

*The Scottish
West
March*

REIVER



The Border Reiver

THE NEWSLETTER OF CLAN LITTLE SOCIETY, NORTH AMERICA

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Editor's Report:

Summer is here as you can tell by the heat wave we have just experienced in July and we are one month into our new fiscal year. Are every-ones' dues paid up and current? If you have lost track of this small item, your address label on this Reiver will give you that information.

The March issue of the Reiver reported on our Quartermaster, James Kleparek's Big Ride. The following is a report from James: As you recall I was on a cross country bicycle ride for the American Lung Association charity this summer. I certainly appreciate and thank those Clan Society members who had donated in my behalf. Without your help this ride would not have been possible for me. The much needed funds have helped support research and prevention of debilitating lung disease and stop smoking legislation. Thanks so much. It is great to know the love and support Clan Little Society members have toward one another. Sincerely James Kleparek, QM.

Clan Little was named in an act of the Scottish Parliament of 1587 as one of 51 truly independent clans of all Scotland. The Clan Little was restarted by the urging of A. Patterson Little, of Georgia and the efforts of Dr. Johnnie Little of Dumfries of Scotland. A. Pat Little passed away in 1998, however his wife, Sally Little is still going strong and is pictured here with Jim Little our Secratrur at Games in N. Carolina.



Jim Little our Secratrur at a Games in N. C.
with Sally Little



Dr. Johnnie Little at a games in Scotland. 2005

Two other members (No current photographs available) of this team are still with us as follows: **Robert C. And Ginny Little** of Burnett Texas. Robert was the Society's first Marischal and the Steuart. Robert put a lot of effort into the Society and set many of the standards now in use. **Dr. Clarence H. Little** was the Society's first Mailin (Treasurer) Robert & Clary, we would appreciate receiving photographs and written information about yourselves. Please send the information to Jim Little the present Secratrur.

Report from William and Christie Little:

On May 20th, 2006 William and I hosted our second Highland Games in Springfield, Illinois. We had a great time again this year. The person in charge of clan row this year was new to management, but he and his clan did a wonderful job of organizing it. They really made us feel welcome and started an on-going tradition of the clans gathering for breakfast and lunch provided by the clan row manager and his wife. When I asked them why they did it, their response was simply, "We know what it's like being cooped up in a tent all day long and not really getting to see any of the games, so we wanted everyone to know how much they're appreciated". Well said if I do say so myself. **Continued on Page -2-**

Next year I promised to help out too, maybe make it a sort of clan pot-luck. If we can keep the clans happy and show others just how happy we are to spend our time with them, then just maybe there will be more clans present at every event. We can't wait for next year's games and we are looking forward to representing the Clan Little Society next year and many years to come.



Best Wishes, William and Christie Little

An exciting event for the SW Region was the wedding of Jerry Little of Gilroy's daughter Elsie's wedding. Jerry wore a kilt and looks very proud and handsome as father of the beautiful bride! Best wishes, Elsie, from all of Clan Little Society.



Word from our good friend, Dorothy Webb of Houston TX reports she is going through more surgery this month - Dorothy is a valued team member of CLSNA.

Dorothy, we are expecting to hear that you are all well and back to your usual activities very soon. We are all pulling for you.



FLOWERS OF THE FOREST

Sad news from Ellen Conn:

BILL CONN 1923 - 2006

Hugh "Bill" Conn, age 83 died on June 25, 2006 at his home in Puyallup W A.

Born in Texas, Bill traveled the world during his 42 years with the Merchant Marine.

He leaves behind his wife Ellen and many friends.

Remembrances may be made by sending a donation to:

Franciscan Hospice

PO Box 1502 Tacoma W A 98401

Ellen & Bill Conn were Conveners in Washington State starting in 1998 and then Commissioners of the NW Region until the end of last year. Ellen was Secratu /Membership from 2000 until August 2003. She did a super job becoming part of smooth working teams with two different Steuarts. Both Bill and Ellen have been a great asset to the Clan Little Society. We extend our condolences and wish the best to Ellen

More sad news, from James P. Griffin

G. Elizabeth Griffin 1926 - 2006

Elizabeth Griffin, age 80, died January 23, 2006 in Scottsdale Memorial Hospital, Osborne, Arizona.

She leaves her husband, James and children, Jean Elliot, of Mass., and Donald Walker of Florida and many good friends. I spoke with James and he is doing quite well.

