Clan Barclay International Newsletter
Aut Agere Aut Mori

Barclay Broadside

December 2022

Message from the the Maor

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

Greetings Clan Barclay! 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 may be wise to wait until 2024. I will announce any updates as they come along.

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.

Finally, I want to wish you all a very merry holiday season and a happy and healthy 2023!

Yours aye,

Leah

Holiday Greetings!

Holiday Greetings from Chief Peter Barclay of Towie and of that Ilk

Greetings to all members of Clan Barclay. My very best wishes for Christmas and for a happy and peaceful New year.

Yours aye,

Chief Peter

Original Artwork Holiday Greetings from [Humphrey John Barclay, Chief of Barclay of Mathers and Urie]

Ardrossan Castle

By Leah Parker, MAEd

In the October edition of the *Barclay Broadside*, I highlighted the recent opportunity I had to visit Berkeley Castle in Gloucestershire, England. Accompanied by my husband and Humphrey Barclay, we had the honor of being hosted for a private tour by the current owner, Charles Berkeley. The Scottish Barclays have an ancient connection to the Berkeley family. The Berkeley family, which still occupies Berkeley Castle, descends from Alice de Berkeley and her husband Maurice Fitz Robert Fitz Harding, whose descendants took the Berkeley name. The Scottish Barclays descend from Alice's brother Roger IV de Berkeley. Siblings Alice de Berkeley and Rober IV de Berkeley were born most likely in the late 1140s. Roger IV de Berkeley had a son, Roger V de Berkeley, who had a son Roger VI de Berkeley, who had sons Hugh, Donald, and Walter de Berkeley. As our clan *filidh*, Tim Barclay, explained in the August edition of the *Barclay Broadside*, "Donald certainly, and Walter very probably, died in their father's lifetime, leaving Hugh to succeed to all his parents' lands…." It was Hugh who then went to Scotland and eventually became Justiciar of Lothian and the progenitor of the Scottish Barclays.

Chronologically speaking, Ardrossan Castle was the next castle in history to enjoy significance to the Barclays. This castle, now a ruin, is located on the west coast of Scotland on a hill in Ardrossan with views of the sea and surrounding land.

The following is reprinted from the Winter 2004 edition of the *Barclay Broadside* and was excerpted from an article that appeared in the July/August 2003 *Highlander*.

When King David I took the Scottish throne in 1124, he was already well connected in English court circles, since his wife was an English countess. David thought his country would benefit from an English influence, so he welcomed to Scotland 1,000 Anglo-Normans, most of noble birth. These families were given the homes and lands of "malcontents," Scottish subjects who spoke against David and whom he saw as a threat. In this way, David installed for himself a supportive and grateful populace, but he also sowed the seeds of bitterness for a displaced group of Scots who did not accept the incomers. Established Scottish names such as Eaglesham and Lauderdale were lost to the new fashionable Norman names, such as de Barclay and de Montgomerie.

In 1140, a Richard de Barclay was the first recorded lord of the castle of Ardrossan, built on a rocky headland on the Clyde estuary. The name Ardrossan is from the Gaelic for a small high rocky headland, suggesting that the place was already known and inhabited by the native Celts before the Barclays arrived. These de Barclays were the same de Berkeleys who had arrived from Normandy with William the Conqueror.

Richard de Barclay and his court settled in the castle of Ardrossan which occupied the summit of the hill known as Castle Craigs. Now a ruin, it was a fine castle in its day, built around a central courtyard and with exterior walls up to eleven feet thick. There was a grand Norman arch and two towers. The splendid Gothic fireplace which graced the main hall can still be seen suspended on the remaining wall of the derelict castle, a reminder of past glory. Ardrossan Castle was defended to the west and south by the sea and to the north and east by a dry moat which was crossed by a drawbridge. The castle was notable for two things. First, for the incredible views over the Firth of Clyde to the

islands of Arran, Cumbrea, Ailsa Craig, Horse Island and on a clear day to Jura and Kintyre, and along the coast to Ayr to the south and Largs to the North. This gave the castle strategic benefits since the Norsemen were still plundering the islands of the west of Scotland at this time.

View of the Firth of Clyde through an Arch of Ardrossan Castle | Courtesy: Leah Parker

Spotting Modern Ardrossan through an Ancient Window | Courtesy: Leah Parker

Richard de Barclay was an important man, acting as a signatory on the charter of Kilwinning Abbey; there are several records of him acting as overseer in disputes among neighboring lords and judging squabbles between the local people, mostly over cattle and land ownership.

