



“Wha daur meddle wi’ me?”

Dear Kinsmen,

Redheugh has apparently had a summer although you would not have noticed it. We have had pretty constant dreich (damp and miserable) days throughout and our local agricultural show, the Holm Show, was a sea of mud at the end of August.

On the day the judges came to Newcastle for the prestigious **Britain in Bloom** campaign, it absolutely poured. However, the village has much to be proud of as it was only one of six villages in the whole of the UK to qualify as a finalist. We will hear at the end of September what the judgement was, which is too late for this newsletter but it will probably be reported on the www.visitnewcastle.com website.

I was lucky enough to be invited to **Nova Scotia** in July and had a marvellous long weekend there. Murray Elliott and Barry Buckman held an early dinner in Halifax for the Nova Scotia Chapter and then we went on to the spectacular Tattoo. I saw some old friends and we had a great time. A few of us also went to a reception given by the Mayor of Halifax. Then I was taken off to a beautiful spot called Long Island about a days drive from Halifax to see the whales in the Bay of Fundy. I absolutely loved that day. It was glorious sunshine and the sea was calm and there were humpbacks and fin whales galore with porpoises alongside. The kind Buckman family had organised a barbecue for local Elliots and then, before I knew it, I was whisked back to Halifax and back to damp old Scotland. I just had enough time to visit the graves of the Titanic victims predominantly to pay respects to a friend's grandfather who had been one of the brave violinists. While there, I discovered an Elliott headstone (photograph in this issue) which was unexpected. My thanks to everybody – especially Barry's lovely family – who made my visit to Nova Scotia such a treat.

In this issue, the remarkable story of **Launceston Elliot**, my address to **Tullie House Museum** and a feature on **Thirlwall Castle**, a typical Border fortification of the 15th Century.

Yours sincerely,

Margaret Elliott of Redheugh

Clan Room: To avoid disappointment, please warn us if you intend to visit Redheugh. Email or telephone us on the following UK number: **013873-75213** or **redheugh@btinternet.com**

ELLIOT CLAN SOCIETY

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www.elliotclanusa.com
www.elliotclanaustralia.org
www.visitnewcastle.com

Chief: Margaret Elliott of Redheugh

Newsletter No. 67 – Autumn 2011

*“Here’s to all Elliots and Elliot’ bairns
And them that lie in Elliots arms.”*

Notices and News Items

LIBRARY: Ken and Eileen Blaiklock have kindly given a copy of ‘*The Scottish Empire*’ by Michael Fry published by Birlinn, £16.99a ISBN. 1 84158 259 x.

The Scottish Empire charts the involvement of the Scots in the British empire from its earliest days to the end of the twentieth century. It is a tale of dramatic extremes and craggy characters; of a variety of concerns, from education, evangelism and philanthropy to spying, swindles and drug running. It sets stories of Scottish regiments on the rampage, of cannibalism and atrocities, beside the deeds of heroic pioneers such as David Livingstone and Mary Slessor.

Above all it tells of how the British Empire came to be dominated by Scots and how it truly became ‘the Scottish empire.’

A Treasure of a Book has been donated to the Elliot Library by MR K.S. STEWART of Christchurch, New Zealand. No. 86 of only 100 copies printed for private circulation in 1896. “*Sir Walter Elliot of Wolfelee - A Sketch of his Life, and a few Extracts from his Note Books*” by Robert Sewell. We are very fortunate to have been given a copy of this rare book.

Strongholds of the Border Reivers – Fortifications of the Anglo-Scottish Border 1296-1603 by Keith Durham published by Osprey Publishing ISBN 978-1-84603-197-7

Recommended Reading List for Border History

“*The Steel Bonnets – The Story of the Anglo-Scottish Border Reivers*” by George MacDonald Fraser.

“*The Border Reivers*” by Godfrey Watson.
“*The Elliots*” by Sir Arthur Elliott - edited version in paperback only available at the moment.

“*Strongholds of The Border Reivers*” – *Fortifications of the Anglo-Scottish Border 1296-1603*” by Keith Durham.