Elizabeth had been a member of CLSNA for quite a number of years. Another "empty place at the table", she also will be missed

The following article on the Plant Badges of the Clans was copied by permission from

THE HIGHLANDER, The Magazine of Scottish Heritage

Plant Badges of the Clans

By Christopher McCooey

The Duke of Atholl's ceremonial bodyguard is the only private army in Britain. If you look carefully at a photo of them assembled for a formal occasion, you will see that each member is wearing a sprig of juniper. This live ornament goes back to the time before badges were made of cloth or metal. Then, plants were widely used as emblems indicating membership in a particular group. Once a clan adopted a plant as its sign, clan members wore a sprig of it...alone, or behind the crest on a bonnet or staff.

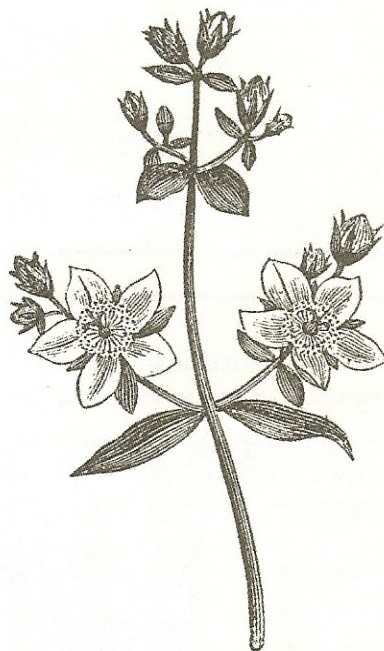
Plant badges were formalized by registering them in the Lyon Court, which regulates the Scottish system of heraldry. The court is presided over by the Lord Lyon King of Arms, Her Majesty's Supreme Officer of Honour in Scotland. The origin of this office is lost, but it is generally believed to have descended from the ancient position of Sennachie to the Celtic kings of Scotland. By act of Parliament, all heraldic responsibility in Scotland has been delegated to the Lord Lyon on behalf of the crown.

Before the Union, Lyon was a Great Officer of State and a member of the Scottish Privy Council. It is because of this that today he is still addressed with the prefix "The Right Honourable." In fact, he is a judge. His court is one of the oldest judicatures in the land and enjoys considerable powers.

When a clan was choosing a plant for its badge, a number of factors might have been considered: historical incidents, existing crests, local abundance and the folklore and myths about each plant. There are a number of plants, for example, that

were popular as clan badges because they were supposed to protect against evil. These include St. John's wort, the plant badge of the Mackinnons, and the juniper of the Murrays. Both were thought to give protection against "devils, elves, witches and others."

St. John's wort was considered to be a magical herb from very earliest times. It was burned on Midsummer's Day when the wafting smoke was



St. John's Wort

thought to protect crops and animals from more malevolent summer "heats" like lightening, drought and field fires. The plant was also used in herbal medicine...and still is. In poultices and salves, it was used to treat wounds and burns. Pills made with the flower's extract are used in the treatment of depression.

Juniper grows best on cold, rainy sites in acid soils. On moorland, it's

seen with heather and bilberry; in the Highland birch and pine woods, it forms an understory. A bush rather than a tree, juniper can grow low and prostrate or upright and conical, reaching up to 17 feet. Juniper bushes can be bent and trimmed by the wind, and change shape spontaneously with age (the older ones have a tendency to die out from the centre and collapse). From a distance, a large colony of juniper can look like a fantastic piece of topiary, a landscape of tapers and sprays, dark shelves and swells.

From the earliest times, Scottish women have known about the abortifacient qualities of juniper berry oil. During the medieval period in Lothian, giving birth "under the savin tree" (savin was another name for juniper) was a euphemism for a miscarriage or a juniper-induced abortion. Indeed, right up to the 1990s, juniper pills were advertised as "The Lady's Friend" in small ads in ladies' journals.

Sometimes the same plant was used by several clans. Both the Drummonds and the Macmillans use holly, which is considered one of the most powerful plants in protecting against evil. The Gaelic name for holly is "cuillioon," the source of place names like Cullen in Banffshire.

While branches were cut off holly trees, it was considered unlucky to cut a whole tree down. Holly leaves have one of the highest caloric contents of any tree browsed by animals and are rich in nutrients. Surprisingly for such a prickly tree, holly was deliberately fed to livestock — especially wintering sheep — a practice which still continues in Dumfries.

