



The Lion & Thistle

The News Publication of Clan Dunbar International Society Inc.

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At the Highland Games



The Highland Games bring out the Scot in all of us. Here you have Colin Dunbar of Long Beach, CA, with Dadz Nanni, our Junior Ambassador, and Convener Joy Nanni. Colin was competing in the athletics at the Maine Highland Games, Windsor, Maine. He came a long way from CA to compete!! ,
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Here's our Bicentennial Minute!

The Road to Yorktown

By 1781, the Revolutionary War had dragged on with devastating costs to soldiers and civilians alike. General George Washington, commanding the Continental Army, had long sought a decisive engagement. The opportunity came when General Charles Cornwallis, commanding British forces in the South, entrenched his army at Yorktown, Virginia, on the York River.

Washington, with the brilliant support of French General Jean-Baptiste de Rochambeau, devised a bold plan: march the combined Franco-American forces from New York to Virginia while the French navy under Admiral de Grasse blocked Cornwallis's escape by sea.

Washington later reflected, "I am now embarked in the most arduous enterprise which ever fell upon my shoulders."

The Siege Begins

On September 28, 1781, nearly 17,000 American and French soldiers surrounded Yorktown. Facing them were roughly 8,000 British troops under Cornwallis. Trenches were dug, artillery batteries placed, and a relentless bombardment commenced.

American patriotism soared during the siege. As cannons roared, one soldier recorded, "Our whole army is in high spirits, and determined to persevere to the last extremity."

Key to the siege was the storming of two British redoubts (fortified positions) on the night of October 14. American troops, led by Alexander Hamilton, seized Redoubt No. 10 with bayonets fixed, while French forces captured Redoubt No. 9. These assaults sealed Cornwallis's fate.

Victory at Last

On October 19, 1781, Cornwallis surrendered his army to Washington. The British band, in a bitter gesture, played the tune "The World Turned Upside Down."

Washington, always mindful of honor, refused Cornwallis's personal surrender but instead, delegating it to his second-in-command, General Benjamin Lincoln, as a mirror to Lincoln's forced surrender at Charleston the year before.

In his report to Congress, Washington declared: "The surrender of Yorktown will, I trust, essentially influence the future operations of the war, and hasten the happy moment of peace."

...Many thanks to the Sons of the American Revolution for this article.

Dragon's Lair at the Cathedral of Wells

Where do legends come from? And who would expect to find a Dragon's Lair in the gardens of the Bishop's Palace at the Cathedral of Wells in Somerset, England? The Cathedral and Palace dates back to the early 1200s, and the Dragon? Even further! During the 13th Century, Somerset was terrorised by a frightful dragon, who liked to eat milkmaids and other unsuspecting villagers. Bishop Jocelyn, who had obtained the permit to build the Bishop's Palace for St. Andrew's Cathedral at Wells, bravely ventured out to kill the dragon. After a mighty battle, as the dragon drew his dying breath, it cast an eternal curse on the villages: that if they ever forgot about the dragon, the creature would return every fifty years.

In the earlier days, when the rains came and the water rushed down from the Mendip Hills, there was much flooding, damage and loss of life.

Something had to be done.

The Bishop not only slayed the dragon, but realised that with a little flood control, as we would say today, the problem could be solved. Should you visit the 14 acre site today you would find one of the most beautiful gardens in England, with stunning views, pools and waterfalls as the underground river surfaces and flows through the city. The Dragon's Lair is a wonderful play area for children, complete with a stone dragon who is visible coming out of his lair.

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Reader stories

Watch this space carefully! Two delightful Dunbar sisters in Nevada have a wonderful history to share. Ongoing research, story planned for next issue.

Flowers of the Forest

George Albert Wiseman – 1943-2022

George was Lifetime Member, joining the Clan in 1988. He was an active Mason, and served many roles in the early organisations for Scottish Clans in New England. His wife, Barbara, passed away in 2017. Sadly, George appears to have had no family members to notify us of his passing. He was always very helpful when I would call him with organisational questions.

