



CLAN MUNRO

NEWSLETTER 2019

IT IS WITH the greatest sadness that we report the death of Timmy Munro on 20th October last year, aged 93. Many members will have already seen the announcement on the website, or in the various newspapers, both regional and national, where the news was accorded a considerable amount of coverage. This extensive reporting shows her importance in wider society as well as within Clan Munro, and reflects the significance of her passing.

Those members who have been lucky enough to meet Timmy, and enjoy her unique ability to make all feel properly welcome at Foulis, will feel her death as a great loss, both personally and as members of Clan Munro. So it is with



the deepest sympathy that we can join together as an Association, as well as

kinsmen, and express sincere condolences to Hector, our Chief, and all his family, for their sad loss.

The obituary that appeared in *The Times* recognises Timmy's unique qualities, and remembers a life of great service to others that earned her Royal recognition, for which she was awarded an MBE in 2013. It described her as *an exceptional Highland chatelaine* and has been reproduced in full on the website, along with those of other journals.

A memorial service was held in a marquee at Foulis on 3rd January, with some 400 family and friends attending, some having travelled great distances to be there. The service reflected the love and affection all feel for Timmy, and included psalms and readings from the Gospels, poetry recitals, and a slow air played on the Uilleann pipes, with the order of service containing an array of pictures from throughout her life. She will be greatly missed by all.

**Eleanor "Timmy" Munro of Foulis, MBE,
was born on 8th March, 1925.
She died on 20th October, 2018, aged 93**

INTERNATIONAL GATHERING 2019

This year, 2019, marks the 300th anniversary of the last time Clan Munro fought together as a Clan unit – at the Battle of Glenshiel, which became the deciding action of the ‘Little Rising’ on 10th June 1719, the second of successive attempts by Jacobites to regain the crown. In recognition of this, a Gathering is to be held this coming summer, in acknowledgment of the important date.

Whilst there are still some details still in the planning stage, the outline programme for the Gathering is that it will be held over the weekend of 9, 10, 11 August 2019. Provisionally, it will be as follows:

Friday 9th August.

We will be based at Dornie & District Community Hall amongst the superb



scenery of Kintail in Wester Ross, where our lunch will be served and where you can relax and enjoy your surroundings in between visits. By coach, we will visit the site of the battle in

beautiful Glenshiel and an expert guide will explain the action and, in particular, that part played by Clan Munro. We have arranged for groups to visit Eilean Donan Castle (shown above), the ancient stronghold of the Seaforth Mackenzies, Chiefs of the Clan, and looked after on their behalf by the hereditary keepers, Clan Macrae.

In 1719, Eilean Donan acted as the Jacobites’ headquarters, and on May 10th of that year, the Spanish/Jacobite garrison was captured and the castle destroyed by three ships of the British Navy. For the next 200 years the castle lay as a ruin until its restoration was completed by Lt. Colonel

Gilstrap-Macrae in 1932. It is now probably one of the most iconic castle in Scotland.

In the evening we have arranged the rare privilege of a Civic Reception for the Clan at the newly-refurbished Town House in Inverness.

Saturday 10th August.

This sees us return by coach to the heart of Mackenzie Country where we will be based in the magnificently restored Victorian Strathpeffer Pavilion where there will be musical entertainment laid on, and a running buffet lunch will be provided. Built to serve as a social and entertainment centre for the many visitors who, in the late 19th century, came to take the waters from Strathpeffer's sulphur springs, then the most northerly spa in Europe and a popular health resort.

We have arranged for you to visit nearby Castle Leod, a tower house gem of the late 15th early 16th centuries and home to the current 'Caberfeidh' (as the Chief of Clan Mackenzie is known), the Earl of Cromartie, who is a personal friend of our own Chief and whose father was a prisoner of war with Hector's father during 1940-45.



There is much to see and do in Strathpeffer - we may not have time to see everything, but there will be the chance to visit the Eagles Stone (pictured above), said at one time to have marked the burial place of Munros killed in a nearby fight with the Mackenzies. It also features in one of the prophecies of the Brahan Seer whose second sight brought him both notoriety and ultimately death, is

linked closely to the Munros of Foulis. The Seer is still spoken of in reverential tones throughout the Highlands today.

We will visit The Strathpeffer Highland Games taking place in the beautiful grounds of Castle Leod (pictured here). A shuttle bus will be in attendance to help you make a visit to these highlights from our base at the Pavilion which will also be the venue for our evening meal. This evening meal is intended to be less formal, (dress: Highland daywear) than the banquets of the last couple of Gatherings, but will be an excellent chance to get to know each other and we hope to have the Earl & Countess of Cromartie as our guests.



Sunday 11th August.

