



# The River City Caledonian

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## Special September Meeting Recap

Several dedicated members of the Society were present at Tuckahoe area Henrico County library on September 20 to discuss our current status and plans for the near future. We met to discuss the downturn in participation over the last several years and to strategize about how to address the problem, as well as planning the Society year. It's no secret that many organizations like ours have seen this trend. We're hopeful that our plans are effective in drumming up and keeping more support for the Society, because it's something we all feel strongly about. You'll see some of those ideas in action in this and upcoming newsletters. We hope you, reading this, will play an active role with us, if possible. We absolutely need and welcome your participation, support, and ideas.

## Coming Up Soon: The Games! (and other plans)

The Central Virginia Celtic Festival and Highland Games is back this October 27-28 at the Richmond Raceway. Please volunteer for setup, breakdown, and/or working the Society tent. Some setup will commence on Friday the 26th at 4:30, and finalizing setup will happen before the games begin, Saturday morning. On Saturday and Sunday, we are asking for 2-hour shifts, (9 am – 11 am, 11 am – 1 pm, 1 pm – 3 pm, and 3 pm – 5 pm). To volunteer please email us: [richmondscottishsociety@gmail.com](mailto:richmondscottishsociety@gmail.com) Or call Ann E. Scholte (telephone on back page) to volunteer. But also: come out and enjoy the Games! Lots of good food, music, and wares to purchase! Axe throwing! Music competitions! And of course the Scottish heavy athletics! There will be Scottish storytelling time, so bring the kids too!

Further down the line, of course is our annual Burns Supper. This year, it will be Saturday, Jan. 26, at Benedictine School. This year, to make people feel safer traveling and in response to some of your requests, we will be having a daytime rather than nighttime event. It gets dark early and roads can be treacherous, in January so we thought this the best option for maximizing attendance and making attendees feel safer. Specific information will be available in our tent at the Central Virginia Celtic Festival, and invitations will be sent out soon after.

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Upcoming Events	1
Member News	2
Recipe	3
Clan Profile	3
Other Scot- tish news	4

Got ideas for Society events, and/or want to take on a more active role? Contact an officer or board member!

**Memberships are up for renewal as of October. Please renew! We need your financial commitment to continue to exist! And tell friends to join us! \$20 annual membership, and \$35 family memberships. Lifetime memberships available on request. Address for sending in dues is on the back page of this newsletter. If you come to the Games October 27 or 28, you can save a stamp and bring your dues by our tent!**

## Member News

### Flowers of the Forest

We lost two long-time members of the Scottish Society earlier this year.

Hazel Smith passed away May 25. Hazel was an active member of our leadership for years and is one of those people who is synonymous with the SSR.

Rosemary Day passed away at the home of her daughter August 31. Rosemary was a charter member and also provided great service to the Society on our board for a long time. Her funeral service was held September 29.

Our condolences go to Hazel's and Rosemary's families, who are in our thoughts and prayers along with these two women who were such a part of the SSR over the years.

## Recipe: Traditional Scottish Stovies



### Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoons lard (or beef dripping)
- 2 medium onions (or 1 large onion, skinned and roughly diced)
- Optional: 4 tablespoons dark beer (or stout)
- 4 ounces/115 grams cold roast beef (or lamb, diced; see note below)
- 1 1/2 pounds/750 grams potatoes (washed, peeled, and cut into quarters)
- 10 fluid ounces/300 milliliters beef stock (or lamb stock or left over gravy)
- Any other left over vegetables
- Salt (to taste)
- Pepper (to taste)

Preheat the oven to 375 F .

Place a Dutch oven, or casserole dish, on the stove over medium heat. Add the lard or dripping, and melt.

Add the onions and cook until soft, but not browned - about 5 to 8 minutes. Take care not to burn the onions.

If using, add the beer or stout, turn the heat up and allow to boil for 2 minutes to burn the alcohol away.

Add the meat and stir well.

Add the potatoes in layers, seasoning each layer with salt and pepper as you go, before adding the next layer.

Pour over the stock or gravy (or both).

Cover with a lid and cook in the preheated oven for 45 to 50 minutes, checking from time to time to make sure the stock is not boiling dry. If it is, add a little extra stock.

ten minutes before the end of cooking, add any leftover vegetables to suit, stir well, and check the seasoning.

Cover with the lid and cook for a further 10 minutes. The meat and vegetables will break up to create a thick, hearty stew like consistency. Be careful not to over boil, as you need to retain chunks of meat and vegetables. Serve the stovies in a deep dish or bowl with rough oatcakes, and brown sauce (if you like it).

## Clan Profile: Clan Armstrong <https://www.highlandtitles.com/blog/clans-of-scotland-armstrong/>

Editor's recommendation: Go see First Man, the film about astronaut Neil Armstrong, in movie theaters. I highly recommend it! To honor the first man who walked on the moon, this issue's profile is of lowland Clan Armstrong.

On the marches, the border between England and Scotland life was difficult. From the earliest medieval times the people who farmed these lands were always at a disadvantage. They were living on the front line of a war that lasted many centuries. Armies from England marched through with regular mayhem, killing livestock and taking what they wanted on their way to battles further north. If that wasn't bad enough other Scottish clans marching south would often do the same. Of all the clans who lived in and defended the lands that bordered Scotland, few were as indomitable or just plain scary as Clan Armstrong.