Holly was believed to have power

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over horses, and its light pliable wood made it the favourite for whips — especially driving whips for carriages, coaches, vans, gigs, carts and traps. In Stirlingshire, holly trees were established in the steep-sided valleys cut by the burns. The trees were coppiced to produce straight stems which were good for plowmen's whips.

Other uses included chimney sweeping (the leafed boughs were hauled through on ropes), stock-proofing fields and, because the tree is evergreen, marking boundaries. In 1861 at Inverary, a particularly venerable holly was saved by the Duke of Argyll who "insisted that an awkward bend be put in the line of a public road to avoid the necessity of cutting it down."

Not every plant which was chosen as a clan badge followed a tradition or superstition of strength. The Fergussons' aspen is one such. Through history, this tree had supposedly been shunned because its leaves are always trembling, even in the lightest of breezes. Legend has it that the leaves tremble because the tree can never rest because its wood was used for the Cross, and it was the only tree that held up its head on the procession to Calvary. With this history, crofters and fishermen never used aspen for their gear. Of course, there is a scientific explanation. The stalks of the aspen's serrated leaves are very long and thin, hence the rustling whisper in the breeze.

Synonymous with Scotland, purple heather was the plant badge used by the Macintyres and Macdonalds while white heather was chosen by the Macphersons and Macdonnells. Heather grows above the tree line, along riverbanks and beneath pine and birch in the forests.

Like the bracken and gorse with which it often grows, heather was

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Juniper

one of the basic raw materials in rural Scottish life. It has been used as fuel and fodder, and as a building material where wood was in short supply, sometimes standing in as the framework for wattle and daub. Its springy stems have been bundled up into thatch and brooms and woven into ropes. Its roots were carved into knife handles — particularly the handles of ceremonial dirks which were worn on special occasions.

The spikes of the honey-scented purple flowers were a component of an orange dye used in kilt making; the flower heads were used to make a refreshing drink similar to barley water, and even to make beer. Strong, springy and fragrant, the plant was used for human as well as animal bedding. Scottish settlers emigrating to America could not imagine life without it and so took heather with them, naturalizing one of their national symbols thousands of miles beyond its natural range.

Heather ale is a brew of ancient legend. Enthusiasts for the beer believe it to have been first developed by the Picts 4,000 years ago. As evidence, they cite some drinking vessels which were found during the 1985 excavation of a Neolithic settlement on the island of Rhum. A crust found on the inside of the vessels contained pollen spores of oats, barley, heather and meadowsweet. The archeologists believed the spores to be the remains of a fermented beverage. They even produced a moderately acceptable ale using the same ingredients!

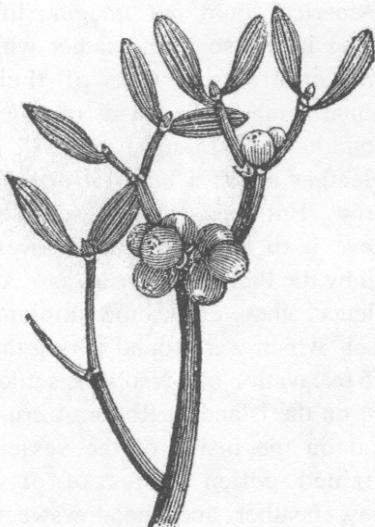
A staple drink in the Highlands, heather ale was made by clan "yill wives" and drunk from cattle horns. It is even possible that the first uisge-beatha (water of life, or whisky) was produced by condensing the alcohol from hot heather ale.

When Thomas Pennant visited

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Islay in 1774, he found that the islanders made ale “from the tops of young heath, mixed with a third part of malt and a few hops.” With the coming of the English and the Highland Clearances, however, the brewing of heather ale went into decline. The tradition was kept up in the Hebrides and Orkneys and, in some isolated spots, the brewing of heather ale may have survived into the 19th century.

The coneless yew of the Frasers is one of three conifers native to Scotland; the other two are the Scots pine and the juniper. The yew has several properties that suggest power, such as the ability to grow to



Mistletoe

a great age. Moreover, yew timber is so hard that it's said that “a post of yew outlives a post of iron.” Yew wood was regarded as the best timber from which to make bows. In fact, the world's oldest wooden artifact is a spear made of yew; its age is thought to be 250,000 years.

