



# ELLIOT CLAN SOCIETY Newsletter

No. 80 – Spring 2018

*“Wha daur meddle wi’ me?”*

Redheugh, Newcastleton,  
Roxburghshire TD9 0SB  
[www.elliotclan.com](http://www.elliotclan.com)  
[www.elliotclanusa.com](http://www.elliotclanusa.com)  
[www.elliotclanaustralia.org](http://www.elliotclanaustralia.org)  
[www.visitnewcastleton.com](http://www.visitnewcastleton.com)

Chief: Margaret Elliott of Redheugh

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

Dear Kinsmen,

Last October, my nephew Benjie Ward and I travelled across the world to be at the inaugural Collie Games, founded and run by James Elliott, our President in Australia. We landed at Perth and were entertained and looked after beautifully by Myfanwy and James who whisked us off to Collie. It is incredibly difficult to initiate an event and I was so impressed by the hard work that James had put into it. I do not think that Collie had ever seen anything like the heavy lifting and perfect Scottish dancing and the bagpipes. Beautiful weather and a great fun day. I was honoured to be a part of it and wish the Collie Games every success in the future (See Collie Games photo, below right).

Benjie and I then went on to have a marvellous few weeks starting in Margaret River, Western Australia, then to Ayers Rock and Alice Springs and finally a week in the beautiful city of Sydney where I was entertained to lunch by the NSW Minister of Counter-terrorism, David Elliott and his wife, Nicole, and shown round the Houses of Parliament. It was a terrific visit and many thanks to James and Myfanwy for the inspiration.

This summer I am looking forward to a visit to Grandfather Mountain in North Carolina.

In this issue, the obituary of a remarkable man and good friend. Sir Gerald Elliot of Binks was a great supporter of the Elliot Clan Society and came to quite a few Gatherings. We are so lucky that his son Jo became a Trustee when his father retired and important that we are still closely connected to the remarkable line of Elliots of Binks. Although they are now based in Edinburgh, the farm of ‘Binks’ is still in their hands and not far from Redheugh.

Yours sincerely,

Margaret Elliott of Redheugh

## VISITING THE 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](mailto:redheugh@btinternet.com)

## NOTICES AND NEWS ITEMS

### Nobel Prize Winner 2017

Richard Henderson, was born in 1945. A Molecular Biologist, who has received the Nobel Prize for Chemistry, went to primary school in Newcastleton and then Hawick High School. “I was brought up in the borders in Tweedmouth and then Newcastleton. I’m a Scottish country lad who benefited from the post-war academic selective system, Rab Butler’s 1944 Education Act. Many of my (intelligent) friends left school at 15 to work. My parents received a £50 grant from the government to encourage them to encourage me to stay on in the education system after age 15, which I did.”

### The inaugural Collie Games



Margaret Elliott at The Collie Games in Australia 2017.



*Sir Gerald Elliot of Binks, 1923-2018. Former chairman of Christian Salvesen and great patron of the arts in Scotland. Trustee of Elliot Clan Society.*

# Sir Gerald Elliot of Binks

Sir Gerald Elliot, who has died aged 94, was a much respected leader of one of the oldest private companies in Scotland. He was chairman and chief executive of the mighty Christian Salvesen, the shipping, trawling and whaling business in Leith which was founded in 1872.

Sir Gerald and his wife Margaret were also enthusiastic supporters of the arts throughout Scotland. Their generosity ranged from national companies to Sistema Scotland, which develops children's orchestras and the Royal Botanic Gardens in Edinburgh.

In 2012 Sir Gerald and Lady Elliot were presented with the Prince of Wales Medal for Arts Philanthropy by Prince Charles. The citation concluded, "What stands out about the Elliots is not just the gratitude they've generated, but the affection." The principal of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, John Wallace added, "We hold the Elliots dear, as both donors and long-standing friends."