In Memoriam: DENNIS ELLIOT 1931-2011. He was a founder member of the Elliot Clan Society and served on the Executive Committee when Sir Arthur Elliott was Chief.

(More news items overleaf)

Notices and News Items *Continued*

Dalkeith House is a stunning Georgian pet friendly holiday town house recently upgraded to the highest standard offering **five star self catering** in the Scottish Borders village of Newcastleton. It sleeps 10 comfortably making it ideal for groups or celebrations. This country house is in the heart of the village with everything you need on your doorstep. Available for short breaks or longer. Minutes from your door are riverside walks, the challenging nine hole golf course, the world class 7 stanes mountain bike trails as well as a pub, two hotels and two cafe's. The fully enclosed garden is a joy throughout the year, full of traditional borders, it has a large patio and masses of seating for outdoor entertaining. www.dalkeith-house.com

Elliot Fine Fabrics: Moves are underway to look into the viability of taking over Selkirk's oldest surviving mill and turning it into a textiles heritage centre. Forest Mill is the oldest mill in Selkirk, having started production as long ago as 1718. Elliot Fine Fabrics was started by Andrew Elliot in 1973 and the firm is run by his son, Robin. With tough times in the textiles trade, the mill is being wound down with a view to selling the property.

The Standing Council of Scottish Chiefs: Margaret Elliott of Redheugh has been appointed Vice Convenor. Sir Malcolm MacGregor of MacGregor Bt. has been appointed Convenor.

Genealogy Support:

The Borders Family History Society:

www.bordersfhs.org.uk

Dumfries & Galloway Family History Society:

www.dgfhs.org.uk

Scottish Borders Archive and Local History Centre:

www.scotborders.gov.uk/council/specialinterest/heartofhawick/18964.html

Scotland's People: www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk

Statistical Accounts of Scotland:

<http://edina.ac.uk/stat-acc-scot>

Airship Development: GARY ELLIOT, chief executive of Hybrid Air Vehicles (a privately owned UK company) has signed a deal with Canada's Discovery Air, a Toronto-listed specialist aviation company to develop an airship capable of carrying a 50-tonn payload which can operate without the need of an airstrip and land almost anywhere, including on water.

SIR ARTHUR ELLIOTT MEMORIAL TRUST 2011

Grants have been given to:

Newcastleton Primary School – towards a digital white board.

Frank Coutts Court Residents Association – for their Neighbourhood in Bloom entry.

Liddesdale Ladies Amenities Group – for the Play park collection fund.

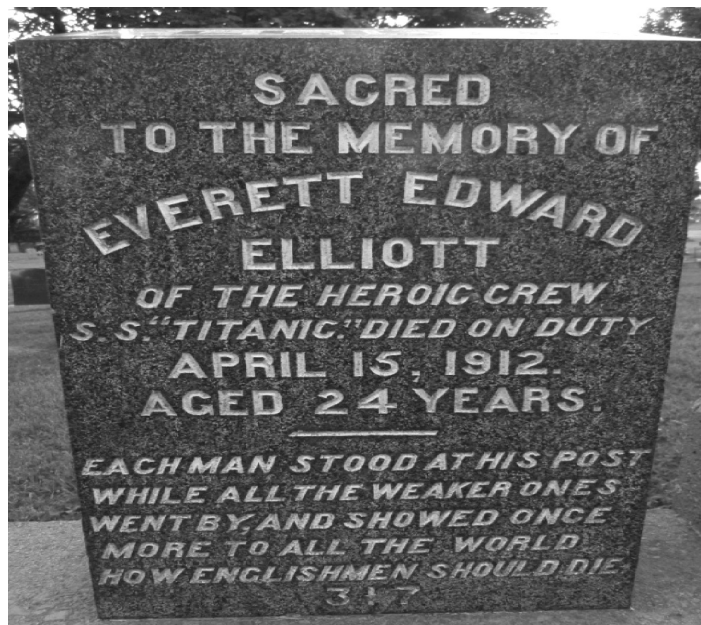
Sian Jones – NC in Equine Studies at Oatridge College.

