

# Remember Those from Whom You Came

## Newsletter for The House of MacAlpine

*The Worldwide Organization For MacAlpines*

*Third Quarter 2023 ~ Volume 61*



### Janet Rae Coney McAlpine

08/13/1943 – 09/25/2023



Janet and Doug were some of the earliest members when the Society began in 2000, and all who knew her would say Janet had a servant's heart. From the start, Janet was active at many Highland Games, co-hosting a tent, meeting new family members and anything else asked of her.

Eventually she took over the newsletter, making it consistent and full of information to meet the objectives of the Society. She managed our Mailchimp account and readily took care of anything that needed to be emailed out to the members.

In 2018, Janet took over as Treasurer of the Society, using her professionalism to keep our finances squared away and reported as required. She was always ahead of the game (or AGM in our case) and ready to go.

It goes without saying that Janet will be greatly missed. Not just her work, but her smile, her laugh, her positive attitude.



*You are near, even if I don't see you. You are with me, even if you are far away. You are in my heart, in my thoughts, in my life, always!*



## Commander's Note

Our former treasurer, Janet MacAlpine, passed away on September 25<sup>th</sup>, after a prolonged illness. She was a staunch supporter of the Scottish community and in particular, the MacAlpines, being both our Newsletter Editor, and our Treasurer. Our condolences to Doug, Ann, Paul and the rest of the family.

Although I have been at other Games in Scotland, the Argyllshire Gathering at Oban holds a special place for me as it was there in 2004 that I first attended one of the games in Scotland. It has also been a pleasure to be at the many other games that I attended this year, it is always special to chat with the many MacAlpine's that go to these events.

Our fall sojourn, with a hearty group, went exploring and recording many more old MacAlpin homesteads in and around Kilmartin. North Knapdale, and out to the island of Gigha. We were able to find most of the sites that we had on our list for this trip, however, there are many more that will wait for future trips.

Additionally, we met with old friends in Kilmartin, and caught up on local events and interests.

I look forward to seeing more of you at the forthcoming games in October and November.



Le gach deagh dhùrachd

With every good wish,

Michael T McAlpin

Commander

Name of MacAlpine



Commander: Michael T. McAlpin

Society Board Members:

President: Earl Dale McAlpine

Vice President: Mark SC McAlpin

Secretary: Laura McAlpine

Treasurer: Teala Pannel

Membership: Robin McAlpine

Member At Large: Fin Stavnsbo Alpin

Newsletter Editor: Robin McAlpine

## President's Letter (it's really an article this quarter, sorry)

“Cuimhnich air na daoine o’n d’thainig thu” This is the motto on my Coat of Arms. In English it translates to “remember the people from whom you have come”. This came so clear to me on our recent trip to Scotland.

Our main purpose on this trip to Scotland was to explore MacAlpine homesteads of old. By seeking out these places, we saw where our ancestors lived and how they lived.

After spending our first night in Glasgow, we caught the ferry to explore Arran.

From Arran, we went to Lochranza and drove down to explore Campbeltown. We spent the night in a great B&B, Craigard House. Robin loved the red door.

We traveled to Gigha in search of six homesteads there (see Mark's articles). We did stop here and there to explore a few local distilleries for a wee dram.



Our next stop was Kilmartin and the Kilmartin Hotel. Richard, the owner of the hotel is a wonderful host. His meals were always amazing. Do you take pictures of beautiful foods? Robin does, and she loved the menu Richard offered up.



While in Kilmartin we revisited the Kilmartin Church & cemetery where approximately forty McAlpine's are buried.



We spoke to the folks that were prepping the newly remodeled Kilmartin Museum about the preparation for the grand opening (this was just after we left, on Sept. 3, 2023). The Society raised and donated money to museum remodel project. We look forward to being able to visit when we return.

## President's Letter *(continued)*

Then we all traveled to the location of old Kilmartin (read Mark's article).



We explored the nearby Carnasserie Castle which we climbed to the top and imagined what might be like in it hay day. It was built by John Carswell, Bishop of the Isles, later held by the Campbells.



