



# the GRYPHON

Published by Clan Baird Society Worldwide

## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Well, the weather is finally getting better and we are entering the Games season once again. I would usually use this column to generate enthusiasm for all of our members to attend the Games in their area or around the country when traveling or vacationing.

However, at this point there are much more timely and difficult issues to discuss. As a Clan we are reaching a crossroads in that we will be selecting new officers at this year's AGM in Salt Lake City in June (see AGM notice in separate article in this issue). Normally we would elect the President and the Treasurer one year and the vice President and the secretary in the alternate year. This has been done historically so that there is minimum amount of overlap and to ease the transition as new officers learn their responsibilities.

Over a year ago, both Bill Baird, our Secretary who has served for 6 years and our Treasurer, John Barr, who has served for 9 years expressed their interest in retiring. In the past 4-5 issues of the Gryphon, we have asked any members who are interested to please volunteer. Frankly, the silence has been deafening. Last year, I asked (begged, pleaded, cajoled) each of them to stay on for an extra year which they have graciously done. Now, that year is passed and they will end their terms effective with the AGM. At this point, there are no clan members who have volunteered or agreed to be elected and serve either of these offices.

In addition, two years ago at the AGM and in the Gryphon, I announced that I would retire following this year's AGM. I have served a total of 11 years as Regional Commissioner, Vice-President, and recently (6 years) as President. Candidly, I am burned out after holding these offices and also acting as membership Chairman and Gryphon Editor. It's time for me to "move on". and welcome fresh faces, ideas and new leadership. (I will remain the Membership chair if called upon by the new President.)

I would really like to take this column to recite all the successes, large and small, and some of our challenges as a Clan but shall save that for a future issue since new Clan Officers and volunteers is becoming a critical issue in our success going forward.

Incidentally, as an additional note, I am disheartened to report that our "sister clan" which we helped to organize, the Clan Baird Society of Atlantic Canada, has recently voted to cease operation and disband due to the continued difficulty in recruiting volunteers to serve as officers in the clan. Really sad...our Clans and members have had a wonderful association over the years.

Anyway, back to our situation. Wrex Diem, our current vice-President and erstwhile Gryphon newsletter Editor, has agreed to serve as President if elected at this year's AGM. This still leaves our Clan without any viable candidates for Secretary or Treasurer. To help ease this situation, I will propose (with the agreement of the current Officers) at the AGM that the Clan combine the duties Secretary and Treasurer since most of the secretary's duties are served by the Membership chair this will not significantly increase the Treasurer's responsibilities or workload. This, by the way, is consistent with other clan's organization and suggested by COSCA for smaller Clans.

The clan Baird Society still has additional and very significant volunteer issues. In each issue of the Gryphon we have asked for members to volunteer. To date, neither Wrex nor I have had any serious or sincere inquiries. The lack of volunteers has become a critical issue. Here is what the Clan needs must have to continue succeed:

We desperately need a webmaster; someone who can re-establish and maintain our Clan Baird website. Our previous website has expired and we have lost this very valuable method of communicating with our current and potential members. In the past two years in which our website was active, 90% of our new members came from inquiries generated by the information in the website. Also, an active website is essential for the Clan to communicate information to our members about Games dates, organizational issues and most importantly, to start publishing our newsletter, Gryphon, online members. If you are qualified in designing and maintaining a website, PLEASE contact Wrex Diem.

Next, the Clan needs a volunteer Genealogist. There are currently about 37,000 Baird names and associated information stored in the Clan sponsored and proprietary computerized data bank. Xyla Hathaway, our current genealogist, has done a very capable job for the last 10+ years but has also decided to "hang it up". If you have an interest in genealogy and are computer "literate" PLEASE contact Wrex Diem. Incidentally, the COSCA genealogist has offered to assist and train any volunteer in this responsibility and Xyla will also assist in the transition.