Peter Michael Needham – HNC Early Education and Childcare.

Dulcie Skelton – Early Education and Childcare.

George Aitchison – HND Course in Agriculture at SAC Edinburgh.

TOTAL; £1,300.00



Halifax Cemetery in Nova Scotia

REPORT ON THE NEW ZEALAND EARTHQUAKE

By Margaret Laurenson

Christchurch – it is really difficult to know where to start. The media coverage, both nationally and internationally has shown the physical devastation and rubble, as well as the tragedy for the families and friends of those whose lives have been lost. Less “visible” are the ongoing impacts for the remaining survivors – those whose homes have been significantly damaged (but not sufficiently so as to warrant being “red zoned”), those whose lives have been significantly impacted through job losses because their work places no longer exist, families whose lives have become topsy-turvy because schools no longer exist, “littlies” (and “biggies”) experience extreme anxiety – “waiting for the next one” – and so on. What is important to understand is that the aftershocks continue – while less than daily now, there is still no warning, and when the shaking starts, there is no guarantee about how long or how strong it will be.

On the brighter side, there are areas of Christchurch that have had no, or very limited impact from the earthquakes – so this is by no means a city of total destruction. Most importantly, it is a city of great heart and strength – within the very supportive greater Canterbury region. Nowhere else in New Zealand is there a greater “English” heritage. The will to “rebuild” is strong, and, in spite of the escalating insurance liabilities and increasing costs of “everything” for the Government, there is every indication that Christchurch will rise from the rubble. New Zealand is no stranger to earthquakes and recovering from consequences – Napier is a shining example of this.

I did my best to contact Elliot Clan members in Christchurch soon after the earthquake. While some have had their homes damaged, and have been subjected to less than ideal everyday living conditions since then, thankfully none were badly injured.

THIRLWALL CASTLE 1450

Built in the early part of the 14th century with dressed stones plundered from nearby Hadrian's Wall, Thirlwall Castle was strategically situated close to the Tyne-Irthing Gap, one of the main 'ingates' frequented by Scottish raiders.



Thirlwall Castle by T. H. Fielding. 1823

Built on an L-plan with immensely strong walls up to 2.7m thick, Thirlwall was a small castle of the hall-house type and comprises a three-storey rectangular block with turrets at its north corners and a four-storey projecting tower on its east side. The building has few windows, those that are in evidence being small and narrow. The entrance was at the north end of the east wall and was protected by a strong door and a yet. A newel stair gave access to the first floor and from here, a straight mural stair in the north wall led to the second storey. The basement was dimly lit by narrow ventilation slits and beneath the north-west tower was a dungeon. There was no vaulted basement, the timber floors within being carried on setbacks and corbels. The hall would have been on the second floor with the solar at its south end and a room above on the third floor may have served as a chapel. In the south east corner of the wing, the second and third floors were equipped with garderobes.

The 'castrum de thirlwall' was a crucial link in a chain of defences that gave warning of Scottish incursions and would undoubtedly have been provisioned with a beacon. The watch was to be kept nightly 'by the inhabitants of Thirlwall ... Robert Thirswall and Robert Carrock [being] setters, searchers and observers of this watch.' Even so, in 1589/90 Richard Thirlwall was forced to lodge a complaint against 'Wille's Arche Elliot of Stychill Hill, Robine Elliot of Bonhomes, his son Dande, and others who had stolen from Thirlwall six oxen, six kye, and six young two year old nowte (cattle).' Not surprisingly, the men of Thirlwall, whilst defending the surrounding area from Scottish marauders, engaged in similar activities themselves and in 1550, along with some of their notorious neighbours in Tynedale, they were accused of being 'much prone and inclined to theft, especially a lordship ... called Thirlwall.' The castle was abandoned as a place of residence in the mid-17th century.