A few miles away in Glenn Mhoine, we located the homestead of Isabella McAlpin. Once inside the walls we could envision her life by the fireplace, while we snacked on the delicious, handful of blackberries now growing rampant inside the walls of her house. Such a sweet treat.



## President's Letter (continued)

Robin and I enjoyed catching up with Society Secretary, Laura McAlpine in Oban. We shared a meal and learned a bit about her ministry in the Schemes in Glasgow. While visiting on Mull, we snagged an ice cream as we explored the town of Tobermory.



After all our exploring, it was time to complete some House of MacAlpine business. We took the train to Edinburgh to meet up our good friend and advisor, Dr. Bruce Durie. It was great to catch up with him in person and discuss future plans for the House of McAlpine. I wish we could spend more time with Bruce as his knowledge seems limitless and we so enjoy his company.



Upon our return from Scotland, we are back on the farm. Robin caught covid, which we had avoided for the past few years. We are back in the game and once again working on Society projects. We will be attending the Stone Mountain Games in GA this month. We hope to see you there.

In Kinship,  
Dale McAlpine



# The Arms of Finn Alpin

Submitted by Robin McAlpine

This is the ninth in a series of articles relating to the MacAlpine arms.



Letters patent for Finn Alpin, were signed by Lyon Sellar, and received by Finn by mail, in January of 2011.

The design for the Arms were decided upon by the Lord Lyon.

The motto “Cuimhnich” , meaning “Remember” and the crown in base and boars head in Chief were requested by Finn. The general design and colors were decided by Lord Lyon Court. The Arms follow the design of previously granted MacAlpine Arms.

The Sword in a bend represents the name of MacAlpine and the Crown and Boars Head are symbols relating to the ancient Royal House of Alpin and the Kingdom of Dalriada in Argyll. The livery colors symbolize the Scottish national flag.

Blazon: Arms: Azure, on a bend Argent between in chief a boar’s head couped and in base an antique crown or a sword in bend point upwards Azure hilted and pommeled.

Crest: A dexter hand Proper grasping a chaplet of laurel leaves Vert between a pair of eared bullhorns parted per fess the dexter Azure and Argent the sinister Argent and Azure.

Motto: Cuimhnich

Grant: The Court of the Lord Lyon, 3rd December 2010. 75th page of the 89th volume of the Public Register of All Arms and Bearings in Scotland. (painted on vellum, by David Allan, Artist at Lyon Court)

## The Homestead Project MacAlpines at Old Kilmartin (Cille Mhàrtainn)

Submitted by  
Mark S.C. McAlpin  
Sennachie elect

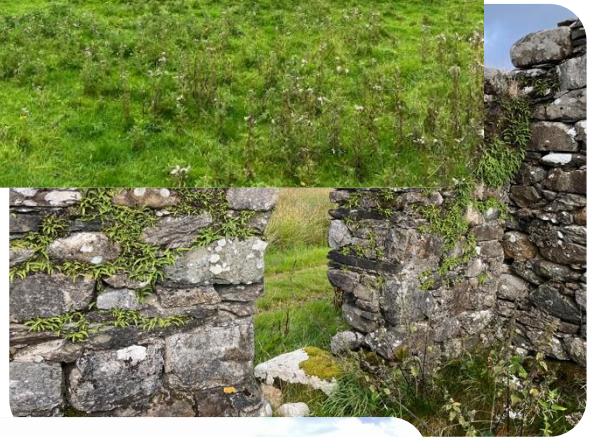
About two miles north of Kilmartin on the A816 there is a Car Park for Carnasserie Castle.

From the Car Park, it is about  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile up the dirt road past a farmhouse to the old site of Kilmartin Village.

The deserted settlement has the ruins of what was once the old village of Kilmartin before the site was gradually abandoned in preference of the present site of Kilmartin.

MacAlpine's once lived here, and they, along with the other villagers abandoned the site as job opportunities developed on the Poltallach Estate two miles to the south. They were not driven off, but gradually relocated themselves to the present site of Kilmartin.

