



Greetings from your Steuart

Another beautiful year is under way; Phyllis and I have had our first Scottish Games in Woodland CA. The weather was perfect, (a welcome change) and we had a lot of visitors at our tent, good friends and new friends. To locate the nearest Scottish activity in your area, go to the internet and search for Scottish Games or contact your Commissioner.

The most important announcement for this Newsletter is that **it is time to pay our annual dues!** Like the Federal Government our Clan Society year begins July one and ends June 30th. In order for our Society to function and supply members with specialty items, newsletters, postage, tartan yardage, etc. We need all members to please pay their dues on time, prior to June 30th. You have found the dues notice and the addressed envelope in this Newsletter, PLEASE, fill in the form and send your check right away.

Our requests for stories and photographs for the Newsletter have paid off and you will find another article about another member whose other hobby is Mountain Man re-enactment. We still need more articles so send in your stories for us to use. John and Ellen, how about an article on your stock car building and racing adventures!

Phyllis and I have found an interesting pass-time this spring right in our back yard. Watching birds, flocks of Gold Finches. We live in the city and always have had a bird feeder of one type or another in our yard with Jays, doves, Sparrows and others visiting the yard. Now this spring we finally have attracted the beautiful canary yellow goldfinches. We don't have to do anything to enjoy them, except keep the feeders full of seeds.



Take time to smell the flowers, look at the birds and have a healthy, happy and fun Spring, Summer and over the rest of the Clan Little Society's fiscal year!
Ross A. Little, CLSNA, Steuart

Membership Dues:

Excerpt from the By-Laws

- 2.1. Full Members: Full members are persons aged eighteen (18) or older who by birth, marriage, descent, bear or are connected with, the name LITTLE, regardless of spelling variations and others who express a genuine interest in the objectives of the Society.
 - 2.1.1. Individual Membership: Any individual meeting the above definition.
 - 2.1.2. Family Membership: Persons related and living in the same household parent(s) and junior family members under age 18.
 - 2.1.3. Life Membership: Individuals in categories 2.1.1. and 2.1.2 may become Life members with all rights by paying the fee equal to ten (10) times the fee for an individual membership or for a family membership.
 - 2.1.4. Junior Membership: Persons under age eighteen (18) related to a full member;
 - 2.1.5. Honorary Membership: Persons who, for their influence on behalf of, and goodwill toward the Society, are so elected by The Council.
- 2.4. Annual membership dues shall be due and payable on or before 30 June of each calendar year. Dues become delinquent on 26 August, sixty (60) days from the due date.

Enrollment fee:

There is a **one time only enrollment fee** of \$10.00 required of all categories, (See example)

Yearly dues:

Individual membership (18 +) \$15.00

Family membership:

Father and or Mother and children 18- \$20.00

Lifetime Membership, one time dues payment:

Individual lifetime membership \$150.00

Or Family lifetime membership \$200.00

EXAMPLE

When an individual first joins the Clan Society they are asked to pay a \$10.00 enrollment fee plus \$15.00 membership fee which equals \$25.00 to join the Society. www.clanlittlesna.com

THE SKIRL OF BAGPIPES AND THE TWIRL OF KILTS

Ever see a kilt? If you are one of the unlucky few who have never encountered this foreign piece of clothing, you may find it to be an eye opening experience. The best way to see a kilt, however, isn't to go stare at the old guy in the park belting out an out of key "Scotland the Brave". No, I think that the full immersion technique is far better, and by this I mean the Scottish games. My reasoning for this is simple. If you were to see one, crazy, old guy wearing a mail order kilt, you might be inclined to laugh, but if you were to see fifty men wearing kilts, many of them quite large, and some also toting the traditional Scottish dagger, called a "dirk", it's probably more likely that you'd keep your mouth shut and learn something. This would be a great experience for anyone, for at the Scottish games, there is a lot to learn, and in the process of learning, lots of fun to be had.