LAUNCESTON ELLIOT: BRITAIN'S FIRST OLYMPIC CHAMPION



Genealogy: Launceston Elliot's father was Gilbert Wray Elliot and his third wife, Ann Mason who named their son, Launceston, as he was conceived in Tasmania. Gilbert Wray Elliot was the second son of Admiral Sir Charles Elliot KCB, third son of the distinguished diplomat The Rt. Hon Hugh Elliot of Minto.

Launceston Elliot's strange story begins even before he was born. His father's second wife met her death in mysterious circumstances by falling from a hotel balcony in Australia. His third wife, Ann Mason, was a receptionist at the same hotel. He was conceived in Launceston, capital city of Tasmania, but born on 9 June 1874 in India. In 1887, Gilbert Wray Elliot resigned from his civil service post in India and took his family back to England to a farm in Essex. At thirteen, Launceston was an exceptionally well built young man who immediately came under the influence of the great Eugen Sandow 1867-1925, the Father of Body Building. He developed into a talented lifter and in January 1891, aged only 16 he performed well at the first British Championships held at the fashionable Café Monico in Piccadilly, London. Three years later he was winner of the championships at the Royal Aquarium, Westminster.

In 1896 he was one of a small group of Britons to travel to Athens for the first modern Olympic games. At the time, there were no internationally accepted rules or classifications for weightlifting. The two-handed lift came first on the program and after a long drawn out contest, Viggo Jensen of Denmark had both lifted 110kg, but Prince George of Greece awarded the Dane first place for having a better style. For the one-handed event, Elliot declined Prince George's courteous offer of a rest break but he asked that he might lift after Jensen this time. Elliot raised 71.0kg without difficulty whereas Jensen, who had injured his shoulder trying to raise 112.5kg in the previous event could only manage 57.2kg and Britain's first Olympic champion was crowned.

The Greeks took a liking to the handsome young Elliot. One source reported "This young gentleman attracted universal attention by his uncommon type of beauty. He was of imposing stature, tall, well proportioned, his hair and complexion of surprising fairness." Another wrote of "...the finest man of English birth" and he received an offer of marriage from a "highly placed lady admirer."

A year after his return from Athens, he married Rose Emily Kathleen Helder, daughter of a Kentish vicar. As a wedding present, Launceston's father gave his son a stud farm in Hertfordshire but he never passed on the deeds and some three years later he was forced to sell the farm to meet his Stock Exchange losses. Launceston, who had thought he was the owner of the farm, was understandably furious, and took his young wife to live with his father in law in the vicarage in Kent.

The financial crisis unexpectedly thrust upon him by his father forced him to turn professional. Since his victory in Athens, he had set four new records at the 1899 Amateur Championships and, as a prominent figure on the British weightlifting scene, he could be assured of financial success. With the help of Bill Klein, Elliot devised a spectacular and lavish act which was an instant success. They toured Britain and the Continent and once took the act to South America.

With the act established as a success, Launceston and his father were reconciled and they settled in Nottingham with their three daughters. The act remained popular until the outbreak of War and after a few post-war appearances, Elliot, who was now approaching the age of fifty, decided to retire. He carried on farming in England for a few years before settling in Melbourne, Australia in 1923. He died aged fifty-six of cancer of the spine and is buried in the Fawker Cemetery in Melbourne.

In May 2011, Lord Sebastian Coe, Chairman of London 2012 Olympics, laid a wreath on the unmarked grave of Launceston Elliot, Britain's first Olympic champion. "It is such a shame that there is an unmarked grave," Lord Coe told reporters. "I know the British Olympic Association are very keen to create a proper headstone, which is the right thing to do."

[ED: With thanks to Mr. Alan Elliot of Hampshire for bringing us this remarkable story.]



