



PO Box 765, Rapid City SD 57709
Black Hills Celtic Events.org
Info@BlackHillsCelticEvents.org

November 2011

Serving the Celtic Communities of: Wales, Isle of Man, Cornwall (England), Galicia (Spain), Brittany (France), Scotland and Ireland



Mark those calendars

Upcoming Events

- Nov. 15th Regular Membership Meeting. Program Roger Ronnie Concerning Starting Celtic Dancing. 7pm Celt's Hall Central States Fair Grounds
- Dec. 6th Board Meeting.
- Dec. Homanay Still In The Planning Stages.



President Pat Hamilton

President's Message

**President's Letter – NOVEMBER 2011
– Pat Hamilton**

CHANGE in location for our November General Meeting: Celts Hall



Dancing
will be
our



November program!!!! We mostly all like to either watch or partake in the occasional Celtic dance opportunity. Your chance will come again on Tuesday, November 15th at our General Meeting. We invited the Dakota Celts to our Scottish dance lesson demo and they invited us to hold it at their Celtic Hall at the Pennington County Fairgrounds. Roger Ronnie will be giving any interested members a mini Scottish dance lesson. This mini lesson will allow people an opportunity to experience Roger's teaching style and get a feel for the expectations required. It's an ideal location & opportunity to 'pick up our feet' and get a bit of musical exercise!

DIRECTIONS TO THE CELTS HALL: If you haven't been there before, The Celts Hall is located in the small building just to the left of the Soule Building at the Fairgrounds. You can take a left immediately after the large red barn, and then bear to the right a bit and the Celts Hall is straight ahead.

Musings from your President:

I was helping my mom the other night, sorting through old photos. As I was taking an old photo out of its frame, I happened to notice the cut out cardboard holding the photo in was actually cut out of a *Brief History of Robert Burns* article! Several years ago, I wouldn't have known anything about Robert Burns, but now it reminded me that our Robert Burns Celebration is only a couple of months away! Mark your calendars for Saturday, January 28th. As is typical for the Scottish & Irish Society, we will recognize the memory of Robert Burns in style.

Our spring will be a busy one for S.I.S..... Burns Dinner in January, elections in February, St Pat's

Day Celebration in March, and Tartan Day in April! Whew!!!! As always, we need help from our members to make each event a success. Please offer your assistance and volunteer for any or all of these events. You get to know your fellow S.I.S. members better and influence to make these events even better! And, what better way to volunteer than to say YES to the nominating committee when they call in the future recruiting for new officers. The existing officers are of immense help to incoming officers and always say YES when new officers

WELCOME BACK:

Surprise! Josh Ellis is back in Rapid! He didn't move to Minot after all. He got a new job in Rapid and is ready to jump back into SIS and resume the VP role. I want to give Aliyah a big thank you for stepping up to the plate for a few months as interim VP! Thank you Josh for jumping back into SIS! That's the kind of spirit that S.I.S. is founded upon!

WELCOME GRANDMA & GRANDPA BURKE!

Yes, John and Nancy have started to stop complete strangers on the street to show them photos of their new granddaughter. Ask John and Nancy for photos next time you see them! They will proudly show her off! Welcome to the sisterhood/brotherhood of Grandparents!!!!

FAREWELL:

Aliyah Sanders is setting up house in Indiana which will allow her to be closer to her grandkids (and daughter). We wish her the best and hope she'll remember to drop in on us when she's back in the neighborhood.



S.I.S. COOKBOOK:

We still need more recipes, so if you've been procrastinating, send them to Sally Knight and mark this off your list and start December 'guilt free'!

SAMHAIN:

Samhain celebration had people nearly 'dying' of laughter (thanks to Jim Byrne & Mike Nau) during our games! Winnie Balster took lots of photos and hopefully they will be up on our web site soon. Pat and Gary's garage was nice and toasty and provided 'togetherness'. Sally & Carol had the garage and yard looking appropriately SCARY! Holly Lemay provided some nice music and nearly everyone dressed up for the occasion!



Pat Hamilton, S.I.S. President

Meeting Notes

It has been proposed that the By-Laws be changed, to having the elections held in February instead of January and officers installed in March at the St. Pat's Celebration. Member input is encouraged.