Buying a ticket to the games and stepping through the gate is like entering a realm where the sights sounds and smells of another world and time form an imperfect meld with our own. Finding the games is not hard at all. Once in the general vicinity one can simply follow the swarms of kilts, Scottish deerhounds (a very distinctive looking dog), and a rainbow of different clan tartans (a plaid to any not of Scotland). Meals can be found in the form of a traditional Scottish pasty, (a small meat pie), or a British banger. All around there are people dressed in the clothes of old Scotland, including everything from full, flowing dresses to suits of armor. From the direction of the gaming field can be heard the sound of pained grunts and yells as the competitors throw, lift, and carry impossibly heavy objects, participating in the same unchanged events as centuries ago. Clydesdale horses proudly march around a field, and border collies can be seen manipulating flocks of Scottish sheep. Throughout all this medley of activity there is the constant symphony created by bagpipes, Scottish drums, fiddles, and the occasional, haunting melody of the hurdy-gurdy winding its way through the air. I say all this forms an imperfect meld because of some of the juxtaposed oddities that one occasionally sees. A caber tosser wearing spandex under his kilt, for instance, or maybe a warrior cleaning his armor with a Brillo pad. These things all lend a very distinctive and interesting flavor to the games that is not easily forgotten, and often brings one back for more, which is good, because the games are something that require more than just a quick glance to truly appreciate.

The name "Scottish games" obviously implies some importance to the competitions, and not without good reason. The Scottish game tournaments are some of the most impressive around. The games, as explained to me by third year pro, Phil Marlin, are multinational competitions arranged in the manner of a decathlon, where the competitors must compete in eight different events and place at least third in each event in order to

move on. The events in the competition are quite varied, with one very common bond, they all require lots herculean strength. The events include two stones, which are like shot put except that they use rocks. There are two weights for distance in which the athlete must spin around, generating enough momentum to hurl a 28-56 lb. weight as far as possible. Next are two hammers, involving a full sized sledge hammer being hurled down-field, except, unlike the weight for distance, the athlete's feet must remain stationary. There is a weight for height, where the competitors stand under an elevated bar over which they try to loft the weight, and finally, the last event is the caber toss. The caber toss all by itself makes for a very interesting sport. The equipment consists of a lot of physical bulk, as well as a large, wooden pole about the size and shape of the members of the telephone pole forests planted along our roadways. The caber is picked up and balanced nearly vertically, supported by the hands and shoulders. The athlete then runs forward at full tilt and, often with a barbarian yell, throws the caber in such a way that the end that was in the air hits the ground while the rest of the caber follows over and lands pointing, hopefully, directly away from the thrower. This sport has two possible origins, one being that it started out as a logging technique, but the second (and also the more favored among the caber tossers), is that cabers were used in assaulting castles. After hearing about some of these sports, one might guess that the competitors might be fairly large, and one would certainly be right. Among the pros, there are lots of ex-Olympic athletes with the average weight being about 280 lbs. This interviewer, topping off at 6'2" and weighing 180 lbs. I felt like a genuine squirt talking to some of these guys.

The strength competitions are not the only games played on the fields. Right next to the grunts, wheezes, and flying cabers is a somewhat more graceful addition to the games, the beautiful highland dancing. The dances are very impressive, filled with jumps, twirls, and fast, precise footwork. The more experienced dancers show an amazing amount of lower body strength just in the height and control of their jumps. The overall impression one could get from watching the dance was that a happy and powerful being was somehow concealed inside a small body, and was giving only hints of its true nature. Linda Groth was kind enough to give me a little of her time to explain how the dances are arranged. The dancers are divided into five categories: primary, beginner, novice, intermediate, and premier. The dancers can only move

on to the next level when they have shown competence at their current one. There are both western and national competitions, with each age group and level doing different dances. The premier level is the highest and it competes for money. Linda herself is a Novice in the ten and under age group. She became interested in dancing because her uncle plays the bagpipes. She says the hardest part of the dance is simply “doing it!”

Leaving the game fields and the dancing behind, one can wander through the “glen of clans”, the place where the various clan tents are set up for visitation. In each tent can be found a multitude of smiles and hospitality, however the one tent that should never be missed on any visit to the glen is the formidable “Little” tent. Ours is the beautiful blue structure, graced with our maroon tartan and numerous flags. It is filled with friendly people, lots of information about our history, and an endless supply of puns on our name, (the puns aren’t so bad for we only do it a little bit. Actually we toy with the idea of making a little book of them). The Little Clan Society is not an actual clan because we have no actual chief, (looking for a fun job? Have the surname “Little” or some derivation of it? Come on by!), but we do have an “unofficial” clan badge, as well as a democratic constitution, approved in 1994. Our clan logo is a Border Reiver, which is a figure of the fighting border men who earned the reputation as the finest light cavalry in Europe by continually raiding and reiving the Scottish-British borders. In Scotland, “Little” is listed as being one of these original border clans. The clan president, Bob Little, originally saw an ad for the Little Clan Society in *The Highlander* in 1991 and he volunteered to set up the tents on the west coast. He claims, “I was one of the first members in the US, Certainly the first on the West coast.” Most people that join the Little clan are interested in their heritage. We have an excellent genealogist, Pat Maddox, who is working on a computer program to merge the histories of the twenty-five different spellings of “Little”. Bob Little, at first, volunteered because he was interested in his mom’s side which was German-English. He knew his father’s side was Scottish only because, “they talked funny”, but there was very little information to be found, and what records there were, were not complete. After joining the clan, he has gone back several generations. Bob Little certainly has his work cut out for him. He says, “We have to get the clan going, and re-organized. As we get more members, we’ll be able to get a lot more done.”

