

THE
GATHERING
EDINBURGH

2009



By Chieftain Richard Graham

The Grahams gather in
Scotland

“The Gathering” brings clans, officials and royalty together in Scotland in July 2009

“The Gathering” took place in Edinburgh, Scotland, from Friday, July 24, to Sunday, July 26, 2009. This event was inspired by the 250th anniversary of Robert Burns’ birth in 1759. It was a gathering of the clans that started with a Clan Convention in Scottish Parliament on Friday. Saturday and Sunday were games days on the fields of Holyrood Palace Park. On Saturday evening all the clans and bands gathered at Holyrood Palace at the bottom of the Royal Mile and marched up to Edinburgh castle at the top of the Royal Mile where a pageant took place inside the castle for all to watch.

The clan convention was sponsored by The Standing Council of Scottish Chiefs. It was held in the Scottish Parliament building with permission to do so from the Scottish Government. Alex Ferguson, Member of Scottish Parliament (MSP), was the presiding government officer and First Minister Alex Salmond gave a message of warm welcome. This was an opportunity for the clan Chiefs, Chieftains and Heads of Families to gather and deliberate on the organization of Scotland’s worldwide kinship network. I was invited in my

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capacity as a Clan Chieftain and my wife, Kate, was invited in her capacity of a travel agent specializing in getting people to Scotland. We found the venue very inspirational and we attended break-out meetings during the day in which we were able to make and hear many suggestions that we felt would improve Scottish activities in North America as well as around the world. Our Chief, His Grace, The Duke of Montrose, was in attendance in Parliament and commented that this could be the start of more communication between the various continents and Scotland.

Saturday and Sunday were days of games on the fields of Holyrood Palace Park and were aimed at gathering clansmen from all over the world. The Duke and Duchess of Rothesay, as Prince Charles and his wife, Camilla, (The Duchess of Cornwall) are known in Scotland, were in attendance and the Prince opened the games. I was fortunate

to be introduced to the Prince and I found him to be a very pleasant person to chat with. Our Chief, His Grace The Duke of Montrose, and his wife, the Duchess, joined us during the games on Saturday as did Bill Richardson, our Canadian Commissioner, and his wife, Sheila. Our hosts were the UK Clan Graham organization with their chairman Cameron Graham and past chairman Bruce Graham present with their wives. Clans had tents just as they do in North America and they were first class. Athletes, highland dancers, pipe bands and clansmen from all over the world were there. Entertainment included very popular Scottish groups such as Caperceilidh which I listened to live for the first time and can confirm that they are great live and on a recording. Several Scottish regiments had displays and were available to talk to. I was intrigued by the Black Watch and others such as the Royal Scots Dragoons,

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The Grahams traveled from North America to attend “The Gathering” in Scotland this past summer. Pictured above are Chieftain Richard Graham with his wife, Kate, and Sheila and Bill Richardson. Bill is the Clan Graham Society’s Canadian Vice President.



Chieftain Richard Graham was honored that he was able to meet His Royal Highness Prince Charles at the games. He and his wife, Camilla, (The Duchess of Cornwall) are also known in Scotland as the Duke and Duchess of Rothesay.



Historical re-enactors roamed the park grounds and added flair to the festivities! Sir Walter Scott, “Braveheart” William Wallace and Scotland’s Bard, Robert Burns, appeared at The Gathering.



Pictured from right to left are His Grace The Duke of Montrose. Chieftain Richard Graham and Bruce Graham and his wife. Bruce is a former chairman of the UK Clan Graham organization.



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Gordon Highlanders and Argyle and Southern Highlanders. Everything was absolutely first class.

When the clans gathered outside Holyrood Palace I got an idea of the thousands of clansmen and bands that were going to march up the Royal Mile. When we actually marched we found the crowds of spectators also numbered in the thousands. The air was electric with enthusiasm as I marched with my clan and the crowds (12 deep in some places) were on both sides of the Royal Mile and hanging out of windows, too, for the whole mile and a quarter. The march was very exciting and ended at the castle where a very theatrical pageant was performed depicting several generations of a family that left

then returned to Scotland generations later. This was the theme of the whole gathering that everybody enjoyed.

Here are links to the march up the Royal Mile. You will see me and our Chief with our wives towards the end of the video.

- <http://scotland.stv.tv/the-gathering/112721-the-gathering-parade-up-the-royal-mile>
- <http://scotland.stv.tv/the-gathering/111686-scots-bask-in-homecoming-sunshine/>
- <http://scotland.stv.tv/the-gathering/111685-prince-charles-speech-to-the-gathering-clans/>
- <http://scotland.stv.tv/gathering/111137-clans-decend-on-edinburgh-for-the-gathering>



Crowds loved the parade in which the clans marched up the Royal Mile to the Edinburgh Castle. Clan Graham was led by His Grace, The Duke of Montrose.



Chieftain Richard Graham and his wife, Kate, visited other areas of Scotland and had the opportunity to meet with The Provost of Inverness, J. Gray, Esq. (pictured at the center).



In the distance is Brig a' Doon, which is a late medieval bridge used as the setting for the final verse of the Robert Burns's poem "Tam o' Shanter." Tam is none other than the mischievous Tom Graham on horseback narrowly escaping from a witch over this legendary bridge.



Pictured here is the infamous but beautiful Glencoe, site of the massacre of MacDonalDs by the Campbells in the 1690s. The mountain scenery has also been used in the popular film, "Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban," as the home of the character Hagrid.