

Highland games: Thousands of lads and lasses converge on Thomas Point Beach **By Roxanne Moore Saucier** **Of the NEWS Staff**

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Carrying lawn chairs, sun hats and large appetites, thousands of lads and lasses made their way down the road to Thomas Point Beach on Saturday. After all, the pipes were calling lovers of all things Scot to the 22nd Maine Highland Games in Brunswick.

For all there was to see and do and taste, the bagpipes claimed the lion's share of attention whenever a group of players pushed air through the innards of the long-armed instruments. Nearly every band tackled the most familiar Scottish tune in these parts, "Scotland, the Brave."

Just before 11 a.m., the bands and family representatives lined up for the parade of clans and historic Highlanders. Right behind the Dunlap Highland Band - with pipers in red kilts, drummers in blue and green - came the youngest group of musicians.

Clad in brown plaid kilts and gray-green shirts, the Colonial Pipers comprised mostly youngsters in a band formed as a youth program.

Thirteen-year-old Ryan Sullivan, whose ancestors resided on that other island - Ireland - started out drumming at Norton Middle School in Norton, Mass. He's been with the Colonial Pipers for a year, and is glad he joined the group that travels around to perform at a variety of events.

"It's fun," he asserted. "You get to do stuff."

One of the most eye-catching bands may have been the Anah Temple Highlanders from Bangor, wearing red kilts.

The field drum major for the day's ceremonies drew lots of attention afterward from people wanting a handshake or a hug, and especially a picture with the bearded man in the tall, black-plumed hat. The fans had not a clue about his business roots, his tenure as Bangor's mayor or fondness for hockey arenas.

Being a drum major has its advantages, **W. Tom Sawyer** acknowledged. "It's the great clothes." He has Scottish ancestry, but not the MacIntosh of the kilt the Anah Temple band wore Saturday.

"Mine's Lancaster," he explained of the tartan he would don later in the day.

Behind the bands came representatives of the 63 clans on site, from Bruce and Grant to Hamilton, Lindsay, MacAulay, MacLachlan, Morrison, Sinclair and Sutherland.

Occupying small tents on the rim of the parade grounds, the clans and the Saint Andrews Societies of each New England state welcomed browsers - especially children who had picked up a "passport" booklet in which to collect the stamped crest of each clan.

A young harpist in the Clan Young tent proved strings could soothe what the pipes had stimulated. Those who stopped by seemed to relax under the flow of light notes.

Over in the Dunbar tent, New England "clan chieftan" and Vermont genealogist William Budde, graciously answered questions about accessories to his red-and-green kilts. The tags on his stockings? "Flashes" of color. The small knife? A "skene dhus."

Budde was pleased to be displaying a copy of a rare version of the Dunbar family crest, one shared with him by a Maine woman, Donna Dunbar Hoffmann of Bucksport.

For the serious researcher, Edinburgh genealogist Robert Starrett held court in a nook next to the family history tent.

Starrett, the son of a Nova Scotian father and Massachusetts mother, went to the University of Edinburgh several years ago and stayed in the homeland. Genealogists cover a broad range of experience, he explained.

"Some are quite sophisticated, other people just have a name," he said.

A person's forebears were not always of the same mind, he continued. "My Nova Scotian dad's 'New England planter' ancestors took lands his Acadian ancestors had been put off of - I embody them both."

The Mallars of Bangor know the feeling. Sonia, regent of Frances Dighton Williams Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, came to Saturday's event as a McDonald descendant.

Husband Wayne Mallar, attending his fourth Maine games Saturday, said he likes to remind his wife that his Scottish and German ancestors both fought for the British during that war.

"I come here to see the people, listen to the music, have a good time," he said.

Mallar - whose ancestors in Saint Andrews, New Brunswick, were Mallochs, a sept of the MacGregor clan - wore a peasant shirt and orange-and-green kilt Saturday.

It wasn't the most familiar MacGregor tartan, he conceded. "The MacGregors have four tartans - this is the ancient one."

To see the MacGregor hunting tartan - in burgundy and green - one only had to stop by the thatch of lawn occupied by Light of the Night Weaving. Owner Terry Pierson was wearing the hunting kilt with pouch - called the sporran - fashioned from badger pelt.

The colors in hunting kilts seem a bit toned down, he said, no doubt to avoid being spotted by animals.

Pierson doesn't make kilts, but weaves blankets, sashes and rugs on several of the six looms he owns, including one that had belonged to his Swedish grandmother. Elsie Pierson had taught her grandson to make rag rugs when he was 10 years old, and now he's been weaving for more than three decades.

Terry Pierson manages an office for a construction company, but has a special fondness for crafts such as one that nearly died out - weaving in one piece a blanket that has one tartan on one side, another on the reverse. He said such treasures were often made as wedding gifts, combining the heritage of husband and wife.

Pierson had heard of a Scotsman in his 80s who still did such work years ago, but is under the impression that he didn't pass that knowledge on to an apprentice.

"It took me a year and a half to figure out" a way to weave such pieces, he said. Pierson has shown his work at events such as the games throughout New England and New York, and hopes one day to visit his homelands of Scotland and Sweden.

Over on the athletic grounds, participants wore kilts, shorts or pants to toss the long pole known as the caber, or throw blocks of iron weighing 28 or 56 pounds. Come afternoon, the ladies stepped up to throw rolling pins or toss packages of haggis - the Scottish dish containing organs of a sheep or calf.

Other events held around the 64-acre park included putting the stone, highland dancing and piping. Highland dancing has become so popular that it draws participants regardless of heritage.

"My parents are Welsh and Danish," pointed out Grace Thorne of Dalton, Mass. Thorne, a 16-year-old with braided hair, was making her first trip to the Maine games for beginner competitions in lilt, fling, chanteruse and sword dance, among others. Her teacher, Maria Josenhans, also competed in the experienced category.

Thorne discovered Highland dancing by attending a lesson with a young girl from her church. "I fell in love with it," she said.

Watching all that strenuous activity seemed to make spectators hungry. Long lines formed at the Scottish Pies and Fish & Chips booths, and pizza sold well, too. So did delectable scones, Scottish shortbreads, other types of cookies and all manner of candy.

Some participants brought their own food for picnics under the trees, while children spent their energy at the playground or splashed along the bonny, bonny banks of Thomas Bay on the New Meadows River.

Trophies, fun and family connections were not the only product of the day's events.

Proceeds will benefit the scholarship fund for children and adults taking classes in fiddling, harp playing, piping, chanting, the Gaelic language and other Scottish arts. Those receiving scholarships this year come from towns such as Lincoln, Mount Desert, Lebanon, Union and Chelsea.

The Saint Andrew's Society of Maine organizes the annual games, and for six years the chairmanship has alternated between this year's director, Lorraine Montgomery of Rumford, and husband Jim.

Regular participants include members such as Milford resident Edd Johnston, who has been on hand for 21 years - first staffing the tent for Clan Johnstone, now helping visitors to the family history tent to look for their Scottish lines.

His wife, Jean Marie Boddy-Johnston, stopped by the genealogical sessions to pick up tips on looking for her MacDonalds and McKeens and Sutherlands. There's something special about the Maine Highland Games, she said: "It's the atmosphere."

For information on the Saint Andrew's Society of Maine, write P.O. Box Drawer 2810, Augusta 04338-2810. For information on Terry Pierson's Scottish and Swedish weaving, call (603) 569-3258 or write Light of the Night Weaving, P.O. Box 147, Wolfeboro, NH 03896.