



# Remember the Death of Alpin

## Newsletter Of The Clan MacAlpine Society

### The Worldwide Organization For MacAlpines

4th Qtr 2015 Volume 30



Kenneth McAlpine



William McAlpine



Michael McAlpin



Sir William McAlpine



Finn Alpin



Sidney Fay McAlpine



Earl Dale McAlpine



Bruce McAlpine

## President's Message

It's about the children: Wandering about the Stone Mountain Highland Games, I was struck at the effort that was being made at getting the children involved, and immersed in their heritage.

Not only were there the dance competitions, and the junior athletics, but also a remarkably well-done children's area, with games and activities that promoted Scottish heritage in a fun and informative way.

In addition to a modified sheaf toss, where lightweight sheaves were tossed with a toy snow shovel for height, a "sheep" toss (sort of a play on words), where the wee ones tossed a small stuffed sheep into a designated target. There was a caber toss utilizing PVC pipe, a "Brave" archery course, where Nerf bows and arrows were used, a "Scottish Salmon fishing game, and much more.

Volunteers staffed the area, and the little ones all seemed to delight in the events. What a great way to educate and entertain the children while instilling an appreciation for their heritage. The importance of involving the children can't be overstated.

We have been granted a Family Convention to take place on September 10, 2016, for the purpose of nominating an interim Commander and requesting that person be recognized by the Scottish Court. This is an important and critical step in ultimately having a Chief of the Name and Arms of the MacAlpines.

The Fergus Scottish Festival and Highland Games had been selected by the membership survey as the location for next year's Annual General Meeting, however the advent of the Derbhfine supersedes the AGM. We look forward to an AGM in Fergus in 2017.

The "Scottish Clan & Family Encyclopedia" by George Way of Plean and Romilly Squire is will soon be printing their third edition, and as a consequence of our Society's efforts, Clan MacAlpine will be included for the first time. The submission will be found in this issue.

This issue also will find important information about next years Society Elections, the Family Convention (Derbhfine) in Scotland, the Call for Representatives and much more.

In kinship  
Michael T McAlpin, President

## UNITE! UNITE! UNITE!

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**Treasurer:** Kenneth McAlpine

**Secretary:** Robin McAlpine

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## Kenneth MacAlpin

Dr Bruce Durie

Shennachie to the Chief of Durie, Honorary Fellow, University of Strathclyde - [gen@brucdurie.co.uk](mailto:gen@brucdurie.co.uk)

We know practically nothing of the real history of Cináed mac Ailpín (in Gaelic *Coinneach mac Ailpein*, commonly known as Kenneth MacAlpin). Most modern king lists start with him as Kenneth I (810–13 February 858) and while he was certainly king of the Picts, the national mythology that makes him first king of Scots is less historically certain. However, it is from this that his posthumous nickname arises - *An Ferbasach*, “The Conqueror”.

Mediaeval lists of early kings were mostly compiled much later, are usually not consistent with each other and do not stand up to modern historical scrutiny. It was 100 years later that the *Chronicle of the Kings of Alba* was compiled, including the reference to Kenneth I:

So Kinadius son of Alpinus, first of the Scots, ruled this Pictland prosperously for 16 years. Pictland was named after the Picts, whom, as we have said, Kinadius destroyed. ... Two years before he came to Pictland, he had received the kingdom of Dál Riata.

This telling has Kenneth “destroying” the Pits, as the Gael king of the area encompassing more or less what is now Argyll (*Oir-Ghàidheal*, the land of the “eastern Gaels”) and Lochaber in Scotland, and Co. Antrim in Ulster (the area around Belfast). Other sources say Kenneth took the kingship there ca.840 after a catastrophic defeat of the Pictish army by Danes. The well-worn tale of how Kenneth’s father had been murdered by the Picts, and how Kenneth avenged him by calling the Pictish kings together for a dinner and slaughtering them, was recognised as early as the 1570s as merely a later retelling of a story of Geoffrey of Monmouth’s invention in the 12th Century, regarding Saxon treachery at a feast.