Abandoned now, and silent, these homes tell the stories of our ancestors.



# The Homestead Project, MacAlpines at Old Kilmartin (Cille Mhàrtainn) (Continued)





## The Homestead Project - MacAlpines at Gigha

Submitted by Mark S.C. McAlpin, Sennachie Elect

The small island of Gigha (pronounced Gee Uh), likely from the Norse Gudey, meaning the "Good Isle", lays about 2 1/2 miles off the coast of the Kintyre Peninsula.

The population of Gigha peaked at over 700 in the eighteenth century, but by the beginning of the 21st century the population had fallen to 98. However, a "community buy-out" in 2002 transformed the island, which now has a population of 163.

There is some evidence to show that the island might have been the seat of power for Conall mac Comgall, King of Dalriada, in the mid to late 6th century. Another fort of Comgall, Dun Chonnallaich sits on a hill that rises almost 850 feet above sea-level about 3 1/2 miles north on the A 816 from Kilmartin.

Records for the MacAlpines that once lived on Gigha are scarce, but they show that MacAlpines once lived in the principal village of Ardminish on the southeast coast of the island, another at Chancerioch, one at Kilchattan, near the church, one at Kinerarach, with two more living on the Kelp shores.

On our recent quest searching for old homesteads, we were able to site three of the old homesteads.



Kinerarach



Kilchattan Church

Although we were there on a very pleasant August day, one could visualize the backbreaking work of the kelp fields. Those who lived "on the shore" in a bleak February, in a rudimentary lean-to shelter would have been miserable indeed.

If anyone has additional information regarding the MacAlpines at Gigha, please contact me.

## The Homestead Project - MacAlpines at Gigha (continued)



Kelp Fields



Chancerioch

Thursday 24 August 2023

## A traditional gathering of the clans

The Argyllshire Gathering, formed in 1871, was originally set up to bring together the families of Argyll – a county that covered a vast area. Rivalries existed between clans and a Gathering with traditional sports managed to keep a sense of unity and peace. The Gathering today is a celebration of Highland heritage and tradition with dances, pipe tunes and athletic events dating back centuries. It's a day of fierce competition and friendly rivalry, a day to renew old acquaintances and make new friends. The MacAlpines returned to the games once more, having been absent for 19 years. The weather was typically Scottish, with varying bouts of rain and partial clouds.

This year's games began with a soggy march from Oban to the Game field

Games in Scotland are quite different than those in North America or Australia, with less emphasis on the clans, and more emphasis on the athletics.



## Trebsen Highland Games



In September, the small, idyllic town of Trebsen, Germany, near Leipzig with its castle and park becomes a center for Scottish life and national culture on the third weekend in September. MacAlpine Society member Dirk Martin represented the MacAlpines at this 22nd annual gathering.

Over 20,000 visitors attend the games, with Pipe Band Competitions, and classic Highland athletic competitions.



## UPCOMING HIGHLAND GAMES

Look for the MacAlpine Tent



**Join us for the 51st Stone Mountain  
Highland Games and Scottish Festival  
October 20 - 22, 2023**



**Join us for the Charleston Highland  
Games November 3-4, 2023  
at Riverfront Park  
1061 Everglades Ave  
North Charleston, SC 29405**

## GRANDFATHER MOUNTAIN GAMES

The 67<sup>TH</sup> Grandfather Mountain Highland Games returned to MacRae Meadows beginning Thursday, July 6th through Sunday, July 9th.



The games officially get underway with the torchlight ceremony on Thursday evening, where representatives of more than 100 clans — many of whom travel from across the country and world to attend the games each year — announce their families' participation in the gathering. Truly, a sight to behold, the "raising of the clans" proclaims that they have once again convened to celebrate their heritage.



Friday offers a full day of activities with Highland dance competitions, musical entertainment, a children's caber toss clinic, heavy athletics and the Celtic Rock Concert in the evening, all which continue through the weekend.

## GRANDFATHER MOUNTAIN GAMES (continued)



There is also a gala dinner with pipers and haggis held at the host hotel.