The morning will be free for own individual activities, but from 12-noon, the International Gathering, which will be open to the general public, will be at Foulis Castle where there will be a barbeque lunch, formal speeches, and an afternoon full of a selection of entertainments - from re-enactments, whisky nosing and tasting, pipe band, archaeology, DNA update, puppets, story-telling, folk musicians, singing, falconry/bird display, spinning demonstration and others still to be arranged.

Final ticket prices have yet to be confirmed, but for budgeting purposes, it is estimated that the weekend will cost no more than £220 per head. This will include transport by coach to and from designated drop-off points, but will exclude accommodation and meals other than those mentioned in the programme. It will be up to individuals and groups to arrange these for themselves.

Further details and tickets are now available via the links on the website - www.clanmunro.org.uk. It is now time to get your kilts packed and travel planned, as this promises to be a truly memorable Gathering.

THE BATTLE OF GLENSHIEL 1719

There may be some who may be wondering why the battle of Glenshiel has such significance to Clan Munro, when it can be seen as a just a single chapter in the long-running saga that was the Jacobite struggle to regain its lost throne. After all, there had been a previous attempt in 1715, and the more well-known, and even more romantic 1745 Rising led by Bonnie Prince Charlie could be argued to have had a more profound effect on Clan Munro, as it saw the death at the battle of Falkirk in 1746 of the Chief at the time.

We published what is the definitive history of the battle in the number 24 edition of the Clan Munro Magazine, in the excellent article by Dr Jean Munro, and that will be well-worth re-reading before the Gathering visits the site. But it may also be both timely and useful to look at other accounts of the action, as they may help illustrate the significance to Clan Munro at the time, and so to us now, as we look back over the past three centuries.

The account given in the *Historical Geography of the Clans of Scotland*, which was reprinted three times in the 19th century, gives a less romantically-charged version of Highland history than our Victorian forebears are often accused of, and devotes an entire chapter to *Glenshiel 1719*. It is unnecessary to reproduce the entire chapter, but we can see something of the significance by quoting the following passages.

After explaining the political situation surrounding the Rising, and bringing the opposing factions to the field of battle, the authors give details of the two armies as they took up their positions. The left wing of the Government army (under the command of Major-General Wightman), on the south side of the river, had on its flank 80 men of Clan Munro under the command of Munro of Culcainn. They were in the action from the start, as we shall see.

The engagement began between five and six o'clock, when the left wing of the Hanoverians advanced against Lord George Murray's position on the south of the river. The position was first shelled by the mortar battery and then attacked by four platoons of Clayton's with the Munroes. The first attack was repulsed, but the attacking party was reinforced, and Lord George's men, who were not supported, were driven from their position, and retreated beyond the burn, which, coming down from Frioeh Corrie, descends towards the Shiel in the rear of the ground which they had occupied. The precipitous banks of the burn effectually checked pursuit.

After the right wing of the Jacobites had been dislodged, Wightman's right began to move up the hill to attack their left. The attachment commanded by Lord Seaforth was strongly posted behind a group of rocks on the hillside, and it was against them that the attack of Montagu and Harrison's troops was directed. Seaforth was reinforced from the centre by the remainder of his own men under Sir John Mackenzie. Finding himself hard pressed, Seaforth sent down for further support.

Another reinforcement under RobRoy (Macgregor) went to his aid, but before it reached him the greater part of his men had given way, and he himself had been severely wounded. RobRoy's detachment next gave way, and retired towards the mountain, They were followed by "Lidcoat's" men and others.

The whole force of Wightman's attack was now directed towards the Jacobite centre, against which the fire of the mortar battery had by this time been turned. The Spanish regulars stood their ground well, but finding that most of their allies had deserted them, they also began to retire up the hill to the left. The whole of Tullibardine's little army was now in retreat.

The retreat soon became a flight. The victorious Hanoverians pursued their defeated enemies over the shoulder of Scour Ouran, and only halted as darkness fell, when they had nearly reached the top of the mountain. Far up the hill there is a corrie which, to this day, the shepherds call

Beallach-na-Spainntach, "The Spaniard's Pass." The action had lasted some three hours.

So what became of Culcairn and his clansmen? We saw them last in the thick of the action, but this account leaves them there, without further explanation. Fortunately, there is no mystery, as we can turn to another account, written only a few years after the battle – Edmund Burt, the road-building engineer and author of the invaluable ‘*Letters from the North of Scotland*’ had come to know George Munro of Culcairn, and mentions his battle experience in one of the *Letters*, saying:

I have heard many Instances of the Faithfulness of particular Highlanders to their Masters, but I shall relate only one, which is to me very well known.