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Winner of the Teaser

*Congratulations to **Leslie Dunbar**, our first correct entry!*

The answer was selection #3, a bicycle tour with antique and modern bikes, with the riders dressed in Edwardian and Victorian clothing and LOTS OF TWEED CAPS! Inaugurated in London in 2009, the route changes every year so the participants take a jaunty ride past many iconic London landmarks, and some of the lesser-known streets as well. This past year there were over a thousand participants; The idea has been copied in New York City, Tuscany and Tokyo to name a few. You can learn more, and buy tickets for next year, at tweedrun.com.

And applause for Leslie, this is the second time she has won the Teaser!

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Happy News:

Member **Brooks Wilson** has successfully completed treatment and is back on the road to good health! Brooks' talented wife, Colleen, was again invited to and participated in the Edinburgh Tattoo. Colleen is a Drum Major.

Member **Dave Dunbar** in Vancouver, Canada, is also recovering from a short stay in hospital. Dave is our DNA Project Administrator.

Ron (Myron) Dunbar, who lived in California for several years, has survived several heart attacks and is now enjoying life in New England, and has visited the Clan Tents at Loon Mountain Games and has been

making friends with Conveners Chris Kuhn at Loon and Joy Nanni at the Maine Highland Games.

Peter Dunbar of S.Hamilton, MA, joined the Clan last year and jumped in to help Chris Kuhn run the Clan Tent at Loon Mountain. Way to go, Peter!

Octagenarian **Janice Clugston**, and you will remember how she and her late husband Norman Clugston, who was Vice Chieftain back then, hosting the "Red Tent" at games in California, well, Janice is doing well and is still writing notes in her beautiful handwriting. Let me know if you would like to chat with Janice – she would love to hear from old and new friends.

Jeannine Dunbar has a new man in her life, his name is Dexter and he is a Jack Russell who likes to take Jeannine on regular walks!

Joy Nanni, Convener for Connecticut and the East Coast, has just welcomed a new daughter-in-law to her family! Congratulations to the happy couple.

Betsi Dunbar, Membership Director, Illinois, has also celebrated a joyous occasion, her son's wedding! Much happiness wished here, and to all the new couples.

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The Autumn Teaser

As we enter the season of spirits and spooky, scary things, we always think of "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" and across the Pond, Robbie Burn's classic tale of "Tam O'Shanter."

But there was a very famous Wizard, who, according to Sir Walter Scott, "...cleft the Eildon Hills in three, and Bridled the Tweed with a curb of stone"..

Can you name this Wizard, and also the Abbey where the site of his traditional grave can be found today?

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Convener Reports

Our conveners have been busy this summer!

The Maine Highland Games, Windsor, ME. 16-17 August, 2025

Convener: Joy Nanni, Assisted by Dade Nanni

Maine was huge this year. At least, it was huge for us. As just a preliminary bit of info, we stamped 74 passports, I sold two copies of the Lost Earldom booklet, and we had people who told us that they'd showed up because they'd seen Dunbar on the list of clans for the village! So we're starting to make a difference here. They had world-class competitions, and we got a picture with "our" athlete, Colin Dunbar, of Long Beach State CA sports, track and field. (you can see the photo on our first page). Joy and Dade arrived home late on Sunday night after the Maine Games, and turned right around and prepped for the Quechee Games in Vermont the next weekend.

The Quechee Games, Vermont, 23 August, 2025

Convener: Joy Nanni, assisted by Dade Nanni

The Quechee Games in Vermont were a little larger than the Home/No Fame Games in Massachusetts. The setting was lovely - a large field surrounded by tree-filled mountains. Unlike the Massachusetts Games, with traffic surrounding us, we were in a more isolated and quiet location. Not that any location is quiet for long when a Maine Highland Games is happening, of course. This may have been a small Games, but it did have a piping band competition, and each band practiced in its own sphere while waiting its turn. The Clan Village, surrounding the part of the field set aside for Opening Ceremonies and the band competition, appeared to be placed within the area where every single practice overlapped. At one point, a car alarm went off, and it took us some time to realize it because we could not separate it from the cacophony of four or five completely different songs being played simultaneously on the Pipes and Drums. My sister thought she was likely to continue hearing phantom bagpipe music for this entire week, but I stopped hearing it about halfway through Sunday.

