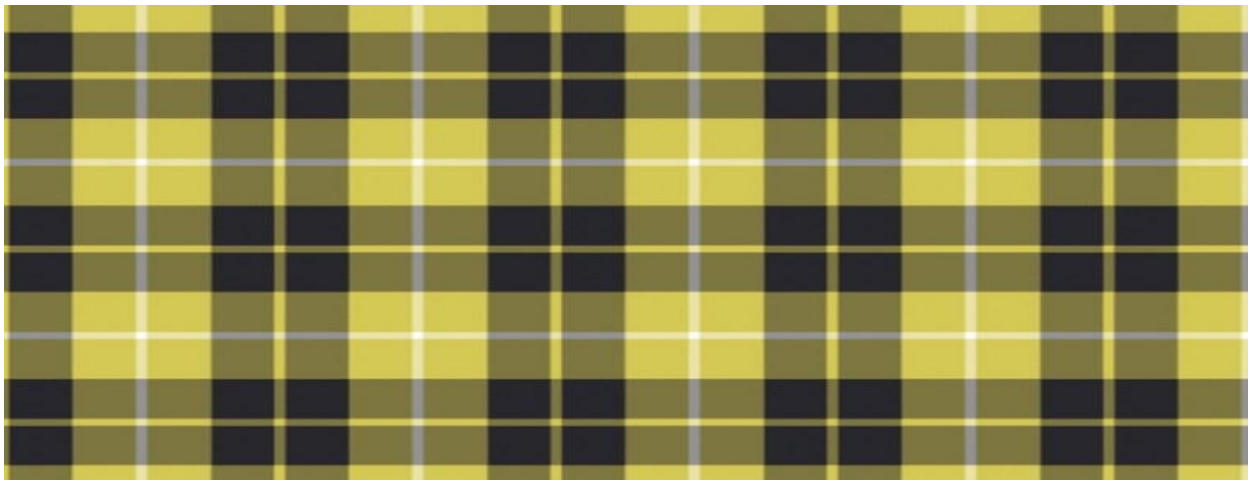
**Clan Barclay International** Newsletter
*Aut Agere Aut Mori*

# Barclay Broadside

March 2023



Greetings Clan Barclay! Here are a few items you may want to note on your calendar:

**THE CAPTAIN BARCLAY ALLARDICE SOCIETY (1779 to 1854)**
OSCR Charity Number SC044662
(registered as a charity by the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator on 13 February 2014)

The Trustees: Anne Macdonald, Humphrey Barclay, Desmond Cheyne

**YOUR INVITATION to a WALK FOR CHARITY at BALMORAL CASTLE , ROYAL DEESIDE ,**

**SUNDAY 21 MAY 2023 from 11am**

BY THE GRACIOUS PERMISSION of HM THE KING

AND with the KIND ASSISTANCE of R. R. GLEDSON Esq. RESIDENT FACTOR,

ORGANISED by THE TRUSTEES of THE CAPTAIN BARCLAY ALLARDICE SOCIETY (1779 to 1854).

THE WALKS will take you through the GLORIOUS SCENERY of UPPER DEESIDE along some of the BALMORAL ESTATE private roads and tracks . CHOICE of THREE CIRCULAR WALKS of approximately 5 MILES , 11 MILES and 15 MILES. ALL ROUTES START and FINISH at BALMORAL CASTLE. THE TEAROOM and TOILET facilities will be available to participants.

SUGGESTED DONATION of £20 per person and £10 per child for children under 16. DONATIONS will be to THE PRINCE'S TRUST. (NO NEED to OBTAIN SPONSORS). SHORTER WALKS AVAILABLE ALONG THE BANKS of the RIVER DEE and to VIEW THE ROYAL HERD of HIGHLAND PONIES. BRING A PICNIC to the PICNIC from 2pm.

EVENT COORDINATOR - ANNE MACDONALD.

PLEASE CONTACT ANNE MADONALD by email at a.mcdonald0775@googlemail.com for more information about the walk, to obtain your ticket to attend the event and to obtain directions to the parking area. All persons intending to take part in the walk and picnic must please register by email with Anne Macdonald by Saturday 13 May 2023 .

The Towie Pipe Band, led by our very own Drum Major Bill Barclay, will be at the following gatherings in Scotland in summer 2023:

- ➔ Oldmeldrum Sports: 17 June
- ➔ Forres Games: 8 July
- ➔ Dufftown Games: 29 July
- ➔ Aboyne Games: 5 August
- ➔ Ballater Games: 10 August
- ➔ Lonach Gathering: 26 August

See Bill Barclay and the Towie Pipe Band at this link!