In the village of Fortingall,

There are a number of plants, for example, that were popular as clan badges because they were supposed to protect against evil.

Perthshire, at the geographical heart of Scotland, stand the living fragments of a stupendously old yew. It grows in the corner of a churchyard where there has been a building for worship for centuries. Ancient, possibly Druidical stones are grouped nearby. By 1767, when Daines Barrington measured the tree's girth and found it to be 52 feet, it was already a hollow ring of wooden pillars, like a wood-henge. Funeral processions reputedly passed through the trunk. According to legend, Pontius Pilate, whose father was supposedly a legionary stationed in Scotland, played under its branches. Guesses about the tree's age range from 2,000 to 9,000 years.

Yews have a unique association with ancient churches in Scotland and Britain. Why this should be is debated. Maybe yews were planted in these protected plots to ensure there would be wood for bows. Or they may have been planted in churchyards to ensure that they were out of reach of crofters' animals — an important factor since the yew's foliage is poisonous. The yew

may have been planted to provide decoration, or as a *momento mori*. The reason may have been simply to provide screening from strong winds. Or the tree could have been planted in pagan times for its magical properties and “taken over” when the Scots embraced Christianity.

Like the yew, the rowan was frequently planted in Scottish churchyards. The tree was supposed to stop the dead from rising, and to this end it was used in the building of coffins and biers. In combination with the yew, it was supposed to be formidable protection from any form of evil. The rowan is the plant badge of the Menzies; the Malcolms specify rowan berries.

The plant favoured by the Hays



Broom

for their clan badge was mistletoe. Since pagan times, the plant has been thought to have magical properties and it's easy to see why. Mistletoe grows seemingly without roots or a source of food way above the earth and stays green-leaved when other plants are bare. The supreme example of spontaneous generation and

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Gorse, an abundant and fast-growing plant in Scotland, was worn as a clan badge by the Sinclairs.

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continuing life, it was banned from use as decoration in churches until comparatively recently.

In the Middle Ages, mistletoe was believed capable of breaking the death-like trances of epileptics, shrinking tumours, locating treasure, keeping witches at bay and protecting the trees on which it grew. With its milk-like white berries suggestively held between splayed leaves, it seemed "signed" as a human fertility potion and aphrodisiac. Women who wished to conceive would tie a sprig round their waists or wrists.

The Mackays chose the great bulrush for their clan badge. The plant is a stout perennial that can grow to ten feet in shallow water. As the stem is straight and jointless, the great bulrush was ideal for plaiting and weaving into baskets, mats, chair seats and the like. It was especially useful for items that were liable to be frequently wetted, a condition to which rushes are, by nature, perfectly adapted.

Gorse, an abundant and fast-growing plant in Scotland, was worn as a clan badge by the Sinclairs. Gorse has been pressed into a multitude of

functional roles: as fuel (especially in bakers' ovens); as cattle food; as a convenient anchor for hanging out washing to dry; and as a chimney brush. Because of its prickly nature, it could also be used to protect crofters' vegetable gardens from the predations of rabbits and deer.

The Forbes and Homes clans both chose broom as their badge. Its practical use can be discerned in its name as its long, whippy, thorn-less stems make it ideal for sweeping. The twigs were used for basket-making and for thatching croft roofs. The green tips of the flowering branches have long been used in herbal medicine. A very large dose



Scots Pine

of one of broom's active constituents, sparteine, can cause excitation and hallucination. It has sometimes been suggested that this is the origin of the myth that witches ride on broomsticks.

For whatever reason a plant was originally chosen as a clan badge, today these defining sprigs are still worn with pride. 🐾

The plant badge for Clan Little Society is Heather.



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The article, Plant Badges of the Clans, reprinted in this News Letter is a good of the excellent articles contained in THE HIGHLANDER The Magazine of Scottish Heritage.

If you do not already subscribe to this fine publication, then you are missing out on a great source of Scottish information.

Charley Ross, Editor, CLSNA

A "LITTLE" Trivia:

Right next to Denver CO is a town named Littleton that was founded by a pioneer Richard Sullivan Little.

In Harrisonburg VA there is a Little Grill, Douglas Little was a cook there for a while. They are planning a Little Store.