Historians now consider Kenneth I to be the fifth last of the Pictish kings rather than the first Scot (Gael) king, and there is no real evidence that he was a Scot who inherited the throne of Pictland through his mother by Pictish matrilineal succession. In any case, the Picts were neither “destroyed” nor “disappeared” but merely merged with the Scoto-Gaelic culture which, unlike the Picts, had writing. The union of Pict and Gaels strengthened in the face of increased Norse settlement of Shetland, Orkney, Caithness, Sutherland, the Western Isles, the Isle of Man and part of Ross, which threatened and weakened the links with Ireland as the Norse controlled the western sea-ways.

Kenneth died not in battle but from a cancer on 13 February 858 at the palace of *Cinnbelachoir*, possibly near Scone or Forteviot. He was reported as King of the Picts, not King of Alba, a title not used until Kenneth’s grandsons, Donald II (Domnall mac Causantín) and Constantine II (Constantín mac Áeda). The Pictish kings who followed Kenneth MacAlpin were:

His brother, Domnall mac Ailpín or Donald I; (812 –862, r. from 858)

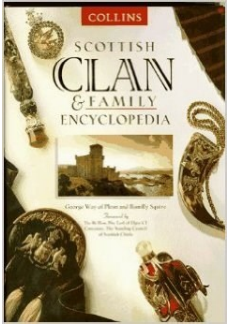
Kenneth’s two sons, Causantín or Constantine I (died 877 during or after the calamitous defeat of the Picts by a Viking army near Dollar) and Áed (who died the next year, possibly killed by his successor Giric in Strathallan)

Giric mac Dúngail also called Giric Mac Rath, (“Son of Fortune”) and “Gregory the Great”, a somewhat mysterious figure possibly ruling jointly with Eochaid mac Run until 889. The claim that Giric was the nephew of Kenneth MacAlpin, son of his brother Donald (Domnall mac Ailpín) is now thought to be based on a later scribe’s error. The *Chronicle of Melrose* (compiled up to 1270) and some copies of the *Chronicle of the Kings of Alba* (written in Scotland, probably in the early 11th century) state that Giric died at Dundurn, near St Fillans in Strathearn.

Giric was replaced by Domnall mac Causantín as Donald II also known as Dásachtach, “the Madman” (died 900) the son of Constantine I. He was killed at Opidum Fother (modern-day Dunnottar), possibly by Gaels, and buried on Iona.

Donald was succeeded by his cousin Constantine II mac Áeda, who abdicated in 943 to become a monk, but his son Malcolm (Máel Coluim mac Domnall, died 954) was later king as Malcolm I, followed by Ildulb mac Causantín (died 962) then Malcolm’s sons Dub (Duff MacMalcolm, “the Vehement”, died 967) and Cináed (Kenneth II, “The Fratricide”, died 995) but with Cuilén mac Ildulb ruling in between them.

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## Article for the Clan Encyclopedia

The following article will appear in the upcoming third edition of “Scottish Clan & Family Encyclopedia” by George Way of Plean and Romilly Squire

### Clan MacAlpine

Dr Bruce Durie

Shennachie to the Chief of Durie, Honorary Fellow, University of Strathclyde - [gen@brucedurie.co.uk](mailto:gen@brucedurie.co.uk)

**Arms:** The Lord Lyon Court has granted a Family Convention to choose a Representer, who may become Chief of Name and Arms. Presently, there are eight MacAlpine armigers.

**Crest/Badge:** As there is no Chief with Arms, there is no official Crest Badge. The one usually given is a boar's head erased within a royal or antique crown. Sir Thomas Innes of Learney, a previous Lord Lyon King of Arms, in “*The Scottish Tartans*” refers to the claim that this Royal Clan is the most ancient in the Highlands, states that it is Celtic and that 25 generations of the Kings of Scotland claim to be of MacAlpine lineage. He also says that the ancient crest was a boar's head.