There are also an increasing number of Regional Commissioner and state Representative positions available for those who will volunteer. These folks are primarily responsible to attend Highland Games and activities in their state or region and to sponsor Clan Baird tents at the Games. Clan tents at Games are a very important way for the Clan to get the Baird name, history, legacy and presence maintained in the Scottish community and with those who attend games. Sponsoring a tent is a great deal of fun and a wonderful means of meeting new Baird's and other Clan members. Again, if you are interested, PLEASE contact Wrex Diem; sponsoring tents is easy and a great weekend's activity for you your family and friends...plus another primary way to bring new members into Clan Baird!

On the topic of members and membership...if our Clan is to continue to be successful and grow, we need to have volunteers who attend Games and sponsor tents. As I look at our organization around the country, the areas of the most membership growth and retention are those in which Clan Baird consistently has a "presence" at the Games. Current and potential Clan Baird members love to go to the Games in their area knowing that "the Baird's are here"!

A list of Scottish Games by month and location can be found at [www.cesna.org/games/](http://www.cesna.org/games/) This will show Games in your area as well as dates, contacts, directions, etc. which is all you will need to help you set up a Clan tent. Any additional Clan Baird literature is available through either Wrex or Larry Burns. Remember, sponsoring a tent is fun and easy!

Finally, please check the number following your name on the Gryphon mailing label. if the number is 08 or 09, dues are *now* payable. Please update your dues now to assist the Clan to continue to serve you.

In closing, I have enjoyed serving as your President, have made many friends, and have really pushed to grow our proud Baird heritage.

Yours, Aye!            Larry

## **THE HAGGIS DEBATE—**

### **CONTINUED FROM JANUARY!!**

This is very serious. Britain, as most readers of this newspaper know, has long been populated by three warlike tribes, the Scots, the English and the Welsh. Much of British history consists of disputes between these tribes, particularly between the Scots and the English. Since the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, after Bonnie Prince Charles made a vain attempt to reclaim the kingdom of the Scottish Stuart dynasty, an uneasy peace has prevailed based on the understanding that Scottish pride and Scottish feathers will not be unduly ruffled

But then, every so often, somebody threatens this delicate understanding with an outrageous suggestion. This usually happens in August, when newspapers have nothing better to talk about. And it has happened again this August.

The insult to the Scots this year is that haggis, the Scottish national dish is not really Scottish but English. Now this may seem a matter of little consequence to Americans, but how would the United States react if apple pie and turkey with cranberry sauce were to be claimed as the products of, say, French cuisine? Or if somebody asserted that baseball was invented by the Romanians (which it was)? These things are a matter of national pride, and people should take great care when talking about them.

The basis of the current claim is that an English cookbook of the early 17<sup>th</sup> century contains a recipe for haggis. This, we are told, was well before any Scottish recipe book gives any similar information. Well now, this assertion is so patently flimsy that it hardly requires refutation. Of course there was no published Scottish recipe for haggis before then, for the simple reason that it would have been quite unnecessary for Scots to publish a recipe for something everybody in Scotland knew how to make. Why state the obvious? It's as simple as that.

But if further proof is required, then it is there in abundance. English cuisine has always been very open to foreign influence and still is. If one looks at contemporary English cookbook writers, what do they write about? French food, Indian food, Chinese food— anything but English food. And it was ever thus. So it is no surprise that early 17<sup>th</sup> century English food writers should have written about exotic Scottish dishes rather than English ones. This is what these people have always done.

The haggis, of course has played an important role in the Scottish national psyche - not as food, but as an invention. Scots like to console themselves with the knowledge that even if today we are a small nation on the periphery of Europe, an adjunct to a defunct empire, and chronically unsuccessful at something we would love to be successful at (soccer), we none the less have a great past as inventor

Scottish schoolchildren are indoctrinated with the history of Scottish inventions. Television, they are taught, was invented by John Logie Baird, a Scotsman, and not by Taylor Farnsworth, an American. The Irish did not invent whisky, and Irish whisky is not the real McCoy, McCoy himself, whoever he was, was clearly Scottish and definitely not Irish. And golf was not invented by the Dutch - as misguided Dutchman have a habit of claiming - it was a product of the Scottish genius for hitting things with sticks and counting the hits.

