

Remember Those from Whom You Came

Newsletter for The House of MacAlpine

The Worldwide Organization for MacAlpine's



Third Quarter 2024 ~ Volume 65

Commander's Note

Our condolences to Clans Fraser, Kerr and Gunn on the passing of their Chiefs.

Lady Saltoun, Chief of Clan Fraser passed on September 3rd and Michael Kerr, Chief of Clan Kerr passed on October 1st, and Iain Gunn, Chief of Clan Gunn on October 10th.

Congratulations go out to the Conventions recently held by the McEwens, where Commander Sir John McEwen was nominated to become Chief and to the Ewings, where Commander Thor Ewing was nominated to become Chief, and also the Strachans where Commander Rob Strachan was nominated to become Chief.

These three nominations have now been sent to Lord Lyon for consideration.

Best wishes for the upcoming Conventions in 2025 of the Logans and the MacFies in their desire to have a Commander recognized.

The path toward a Commander and ultimately Chief is rightly a lengthy process, our path has been over twenty years, and we are hopeful of a positive outcome in the future.

There has been a lot of traffic on our Facebook Page, we have started a campaign, orchestrated by our Sennachie elect Mark McAlpin to distribute a lot of postings about the history of the MacAlpines in the Kilmartin area. It has had a very positive response so far. Keep up the good work Mark.

This year's game season is winding down, with just a few more games left coming, however, there are more Scottish events coming up with St. Andrews day events, Hogmany, and just after the new year, Burn's dinners. Come out and celebrate your heritage.



Le gach deagh dhùrachd

With every good wish,

Michael T McAlpin

Commander

Name of MacAlpine



President's Letter

During our stay in the Carolina's, we went on an excursion to visit the McAlpine Creek Park. The park is 6.2 miles long, encompassing 114 acres, with a lake and fishing pier, soccer fields, hiking & bike trails, a dog park, and picnic areas. McAlpine Creek Park is located in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina and was created in 1978. It has become very popular with cross-country runners and numerous events are held there annually.



We walked the trails of the creek with our dogs "Alpin & Abby", stopping along the way to enjoy the quiet ambience and beautiful nature that is all part of the park.

A little history of the McAlpine Creek, during the Revolutionary war (1775-1783) the "Battle of Charlotte" marked the beginning of a turning point in the southern campaign of the American Revolution. From September 11 to 24, 1780, under

Major General Jethro Sumner and Brigadier General William Davidson, American forces camped along McAlpine Creek, near present-day Old Providence Road, while British troops with Lord Cornwallis, camped at Little Sugar Creek.

Also, my five times, great-grandfather, Alexander McAlpin fought in the Revolutionary war as captain and he is listed on a monument in Elberton, Georgia, along with other Revolutionary war soldiers.

In Kinship,

Dale



Commander: Michael T. McAlpin

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The Homestead Project – McAlpine's of Islay

Submitted by
Mark S.C. McAlpin
Sennachie elect

Islay, known as the “Queen of the Hebrides,” is a picturesque island off the west coast of Scotland. In the early 19th century, Islay was a bustling community with a rich tapestry of families, farms, and towns. This article delves into the lives of the people of Islay during this period, focusing on their daily activities, the towns they inhabited, and the farms they worked on.

The McAlpin family was one of the prominent families on Islay during the early 1800s. Records show various members of the McAlpin family living in different parts of the island, such as Bowmore, Gartnatra, and Laphroaig. For instance, Donald McAlpin and his wife Kath Campbell resided in Gartnatra, where they baptized their daughter Anne on September 26, 1805. Similarly, Dougald McAlpin and Ann McDougall lived in Laphroaig, where they had several children, including Neil, born on March 25, 1807.

Bowmore, the island's capital, was a central hub of activity. It was home to several McAlpin families, including Robert McAlpin and his wife Janet McLean, who baptized their children John, Ann, Janet, and Mary in the late 18th and early 19th centuries¹. Bowmore was known for its distinctive round Kilarrow Parish Church and its distillery, which played a significant role in the local economy.

Laphroaig, another notable location, was primarily a farming community. Dougald McAlpin and Ann McDougall's family were among the residents here, with records indicating the births and baptisms of their children, such as Flora on May 20, 1810, and Angus on July 1, 1812.