There are Little's Good Gloves on the market. Janice Cathy sent in a catalog, however, the company haven't answered any of my request for information.

When we march in the opening ceremonies at the Scottish Games I have noted that the "Lindsay's have a Little behind".

A few Reivers back we published an article with map and photographs of "Lytle Creek". Sent in by Jan Cathy.

Send in your Little/Lytle Trivia!

The following chart lists the management team, officers of Clan Little Society North America for 2005 / 2006 and how to reach them:

<p align="center"><u>ELECTED OFFICERS</u> Board of Directors Council Members</p>	<p align="center"><u>APPOINTED OFFICERS,</u> Council Members Report to Marischal</p>	<p align="center"><u>CONVENERS</u> (Report to Commissioner)</p>
<p>John E. Little, Steuart, (Pres) & Commissioner, Mid Central 209 W Durham Street Broken Arrow, OK 74011-3410 (918) 449-8541 (jellen@valornet.com)</p> <p>Catherine M. Litel, Marischal, (VP) Box 493, Hugson, CA, 95326 (209) 883-0912</p> <p>Ellen M. Little, Mailin (Treasurer) 209 W Durham Street Broken Arrow, OK 74011-3410 (918) 449-8541, Voice or Fax, (jellen@valornet.com)</p> <p>Jim Little, Secratur / Membership 242 Game Trail Thomasville, NC 27360 (336) 476-7607 (jinpoc@triad.rr.com)</p> <p>Ross A. Little, Past Steuart (Pst Pres.) 4819 S. Land Park Drive Sacramento, CA 95822-1643 (916) 446-3909 (rossalittle@sbcglobal.net)</p>	<p>Trevor Little, Lead Commissioner, N. N. East 529 Fallingbrook Drive Waterloo, ON N2L 4N2, Canada (519) 884-8275 (nacoha@golden.net)</p> <p>David M. Liddell, Commissioner, N. East 373 Floral Lane Saddle Brook, NJ 07663 (201) 794-9334, (davy373@netzero.net)</p> <p>Richard R. Little, Commissioner S. East 1780 Hymor Dr. Deland, FL 32724 (386) 736-4398 (Richardlittle995@msn.com)</p> <p>David J. Little, Commissioner N. Central 303 Saratoga St. S, Saint Paul, MN 55105 (651) 690-2719 (dave.little@lfhi.com)</p> <p>John E. Little, Commissioner, Mid Central 209 W Durham Street Broken Arrow, OK 74011-3410 (918) 449-8541 (jellen@valornet.com)</p> <p>Don L. Lytle, Commissioner, S. Central 125 Beta Drive Lafayette, LA 70506-3923 (318) 981-2308, (donlytl@juno.com)</p> <p>Bill Litel, Commissioner, SW Region 2303 Porter Way Stockton, CA 95207-3340 (209) 957-6778, (wlitel@msn.com)</p> <p>Troy & Laurie Brooks, Commissioner, E. Ce. 3827 S 83rd Street Milwaukee, WI 53220 (414) 543-1762 (Brooks2000.@valor.net)</p> <p>James A. Kleparek, Commissioner, NW P.O. Box 451 Freeland, WA 98249-0451 (360) 730-1762 (klepark@whidbey.com)</p>	<p>James K. Litel, Convener, Arizona 2727 S. Enchanted Hills Dr. Tucson, AZ 85713-4527 (520) 623-8558</p> <p>Ellen M. Conn, Convener Washington 12102, 126th St. Ct. E Puyallup, WA 9875 (253)445-4138 (celdanski@aol.com)</p> <p>Charles Lytle, Convener, Oregon 2006 Conestoga Lane West Linn, OR 97068-2536 (503) 624-2183 (Rcauger@aol.com)</p> <p>John & Barbara Murphy, Maryland 23710 Mt. Pleasant Landing Ci. St. Michaels, MD 21663 (410) 745-6692</p> <p>Bryan Little, Connecticut 1199 Whitney Ave Hamden, CT 06517 (203) 776-3580</p> <p>William & Christy Little, Conveners. IL 658 W. Walnut Street Canton IL, 6150-1629 (wclittle68@uwf.edu)</p> <p>Jim & Pat Little, Conveners NC 242 Game Trail Thomasville, NC 27360 (inpoc@triad.rr.com)</p>
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Take a look at CLSNA web-page [www.clanlittlesna.com]