Member Notes

From the Web Site byrneclan.org
Submitted by Jim Byrne



Byrne Clan

A WORLDWIDE GATHERING

The Clann O'Byrne traces its origin to Bran, or Braen, meaning "Raven" who was a son of Maelmorda and died in the year 1052. His father, Maelmorda, was King of Leinster (the Southeastern part of Ireland which includes Co. Wicklow) and died after the Battle of Clontarf in 1014. Maelmorda had led the Leinster Irish in alliance with the Norse of Dublin against Brian Boru. This battle is usually portrayed as the Irish united against the foreign

invaders; in fact it was a mere power struggle. After Maelmorda was killed in 1014, his son

Bran became King of Leinster, but he only ruled for four years. In 1018 Bran was blinded by a rival named Sihtrie. This disabling of Bran made him ineligible to be King, since under the ancient Irish Brehon laws only eligible family members who were physically

unblemished could serve as leader (King or Clann chief). He later died in a monastery in Cologne, Germany in 1052. Bran's descendants referred to themselves as "O'Bran" meaning grandson or descendent of Bran. "O'Bran" became "O'Broin" (pronounced "O'Brin") in Gaelic and in later centuries became somewhat anglicized as O'Byrne. When our ancestors told us that we were descended from Kings, they were right!

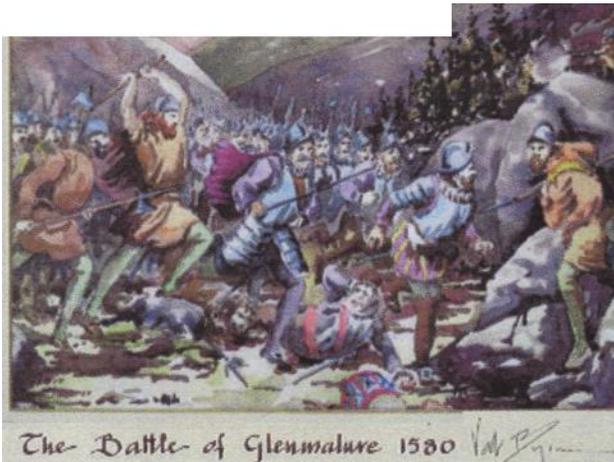
The O'Byrnes originally lived on the flat plains bordering the River Liffey in the northern part of present day Co.Kildare. A little over a century after the death of Bran, the O'Byrnes as well as their closely related allies the O'Tooles were forced to move from their homes by the Norman invasion of Strongbow and the English in the late Twelfth Century. This invasion was prompted by a struggle over the same Kingship of Leinster which previously been held by Bran, our ancestor. Strongbow's invasion route to capture Dublin was right through the territory of the O'Byrnes and O'Tooles who were easily defeated. A few years after the Normans defeated the Lemster Irish, the O'Byrnes and their allies the O'Tooles moved to the protection of the wild and rugged mountains of Wicklow. These mountains

provided them the sanctuary which enabled them to increase in size and strength. After the initial conquest of Ireland by England, the power of the English Kings and their representatives in Ireland decreased. Despite periodic forays into the countryside and occasional English victories, the rule of English law and custom was only secure inside the "Pale", a small area surrounding Dublin. For almost three hundred years the O'Byrnes and their allies the O'Tooles were the most powerful force south of Dublin. The O'Byrne's Country known in Irish as "Crioch Branach" began in the very north of Co.Wicklow near Delgany

and extended south along the sea to just north of Arklow. The O'Byrne's Country spread into the mountains and included the territory of the "Gabhal Raghnaill" or Ranelagh which was centered in Ballinacor. The O'Byrnes were led by Chiefs who were elected from a small group of eligible clansmen. The O'Byrne Chiefs were "Chief of the Name" and were titled "O'Byrne" or "The O'Byrne." They were inaugurated near Delgany on a high hill near the sea called Dun Caillighe Bearre. This was the site of an ancient hill fort or Dun. Today it is known as Downs Hill, and from its top one can see the Irish sea and much of O'Byrnes Country. In addition to the small leadership group which contributed eligible candidates for election as Chiefs, there were other significant groups of subordinate O'Byrne families known as Septs. The greatest of these Septs was the O'Byrnes of Ranelagh or "Gabhal

Raghnaill". Another Sept was the O'Byrnes of Clonmore, County Carlow from which descends our current elected Chieftain, Val Byrne of Bray, Co.Wicklow.

