

THE CLAN DONNACHAIDH, A BRIEF HISTORY

'THE CHILDREN OF DUNCAN'

The first clan to appear in highland history is The Clan Donnachaidh. Our first chief was Duncan Reamhair (which is pronounced Rav-ar and means "the Stout" or "the Robust"). His father was Andrew de Atholia who lived in the 13th century. Because Duncan and his son were 'de Atholia' this indicates that they held their lands in Atholl for many previous generations. Although specific documentary evidence is difficult to find, it is possible that the ancient ancestors of the clan were kindred to St. Columba, who established a monastery at the end of the 7th century in Dull in Atholl.

Support of the Clan for Robert the Bruce and his effort to gain the crown of Scotland is well known in history. Stories tell that the late, but strategic, arrival of the clan to the battle of Bannochburn in 1314 secured victory for the Scottish forces. At a rest break on the way to the battle, the chief's standard was pulled from the ground revealing a round rock crystal adhered to the end of the staff. This was regarded as a good omen and the crystal is reported to have healing powers for both man and beast. The "charm stone" was named Clach-na-Bratach (meaning 'Stone of the Standard'). This treasure is proudly displayed at the Clan Museum at Bruar Falls, Atholl.

The Clan Donnachaidh were staunch Jacobites. The 13th Chief, Alexander Robertson of Struan, also known as the Poet Chief, led the Clan in all three Jacobite Risings. Because of his involvement, his lands were confiscated, and the Chief was forced to spend much of his life in exile. It should be noted that none of the Donnachaidh Chiefs cleared their lands of tenants and clan members. As a result, each successive chief inherited considerable debt and most of the clan lands had to be sold.

The current day Clan Society was encouraged by the 20th Chief and was established in 1893. The Clan Centre is located in Bruar, not far from Blair Atholl. The organization is made up of 25 Branches and affiliated regions world-wide. The society also publishes a Clan Annual distributed to members, and sponsors a DNA project, which allows those interested to submit their data to further DNA research with Clan descendants.

In August 2018, the Clan celebrated two important milestones of our 23rd Chief, Alexander Gilbert Robertson of Struan. At a Gathering in Pitlochry, Perthshire the Clan celebrated Struan's 80th birthday and 35th anniversary of becoming chief. About 150 members and friends gathered from all over the world to join in the 10 days of festivities. This year also marked the purchase of the Clan Kirk located at the confluence of the River Garry and the River Errochty in the village of Struan from the Church of Scotland. The kirk is located on an ancient site where the Clan has worshiped for many centuries.

Representing Clan Donnachaidh at the 41st Maine Highland Games & Scottish Festival are members of the Northeast Branch of Clan Donnachaidh Society.

Clan web site: Donnachaidh.com

Reference materials:

"Clan Donnachaidh, A Brief History" by Jean Robertson of Struan

[The Robertsons, Clan Donnachaidh in Atholl](#), by James Irvine Robertson, 2005