



# The Scottish Connection

Newsletter of the Scottish Heritage Society of North Central West Virginia



VOL. X, NO. 1

Spring 2011

## WOW OUR TENTH FESTIVAL

Tell a friend, bring a friend

The steering committee has been working hard to make this year's festival one to be proud of. Everything we have is family oriented. The sounds of bagpipes will fill the air. For the third year we will offer for your viewing and listening the West Virginia Pipe Band Competition, along with solo bag piping, Highland dancing, and amateur athletic competitions. Children's games, puppet shows, and workshops are scheduled all day. The children are the future of our heritage and we want to make sure they have fun. There will be Clans who know how to find information about your family. For the first time, we are honored to have with us Steven Edward Dugald MacTavish, Chief of Clan Mactavish, our Honored Clan this year. Food and merchandise vendors will have Celtic flavor, with some new ones this year.

Entertainment is top-notch with Ed Miller, The Rogues, Alasdair Fraser and Natalie Haas, and Rathkeltair. This line-up will have you stomping your feet and clapping your hands.

The week-end starts with the ever popular Ceilidh at Via Veneto on Friday night at 7:30 PM. The festival is held at the Bridgeport City Park from 9 to 5:30 on Saturday. The Bridgeport High School auditorium will be the venue for the Concert on Saturday night at 8 PM. Sunday morning concludes this years festival weekend with the Kirkin' of the Tartans at the First Presbyterian Church, Clarksburg, WV at 10:35 AM.

If you would like to volunteer and have a wonderful time, please contact Kim, Joel, or Dakota Sabo at 304-842-2622.

See you on May 6, 7, and 8, 2011.

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### Robert Burns Dinner Report

Our 2011 Robert Burns Dinner ended up giving all attendees an unintended example of life back when Robert Burns lived. Shortly after we finished setting up Via Veneto around noon, the power went off! The power eventually came back on close to the end of the evening.

Nuncio Bonamico had a hectic afternoon. Most of the meal could be cooked on his gas stoves, but that left things – such as coffee – that needed electricity. Despite the missing electricity, the meal was again great.

A portable generator gave us some light for the program, but the major light source was candles .... a lot of candles. The temperature in the room began to get chilly, but the candle light was charming and made us feel that we were back in the late 1700's with "Rabbie".

Helen Jones read several Burns poems and Bill MacLean gave some background on the economic system and political issues that created the environment for Burns' life and work.

Our entertainers, Aurora Celtic, had a lot to do with the evening's success. They played both during the social hour before the program as well as our principal entertainers. The group, three artists from the Aurora, West Virginia area, play the penny whistle, the fiddle, and the mandolin. Their style was upbeat and entertaining.

### And now you know why you haven't had a dues billing . . .

The Society's Board has decided to waive Society dues for 2011. The Society is in a strong financial position because of the voluntary higher dues payments made by Burns Circle and Life-time members and the continuing success of our Festival.

If you have paid dues for 2011, these amounts will be credited to your 2012 dues. If you have any questions please call (304-842-0370) or email ([macleanbe@earthlink.net](mailto:macleanbe@earthlink.net)) Bill MacLean.

## Where in Scotland Are We?

This abbey church is on an island off the west coast of Scotland. The church dates from a later period, but the island was first converted to a monastery and church center in 563 A.D. This leads to two questions: what island and church is this and what famous early churchman founded the monastery?



## And the Answers Are . . .

The island is Iona, off the southwest corner of the larger island of Mull, itself off the west coast of Scotland in the Argyle district. Iona was the head of the Scottish Christian church for many years after the founding of the monastery by St. Columba in 563 A.D. St. Columba is believed to have been a younger son of an Irish ruling family who was forced to leave Ireland due to unruly behavior. Iona became the mother church for a number of other monasteries and abbeys.

## HELP !!!

Several Society functions need new lead individuals. If you may be willing to either help with or serve as the lead individual for any of the following, please let Kevin Anderson ([daa223@juno.com](mailto:daa223@juno.com) or 304-534-3737) or Jeep Wilson know ([jeepnjanet@earthlink.net](mailto:jeepnjanet@earthlink.net)).

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Website (we have a web master, what is needed is an individual to coordinate content)

Membership (dues billings and contacts with new Society members, these can be two functions)

## More Web Site Changes

The Society's website, [www.scots-westvirginia.org](http://www.scots-westvirginia.org), has had additional changes and some added material. If you haven't looked at in a while you may wish to do so.

The Festival material has been reorganized so that the index on the left of most web pages has Festival as a major category with quite a few indented subtopics. This makes it easier to review Festival-related material. We have also broken up some of the slower-loading pages to make the site more responsive.

A page on the Society Library and Genealogy has been added. A button takes interested surfers to a genealogy inquiry page. Our first inquiry came from Manassas, Virginia ... I hope they attend the Festival!

## And What IS a Broch?

Broch's are a distinctive type of dry-stone building built about 2,000 years ago along the shores of what is now Scotland. A few are found in north eastern Ireland. The broch's are believed to have been built for defensive purposes. They always have a small single entry that forces individuals entering the broch to crouch low. The entrance then passes by a raised area where a few defenders could hold off attackers who were only able to enter one at a time, and in a position that left them vulnerable.

Broch's all had double walls to at least some extent. These were apparently used to lighten the burden of the stone used in construction and to allow internal stairways to the top of the structure.

Most broch's have been at least partially torn down, probably for the building stone that could be reused in later buildings. One exception is Mousa Broch, located on a small island about one mile off the eastern shore of the Shetland Islands. Mousa's remoteness probably was its salvation.

Mousa Broch is a striking 44 feet tall, apparently its full original height. Visitors come to the island by boat and then walk along the shore to the broch. During our visit several seals followed our group of visitors, maintaining a very close distance to the shore. This was a delight for the younger visitors who then ran down to the shore, a move we were sure would scare the seals off. It did not. Perhaps they have learned that only very foolish human visitors jump in the ocean around Shetland ... even in the summer!

I have included pictures from both the outside, showing the full extent of the structure, and the inside, showing some of the double wall construction. It is hard to imagine the skill required to build something this large without mortar that has last 2,000 years. The outside picture has a full size adult standing next to the broch, one way to get a feel for its size.