For such a small Games, my helper Dade stamped quite a few passports! Unfortunately, I don't have a very good count this time, because my attention was drawn away and he did not always remember to mark the tally. As an estimate, we have about 45 marks. The Quechee Games has a system in which each family is assigned a clan (either at random, or by request), and told to earn points for their clans by doing the activities in the booklet. Those activities include marching with "their" clan, getting passports stamped, and finding scavenger hunt items in various areas. Our honored clan was Clan MacGillivray, merely because their clan earned the most points last year. This year, Clan Ross won the most points and was awarded a handsome chalice-shaped trophy! They will be the honored clan next year. The organizer let me know that Clan Dunbar was in second place, which surprised me, as I hadn't realized that there had been children assigned to my clan. I met them later in the day and congratulated them for their hard work. There were over forty clans and organizations in attendance. With one corridor of vendors and only a handful of food tents, the Clan Village definitely dominated this event.

High heat seems to have been a theme in this year's New England Scottish Games, and Saturday was no exception. The tent on the other side of us from Ross, Clan Montgomery, arrived well-supplied with bottles of water, Powerade, and a couple of other drinks, which she gave out for free to anybody who wanted one. They came to her for water when one of the drummers fainted in the heat. Fortunately, everyone in

both the Dunbar and Ross tents were alright. We stayed cool, watched our exertion, and kept hydrated. Still, this is the only one of the Games in which I managed to acquire a mild sunburn! By the time we got home, we were quite tired. We also left late, because we helped Clan Montgomery pack up her tent. This was not only out of gratitude for the free drinks. In New England, at least, it's very common for a clan to look to the needs of nearby clans, helping to set up and take down tents for single people, older people, and disabled people.

Though I did not sell anything at the Quechee Games, and I did not even garner a single sign-up for the newsletter, I did make an important discovery! A man stopped at my tent with a Dunbar tartan hat and a pin declaring him to be Ron Dunbar. He identified himself as someone who knew (and used to help with) "my predecessor", the man who used to run the Dunbar tent! He had lost track of his friend (they live in different states) and stopped helping with the clan after four heart attacks from which he has recovered well enough to still be up and about. This was the first Games he had been to in a long time. He marched and gave the clan call with us. He seemed very happy to be back, and nostalgic about the earlier years. We exchanged information, and he offered to send me any Dunbar items he could find that he used to bring to the tent. I'm not sure yet what that will entail, but I am always happy to display anything I can get! Myron Dunbar (his full name) is already a life member of the Dunbar Clan. I directed him to the website, and he remarked on what had changed and what had not.

Editor's Note: You may remember Ron from the 2004 Tour of Scotland, he was living in California in those days.

Pleasanton, California - the Caledonian Socy. Games

Brooks Wilson, while not a Convener, is the logistics coordinator for the performances of the Marine Band, which performs at the Caledonian Society Highland Games in Pleasanton every year.

This year the Honor Band was the Wasatch and District Pipe Band, which played with the Marines in the massed band portion of the Grandstand Shows. The guest Pipe Band was the St. Thomas Alumni Pipe Band.

2026 will be the 160th anniversary of these games, and the organisers are hoping to bring a Scottish military pipe band to Pleasanton for that event. Pleasanton is one of the large games on the West Coast.

And Brooks' delightful wife, Colleen, the Drum Major, was invited and performed at the Edinburgh Tattoo again this year.

The Seaside Games, Ventura, CA, 11-12 October, 2025

- The Seaside Games, held at Ventura, CA, north of Los Angeles, enjoyed delightful weather, and while the crowds were not huge, there were many visitors to our Clan Tent, where Heather Dunbar Wilhelm, ably assisted by her sister Nora Dunbar Abra and mother Jeannine Dunbar, were kept busy answering questions on Genealogy, history, DNA, Tartans and more!
- Meanwhile, grandson Robbie, in full highland gear, promoted Clan Dunbar as he visited all the tents and handed out literature while collecting same from the other Clans present. Heather and Jeannine had some excellent reference books available, and delighted guests with the research and help they were able to provide. Our large map of the Dunbar Castles and Estates was of great interest, as well as Ally Knox' genealogical chart of Dunbar family history.
- Jeannine, Nora and Heather made a great team for this event, as they each have unparalleled knowledge of Dunbar history and extensive research experience that was especially helpful to their guests.