## The Fergus Scottish Festival and Highland Games

The Fergus Scottish Festival and Highland Games in Ontario, Canada has enjoyed tremendous success since 1946.

The Games exemplify all things Scottish with a focus on heavy events, dancing, piping, clans and interactive family fun and community involvement. These are mainstay events for the MacAlpines, and enjoy broad support.

From the Torchlight Parade to the raising of the MacAlpine Tent, the MacAlpine's were well represented.

Our thanks to Bruce MacAlpine for making all the arrangements.

A great picture of Bruce with Steven MacTavish of Dunardry, Chief of Clan MacTavish, and we look forward to seeing Steven at the Stone Mountain Games. The MacTavish hail from just south of the MacAlpines ancestral home.



## Flowers of the Forest

Our condolences to all the MacLaren on the unexpected passing of their Chief.

Donald MacLaren of MacLaren and Achleskine, who has died aged 68, was a larger-than-life Highland clan chief and distinguished diplomat, who served as British ambassador to Georgia, after postings to Berlin, Moscow, Havana, Caracas and Kyiv.





## Our First (but not last) trip to Scotland

by Dave McAlpin and Beth O'Halloran

My wife and I were on the fence about a trip to Scotland until I received an email in 2022 from Society President Dale, that my clan project DNA sample confirmed my genetic predisposition to the McAlpin line in North America. After Dale welcomed me to the family, I asked him for advice about how to spend a week in Scotland which he was generous to convey. Combined with a review of several years' worth of McAlpine Society newsletters for travel tips, we were able to plan an enjoyable and educational experience.

We flew overnight from Boston to Edinburgh and within a three-hour window after landing, took the tram to the Waverley train station where we picked up the Oban train tickets we had reserved on the ScotRail website. Once onboard the train we could unwind our jetlag while taking in the farms and stone walls on our way to a quick change of trains at the Queen Street station in Glasgow. The 3.5-hour ride from Glasgow to Oban train had incredible views of pine forests, rustic hill country, and traced a route along Loch Lomond.

Since the Oban train station is walking distance from the CalMac ferry terminal and the Oban Distillery (oldest in Scotland), we lodged nearby in the charming Whiskey Vaults hotel. The weather was cool in mid-September, so we sipped a wee dram of whiskey next to their cozy peat fire. We later tasted various Scotches next door, none of which we can get in Montana.

Early the next morning we boarded the Oban to Mull ferry. At the pier in Craignure, we met a taxi (highly recommended) which took us 35 miles across the island to catch a small ferry to historically rich Iona Isle. We walked through the grounds of a cemetery for the Abbey nuns and down a country lane on our way to the Iona Abbey and Nunnery. In this location the Book of Kells was drafted, and adjoining to the to the active Monastery is the "graveyard of the Kings" where several Scottish kings were laid to rest. On return to Iona, we stopped off at Duart Castle. Despite not having time to take the tour, we chatted with an elderly gentleman raking the lawn who turned out to be the owner of the castle, Laughlan MacLean, head of the MacLean clan worldwide. Macleans were known for quickly assembling a merciless fighting force, and it is likely that many McAlpins fought under the MacLean crest.

Sadly, the death of Queen Elizabeth caused our tour of the Oban Distillery to be cancelled for a national holiday, but the busses were still running for half the day. We hopped on a public bus heading South to the village of Kilmartin. By most accounts Kilmartin is the center of history for the House of McAlpine. By this writing the visitor's center should be remodeled and open, but we enjoyed walking through the graveyard to see the gravestones of knights who were in the Crusades! Even if not open, the stone church our ancestors attended is small and charming. We spent our afternoon hiking through the sheep paddocks in the valley below Kilmartin to see the well-marked archeological sites, including a burial mound, ceremony site, and grave makers of Vikings who fell in battle. This part of Scotland is rich in archeological history and said to be where some of the first cloth was woven and the first bronze tools and weapons were forged.

Dave McAlpin is the head Tax Judge for the State of Montana and resides in Helena. Beth O'Halloran represents school districts in court and her father emigrated to Montana from Galway Ireland.