The people of Islay were primarily engaged in farming and distilling. The fertile lands of Islay provided ample opportunities for agriculture, and many families, including the McAlpins, were tenant farmers. The 1811 Tenants List shows Martin and Neil McAlpin as tenants in Kilnave, while Donald McAlpin was listed in Gartnatra houses.

Distilling whisky was another significant activity on the island. Islay's whisky, known for its distinctive peaty flavor, was already gaining popularity during this period. The distilleries provided employment and contributed to the island's economy.

During the early 19th century, residents of Islay faced several common challenges. The economy was heavily reliant on agriculture, which made it vulnerable to poor harvests and fluctuating market prices. Crop failures could lead to food shortages and financial strain. Apart from farming, fishing, and distilling whisky, there were few other employment opportunities. This limited economic diversification made the community susceptible to economic downturns.

The island's weather could be unpredictable and harsh, with strong winds and heavy rains impacting daily life and agricultural productivity. Being an island, Islay was relatively isolated, which made trade and communication with the mainland more difficult. This isolation could lead to shortages of essential goods and services.

The Homestead Project – McAlpine's of Islay (continued)

The early 19th century saw population growth, which put pressure on land and resources. This sometimes led to disputes over land use and tenancy. Economic hardships and limited opportunities led many residents to emigrate, particularly to North America and Australia, in search of better prospects. Access to medical care was limited, and diseases could spread quickly in the close-knit communities. Epidemics of diseases like cholera and smallpox were not uncommon. Many homes were simple and lacked modern amenities. Living conditions could be tough, especially during the harsh winter months.

Despite these challenges, the people of Islay were resilient and resourceful, relying on their strong community bonds and rich cultural heritage to navigate the difficulties of their time.

The early 19th century was a vibrant period in Islay's history, marked by the industrious lives of its residents. The McAlpin family, along with many others, contributed to the island's agricultural and distilling heritage. Through their hard work and dedication, they helped shape the Islay we know today.



Cross, Kilnave Church &

Portnahaven Church



The Homestead Project – McAlpine's of Islay (continued)



Kilarrow Parish Church, Bowmore, Islay



Kilchoman Old Parish Church

Grandfather Mountain Games



The 68TH Grandfather Mountain Highland Games returned to MacRae Meadows beginning Thursday, July 11th through Sunday, July 14th.

The games officially get underway with the torchlight ceremony on Thursday evening, where representatives of more than 100 clans announcing their participation in the gathering.

Friday offers a full day of activities with Highland dance competitions, musical entertainment, a children's caber toss, heavy athletics and the Celtic Rock Concert in the evening, all which continue through the weekend. There is also a gala dinner with pipers and haggis held at the host hotel.



Grandfather Mountain Games (continued)



Fergus Scottish Festival & Highland Games

For nearly 80 years, Fergus Ontario has been the host of the largest Games in Canada.

The MacAlpine's are always well represented at these games.



Fergus Scottish Festival & Highland Games (continued)



Convenor Bruce McAlpine was honored to spend time with Steven McTavish of MacTavish, Chief of Clan McTavish, and Rupert Irving of Bonshaw, Chief of Clan Irving.



Ragman Roll seals and a MacAlpin Crest

What is the overall crest for MacAlpin?

The answer should be straightforward – Use the crest of the Chief. But there has never been a MacAlpin Chief.

The next suggestion is usually – Check Fairbairn's *Crests*. More properly titled *Fairbairn's Book of Crests of the Families of Great Britain and Ireland*, this was first published in 1859 and “Compiled from the best authorities”, but “thoroughly overhauled and revised” in 1892 and again in 1905, as the publishers TC & EC Jack of London and Edinburgh said in their Preface to the 4th edition. It has become the standard reference work for Crests, and much used by heraldists as well as engravers, sculptors. Jewellers, printers and so forth. And, of course, people who make and sell Crest Badges.

Unfortunately, *Fairbairn's Crests* is not any sort of “official” publication and is often wildly wrong. The claim “best authorities” is laughable. The “Durie” entry, for instance, ignores crests actually granted to Duries over time, and gives something that no-one has ever seen in Scotland.

Fairbairn's has gained a spurious authenticity because it is widely available. Victorian stationers would offer a Crest Seal Stamp to anyone who bought a guinea box of writing paper. That how many families claim to have “an old seal stamp” as an heirloom, not realising it was simply copied from Fairbairn.