One can imagine all the hard work that goes into the production and organization of these games, and if you ever go to a Scottish gathering, you should drop by the Caledonian Club tent and give them a word of thanks, for the credit goes to them. I talked to Gordon Scott, the chief of the Caledonian Club who has been involved for the past ten years. The club is a Non-profit, open membership organization that funds scholarships, social events, and sponsors games. There are currently 287 families who

are members. The club was founded in 1876 by the people who put on games in Sacramento. It operated into the late twenties when there was a break until about the late fifties when it began functioning again. About the games, Mr. Scott said that they are, “A lot of hard work”. After each event there is a meeting in which the success of each category, including food, games, clan organization, is analyzed. New heads are assigned for the next games and plans are made on what to do differently. Several meetings take place to check on progress before the clansmen even start shaking the dust off their kilts. Even after all this preparation the day of the actual event finds the Caledonian club tent to be a beehive of hectic activity just to keep things running smoothly.

So, are you interested yet. The games are a whole different world just waiting to be explored, and it doesn’t matter if you are a burly being into sports and weightlifting, a small, energetic package of dancing dynamite, or just a spectator in search of interesting sights and friendly people to talk to, the games have something for you. Most importantly, however, is that if you are to visit the games, you must not forget to stop by and say “hi” to all the friendly folks in the big “Little” tent. We are all bursting with laughs and information, both of which we give freely.

Copyright By Jason D. Little 8/29/96



Graham Baird

Richard E. Little has been a member of Clan Little Society for several years. His main hobbies are blacksmithing and Mountain Man re-enactment. Richard's ancestors came from the border region of Scotland and from there to Northern Ireland, to Ontario Canada and to California. Richard now makes his home in Hinton, Virginia.

Rich followed his father's example and became involved with the Boy Scouts along with his son Douglas, and Rich became the assistant Scoutmaster. On one of their camp-outs they went, as a troop, to a mountain man

encampment and the troop decided that their troop should become mountain man re-enactors. In looking at the list of equipment needed, tents, stakes, fire tools, spoons, forks, knives, flint fire starters, tomahawks and more, they decided that these items were too expensive for the troop to buy so Rich

decided that he could learn to make them himself. He talked to a friend who was a blacksmith and he offered to teach Rich the basics of blacksmithing. The troop developed its own list of equipment after the style of the mountain men and Richard made many of the items, while teaching the boys as well. The first white men to venture into the unknown country west of the Mississippi were free trappers, these men lived off the land and in the great outdoors and became known as mountain men. Many of these men were Scots. Richard and his wife participate in mountain man Rendezvous and he makes most of his own equipment.

Richard has progressed from basic blacksmithing to teaching scouts and home-schooled students and setting up demonstrations at fairs, etc. He now is selling some of the items he makes such as heart shaped trivets, fireplace tools, camp fire tripods, curtain hold-backs, paper towel holders, flint and steel fire striker kits, knives and much, much more. Rich asks if any of you know what a "white-smith is? Richard is now using some of his grandfather's blacksmithing equipment in his own shop.

Blacksmithing, working hot with iron, is an ancient craft and Richard (in his research) found a very early reference to blacksmithing in the first book of the Bible: Genesis 4,



Mountain Man Tent



Dottie & Richard Little



Richard, The Village Smithy



Sgian Dubh made for his father.

22. Rich belongs to the Blacksmith Guild where he is able to exchange ideas and gain knowledge, help, encouragement and friends with a common interest. (A WHITE-SMITH is a person who shapes cold iron on a bench with chisel and file).

WAY TO GO RICH!

Two good stories people! Please help your editor out by keeping them coming. Some of you I know must have some interesting family history and stories that you could share with all of us.

Also as always we need more volunteers to help represent the Society at games and to do other things to keep the wheels rolling. So please give us a jingle so we can help you help your Society!



Scottish Country side in the Border Region near the Hermitage



This is reported to be the Little farm house near Dumfries Scotland