At the Battle of Glenshiels, in the Rebellion of the Year 1719, a Gentleman (George Munroe of Culcairne), for whom I have great esteem, commanded a Company of Highlandmen, raised out of his Father's Clan, and entered at his own Expence. There he was dangerously wounded in the Thigh, from a Party of the Rebel Highlanders posted upon the Declivity of a Mountain, who kept firing at him after he was down, according to their Want of Discipline, in spending much Fire upon one single Officer, which, distributed among the Body, might thin the Ranks of their Enemy.

When, after he fell, and found by their Behaviour they resolved to dispatch him outright, he bid his Servant, who was by, get out of the Danger, for he might lose his Life, but could be of no Manner of Succour or Service to him; and only desired him, that when he returned Home, he would let his Father and Family know that he had not misbehaved.

Hereupon the Highlander burst out into Tears; and asking him how he thought he could leave him in that Condition, and what would they think of him at Home, set himself down on his Hands and Knees over his Master, and received several Wounds, to shield him from further Hurt; till one of the Clan, who acted as Serjeant, with a small Party, dislodged the Enemy, having taken an Oath upon his Dirk that he would do it.

This Man had often waited at Table when his Master and I dined together, but otherwise is treated more like a Friend than a Servant.

In a subsequent letter, Burt relates an incident that followed the battle, which may have had something to do with Culcairn's servant's reluctance to leave him the Jacobite's mercy. He says:

***T**his was after the Battle of Glenshiels, before-mentioned. As the Troops were marching from the Field of Action to a Place of Encampment, some of the Men who were dangerously wounded, after being carried some little Way on Horse-back, complained they could no longer bear that uneasy Carriage, and begged they might be left behind till some more gentle Conveyance could be provided.*

In about three or four Hours (the little Army being encamped) Parties were sent to them with Hurdles, that had been made to serve as a Kind of Litters; but, when they arrived, they found to their Astonishment that those poor, miserable Creatures had been stabbed with Dirks in twenty Places of their Legs and Arms, as well as their Bodies, and even those that were dead had been used in the same savage Manner. This I have been assured of by several Officers who were in the Battle, Scots as well as English.

Burt's Letters are useful in many ways, as they give more than a hint of how the Battle of Glenshiel appeared to the individual, and how the Highlanders' regard and affection for each often stimulated great courage and bravery. And the idea of reprisal and slaughter of this nature may have been in the minds of both Culcairn and his un-named servant. It requires little imagination to put oneself in their place, and which one of us would act differently?

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A TASTE OF THINGS TO COME

There is good news for those with a taste for the finer things in life – but it takes the form of a test of patience. The Chief's family farming business has again been singled out for praise and acknowledgement of the high quality grain produced by Foulis Farms, taking first prize for Best Overall Malting Quality, at the Glenmorangie Highland Grain Malting Barley awards held last December.

The picture shows Finnian Munro, Younger of Foulis at the awards dinner and presentation ceremony held at the Carnegie Lodge Hotel at Tain, being presented with an engraved commemorative decanter, together with an appropriately special bottle of Glenmorangie 19-year-old single malt with which to fill it.



So anyone wanting to savour the flavour of the grain from Foulis' fields will be able to make their selection from the Glenmorangie line-up. But don't be too eager to rush out and stock up, as the distillation and maturation process of single malts cannot be hurried – it is likely to be ten or 12 years before spirit of this award-winning grain finds its way into the bottle. It is well known that the proof of the pudding is in the eating, but the proof of this particular pudding will be something over 40 degrees.

One thing we can be sure of, is that Foulis Farms grain is consistently top quality, as this latest award is the fourth major malting barley award they have won in recent times, including two from the highly respected Macallan.

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FIDDLERS HIT THE RIGHT NOTE

Kiltearn Fiddlers have been in the spotlight again, having represented *Fèis Rois*, the Dingwall-based organisation that promotes Gaelic cultural arts and language, at the prestigious Scots Fiddle Festival at the Pleasance, Edinburgh on 17th November last year. The group, which was founded by Alpha Munro in the early 1990s, gave the Edinburgh audience a well-received 45-minute recital of their distinctive music that has won them an enthusiastic following.



Our picture shows the group of fiddlers.

Emerging from a *Fèis Rois* Community Class in Evanton, the group helps young people improve performing confidence, creativity, music skills, and spread traditional music around the Highlands. Successive groups have played for festivals around the UK, including the Blas Festival, Llangollen International Eisteddfod, North Wales, as well as in Sweden, France, Denmark and Ireland, and at numerous charity events, ceilidhs and dances. They take part in as many as 18 events a year, and have recorded a number of Cds. Their playing has won them several trophies for the Advanced Scottish Idiom class at the Inverness Music Festival, and have represented *Fèis Rois* on several occasions. Instruments currently include piano, guitar and percussion, accordion, flute and whistle.

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