One of the visitors to the tent was a lady who rescues Border Collies from the Humane Society Shelter in Los Angeles, and trains them to be the great sheepdogs they were born to be. Border Collies are wonderful, happy, faithful dogs, but they have a high energy level and were born to run hard and fast and turn on a dime. Not for everyone, it seems, and so sadly many end up in shelters. Jeannine's Jack Russell, Dexter, made friends with the collies and all the visitors to the Clan tent as well! He was quite an attraction.

The Seaside Games this year were notable, as always, for their excellent competitions for Pipe and Drum Bands, and also for their challenging Highland Dance Competitions. The trophies for the winners were impressive!

Robbie, in addition to being a great ambassador for the Clan, was a huge help in setting up the Clan Tent, and taking it down at the end of the Games. He is a senior at Dos Pueblos High School, Goleta, in the Santa Barbara area, CA, and will be off to college before we know it. He has his grandfather's dry wit and his grandmother's knack for storytelling.

Editor's Note: Heather and Joe Dunbar Wilhelm are hoping that the San Diego Highland Games will return next year, at a new location, as the Vista site at Brengle Terrace Park became unaffordable.

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SCOTTISH HIGHLAND GAMES AT LOON MOUNTAIN, LINCOLN NH

September 19-21, 2025

Convenor's Report

The weather was glorious the third weekend in September for the Scottish Highland Games at Loon Mountain hosted by NH Scot. 2025 was the 50th Anniversary of the event, founded by Evelyn Murray of Cambridge MA along with our own Duncan Dunbar Chaplin and his wife Ann Theopold Chaplin, author of 'Robert Dunbar of Hingham.' The temperature was sunny in the 70's and the foliage was just beginning to turn.

I was joined on Thursday afternoon by Peter Dunbar of Hamilton MA, who did most of the heavy lifting to set up our tent. A wide full-length banner, designed and mailed to us by Tony Dunbar, stretched high across the front. My very large framed Dunbar Castles and Estates Map was prominently placed in front of the tent on an easel. It attracted lots of interest. People definitely like maps. We used it to point out Dunbar castles, but some visitors used it to plot past trips to Scotland. On Saturday Tony and his wife Kathy joined us from Roswell GA. We had some great discussions about Robert Dunbar of Hingham and the Dunbarton Oaks Dunbars of Barnwell SC.

Our Clan Dunbar tent was situated between Clan Henderson and Clan Monroe. The Monroes have an extremely active DNA Project. Their database is so robust that they have dual DNA administrators, one in the US and one in Scotland. I had some questions about marriages between Dunbars and Monroes (the data is conflicting), and received immediate responses. I was very impressed by their grasp of the facts. One of their key ancestors was John Monro of Bristol RI, captured at the Battle of Worcester in 1651. Our link with the Monroes began with Euphemia, daughter of David of Durris I.

Ron Dunbar of Vermont visited us every day, always full of ideas about history and possible merchandise. I first met Ron on our 2009 Clan Trip to Scotland and he remains a loyal Dunbar.

Christine Dunbar Kuhn, Clan Genealogist

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The Clans are at the very heart of what it is to be Scottish. They are the guardians of our culture. They deepen our understanding of, and connection to, our Scottish Roots. They are not-for-profit organizations, so your membership goes straight to work in preserving your unique Clan heritage for generations to come.

Thank you to the Maine Highland Games for this beautiful description, taken from their home page.

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On Bicycle Design

Just thought you would like to know, Blacksmith Kirkpatrick MacMillan (1839) was the first to invent the pedal driven bicycle and managed to cycle his bike more than 70 miles from Thornhill, near Dumfries, to Glasgow. Sadly, he never patented his design, and eventually many people copied him. Cycling apparel manufacturer Endura's Forgotten Legend project recently built a fully working model of MacMillan's bike. Wouldn't that be fun to see!

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Blervie Castle – An Update

Over the years we have visited Blervie, and its “sister” castle, Burgie, both on Clan Tours and independently. And some of the more daring of you have clambered over rubble and crumbling walls to see the Dunbar crests on both castles and tread where our ancestors have surely trod. Blervie is now owned by Mr. Craig Anderson, and with the services of Nick Brown and Associates, Architects and Planners of Banffshire, and many field experts, has put together a Conservation Plan for Blervie. If you were fortunate to hear his presentation at our 2024 AGM in Scotland you will understand what a monumental task Craig has undertaken.