I am beginning to put together the plans for a Barclay Family History Tour beginning in London and going through Scotland. Who wants to join us? If you think you might have an interest and want to be kept informed as the plans develop, please contact me at leah@clanbarclayinternational.org. Please let me know how many people would be in your group. I had originally thought I would try to organize this for 2023. However, since I know we would like to visit Towie Barclay Castle, and it is unknown who will own it in 2023, I think it is wise to wait until 2024. I will announce any updates as they come along. Thank you to everyone who has been in touch to express interest!

If you would like to share birth, marriage, or death announcements for your Barclay kin that you may want to see published in the *Barclay Broadside*, send them to me at leah@clanbarclayinternational.org.

Yours aye,

Leah

# Filidh's Feature

*Filidh /fɪlɪ/*– clan genealogist, historian, storyteller, poet
By Tim Barclay

## Towie Barclay Castle

Towie Barclay Castle in 1963 [Canmore, SC 1587535]

The construction of the castle of Towie-Barclay, lying just north of the Ythan water, is commemorated by a plaque on the castle wall bearing the date 1593. The castle and manor of Towie is mentioned in 1559, but whether this was the present sixteenth-century L-plan tower house or an earlier structure on the site, is unclear. Regardless, Towie-Barclay is one of a group of four contemporary Aberdeenshire castles (Craig, Delgaty, and Gight are the others), almost certainly the work of the same master mason, and the groined vaulting is very similar to that at Balbegno, In Kincardineshire, dated to 1569.

Possession of the castle and estate by the Barclays ended around c.1680, when Elizabeth Barclay, daughter of Patrick V Barclay of Towie, married John Gordon of Rothiemay. Their children adopted the surname Barclay in

consideration of an entail made upon the estate and, following the marriage of Elizabeth and John's heiress daughter, Elizabeth, to Sir Alexander Innes of Coxton, her husband and children were obliged to do likewise. Sir Alexander died in 1715 and the estate then passed to his son, Sir Alexander Barclay (Innes), who had by his first wife, Helen Duff, a daughter Jean (wife of Dr. Robert Dalrymple), and by his second wife, Jean Ogilvie, another daughter, Isabel. Jean Barclay (Innes) died just a year after her marriage to Dr Dalrymple in 1745 without heirs, leaving Isabel, married to Charles Maitland, to inherit the Towie-Barclay estate. The castle was sold by them in 1752 to the Earl of Findlater, who later sold it to Gordon's College and the Royal Infirmary of Aberdeen in 1792 for 21000. The new proprietors removed the turrets and embrasures and upper two stories and filled in the surrounding ditch filled up. These features were reinstated during the restoration of the castle by Marc and Karen Ellington, who won a Saltire Award for their work in 1973.

## Living in Towie Barclay Castle

By Karen Ellington

In 1969 Marc and I started our search for a castle to restore in Scotland. At that time Marc was very much pursuing his music career and we were living in London. At every opportunity we drove up to Scotland to continue our search following the advice of Nigel Tranter - author of "The Fortified Houses in Scotland" x 5 vol. who became a great friend and mentor. He drew up a list of the best possibilities for us to pursue. Towie Barclay was always our first choice but at that time the owners were unwilling to sell.

We continued our search without success until 1971 when we contacted the owners of Towie Barclay once again and finally after many attempts they agreed to sell to us. We were delighted and in September of that year we took ownership.

We booked into a local Bed and Breakfast initially and contacted an Architect in Banff nearby who drew up the plans of the existing ruin which had been reduced in size from 4 stories to two in 1792. No one had lived in the Castle since that time, and the ruin was in a dangerous and perilous state. With no experience of building or garden restoration we were certain we would be able to do a good job and focused on retaining the historic integrity and character of the building.

Towie Barclay Castle | Courtesy: Leah Parker

We obtained the necessary permissions and commenced work in 1972 with great enthusiasm, which carried us through to this day. The restoration of the existing 2 floors was completed in 2 years, after which time we commenced laying the lawns and restoring the formal walled garden. We were undaunted by the scale of the required work and studied all aspects of the subject as we went along.