- **Gaelic Name:** MacAilpein (Son of Alpin)
- **Motto:** Cuimhnich Bàs Ailpein (Remember the Death of Alpin)
- **Plant Badge:** Giuthas (Scots Pine)
- **Origin of Tartan:** recorded prior to the launch of The Scottish Register of Tartans. The first documentation of a tartan is in *The Clans, Sept and Regiments of the Scottish Highlands* (1908) by Frank Adam, and is similar to the hunting MacLean, but for the yellow lines. Other tartans connected with Siol Alpin Clans are predominantly red.
- **Lands:** Dunstaffnage in Argyll, near Oban. Other areas under MacAlpine control included the Royal Palace at Forteviot, where King Kenneth moved his capital after subjugating the Picts and because of increasing Viking raids in Argyll. There is a sizeable cluster of MacAlpin(e)s around Kilmartin

It seems strange that a surname apparently descended from Alpin, father of Kenneth MacAlpin (Cináed mac Ailpín, *Coinneach mac Ailpein*) has never had a Chief of Names and Arms. The reality is that there are no connected genealogies back to Alpin, despite claims of seven established Clans to descend from him (Clan Grant, Clan Gregor, Clan MacAulay, Clan Macfie, Clan Mackinnon, Clan Macnab, and Clan MacQuarrie, collectively called the *Siol Alpin*).

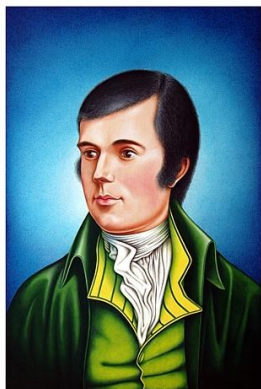
The historical Alpin mac Echdach may refer to two different persons, the first a presumed king of Dál Riata in the late 730s, descended from Fergus Mór mac Eirc; the second the father of Kenneth MacAlpin. Most modern king-lists start with Kenneth I (810–13 February 858), King of the Picts, rather than the first King of Scots as the national mythology now makes him. The name Alpin is likely Pictish one, possibly derived from the Anglo-Saxon name Ælfwine. The patronymic Mac Echdach indicates son of Eochaid or Eochu.

Sadly, Alpin is not listed in the 11<sup>th</sup> Century *Duan Albanach* (*Song of the Scots*) or the various Irish *Annals*, and there is no real evidence that he was a king in Dál Riata or that his father was Eochaid mac Aeda Find, who may be spurious in any case. In any case, the MacAlpine name is so ancient and will have arisen when the clan system was still developing.

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## Burns Dinner



*"When Scotland forgets Burns,  
then history will forget Scotland"* □  
*J S Blackie*

January 25<sup>th</sup> 2016 is a Monday.

What a great day to gather family and friends, and celebrate the life and poetry of Robert Burns.

Whether a traditional grand dinner, or less formal it can be a wonderful experience, and a way of passing down a portion of our collective heritage.

At a grand dinner, guests are piped in by bagpipes to take their places at the dining table. If you don't happen to have a piper in the family, a cd will work.

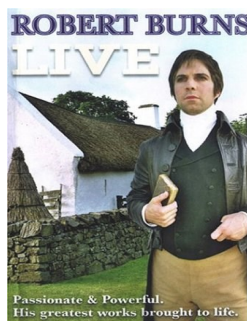
The Selkirk Grace is read, and supper begins with a soup (Cock-A-Leekie or Scotch Broth are favorites). Now the haggis, is piped in from the kitchen while the guests stand and clap the haggis in.

A reading of Burn's famous poem, "Address To A Haggis", cutting open the haggis with a large knife when they reach the

line "an cut you up wi' ready slight"! (for those who can't obtain a haggis, or prefer not to, a meatloaf could be substituted) The haggis is eaten with mashed tatties and neeps (potatoes and turnips).

Then dessert (cranachan is our favorite) perhaps with oatcakes and cheese.