And that's how MacAlpin got stuck with a choice of four or more, all spurious, which are (taken from my 1911 two-volumes-in-one edition by the Heraldic Publishing Company of New York):¹

Alpin, Scotland: *a man's head, couped, affrontée, proper, crined Gules*. Motto: *Cuiuich bas alpan* and *Virtutis regia merces*. PL 19, cr. 1.

Macalpin, Scotland: *a Saracen's head, couped at neck, dropping blood, all proper*. Motto: *Cuinich bas alpan*. PL 23, cr. 1.

M'Alpin: *a man's head, bearded, affrontée, crowned with an antique crown, proper*. (no Motto) PL 19, cr. 1, (crown, PL 79, cr. 12).

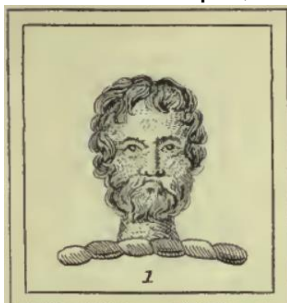
M'Alpin, Scotland: *an old man's head, affrontée, crowned with an antique crown, proper*. (no Motto).

And for good measure...Peter of Clan Alpine House, Scotland: *out of a mural coronet Argent, masoned Sable, a lion's head Gules crowned with an antique crown proper*. Motto: *Eadhan dean agus na caomhain*. PL. 45, cr. 9, (crown, PL. 79, cr. 12).

In an earlier edition there is also

MacAlpine, Ireland: *out of a ducal coronet Or, a thistle erect, flowered and leaved proper*. Motto: *E'en do baite spare not*.

...not to mention Galpin, Halpin, etc.



PL 19, cr. 1



PL 23, cr. 1



PL 79, cr. 12



PL. 45, cr. 9

¹ This is available to download free as a 60MB PDF file, at: <https://archive.org/download/fairbairnscrests00fairrich/fairbairnscrests00fairrich.pdf> There are physical reprints available at Abebooks and elsewhere, but make sure you get both volumes, or two in one.

Ragman Roll seals and a MacAlpin Crest (continued)

Recent Armigers have chosen different Crests, from curlews to dragonflies, as is their prerogative. But the *Fairbairn's* influence is seen in the generally-available crest-badge kiltpins etc. sold by Tartanalia merchants, typically the bearded head dripping blood, or some variant of the lion's-head-in-a-crown example.

But is there any earlier Crest that could be relied upon, pending the arrival of a Chief? It would seem there is – two, in fact.

The Ragman Rolls

In 1287 Alexander III, King of Scots, died after falling from his horse near Kinghorn, Fife (not the exact place where the memorial stands today – that was chosen because the view across the Forth to Edinburgh is better from there. The legitimate heir was his eight-year-old granddaughter, Margaret, then living in Norway (Alexander's daughter had married King Eric II). "The Maid of Norway" was sent from Bergen to Scotland as the heir presumptive in August 1290, but took ill – some say of yellow fever, some of food poisoning, others of motion sickness (unlikely!) and she died in Orkney towards the end of September.

As Margaret was never crowned, her status as the last legitimate scion of the line of King William the Lion and thus Alexander's succession was in flux. Thirteen people thought they were in line, notably from the Bruce and Comyn-Balliol families, and King Eric himself claimed the Scottish crown but somewhat half-heartedly. There was even an impostor German woman, known thereafter as "False Margaret", who was burned at the stake for her impudence.

This provoked a succession crisis. The Guardians of Scotland dropped the ball because they feared a civil war whomsoever they chose, so in a stunning piece of self-inflicted harm, they asked Edward I of England to arbitrate. Fresh from his Victory Lap of Wales, Edward spotted the opportunity to revive English feudal overlordship, and appointed a commission of 104 "auditors", making sure to massage the process so that his puppet John Balliol became king. And the rest is 30-odd years of history, all the way through the Wars of Independence, Bannockburn, and the eventual Treaty of Edinburgh–Northampton signed in 1328.

On the way, Edward insisted that the nobility and gentry of Scotland gave allegiance, during the time between the Conference of Norham in May 1291 and the final choice in favour of Balliol in November 1292; and again in 1296. These documents, bearing seals, have become known as the Ragman Rolls.