So the haggis is clearly Scottish, as Robert Burns understood full well when he wrote his famous poem in its praise. If one's national bard writes a poem to a dish consisting of chopped up offal cooked in a sheep's stomach together with oatmeal and spices secured with a curious pin, then that dish must be authentically national

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Clan Baird  
Scholarship Guidelines

Anyway, even if there were doubts about this - which of course no right-thinking person would entertain - why take an iconic dish away from a national cuisine that has so little else of distinction in it? Yes, we have salmon and porridge, and one or two other dishes, but Escoffier would surely have been very unfulfilled had he been born Scottish.

Blithely attributing our haggis to a people who already have lots of dishes - most of them terribly stodgy - in their national cuisine seems, if nothing else, to be gratuitously cruel. It would be like eating a mockingbird, if I may be permitted a literary allusion.

Never heard of haggis? Never tasted it? Try it on your next visit to Scotland, or even England. It is best taken with mashed turnips, which, incidentally, were invented in Scotland with a shot of whisky. The whisky is to neutralize the taste of the haggis, and the turnips are there for health reasons. Highly recommended.

Alexander McCall Smith is the author, most recently, of "Tea Time for the Traditionally Built"

#### **KNOWN EVENTS**

**Please list them with us so your fellow Clansmen might visit you**

April: Tulloch and Hillsdale College, MI. Free tickets required - Ruth 517-607-2410

May 20 & 30th: Alma, MI Highland Games hosted by Wrex R. Diem

June 12th : Salt Lake City Heilan' Games and AGM hosted by Vincent Baird.

July 10th & 11th—Grandfather Mountain Highland Games at Linville, NC, hosted by ????

The purpose of the Clan Baird Society Scholarship is to provide financial support toward the study of an element of Scottish culture. This may include Scottish music, dance, language, literature, history, genealogy, politics and religion. Only applications relevant to the study of Scottish study will be considered.

Scholarships will be awarded for \$500.

All applications must be postmarked by ???

Applicants must be at least 12 years of age: there is no upper age limit.

Applicants may be asked to submit a personal videotape of performance or involvement and are encouraged to include up to three letters of recommendation.

Awards will be based on relevant study and financial need. Race, gender, ethnicity, or religion of the applicant will not be considered.

Preference will be given to immediate family of Clan Baird members but others will be considered.

All scholarship monies must be utilized within **18** months after the award date.

Scholarship recipients must submit a letter of confirmation of enrollment, registration, or apprenticeship in the program toward which the scholarship will be applied.

Scholarship recipients must submit a certificate or letter from the institution, organization, or instructor confirming completion of the program.

***important:** Please answer all questions and follow all instructions in this application.*

#### **EUREKA!!!!**

Ask and you shall receive and we did. When we ask for someone to step up to the plate and become the new editor of the Gryphon, Heather Snyder, a relatively new member did just that. Come October, we could well be receiving the Gryphon from our new editor. THANKS A MILLION Heather.

# The secrets of the Scots' success at Bannockburn

BANNOCKBURN and Robert the Bruce are inextricably tied in Scottish history. Bruce's battles against the English for nearly two decades are epic, but there are some perceptions that are not always based on historical investigation and can be misleading.

It is true that Bruce and his forces were severely outnumbered when Edward II sent some 25,000 men north to crush the Scottish insurrection once and for all at Stirling, culminating in the Battle of Bannockburn on 23-24 June 1314. However it is not the case that the smaller force was ill-equipped and unskilled.

Writing in the 1370s the Archdeacon of Aberdeen, John Barbour, explained why the English archers fled from the Scots contingent of horse at the battle of Bannockburn:

*And against armoured men to fight  
May naked (unarmoured) men have little might*

What kind of armour was available to combatants on both sides, and why were the Scots popularly believed to be a poorly equipped rabble?