After dinner there will be a toast to the Queen, a "Toast to the Lassies" and a lady makes a toast in reply. A reading of a favorite Burns poem, and finally, closing with everyone singing Auld Lang Syne.



As an alternative to reading the poem, Christopher Tait performs a brilliant Robert Burns. His DVD "Robert Burns Live" can be purchased on line at [Robertburnslive.co.uk](http://Robertburnslive.co.uk) or on Amazon, or view the Youtube version at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=2XifuHP2RnE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2XifuHP2RnE)

## Clan MacAlpine Society – Call for Representers Family Convention to be held at Abbotsford House, Melrose Roxburghshire September 10, 2016

The Clan MacAlpine Society seeks to gain formal recognition of a Chief of Name and Arms by the Lord Lyon King of Arms. Having an armigerous Chief, MacAlpine would then be constituted and regarded as a clan or family in its own right.

The Convention will be held under the supervision of Mark D. Dennis Esq., Ormond Pursuivant of Arms as the appointed Supervising Officer and representative of the Lord Lyon.

Those wishing to be considered as interim Commander, chosen at a Family Convention as above, should request fuller information from the Secretary of the Clan MacAlpine Society by email at [robinlmacalpine@yahoo.com](mailto:robinlmacalpine@yahoo.com) or Robin L. McAlpine, 3061 Harbor Blvd., Ventura, CA 93001, USA





## Kenneth MacAlpin . . . Continued from Page 2

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The sarcophagus in Govan's Old Parish Church, Glasgow, discovered in 1855, is thought to have once held the remains of Constantine, son of Kenneth MacAlpin, who died in 877 (see <http://www.thegovanstones.org.uk/>).

That said, MacAlpin (and its variants) is anciently known in Scotland but may simply reflect “Son of Alba”, or be derived from another Elbin or similar name. An old Gaelic saying: “*Cnuic `is uillt `is Ailpeinich*” (Hills and Streams and MacAlpine) suggests that the origin of the MacAlpins was contemporary with the origin of the hills and streams, that is, the Earth itself. Black’s *Surnames of Scotland* lists early records of the name starting with John MacAlpyne who witnessed a charter by Malise, earl of Stratherne, of the lands of Cultenaclouche and others in Glenalmond, c. 1260 (Grandtully, I, p. 126.), and Monaghe fiz Alpyne of the county of Perth who was forced to render homage to Edward I of England in 1296. Others include Monauche Macalpin, witness to a charter in 1285, Monach mac Alpy, who rendered homage to the government of Scotland in the year 1296, Malcolm Macalpyne who witnessed a charter by Duncan, Earl of Levenax (Lennox) in 1395, and Mordac Makcalpy who was granted permission by Henry IV of England to attend the university of Oxford in 1405.

Modern DNA evidence suggests that present-day MacAlpin(e)s have two distinct genetic origins strongly represented - I2a2a1a1/L369 (eastern or “Pict”) and R1b1a2/M-269 (western or “Scot”, but the dominant R1b in Europe). There is little support for a shared origin with, say, MacGregor.

The eventual appointment of a Chief, consequent on a Family Convention to choose a Representer (2016) and the procedures that follow, will be a welcome recognition of one of Scotland’s oldest and most distinguished surnames.

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## Elections

Robin McAlpine Secretary

At the AGM in Kilmartin, the decision was made to stagger the terms of our elected officers.

As a consequence, the positions of President (Michael McAlpin) and Treasurer (Kenneth McAlpine), are up for election in 2016. In addition, the two year term of Member at Large (Finn Alpin) is up. Current Officers are eligible for re-election.

Nominations for these offices are open and must be received by the Secretary by the 31st day of March 2016.

Every Member of the Society will have one vote. Voting may be either by post or electronic format.