The derivation of the title is disputed. Could it refer to the "Statute of Rageman" (De Ragemannis), a legate of Scotland, who compelled all the clergy to give an account of their benefices so they might be taxed by Rome? Could it stem from a medieval game of verse called *Ragman Roll*, after a fictional king purported to be the author? Either way, it was applied to the four great rolls of parchment recording the acts of fealty and homage consisting of thirty-five pieces sewn together. And the name survives in the colloquial term '*rigmarole*', meaning a confused, rambling, incoherent discourse, nonsense, and a petty, complicated set of procedures.

But we have later copies of the documents, containing numerous pendent seals. Including two by early "MacAlpins".

Anyone who wants to read up on the Ragman Rolls seals should consult the exhaustive and scholarly work of Scottish heraldist Bruce MacAndrew, *The sigillography of the Ragman Roll* – conveniently available at https://www.clanstrachan.org/history/Ragman_SEALS.pdf, or in its original published form at *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* Vol 129(1), pp. 663-752; <https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/library/browse/details.xhtml?recordId=3187540> and see also Joseph Bain, *Calendar of Documents relating to Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1884), Vol II, Appendix II, available at <https://archive.org/details/calendarofdocume02grea/page/n5/mode/2up>

Ragman Roll seals and a MacAlpin Crest (continued)

There are two MacAlpyn seals, hard to make out, but they look like this:

	
1240 A fox carrying a dead goose S'... MACALPYN RR560 Monaghe fiz Alpyn	3557 A rabbit S'DVCANI F'ALFINI RR1004 Duncan Alpynsone of Aughintulus

So, we have interesting candidates for early Crests from 1291 and 1296 AD.

We don't really know who Monaghe fiz Alpyn was, or Duncan Alpynsone of Aughintulus (which I'm assuming could be Auchintoul, near Aberchirder, between Banff and Huntly). This is not exactly traditional MacAlpin land – it was Gordon, and before that it belonged to Alexander Leslie (1590–1663) Russia's first General, and earlier still in the 16th Century a William Coutts of Auchintoul, a vassal of the Macdonalds.

So... fox and goose, or rabbit, anyone?

Bruce

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Right of Audience at the Court of the Lord Lyon
Freeman Burgess of the City of Glasgow



In Memoriam

Iain Gunn of Gunn Chief of Clan Gunn passes

Iain was the Commander of Clan Gunn for 40 years before being named Chief.

I had the pleasure of spending the day with him a few years back, he and his wife Bunty were a delight to be with. He will be missed. He is survived by his wife Bunty, his son John, and his daughter Helen.

The following announcement was made by his son John:

It is with great sadness that I am writing to advise you that my father and Chief of Clan Gunn, Iain Gunn of Gunn, died peacefully in his sleep yesterday evening. As many of you will know, he was instrumental in setting up the modern version of the Clan Gunn Society over 60 years ago and, ever since, he lived and breathed Clan Gunn. We plan to hold a memorial service for him probably in Edinburgh sometime in the New Year to which all that wish to attend are cordially invited. We will advise the Clan of the details when we have them.

He was small in stature but has left some huge boots to fill, which I will do my very best to do.

Yours Aye

John Gunn of Gunn



Passing of Lady Saltoun, Chief of Clan Fraser

Our condolences to the family and friends of Lady Saltoun, Flora Marjory Fraser, and to Clan Fraser on the passing of Lady Saltoun September 3rd 2024.

The 21st Lady Saltoun of Abernethy died aged 93. She was Chief of the Name of Arms of the Clan Fraser and is one of the very few female hereditary peers to have sat in the Lords.

Her daughter, Katherine, becomes the 22nd Lady Saltoun.



New Appointments at Lyon Court



The Lord Lyon held a Head Court at the Court of Session yesterday during which Sheriff George Way of Plean (on Right) was sworn in as Rothesay Herald, Professor Gillian Black was promoted to Carrick Pursuivant, (Center Right) Colin Russell was promoted to Bute Pursuivant (Center Left) and Major Neil Kilpatrick Cargill (on Left) was sworn in as Falkland Pursuivant Extraordinary.

Gillian Black is Chair of Scots Private Law at the University of Edinburgh School of Law. She has been appointed by Lord Lyon as the Supervising Officer to the Family Convention of MacAlpine.



UPCOMING HIGHLAND GAMES

**Mark your calendar &
Look for the MacAlpine Tent**



Stone Mountain Highland Games

October 19 - 20, 2024

**Stone Mountain Park
1000 Robert E Lee Blvd
Stone Mountain, GA 30083**



Charleston Highland Games

November 2, 2024

Riverfront Park

Charleston, SC