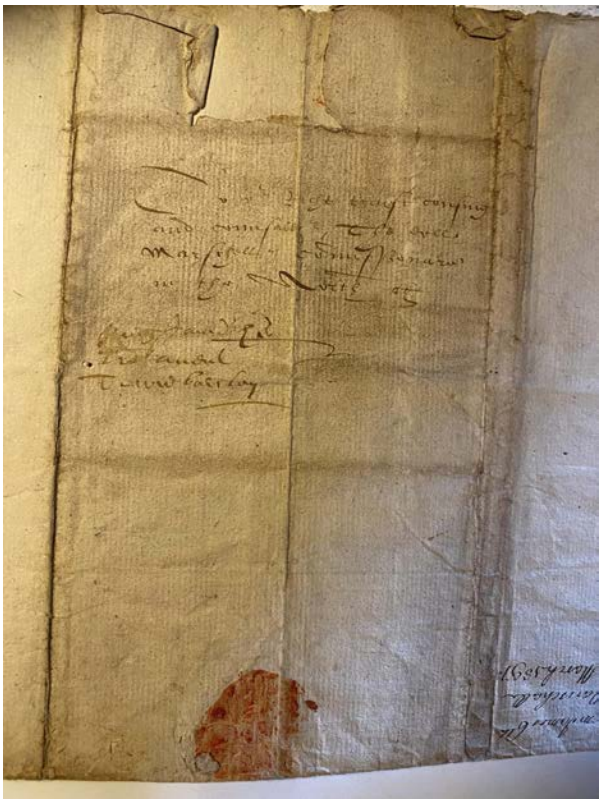
In 1975 we decided to rebuild the top two floors which had been demolished in the 18th century. The design was based on similar Castles built originally by the same masons. Permission was granted for us to proceed and by late 1976 most of the work was completed.

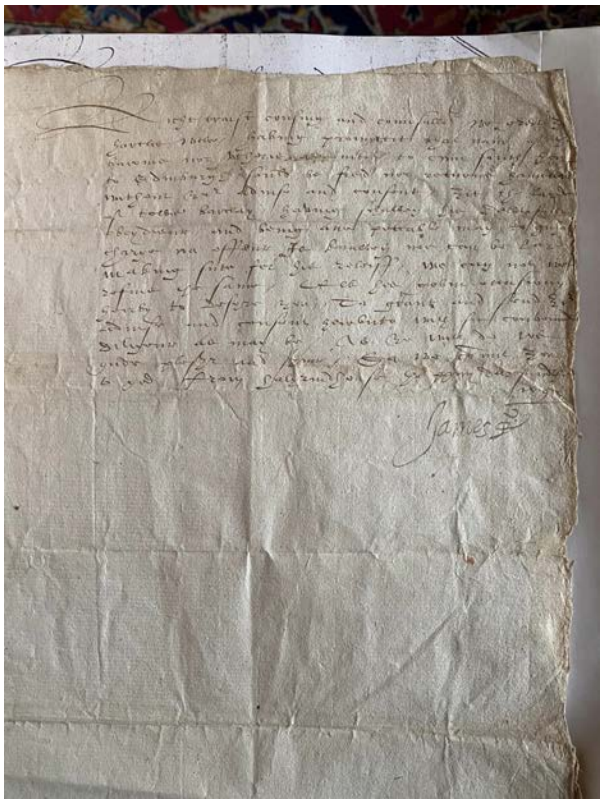
Our first daughter Iona was born in 1979 followed by Kirstie 3 years later. When they were old enough we gave them lessons on crawling up the down the spiral stair which gave them the skill to be safe and respectful of it. When they were in their teens we moved them up to the top floor which they greatly enjoyed.

