



# hunters' halloo

Newsletter of the Clan Hunter Association, Canada

April 1997 Vo 1,9

Crest Badge of a  
Member of Clan Hunter

## Editor's Note

1

## Engagements Weddings & Births

1

## T-Shirts

1

## My Search

1

## The Web

2

## Annual Meeting

2

## Poacher's Arms

3

## The Hunterston Brooch

3

## Did We Come from the Norsemen

3

## We Lost Them

4



I know that many of you are already aware that earlier this year we were saddened by the passing of Russ Mullen, the husband of our Chief, Pauline Mullen Hunter of Hunterston. Some of you may have had, as I did, the opportunity to meet Russ at the last Hunterston Clan Gathering, but all of us were able to enjoy the article, "Braveheart", which Russ wrote for our newsletter. In this issue we share Russ' last article in which he wrote of the Goldenberry Brooch which was found on Goldenberry Hill near to Hunterston Castle.

The time is approaching fast for all those still thinking of attending the 1997 Clan Hunter Gathering at Hunterston, Scotland to get your application form / meals plan back to Scotland. Remember the deadline is June 1st. As far as I am aware we do not have a large contingent travelling from Canada, (around 10 I believe), but there may be some who haven't mentioned it to me yet. There is no organised group travelling together, so we will all meet there.

*Tom*

## *Engagements Weddings and Births*

Scottish Country dancers Don And Mida Hunter Lecocq became first-time grandparents on February 21st with the birth of "Rebecca Lyn" to their daughter Stephanie and her husband, Mark Heathcote. I hear tell that Rebecca was delivered by a fellow Scottish Country Dancer, Dr. William Nurse and when Rebecca was 4 days old her mother took her to dance class. Although Rebecca did not dance, she did take her "miniature" ghillies with her. Rebecca's mother, as you might surmise is also a Scottish Country Dancer.

## *T-shirts Available*

We recently acquired a limited number of t-shirts with a large clan crest on the front. Sizes are small, medium and large. Colours are (12) white with green crest and (2) light blue with black crest. First come first served. Price is \$15.00. + postage

## *My Search*

About 40 years ago, my father, Robert Hunter, came to visit. We were living in Amherstburg at that time. My father talked about his family, as two of his brothers and a sister had died recently. These talks led me to gather a record of my

father's family, most of whom were no longer living. I was spurred on by my father who wanted to be sure that all of his children had a GOOD picture of his father, (also named Robert), & mother and the five "Hunter brothers" and two sisters. With his help, I put together a brief article for him, had copies made of the group picture and mailed them to each of his children. This was my first interest in genealogy.

When my father died in 1965, these talks came back to me and I remembered his wish to have the printing on his parents' tombstone recut as it was getting weathered. It being in the Presbyterian Cemetery in Maxville, in Glengarry County, I enlisted my brother Bill's help, as he lived in Maxville. I wrote to my 21 first cousins, telling them of my plans and also asking them for information about their parents and their families. I received many letters in reply and gained much information. The work was soon completed.

All the data I was accumulation prompted me to keep records in a systematic way, adding details of my 5 brothers and two sisters. This soon grew to the addition of the descendants of cousins and my own nieces and nephews.

When my boys no longer needed so much of my time, I started filling in the blanks which meant writing more letters, as current information is so often more difficult to obtain than records of 100 years ago, especially with the family living in many areas of Canada. In order to learn more about this kind of research, I joined a class at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints here in Chatham. By the time I finished the course I was truly "hooked". One

thing I learned was to be **very accurate** and not to believe a date from newspapers and articles. A good plan is to "prove" every date with at least 1 Primary source such as a Birth certificate or registration, Marriage certification or registration etc.

I knew that my father was born in Dumbartonshire in Scotland as he allowed me to photocopy his birth certificate which was my **first document**. From my letters I soon discovered that his brother William had been born in Dumfriesshire and that there had been a little boy named James and a sister named Jessie who came to Canada with them in 1883, but who died soon after arriving.

Next Newsletter - Further experiences in my Research leading to Scottish Records.

*Catherine Elder*

## ***The Web***

Our venture into the Internet has proven to be a big success. I have had communications from Australia, USA, Canada, and England all complementing us on our web site and asking for more information and in some cases for membership. Of course I have had to pass the folks from another country on to their relative clan officer but it is most encouraging. There is much activity on the genealogy page with many Hunters from all over the world seeking links with their particular family tree and I have no doubts at all that this is the way to share information. If there is a downside to it all it would be that I now spend a large portion of every evening answering e-mail and responding to

inquiries for information. Time will tell of course as to whether we increase our membership by this means or not. However it is still great fun chatting to all these Hunters, members or not. For those of you who want to see what is going on you can join us at...