An English chronicler noted of the Scottish foot soldiers that "each was furnished with light armour, not easily penetrable by a sword". More detail about this kind of armour comes from an arming act passed in 1318. It states that anyone owning £10 worth of property (yeoman farmers) should either have a habergeon (mail shirt) or a good sufficient "acton, a basnet & gluffis playt". The acton (from Arabic *kotyn*, or cotton) was a heavily padded jacket stuffed with material.

London regulations from 1322 order this to be "olde linnen or new cotton". The bascinet is a simple round or conical helmet and "gluffis of plate" is the Scots term for gauntlets. It is of note that a similar English arming act demands almost exactly the same equipment for foot soldiers in the king's army.

Dr David Caldwell, curator of medieval armour at the Royal Museum of Scotland, has highlighted the significance of the terms of the act as they "indicate precisely the minimum requirements of soldiers of that time

John Barbour, in his poem *The Brus* (c.1375-77), describes an English knight as clad in "armys gud & fyne". University of Glasgow professor Archie Duncan, in his version of the poem, mentions the unlikelihood of knights having plate armour at this time as the "mail hauberk was still universal". The hauberk and its short-sleeved diminutive - the habergeon - would continue in use, but it is clear that additions to this protection were being acquired by those who could afford them.

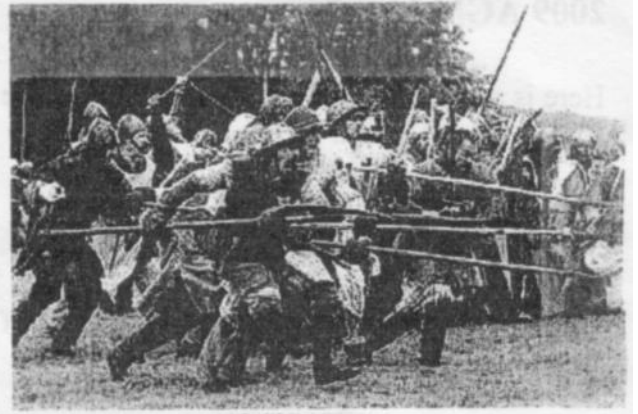
Edward I, the "hammer of the Scots", must have been wearing something more substantial than just mail when a crossbow bolt stuck in his armour at the siege of Stirling in 1303. It may well have been a "pair of plates", a kind of flack jacket made up from many pieces of metal. This is evidenced by the increasing number of seals and tomb effigies that display chains attached to the torso to which weapons can be attached.

An English knight, writing in captivity at Edinburgh Castle, recounted how an enemy of the king "struck the said Bruce with a sword in the chest, but he, being in armour, was not wounded"

continued on the next page.



The statue of Robert the Bruce at Bannockburn looks down on a recreation of the battle.



A re-enactment of the Battle of Bannockburn

The same year as Edward's experience with the crossbow bolt, his son, the fashion conscious Prince of Wales, sent his armourer into London to do some shopping for the forthcoming Scottish campaign. Helms of various types were acquired as well as "2 crests of gilt copper painted with the Prince's arms" and thigh- pieces embroidered with the same in silk. Along with these were purchased a pair of "plate quisses, poleyns and sabaters" - armour for the thighs, knees and feet. He also bought gauntlets and white leather shammies for polishing the breastplates.

The armour of the English knights would prove a hindrance as the tide of the two-day Bannockburn clash turned against them. According to an English source, the headstrong Earl of Gloucester, who was killed in the fray, was so "borne down by the weight of his body-armour he could not easily arise". An idea of the weight of armour can be found in a bulk order made by the French king in 1384. He requested habergeons weighing 25lb or more. A Yorkshire knight, according to the poet Barbour, even hid his armour in a bush so that he could make his escape.

A contemporary Latin poem speaks of the English knights glorying in their horses. Barbour's allusion to "trappyt" horse is suggestive that they were armoured too. Another chronicler's verses on the battle include this line about the river near the battle: "Forth buries many men well-equipped with arms and horses."