In the centuries before the beginning of the Tudors, the English generally viewed Ireland as a mere revenue source to help them with their wars in France and at home. This changed under the Tudor monarchs, especially Henry VIII and his daughter Queen Elizabeth. They paid much greater attention to affairs in Ireland, and sought to bring the island under the strict control of the English Monarchy. The conflicts which developed from this power struggle involved the O'Byrnes until domination by England around the time of the end of Elizabeth's reign in 1603. In the Sixteenth Century the O'Byrne Chief, Thady O'Byrne, and the Clan



leadership living on the plains near the sea submitted to English rule. The subordinate Sept of Ranelagh living in the mountains and led by Hugh McShane O'Byrne refused to follow their Chief and would not submit to English rule. Thady O'Byrne died in 1578 and was succeeded as Chief by Dunlaing O'Byrne who also was unwilling to resist the 'English. In 1580 both the new Chief Dunlaing and the mountain warrior Hugh McShane O'Byrne died. Hugh was succeeded as

leader of the Ranelagh Sept by his son Feagh McHugh O'Byrne who became the greatest warrior ever to be called an O'Byrne. Feagh was not eligible to be Chief of the O'Byrnes and was not formally inaugurated. Nonetheless he was the undisputed leader of all the O'Byrnes resisting English domination. Feagh McHugh O'Byrne commanded his followers for almost two decades beginning with the victorious Battle of Glenmalure in 1580 and ending with his death in 1597. During that time Feagh led the O'Byrnes and their allies in numerous raids on Dublin, and many battles against the English. He assisted the powerful leaders in Ulster and aided Hugh Roe O'Donnell in his escape from Dublin Castle in 1591. Following the Irish defeat at the Battle of Kinsale in 1601 the Irish ability to resist English rule was eliminated.

The new Stewart King, James I, who took the throne after Elizabeth's death in 1603 was intent on enforcing strict English control. This included forcing all of Ireland to abandon Gaelic language, customs and law and replacing them with those from England. In order to preserve their control over Ireland, England destroyed the Clann system. Chiefs no longer served the same function as leaders, and all of the Irish Clans ceased to inaugurate their Chiefs by the early Seventeenth Century. The last inauguration of an O'Byrne Chief was in 1578. Clan owned lands were forfeited and transplanted

with English and Scots. Religion was used as a litmus test of ones loyalty to the English Crown. Byrnes would continue to contribute to the history of Ireland, but after the end of the Tudor reign the O'Byrne clan and all of its Septs would cease to exist as an entity. In 1641,1689 and 1798 the Irish would rebel against the rule of England, and in every instance the revolts were effectively put down. The Byrnes of Bally m an us, Co.Wicklow played an important leadership role in the 1798 uprising. After each of the unsuccessful rebellions many Irish, Byrnes included, were forced to emigrate. After the 1689 rebellion, many O'Byrnes went to France as part of the Irish International Brigade known as the Wild Geese. After the unsuccessful 1798 rebellion, Australia, and to a lesser extent, America, would become the recipient of numerous Byrnes. Unsuccessful rebellions were not the only cause of emigration for Byrnes. Economic conditions in Ireland in the Nineteenth Century, especially the Famine of the 1840's caused the greatest amount of emigration. In the Twentieth Century, Byrnes played their part in achieving the independence for Ireland in 1922.

Officers

President Pat Hamilton
info@BlackHillsCelticEvents.org

Vice President Aliyah Sanders

Secretary Travelling

Treasurer Carole Conrad

Board Members Susan Kains, Susan Peterson, Winnie Balster, John Burke

Past President Jim Byrne

Web Site Gary Hamilton

Newsletter John Burke
 jburke67@rap.midco.net

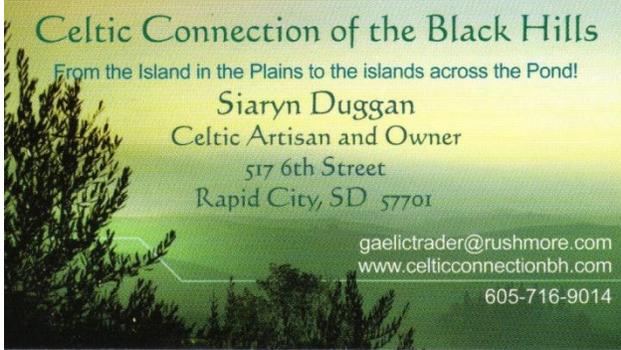
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RON BALSTER *BROKER ASSOCIATE*

302 MAIN
 RAPID CITY, SD 57701
 OFFICE (605) 342-7272
 CELL (605) 381-4532
 TOLL FREE (800) 888-1619
 FAX (605) 343-8900
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