<<http://www3.sympatico.ca/tom.hunter>>

and

<<http://www.tartans.com/clans>>



*Hunter of Hunterston tartan in two weights now available from:-*

**Geoffrey (Tailor) Highland Crafts Ltd.,**  
57/59 High Street, Edinburgh  
EH1 1SR,  
Scotland  
Toll Free Hot Line - 1-800 566 1467  
FAX 44 131 556 9615  
E-mail  
<101675.1173@compuserve.com>

*Contact us and request our fully comprehensive Information pack, which we will be delighted to send to you. Please advise if Gent's Lady's or Children's Wear in which you are interested.*

## ***Annual meeting. New time and place.***

Due to the fact that the Clan Hunter Gathering in Scotland will coincide with the Fergus Highland Games this year, our annual gathering and meeting normally held at Fergus will be moved to September and will be held in Scarborough. This will allow us to share the news from Scotland. Look out for more details

in the next newsletter

## ***The poacher's Arms Dinner***

A very pleasant evening was spent last month by 8 members of the Clan Hunter who gathered at the Poacher's Arms in London, On. for a lovely meal and even better conversation. All agreed that we should do this more often . Those attending were Don and Marion Hunter from Toronto, David and Catherine Elder from Chatham, Sharon and Al Chiquoin from St Thomas and Tom and Christine Hunter from London. Unfortunately due to sickness Marion and John Hunter also of London were unable to be with us.

## ***The Hunterston Brooch***

In 1830 a chance discovery by workmen digging a ditch on his estate put into the hands of Robert Hunter, the 25th Laird of Hunterston, the finest known example of Dark Age jewelry. The Hunterston Brooch, as it was soon called, is a five-inch circle of solid silver with a large hinged pin, decorated by whorls of delicate gold filigree depicting stylised Celtic animals and studded with amber. No description can really do it justice. Its craftsmanship is so fine it has been called "the work of angels". In fact, it left the hands of its human creator probably in the 7th century and became, no doubt, the prize possession of some royal Celt. Later in its history it was acquired, either as loot or by trade (although it is difficult to imagine its owner parting with it

other than at sword point), by people of Scandinavian origin, possibly from the Isle of Man. We know this from the Norse runes later inscribed in the reverse, which read: "Malbridga owns this brooch" and "This brooch belongs to Olfriti (a womans name).

Almost as soon as it was unearthed, legends began to be woven around it. The Norse runes naturally suggested a connection with the Battle of Largs, fought in 1263 on the foreshore before a town five miles north of Hunterston between the forces of the warlike King Haakon of Norway and the knights and bowmen of Scottish King Alexander III. Plundered, so the speculation ran, from the corpse of a Norwegian chief after the battle, it fell along with its new owner from Hawking Crag, a sheer cliff overlooking the site of its discovery, as he lost his footing in the darkness. The fact that some human remains were found nearby seemed to validate this supposition. The theory can't be discounted though the story seems to have been invented to explain the distance between the lost brooch and the presumed site of the battle. Actually, if the loss of the jewel is connected with the abortive invasion of the Norsemen, there is no need of such an explanation. The Battle of Largs was not a set piece engagement fought in one spot, but a series of skirmishes fought up and down the coast after the dispersal of the invading fleet by a storm. One such encounter is believed to have occurred on Goldenberry Hill which on one side overlooks the coastal plain of Hunterston, and on the other falls away suddenly to form the very cliff under which the brooch was found. There, Sir Robert Boyd of

Kilmarnock, assisted no doubt by his Hunter allies under the 7th Laird of Hunterston, Norman le Huntere, massacred a contingent of the Norse army. The victors were uncompromising men in a very dark mood at this disruption of their peace, and the invaders were probably either butchered on the spot or driven or thrown over the cliffs. It is not difficult to imagine one of their victims, mortally wounded or with bones broken by his fall, crawling away to die in the undergrowth which hid his body from despoilers. A cairn of stones once stood on the foreshore near Goldenberry, believed to have been a memorial to this ferocious episode in Hunterston's history.

Others, arguing that it was unlikely that a Norse chieftain would have carried such a rich ornament into battle, suggested that the brooch was lost in a shipwreck, its owner staggering ashore to die. This remains a valid theory. It will never be known for sure why the brooch lay where it did on the day of its discovery. Robert Hunter cherished it and wished it to be a family heirloom, but after his death, his wife sold it to the Scottish nation. While an exact replica is kept at Hunterston Castle, the original is now on display at the Royal Museum of Scotland where visitors can gaze on its beauty and dream up their own legends!

## ***Did we come from the Norsemen?***

Did you ever stop to think that if all the Hunters are related in some way to the original William Venator, "the Norman", who came

over with William The Conqueror that must mean that our origins are French. One would be forgiven for thinking so, but the truth of the matter is that the Normans weren't originally French either. They were Norsemen. They came to Normandy in longships with Rollo (ca.700) and conquered the region. They laid siege to the city of Paris and defeated Charles the Simple who was King of France under the holy Roman Empire. In order to break the siege on Paris Charles the Simple gave his daughter to Rollo in marriage and she converted Rollo to Christianity. Rollo was a very powerful man, but refused the title of King of France and instead became the Duke of Normandy. So I suppose you could say that we come from Viking stock really.

## *We've lost them!!*

Does anyone know what has happened to these folks? Their mail keeps getting returned. If anyone can help me find them I'd sure appreciate it

(Last known address)

**E. A. Hunter**  
**12428-94th St.**  
**Edmonton**  
**Alberta**  
**T5G 1K6**

(Moved to Mexico  
 Address must be wrong)

**John A. Hunter**  
**Apartado #698**  
**Jalisco**  
**Mexico**



## *Notelets*



*We still have some beautiful notelets featuring the Clan Crest and picture of Hunterston Castle in packs of five. These very attractive cards make excellent gifts for family members or simply as a very unique form of communication displaying your family heritage. Each pack of five with envelopes is sold for \$5.00 + postage of \$1.00*

Send your submissions  
 for the Newsletter  
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