Gerald Henry Elliot was the son of Surgeon Captain J.S. Elliot RN and Magda Salvesen who was the daughter of Theodore Salvesen the chairman of the company. Sir Gerald attended Cargilfield Prep School and Marlborough College. In 1942 he joined the Indian Army and trained Indian soldiers at the Regimental Centre in Abbottabad. In 1946 he qualified as an interpreter in Urdu and was demobbed that year.

He then read PPE at New College, Oxford and met Margaret Whale, daughter of a prominent theologian. Despite her maiden name her family had no connection with whaling. Sir Gerald once explained, "Margaret comes from a Cornwall family and there aren't many whales in Cornwall."

In 1948 he joined Salvesen and became a partner in 1955.

He spent four seasons whaling in the forbidding seas of the Antarctic but in 1963 the firm ceased whaling and Sir Gerald was appointed managing director from 1973-81 and chairman from 1981 until his retirement in 1988.

Sir Gerald was also involved in the highly successful and fast expanding Forth Ports Authority of which he was chairman (1973-79).

Retirement proved active. He set up Archangels with Barry Sealey which advises emerging technological companies in Scotland. With Sir Alan Peacock he founded the think-tank David Hume Institute. Jane-Frances Kelly, its director comments, "It is no exaggeration to say that the Institute would likely not exist without his continued encouragement. Sir Gerald was a champion of allowing the evidence to speak for itself."

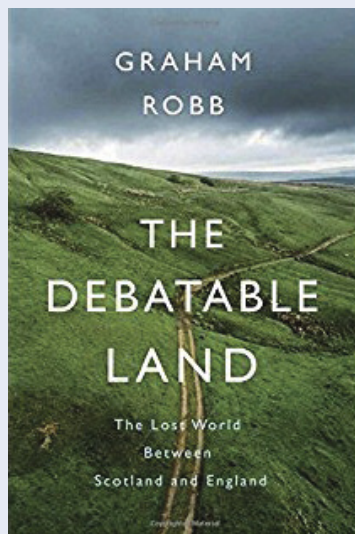
He was also an active member of the Royal Society of Edinburgh and served as its vice president.

"He and Lady Elliot supported both established and emerging artists through The Binks Trust and generously opened up their home to welcome visitors to the Festival. Sir Gerald was chairman of Scottish Opera (1987-1992), whose general director Alex Reedijk recalls, "Sir Gerald was a cultured and musically curious businessman who shared a deep love of the performing arts."

Sir Gerald was knighted in 1986, was a trustee of the Prince's Trust and served on the Court of Edinburgh University (1984-93).

He is survived by Lady Margaret, their three children, nine grandchildren and six great grandchildren. His eldest son, Jo, is now Trustee of the Elliot Clan Society.

## Book Review



*In 2010, the historian and biographer, Graham Robb, decided to leave his Oxford home for what he describes as “a lonely house on the very edge of England,” so close to the brink that Scotland begins where his land ends.*

# The Lost World between England and Scotland

This border, Graham Robb suggests, is probably the oldest national land boundary in Europe, little changed in its course since William Rufus, son of the Conqueror, made Cumbria an English colony in 1092. It marches along the watershed of the Cheviot hills and the valley of the Tweed, a diagonal that strikes north-east from the Solway Firth until it reaches the North Sea just above Berwick: a political boundary that looks as though nature intended it, for most of the way.

detectable territorial division in Great Britain,” with deep roots that predate the nations of Scotland and England and even the colonists of the Roman empire. According to Robb, the Debatable Land sits at the fulcrum of British history – a “missing piece in the puzzle,” the last part of Britain to be conquered and brought under the control of the state. These claims sound extravagant, but the author builds a persuasive case for them in a book that recounts his six-year



*Liddesdale: Walter Scott described it as ‘wild and inaccessible.’  
Photograph: Alamy Stock Photo.*

Only at its western end is the geography less helpful. There, until the anomaly was resolved in the mid-16th century, the boundary split into two to encircle an area of 50 square miles that belonged to neither side, known as the Debatable Land. Three rivers, the Liddel, Esk and Sark, ran at its edges and it had sea access along a mile of Solway coast.