THE REIVERS EXHIBITION AT TULLIE HOUSE MUSEUM, CARLISLE

Margaret Elliott launched this new display area in April 2011 with the following address:

Ladies and Gentleman. I am an Elliott. The 29th Chief of the Elliots to be exact, and you have been kind enough to invite me here to Carlisle. I have a feeling that in the 15th and 16th Century you would not have made me so welcome. I live in Liddesdale on the site of the great Elliott pele tower – luckily now a farmhouse – rebuilt from the old stones of the original building. History sits heavy in Liddesdale as it does all across the Borderlands. We sit on a bluff of the river overlooking the old ford on the road running up to Hermitage Castle five miles away – a mile away is the dramatic site of Liddel Castle by Castleton Cemetery. The valley is now home to some 1000 souls but in Reivers time the population was threefold. All over the hills are signs of long abandoned bothys and fields.

Seen from the fat pasturelands of the Eden valley, the Cheviot hills and Liddesdale, Ewesdale and the notorious Debateable Lands must have been regarded rather as the Hole in the Wall Gang was regarded by the respectable people of Wyoming – full of desperate, unstable and violent men bent on stealing your cattle and sheep, never allowing you a peaceful night's sleep and thoroughly disruptive. While I am sympathetic, I would like to give you a view from the other side!

Sandwiched between two hostile nations the Borders was a useful buffer zone – I don't think we can call it a demilitarized zone – the Reivers would have delighted in that phrase – as they were all armed to the teeth! The towns of Kelso, Hawick and Jedburgh were easy targets for an English foray and one of the ways through was up the Liddel valley. Because of this – there were years of ruined harvests and the stock was taken by the invaders. Such problems produced desperate men and so the Reiver's way of life became the norm.

The Borderers were never quite Scottish or English.

Indeed they are of the same stock and they used the political situation to their own advantage, if they possibly could: changing sides when it suited them, infuriating each monarch in turn so are we surprised when James VI & 1st tried to turn us into Middle England and hung Johnnie Armstrong, although memory of that outrage came back to haunt his Stuart descendant, Bonnie Prince Charlie, when he tried to recruit Borderers on his march south through Liddesdale.

But I cannot come to Carlisle and not mention Kinmont Willie. This thoroughly notorious reiver was taken on a Day of Truce and brought bound and gagged to Carlisle Castle. This was against all the rules of cross border law and Buccleuch and his supporters in a fit of righteous indignation – (the words righteous indignation and Border reivers are not natural bedfellows). Although the river was in full flood they crossed the river and with the help of the Grahams, sprung Kinmont Willie with a great deal of noise and kerfuffle and swam back again with their prize. The resultant backlash from a mortified Lord Scrope, Warden of the English March was terrible. He led an army of 2000 men into Liddesdale burnt the houses and stripped sixty or eighty children of their clothes – it was reported that nine or ten infants perished within eight days thereafter.

After a great deal of pressure from Elizabeth 1, James VI finally bound over Buccleuch to Sir Robert Carey who held him under lock and key for a time in Northumberland. Apparently they got on rather well and his influence on Buccleuch changed his ways and he was canny enough to realise that there was little future in the reiver way of life when James VI inherited. There is a good story that when he was eventually presented to Elizabeth 1st at the English Court and he demanded to ➤

THE REIVERS EXHIBITION AT TULLIE HOUSE MUSEUM, CARLISLE

Continued from previous page

► know how he dared to storm her castle. His response was “Madam, what is there ... that a brave man may not dare?” She seemed delighted with this remark and turned to her court exclaiming “Give me a thousand such men and I will shake the thrones of Europe.”

Today the descendants of those resourceful reivers still live and work along the Border line.

The Elliots, Grahams, Scotts, Kerrs, Humes and others are still about and there are thousands of Borderers that have spread themselves around the world. We hold a Gathering for Elliots from around the world every four years and we celebrate the lives of our forefathers, the Border Reivers. Indeed I have sent many of my visitors into this Museum to watch the atmospheric audio-visual display but always with a warning – “take no notice of that bishop’s rubbishy

curse” – like water off a duck’s back – it made not a wit of difference.

Also descendants of those fighting men of old proved to be fierce and brave fighting men during the two world wars. George Macdonald-Fraser who knew the Borders and the Borderers like no other – wrote a book about serving in Burma with the Border Regiment demonstrating the Cumbrians extraordinary bravery and gallows humour – it was ironically entitled Quartered Safe Out Here and the strong gene of the boldness of the reivers comes out very forcefully.