As the century progressed, resentment against the English grew and a popular uprising developed as increasingly more noblemen, farmers, craftsmen and serfs began to seek independence from the English influence and control.

It is notable that Richard called himself de Ardrossan, a title which makes it clear that he owns the land of Ardrossan. This is in marked contrast to the highland chiefs such as MacLeod of MacLeod, or MacDonald of MacDonald, whose names showed they were leaders of their people, not owners of the land. This change in the status of the

leaders of people had a huge social and political ramifications for centuries to come.

In 1296, Godfrey of Ardrossan, a kinsman of Richard, swore allegiance to Edward of England, and an English family was installed in the castle. This move was not welcomed by the popular leader of the growing independence movement, one William Wallace, known as “Braveheart.” Wallace and his men visited Ardrossan in the dead of night and set fire to a row of houses within site of the castle. The unsuspecting English guards ran to help, and “Wallace, with a well-armed company, kills every mother’s son and forthwith forces ye castell and wins it. In a deep vault in ye bottom of ye red tower he threw the carcasses of these englich, which to this day has the name Wallace’s larder” (Timothy Pont, 1605).

Following Wallace’s victory at Stirling Bridge in 1297, he was joined by two brothers of Ardrossan, Fergus and Robert, who were reputed to be excellent and loyal knights. In fact, at the time, Fergus was seen as “Ane night rycht courageous” (a very courageous knight). Following Wallace’s death, the two brothers were captured and imprisoned in English castles. A group of Ayrshire men attempted to release them by appealing to Edward, but he refused.

While the brothers were being held captive, Hugh de Ardrossan, possibly the son of Fergus, took possession of the castle by siding with Edward. Hugh’s loyalty to Edward may not have been what it seemed because five days after he took charge of the castle of Ardrossan, he was fined the huge sum of the value of his lands plus three year’s rent. Fergus and Robert were released and reinstated in the castle in 1312, and were given even more land. Edward by now obviously saw Fergus as an ally. It would appear that the de Ardrossan family held no true allegiance and supported both sides as power shifted from one side to the other. This could be seen as a shrewd way to hold onto power and their castle, or an act of treachery and self-interest.

As Robert the Bruce became the rallying point for the national spirit, the de Ardrossan family gave no support to his fight for independence until the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314. Again, the family made sure they were on the winning side. After Bruce’s victory, the Ardrossan family kept their land when Bruce disinherited many of the nobility he saw as his enemy.

Fergus became Baron of Ardrossan and fought alongside Robert the Bruce in the quest for a free Scotland. He remained loyal to Robert the Bruce and joined him in signing the Declaration of Arbroath in 1320. This monumental document was signed and sealed by thirty-eight influential Scottish noblemen, and delivered to the all-powerful pope, who still did not accept Scotland's right to self-determination. The Declaration of Arbroath is seen by some historians as an influence and inspiration for the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States.

Fergus of Ardrossan had put his name to the most important document in Scottish history and received from Robert the Bruce a charter granting him the lands of Ardrossan and an assurance that his heirs would inherit the land and title. Bruce saw Fergus as a "well-beloved and faithful Baron."

More about Baron Fergus Barclay de Ardrossan, According to the [Ardrossan Castle Heritage Society] | Courtesy: Leah Parker

By the 1650's, castles such as Ardrossan were no longer the strongholds they once were since they could not withstand gunfire and artillery. The castle was destroyed, reputedly by Oliver Comwell, and many of the stones and structures were removed by ship to Ayr to build a citadel for the Earl of Eglinton. The Kirk of the castle was blown down by a severe Atlantic storm in 1691, and by 1874 cattle were grazing around the once proud castle amongst the graves.

The Ruins of Ardrossan Castle Today | Courtesy: Leah Parker

To put the history of the Barclays of Ardrossan and later Scottish Barclays succinctly, Richard de Berkeley, brother of William, came to Ardrossan in the 1100's. He was the first Berkeley/Barclay in Scotland. William had sons Robert and Walter (by his first marriage) and daughter Agatha (by his second marriage). This family was here for some generations before becoming extinct (at least in the male line). Other de Berkeleys, descendants of Roger III through his 3X great-grandson, Hugh the Justiciary of Lothian, came to Scotland later but went elsewhere. Hugh is the Barclay from whom all the main lines of Scottish Barclays descend.

Clan Barclay International

Be in touch: leah@clanbarclayinternational.org
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