Craig has kindly sent us an update on plans and progress, which follows. If you would like to see the full plan, I will happily EMAIL it to you. It is precise, deliberate, and very well organised – an important read.

Here is the update:

Blervie Castle Preservation - update Sept 2025

Your members may recall the work carried out to carefully survey the castle remains, (arising from severely cracked and bulging walls and the eventual collapse of the deformed slumped third floor vault which fell in 2003 leading to the major collapse in June 2005 (600 tonnes of masonry)) - since when , with the help of grant from Historic Environment Scotland (HES - the state heritage regulator) the attached Blervie Castle Conservation Plan was prepared.

That document explains the historic heritage significance of Blervie , including the fact it was completed in the late 16C by Patrick Dunbar - financed in large part from rents raised in the transfer of 3,000 acres of former Catholic Church farm lands following the Protestant-led Scottish Reformation . The document looks at the structural consolidation works necessary to prevent further deterioration.

As well as emergency works to remove the remaining overhang of the NE bartisan in 2006 , HES has grant funded insertion of scaffold shield works in 2023 to protect the key architectural feature of the joggled ‘flat arch’ of the Great Hall. The key stone includes the Dunbar coat of arms , albeit with detail worn since the main part of the castle was ‘collapsed

by fire' in the 1760's - and the stone salvaged to build a fine Georgian mansion farm house down the hill at Mains of Blervie.

Over the last year I have secured formal scheduled monument consent approvals and contract tenders for the Stage 2 Urgent Works . These essential works are to provide propping of the remaining ground floor stone vault and to make safe areas of stonework, principally at wall heads and propping of various doorways . This will then pave the way for the final Stage 3 Consolidation which will involve major scaffolding (460' above sea level - so can experience fierce winds) to insert structural ties and provide permanent consolidation of the remaining stonework with lime mortar repairs - then allowing removal of scaffold and temporary works and the current security fence - with Blervie then safe to visit and enjoy unobstructed , as a 'noble ruin'.

Provision will be made, hopefully, to include viewing platforms to give supervised public access days , so the local community and visitors alike can enjoy the magnificent ' six counties panorama from the top of the remaining turnpike stair. There will in any case be provision for a viewing platform above the Guard Room vault and for public parking and interpretation boards - with unrestricted public access around the base of the tower.

A further idea is to provide an internet- enabled public access camera (carefully screened to avoid immediate neighbour privacy) so that the local community (and Dunbars further afield !) can enjoy the glorious sunsets and moonscapes ...beamed into their living room TVs .

The challenge , as ever, is gaining sufficient public support to attract heritage grants. The overall costs of Stage 2 , based on recent tenders amount to £80k and the major works at Stage 3 are estimated at a further £300k .

Due to government grant reductions the grant from HES - which was 75% (in 2005 , after the tower collapse) is now unlikely to exceed 35% . Projects of this nature are then dependant on applications to the National Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to raise c50% of match funding (then meeting 85% grant) - leaving 15% of costs to be raised through local and other sources.

In overall terms , allowing for say a 3 year consolidation project, total project costs are likely, allowing for inflation over that period and a contingency element , to be in the region of £450k and the likely 'funding gap' shortfall of 15% (assuming both HES and HLF grants are supported) being circa £67k (\$90k)

The Heritage Lottery Fund , understandably, require specific evidence of a strong level of community support and benefit - so I am willing , as well as devoting time and finance , to set up a Building Preservation Trust. This will involve transfer of ownership of the care of the monument to trustees - and to endow that trust with set up funds for future management and maintenance - which is in addition to the overall project costs.

I have had preliminary discussions with local heritage groups to enlist community support and they have shown a willingness to look at how the consolidation project can be taken forward. They appreciate that without grant support to stabilise the structure , further collapse over

time of this nationally important scheduled monument would inevitably result.(A common dilemma as there are circa 150 of c800 ruinous Scottish towers and castle 'shells' as monuments which have serious structural consolidation issues). This is why HES and HLF combined funding is directed towards priority projects where there is very strong community support and demonstrable benefit.