But as we celebrate every four years, this excellent exhibition celebrates their history permanently, bringing the Reivers alive again in such an effective way and making us very thankful that we were born into a peaceful Borderland.

We welcome the following new members to the Society

UNITED STATES

US3472 Elliott, Robert, Ward Cove, Alaska
US3473 Ash, Elliot, Napa, California
US3474 Weber, Jeffrey L., Stuart, Florida
US3475 Elliott, Karl J., Jacksonville, Florida
US3476 Garber, Linda Elliott, Santa Fe, Texas
US3477 Elliott, Dick L. & Dena N., Wichita, Kansas
US3478 Elliott, Jeanne Evelyn, Bettendorf, Iowa
US3479 Pfister, Brian Elliott, Lancaster, PA
US3480 Elliott, James L., Monroe, NC
US3481 Myers, Pamela, Chanhassen MN
US3482 Elliott, Bryson, Austin Texas
US3483 Mahium, Julie, Hartland, WI
US3484 Aicher, Mark & Tracy, San Antonio, Texas
US3485 Elliott, Sean, Magalia, California
US3486 Van Steenhouse, Andrea L. Elliott, Denver, CO
US3487 Mulder, Rachel Elliott, Raleigh, NC
US3488 Elliott, Colleen, Cara & Brad, Lafayette CO
US3489 Kolb, Ron, Villa Park IL
US3490 Elliott, Russell, Dallas, Texas
US3491 Hahn, Michael P., Carrollton, Texas
US3492 Ingalls, Rob, Walnut Creek CA
US3493 Elliott, Philip, San Diego CA
US3494 Elliott Jr., John Philip & Nichole Marie, Taylor MI
US3495 Carlson, Rowena, San Diego CA
US3496 Elliott, Donal M. & Kathleen E., Dry Ridge, KY
US3497 Elliot, Robert, Ward Cove, Alaska
US3498 Elliott, Joshua, Leah & Gavin, Woodstock, GA
US3499 Elliott, W. Carter, Atlanta, George
US3500 Elliott, Robert Pierce, Priest River, ID
US3501 Elliott, Robert Bruce, Cedar Springs, MI
US3502 Elliott, Eddie & Marcia, Alexander NC
US3503 Elliott, Eric S., Nebo NC

UNITED STATES

US3504 Krogstadt, Dean & Janice, Seattle, WA
US3505 Elliott, George Richard, Asotin WA
US3506 Elliott, Brendan, Mayumi & Mizuki, Redmond WA
US3507 Elliott, Wade B. Snoqualmie, WA
US3508 Porter, Bernice Elliott, Omaha, NE
US3509 Horton, Herbert H., Eatonton, GA
US3510 Johnson, Elden J., East Jordan MI

CANADA

C1083 Elliott, Donald Alexander, Ottawa, Ontario
C1084 Richard, Darlene & Michel, Dartmouth NS
C1085 Elliot, Michael & Brandon, Chatham, Ontario
C1086 Elliott, Robert Roy, Abbotsford, BC
C1087 Elliott, Richard Andrew, Toronto, Ontario.
C1088 Hendsbee, Tanya and Doug, Dartmoth NS
C1089 MacDonald, Judith Karen, Calgary, AB
C1090 Elliott, Jackie Sherwood, Morin Heights, Quebec
C1091 Harder, Shirley Diana, Canoe, BC
C1092 Elliott, Ralph Gordon, Stoney Creek, ON

UNITED KINGDOM

E/455 Elliott, Duncan H., Looe, Cornwall
S151 Laing, Mrs. Panny, Forres Morayshire

AUSTRALIA

A308 Donnan, Mrs Karen D., Cairns, QLD
A309 Elliott, James L., Karrinyup, WA

NEW ZEALAND

N090 Elliott, Sue, Thornden, Wellington

Details of new members received too late for publication will appear in the next newsletter.