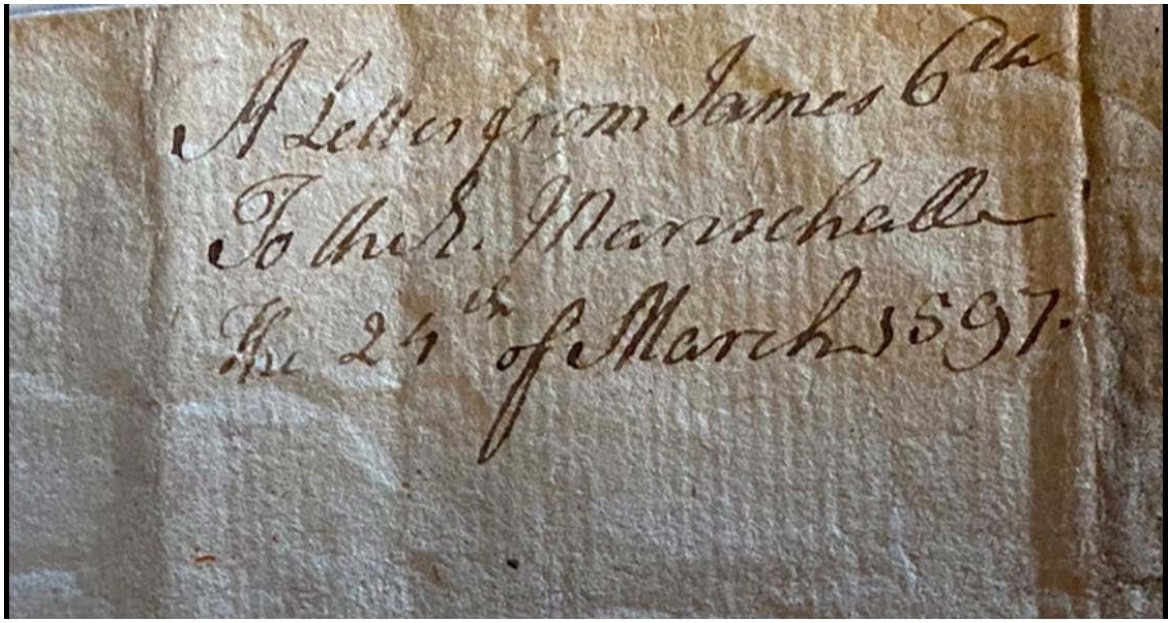
After the girls left home Marc converted their bedrooms into a recording studio. We produced many records using backing musicians from the area as well as importing friends from Fairport Convention to contribute to the recordings. We also produced over 400 radio programmes for BP which were broadcast to their oil installations in the North Sea.

Stairs in the Castle | Courtesy: Leah Parker

Over the years since our London days in the 60s we have collected antiques, the most interesting of which is the letter signed by King James VI of Scotland allowing safe passage for Patrick Barclay to return to Scotland. We concentrated mainly on collecting period oak furniture made in Scotland which very much enhances the building, especially the Great Hall.








Hand-Written Letter of Safe Passage from King James VI of Scotland for Patrick Barclay of Towie Barclay Castle Dated 24 March 1597 | Courtesy: Leah Parker

Barclay Crest on Ceiling of the Great Hall | Courtesy: Leah Parker

Portrait of James VI of Scotland, I of England, in the Great Hall | Courtesy: Leah Parker

Crest of James VI of Scotland, I of England, on Ceiling of the Great Hall | Courtesy: Leah Parker

The unique and magnificent nature of the Great Hall makes it our favourite room. It is the perfect room for all occasions, and has served us well during our time here. Everything from the girls' Christenings in the Minstrels gallery with water from the nearby River Ythan, to visits from The Queen Mother as well as the then Prince Charles. Great memories to cherish forever.

Marc Ellington in His Haven, the Great Hall | Courtesy: Karen Ellington

Minstrels Gallery in the Great Hall | Courtesy: Leah Parker

Extraordinary Ceiling of the Great Hall | Courtesy: Leah Parker

Marc Ellington Hosting (then) Prince Charles at the Castle circa 2012 | Courtesy: Karen Ellington

It was always our wish to return the Castle to a Barclay family member after our time here.  The Castle has been an amazing journey with priceless memories.

# Message from the the Maor

*Maor*/mɯːr/– clan factor (doer/maker), supervisor, officer
By Leah Parker, MAEd

## Thank You, Karen!

On behalf of Clan Barclay, I want to express deepest gratitude to Marc and Karen Ellington for bringing Towie Barclay Castle back to life, their faithful stewardship through the years, and their gracious hospitality to Barclays from around the world. I also thank Karen for writing this lovely piece and for giving permission to share these extraordinary photos from the castle.

Enjoying Coffee with Karen in the Castle Kitchen in September 2022 | Courtesy: Leah Parker

**Clan Barclay International**

Be in touch: leah@clanbarclayinternational.org
Visit our website: www.clanbarclayinternational.org
Explore the Barclay Surname Project at FTDNA:
https://www.familytreedna.com/groups/clanbarclayproject/about/background
Join the conversation at our Facebook Group:
www.facebook.com/groups/clanbarclayinternational
Follow us on Twitter: https://twitter.com/Clan_Barclay
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