The battle was undoubtedly a rich haul for the victorious Scots. Barbour describes how the corpses were stripped naked of clothes and armour. Successive English kings tried to institute an arms blockade through foreign diplomacy and decrees and inquests to punish unscrupulous arms dealers.

The Scots were not poorly equipped before the battle and their supplies were certainly improved by its outcome.

**New Member—and a hearty  
"Ceud mile failte"  
100,000 welcomes to:**

Jackie Ulmer  
2915 Belgrave Ave.  
Germantown, TN, 38138

### **Cartoon**

This issues cartoon was provided by Ann Louise Baird King of NY. It was published in the Buffalo News.

### **EMAIL ADDRESSES**

Of the 276 members, we have received a grand total of 25 email addresses.

## 2009 AGM Minutes.

Here is a summary of the items discussed at the 2009 Annual General Meeting of the Baird

Clan which was held Oct. 17<sup>th</sup> at the Stone Mountain Games in Atlanta, GA

**MEMBERSHIP**—Membership has been holding steady; although we are seeing signs of decline in that many members have not paid their 2008 and/or 2009 dues. Some members are losing interest due to lack of Baird participation in their local Games. (See notes in President's column in this issue).

**ELECTRONIC GRYPHON/WEBSITE**—the Clan would like to start moving in the direction of emailing the Gryphon and/or making it available online; however, we have recently "lost" our Webmaster and desperately need a new website. (again—see notes in Pres. Column in this issue).

**BAIRD SCHOLARSHIP**—A Clan Baird scholarship has been approved by the membership and a set of guidelines and an application have also been approved. (These items will be included in this issue or available thru Wrex R. Diem ([alakazam@frontiernet.net](mailto:alakazam@frontiernet.net))). This scholarship is projected to be implemented in the latter part of this year, 2010.

**CLAN BAIRD SOCIETY OF ATLANTIC CANADA**—See update in the Pres. Column in this issue.

**OFFICERS/VOLUNTEERS**—See update on this crisis in the Pres. Column in this issue.

Sarah Baird Simpson of Clearwater, FL discussing the Baird Clan with your VP Wrex R. Diem



## REPORT ON THE DUNEDIN GAMES!!!!

**OH - what** a glorious day in Dunedin, Florida on March 27<sup>th</sup>. I have said and will continue to say - let us publish in the Gryphon what games the Baird's will have a Clan tent to let our members know where we will be.

Right off the bat - Ed and Barbara Baird of White Lake, MI, who were vacationing in FL show up to say HI - a great example of publishing where Clan Baird Tents are.

Unfortunately for the Dunedin Games, the city has built a new giant community center, a large restroom, a large retention pond area and planted a lot of trees. This was done in the area where the games used to be held. This compressed the games significantly, so it was hard to determine the size of the crowd and it gave the feeling of everything being on top of everything.

We did have Donald McCallum stop by to say hello. He was a dear friend of Byron and Frances Baird - our conveners of the Clan. He proudly stated that he made the Baird's their first banner.

I was personally delighted that some dear old friends stopped by to say hello. We were unable to sign up any new members, but we shall see after a follow-up letter is sent out to our Baird visitors.

## A Birthday Celebration

Robert Baird and his wife Mary of Ann Arbor, MI, took their nephew and his wife—Richard and Rochelle Baird—to the 251<sup>st</sup> Birthday Celebration of Robert Burns. The event was held at the Eagle Eye Golf Club in East Lansing, MI. This was the 39<sup>th</sup> celebration sponsored by the Glen Erin Pipe Band and a sell out crowd of over 400 attended. The golf club has tall ceilings which makes it ideal to hear the pipe band. Robert and Mary started enjoying the event 35 years ago.

## Y'ALL COME!!!!

Clan Baird's Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held this year on Sat., June 12th at the Salt Lake City Highland Games near Salt Lake City, UT. This is our annual Clan business meeting in which we will elect our officers and update all attending members on financial matters, membership, old and new business, and other matters of Clan interest. The meeting will be hosted by Mr. Vincent Baird of Tooele, UT.

Vincent has provided a brief timeline of events around the games that could be of interest to attending members.