Confusingly, its name has its origins in the old English word “battable”, meaning pastureland fit to fatten cattle, rather than in arguments over its ownership. Graham Robb asserts that it represents “the oldest

investigation into the history of his new surroundings in Liddesdale, the valley of the Liddel.

Graham Robb has a good eye for the small and seemingly ordinary things that convey a sense of remoteness – of place and time.

The young Walter Scott, reaching Liddesdale from north of the border on a ruin-inspecting and ballad-collecting trip in 1792, described it as a “wild and inaccessible district” that had once been “the bloodiest valley in Britain.” Scott represented modernity: he arrived in the first wheeled vehicle that many people  
*(continued on page 4)*





in Liddesdale had ever seen, at which they “stared with no small wonder.” But what he was after was the pre-modern, the violent romance of long-vanished Border reivers and moss-troopers, which his writing soon implanted in the imagination of Europe.

Sorting out the fact from the fiction in this history is one of Graham Robb’s tasks. He tackles some serious misconceptions about the borderland; the notion, for example, that a borderer must have been, at heart, either English or Scottish; and that the Debatable Land was “the unviable remnant of an otherwise extinct world.” In fact, the border clans such as the Armstrongs, Elliots and Grahams were far from proto-nationalists; they were brigands and cattle thieves loyal only to themselves and their surname. And yet neither were they savages held in check by two nations: they had in the middle ages what Graham Robb calls a “fully developed, indigenous legal system” distinct from the laws passed in Edinburgh and London. The reivers could certainly be bloodthirsty – they are popularly supposed to be the origin of the word “bereaved” – but their Border law, with its code of punishment and compensation, might have helped keep the borderland as a buffer zone between two rival powers. In particular, it preserved the Debatable Land as a place devoted to cattle grazing, free of conflict because human settlement was forbidden, until

the moral order broke down in the 16th century and the invading Armstrongs, Elliots and Grahams imported their traditions of butchery.

A document of 1249 describes this local system of justice as “ancient as lovable customs,” and Graham Robb speculates that then and for some time after it might have been “the last and still lively remnant of the remote period when the post-Roman kingdoms of Strathclyde and Northumbria had straddled the future frontier.” Later, he decides that the origins of the Debatable Land stretch back even before that time, to its role as a trysting place for three Celtic tribes, the Damnonii, the Votadini and the Selgovae, whose territories meet at this point.

By now, Graham Robb’s quest, which began as a mild curiosity about his new whereabouts, has developed into a professional obsession. He intercuts the past and present, the intimate and the impersonal, to wonderful effect. Few authors write so well about things lost and neglected – or have such sharp ears and eyes for the natural world.

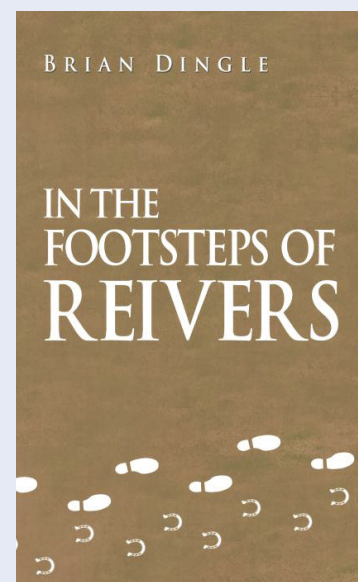


Graham Robb. Photo by Murdo Macleod for the Guardian.