On a positive note, I have meantime secured support from HES to carefully take down and rebuild the farm cottage away from the footprint of the castle into the courtyard, as per the attached plans . This benefits the stand-alone setting of the castle and provides a much improved layout for a new enlarged 'courtyard house' with stabling and garaging - to enjoy the view of the castle along with the panoramic vista and glorious sunsets. A copy of the drawings is attached also.

There is scope within the remaining land around the castle to incorporate an interpretation centre. There is also space for workshops which could demonstrate traditional building skills and perhaps artists studios.

There could also be scope in the field to the north to look at creating a landscaped site to enjoy the panoramic setting - opening up the prospect perhaps of a garden of remembrance - which has been developed at other heritage sites and could allow for landscaped family memorials.

A use such as this would need planning permission , with community support, and a high level of sensitive design and landscaping - but would justify its own costs and ongoing maintenance through internment charges . It would also respect the significance of the Templestones Bronze Age stone monument down the field to the West - commemorating the ceremonial and spiritual use by the early farming community stretching back over 3500 years .

As your Clan Dunbar members will appreciate, there are challenges ahead in looking to secure the remains of Blervie Castle, but I am resolved to continue that quest. I would therefore appeal to any of your members who may wish to participate in the formation of a Blervie Castle building preservation trust and ways in which Clan Dunbar members could potentially become involved. This could potentially include the wider context of Clan Dunbar at Blervie as a Moray rallying point and could include potential for clan history interpretation and a family memorial site.

There will be other potential opportunities and Clan Dunbar support could act as a way of triggering the support of the Forres-area heritage groups and local sources of grant aid.

Hoping this helps explain progress and opportunities .

Craig.



Editor's Note: Plans and other documents that Craig mentions are too large for this publication, but I will happily Email them to you at your request. Those of you who have climbed over Blervie Castle will be impressed with the progress on the conservation!

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Ramblings

As some of you know, and most of you don't, your Editor loves to spend time baking sweet treats for family and friends. There hasn't been much spare time for baking these past few months, but one recipe stands out: Blueberry Ricotta cookies from Bake from Scratch magazine, May-June issue for 2025, P. 110. Family, friends and neighbours all agree that this

one is a winner! You can probably find a copy of the magazine at a reduced price online as the holiday issues are on the shelves at the bookstores now.

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ANNUAL DUES

While your annual dues for the Clan are not due until 1st January, it is difficult to plan the budget for the New Year when the dues do not arrive on time.

Would you please pay your annual dues beginning 1st November, 2025, and at the very latest, 31st December? This will be enormously helpful.

Single membership is still only \$30 per year, and family membership is \$45. Family membership includes your spouse, and all children under twenty-five years of age. It's a wonderful way to share your Scottish heritage, so be sure to name your family members and give addresses and Email if they live away from home, college, for instance.

A recent instance of a single membership where the member passed away, with no other family member to advise of the passing, meant that we did not know until almost three years after his death, that he had passed, and only then because the Post Office returned the mail. This was very sad. Having another family member on your membership certainly would avoid this kind of situation.

Payment of dues on our website is safe, simple and very helpful! Send a cheque if you absolutely, positively cannot pay any other way – and we do understand – but using the website saves you a stamp, an envelope, a trip to the post office, and most of all, you know that your payment has arrived safely and not been lost in the mail!

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Samhain is celebrated on October 31st this year. A very traditional Celtic festival, it honors the end of the harvest season and the beginning of Winter. It is also a time for honoring those who have passed, but not necessarily as vibrant a celebration as we are familiar with here. And witches? That's another story for another time.

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Here you see Ron Dunbar, Christine Kuhn, Kathy Dunbar, Tony Dunbar and Peter Dunbar, with Christine's detailed map of the Dunbar Castles and Estates at the Clan Tent at the Loon Mountain Highland Games. What a great team!

Another great team just happens to be Tony Dunbar, his wife Kathy and daughter Ashley. Wait till you see all the special touches that made our AGM at Stone Mountain so special!

Jeannine Dunbar and Dexter at the Seaside Highland Games. That's Heather in the background. A fabulous Southern California day!



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Sir James Michael Dunbar, 14th Baronet of Mochrum

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