Their reputation for ferocity grew over the centuries, due in large part to the constant need to defend their territory – practise makes perfect. Clan Armstrong came to be of great importance to the Royal House of Stuart, as Scotland didn't have a regular standing army, and often relied on the border clans for military aid. The Armstrongs, it was said in 1528, could muster 3000 armed horsemen to the field at very short notice.

Before the 1300s the Armstrongs originated from the south side of the borders in Cumberland, but came to settle in Liddersdale, making Mangerton the seat of their chief. Throughout the borders there was a reiving tradition among those who lived there. Reiving is an old word that means 'raiding', and this became necessary to their survival. An Armstrong wife whose cupboard was empty would serve the men a platter of spurs for their supper, which meant: get out there and steal some cattle, we are on the edge of starvation!

The reiving tradition, though it strikes our modern sensibilities as criminal, was really the result of being constantly invaded by both sides of the border. Farmers had no choice but to supplement their battered harvests. Loyalties to either country were shot to pieces by the need to ensure the survival of the clan. They even carried a double sided flag: English on one side and Scottish on the other, to present to whichever army apprehended them! It was said the Armstrongs, like other reiving clans, were 'Scottish when it suited them and English at their pleasure.'

With the reiving tradition the Armstrong clan developed an extremely skilled horsemanship. To be a border reiver was a young boy's dream. Much more exciting than being a farmer. It wasn't just a career for vagrants; clan chiefs and noble families embraced the reiving tradition. Riding out to protect your own and take back what had been stolen was an honourable pursuit.

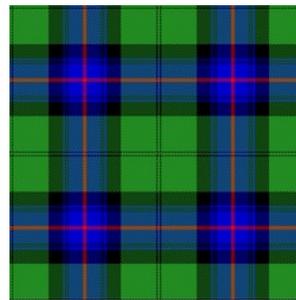
Today, in border towns like Jedburgh, Hawick, Langholm and Selkirk, the reiving tradition is still remembered. These towns celebrate the annual festival of the 'Common Riding', a celebration of horsemanship that brings many flocking into town. This goes back to the 13th Century: local clans would ride around their land boundaries to weed out any encroachment by neighbouring landowners. Though this is no longer necessary, the border towns have kept the tradition alive. The Common Riding is an impressive series of festive events across the border counties, sometimes with events spanning several days. Horsemanship is always at the top of the agenda, in commemoration of those gallant reivers of old who risked their lives to protect their clan.

The clan does not currently have a chief recognized by the Lord Lyon King of Arms; thus it is considered an Armigerous clan.

Milnholm Cross (a sword in a stone) erected circa 1300, is the oldest monument to Clan Armstrong. It commemorates clan chief, Alexander Armstrong, who died at the hands of William De Soulis (of which more below). Today it looks over the peaceful valley of Liddersdale, once one of the most dangerous and lawless places in the British Isles, the Medieval equivalent of Helmand Province.



**The Armstrong Tartan  
And Crest**



In 1972, Neil Armstrong visited the town of Langholm, Scotland, the traditional seat of Clan Armstrong; he was made the first freeman of the burgh, and happily declared the town his home. The Justice of the Peace read from an unpealed 400-year-old law that required him to hang any Armstrong found in the town!

In other clan developments, an excerpt from BBC News:

## **Clan Buchanan appoints its first chief since 1681.**

The Clan Buchanan will be led by John Michael Baillie-Hamilton Buchanan, who first made his claim to the title more than 20 years ago. The chiefship was last held by John Buchanan until his death without a male heir in 1681. The new chief, whose formal title will be The Buchanan, said he was "honoured and proud" to take up the role. The Lord Lyon King of Arms, who is head of the Lyon Court which regulates Scottish heraldry, formally upheld a petition for Mr Buchanan to assume the chiefship. Mr. Buchanan, who is the manager of Cambusmore Estate in Callander, Stirlingshire, said it had been "a long journey" to prove his family's lineage. He said: "There has not been a chief for a very long time - over 337 years - but there is a thriving community of Buchanan clansmen, clanswomen and septs around the world.

The Clan Buchanan, whose historic seat was the now-ruined Buchanan Auld House in Stirlingshire, can be traced back to 1010 in Scotland. It has several million members in countries including the UK, the United States of America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Jamaica.



*Questions? Contact an officer or Board member:*

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## **The Scottish Society of Richmond, Virginia**

The Scottish Society of Richmond was founded in 1978 for the purpose of sharing ideals of Scottish heritage. It provides a gathering place for those with an interest in Scotland, educational programs and events on Scottish themes, as well as scholarships and awards for those studying Scottish arts and culture.

**Send membership requests, dues, and  
other correspondence to:**

**Ann E. Scholte**

**6918 Woodrow Terrace**

**Henrico, VA, 23228**

**Make checks out to Scottish Society of  
Richmond**

**Check out our shiny, newly updated website!**

**<http://www.richmondscots.org/>**

*And thanks to Margaret Clark for putting it together!*



**CENTRAL VIRGINIA CELTIC FESTIVAL & HIGHLAND GAMES –  
OCTOBER 27 & 28, 2018**