## In the Footsteps of Reivers

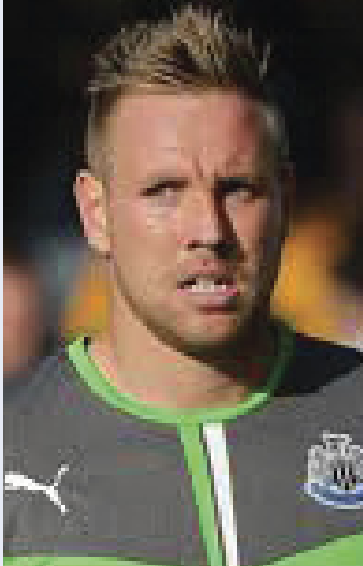
A book by Brian Dingle.  
published by Olympia  
Publishers, £16.99.

*There are so many hidden ruins historic sites in the Borders, and this book attempts to bring them all together. There are endless castles and monuments and the characters and stories that went with them not only describe an area of lawlessness but how the Borderers lived and died. As a reader, I would have appreciated a map marking the relevant positions to make it easier to follow ‘in their footsteps.’*



Brian Dingle was born in Newcastle and raised in Northumberland, close to the Scottish Border. He is descended, on his paternal grandmother’s side from the Elliots, a notable reiving family. They now live near Lanark in Scotland.

## Professional Footballer, Rob Elliot



Born in 1986, Rob Elliot is goalkeeper for Premier League club Newcastle United and the Republic of Ireland national team.

## Charlotte Elliott 1789-1871

Charlotte Elliott was the 3rd daughter of Charles Elliot and Eling Venn descended from the Elliotts of Stobs line. Her childhood was happy and she was highly educated. At an early age she developed a great passion for music and art and was deeply religious. Her first 32 years of life was spent in Clapham and was gifted as a portrait artist and writer of humorous verse until a severe sickness in 1821 rendered her an invalid for the rest of her life. She wrote about 150 hymns and many poems of which the best-known one "Just as I am, without one plea."

*Just as I am, without one plea,  
But that Thy blood was shed for me,  
And that Thou bid'st me come to Thee,  
O Lamb of God, I come! I come!*

*Just as I am, and waiting not  
To rid my soul of one dark blot;  
To Thee whose blood can cleanse  
each spot,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!*

*Just as I am, though tossed about  
With many a conflict, many a doubt;  
Fightings within, and fears without,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!*



*Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind;  
Sight, riches, healing of the mind;  
Yes, all I need, in Thee to find,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!*

*Just as I am, Thou wilt receive,  
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse,  
relieve;  
Because Thy promise I believe,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!*

*Just as I am, Thy love unknown  
Has broken every barrier down;  
Now, to be Thine, yea, Thine alone,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!*

## \$50 Reward for Walter Elliott

Who broke jail at Flagstaff, Coconino County, Arizona, on 3 March 1901. Description: age 23; height, 5 feet 10, weight, about 160 pounds, dark complexion, brown hair, grayish brown squinty eyes. Has a habit of looking at a person with eyes partly closed, to give an impression that he is trying to appear to have a great penetration. Small features, thin faced, smooth shaven. Is slim-built. He is a native of Texas; has decided southern accent. Talks good Mexican or Spanish. Smokes cigarettes constantly. He wore, when escaped, dark brown suit, small check; small round soft black hat; light black shoes, narrow toes; light shirt, ribbed underwear. Will probably change to cowboy dress, as he is a cowboy by profession. Has pimples on back of neck, caused by blood disorder.

Was freshly vaccinated, left arm, when escaped. Walks rather straight, with head stooped, as if looking at feet; swings shoulders a little in walking. If in town will drink whisky. Gambles at craps and stud poker. Has a habit of going with coat and vest unbuttoned. This man Elliott is of the cheap bad man type, and will associate with toughs if in town. Is capable of doing anything if he has the advantage. Has lived in New Mexico, and has relatives there. He is charged with highway robbery, committed in Williams, Arizona and is certain of conviction if caught.

*I will pay the above reward for his arrest and detention in any jail or for any information leading to his arrest. Wire information to this office at my expense. JAMES A JOHNSON, Sheriff. Flagstaff, Arizona, March 10, 1901.*