Thursday the 10th - Genealogy Classes at BYU, the History Center, Movies, Fishing in the Uintas, Visit Park City - the Olympic Village, Watch the Salt Lake City Bee's Baseball Game.

Friday the 11th - More Genealogy and other stuff till noon and at 2 pm we set up the Clan Tent, later, have dinner and then attend the Tattoo from 8pm-10pm.

Saturday the 12th - Festival all day with the AGM about 2pm, enjoy haggis, etc.

The game's hotels granting game's rates are:

Best Western I-15 & South 850 in East Lake, UT. 801-768-1400.

Days Inn-850 East (I 15, exit 2822) Lehi, UT 801-768-8322

Quality Inn-712 S. Utah Valley Drive I-15, exit 276) 801-763-8383

As we approach June - for more information contact Vincent Baird after 6 pm MST @ 435-843-4425 or email your questions to

[vbaird@triloby.net](mailto:vbaird@triloby.net)

**So, we** look forward to seeing you all at Utah's Heilan' Games.

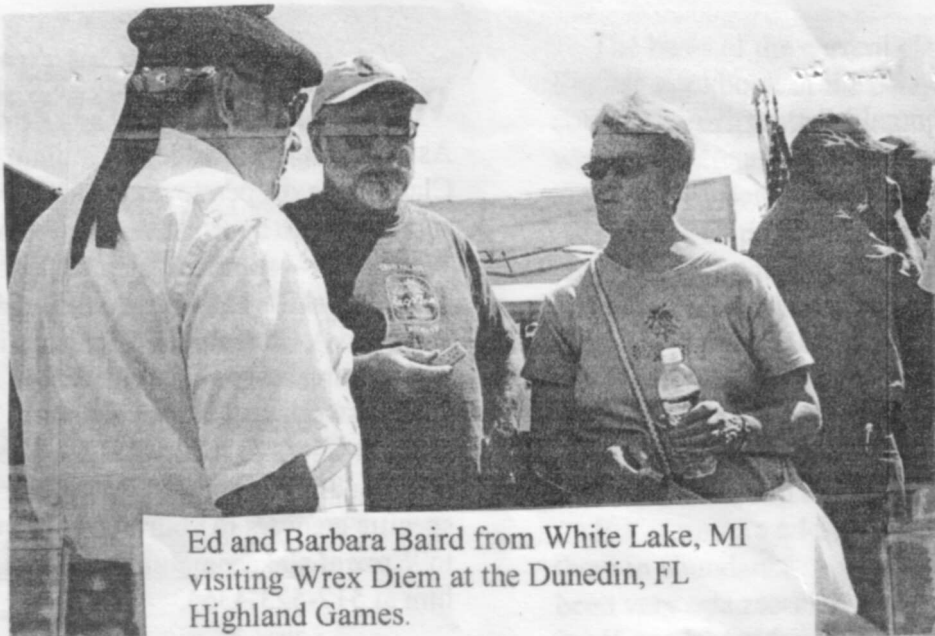
Here is a quote from Vincent Baird, 1996  
*"The sweetest kiss I ever had was not the kiss of a lass's hand  
or even a kiss from my lover's lips.  
The sweetest kiss I ever had, was the kiss of my Motherland—Scotland!"*

**Treasurer's Report - Not** available at the time of the printing!!!

## WANTED---THREE MORE

As stated in the Presidents Column, we, the Clan, are in desperate need of: A Treasurer someone with appropriate money skills, A Webmaster—someone with sophisticated computer skills and knowledge regarding the web, and A Genealogist interested in maintaining and navieatine around our data base answering members questions. So, like [leather Snyder , why not step up to the plate and volunteer for one of these positions. For specific answers to your questions, email them to Wrex at [alakazam@frontiernet.net](mailto:alakazam@frontiernet.net) or call him at 517-523-4364.





Ed and Barbara Baird from White Lake, MI  
visiting Wrex Diem at the Dunedin, FL  
Highland Games.

Blondie