Address Nominations to

[robinlmc Alpine@yahoo.com](mailto:robinlmc Alpine@yahoo.com) or Robin L. McAlpine, 3061 Harbor Blvd., Ventura, CA 93001, USA

### **Kenneth MacAlpin . . .** Continued from page 2

The House of Alba continued with Constantine III, son of Cuilén (d. 997); Kenneth III son of Dub (d. 1005); Malcolm II, son of Kenneth II (d. 1034) who reigned for an unusually long 29 years, but left no sons. He appointed his grandson by one of his daughters, Bethóc and her husband Crínán, lay abbot of Dunkeld, to be Duncan I; Shakespeare's King Duncan, first of the House of Dunkeld, and killed by the men of Moray led by Macbeth near Elgin (not murdered in his sleep as the Bard tells it!)

Kenneth had other sons, plus at least two daughters. One married Run, king of Strathclyde, producing Eochaid and the other, Máel Muire, married two important Irish kings of the Uí Néill (O'Neill) dynasty. It is worth remembering that the Scottish monarchy at this time operated under the system of succession by tanistry, whereby all adult male descendants of previous monarchs were eligible for the throne. The sovereignty would switch between royal lines, all closely related, examples being Constantine who ruled in spite of his predecessor (and cousin) having a son, and both Kenneth III, Malcolm II, also his cousins, murdering their precursors to take the throne. This system always produced an adult king on the throne, unlike the minority reigns that plagued the later Stewart/Stuart kings.

The various Scottish (and later British) monarchs since have claimed descent from Kenneth I in some way and thus regal legitimacy. Seven Scottish clans also claim descent from Alpin, father of Kenneth I –MacGregors (considered senior), MacKinnons, MacNabs, MacAulays, MacPhies, Grants, and MacQuarries. However, the absolute veracity of this *Síol alpin* ("Seed of Alpin") story is cast into doubt by modern scholarship and DNA evidence (see Adrian C. Grant, *Scottish Clans: Legend, Logic & Evidence: vol 1*, 2012). There is no question, though, that they were a confederacy of clans, and had much in common such as shared heraldry and bonds of fealty. Strangely, there has never been a Clan MacAlpin with its own clan territory or hereditary chiefs, although the MacAlpine Society is seeking official recognition of a Chief of Name and Arms.

Kenneth's monuments.

We do not know exactly where Kenneth was born or died, or precisely where he reigned. Even the supposed battle of Cambuskenneth 843AD ("where the Scottish nation was forged"), once commemorated by a standing stone at Airthrey near Stirling, is probably a much later invention. It is said that merging of the Scot and Pict kingdoms was sealed by moving the 'Stone of Destiny', the symbolic seat of power of the Celtic Dalriadic Kings, from Dunstaffnage to Scone in heart of the old Pictish kingdom. It went to London with Edward I, but was returned, and can be seen along with the Honours of Scotland (the crown jewels) in Edinburgh castle.

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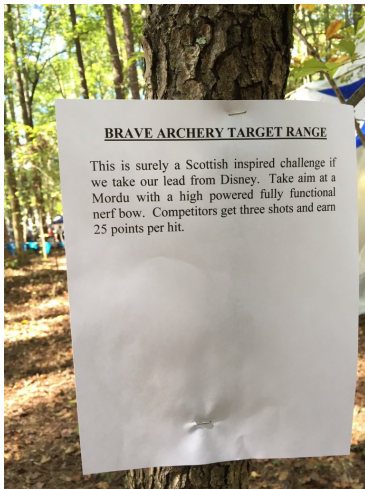
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# Clan MacAlpine Society

## Photo Gallery - Stone Mountain



### Clan MacAlpine Society Kilt Pins

Custom designed by Mark McAlpin, incorporating elements of the boar's head, pine tree, crown, and sword, all of which are linked to the MacAlpines, and appear prominently in MacAlpine Heraldry.

The pins are made of silver weighing approximately 1 ounce - Dimensions are 4"x 1 1/8"

\$75 USD payable by PayPal or check



Please contact [NotCommonKiltPins@outlook.com](mailto:NotCommonKiltPins@outlook.com) for questions or purchase

### Clan MacAlpine Society Information

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**Contributions:** Can be made payable to:

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