

# The Tartan Telegraph



Iseaki, Japan in August 2008

## Celtic Connections

By J. Beau Buffington

Autumn is finally here in the Ozarks. Yet, as I stared down the long hallway connecting Summer and Fall this past July, I could hardly imagine life on the other side. There were too many unknowns for my cognitive map to even attempt plotting a course. It was only after the trip to Japan and the conclusion of the Celtic Festival in Buffalo that I began to appreciate the fact that *Amazing Grace*, the most popular tune for bagpipes by far (and also one easily taken for granted by bagpipers) is an excellent metaphor for things working out in spite our best intents and efforts. Or to put it another way,

“The best laid schemes o’ mice and men / Gang aft a-gley.”

Several days before leaving for Springfield’s Japanese Sister-city with Celtic Fire Irish dance company and Pat’s Clogging Studios in early August, I played for a funeral at the Missouri Veteran’s Cemetery. It wasn’t until a day or two later that I received a sickening email indicating that, by some strange coincidence, I had played at the *wrong* funeral! In over 20 years of performing for events and ceremonies over the entire state of Missouri, I have never gotten lost or even mixed up about where I needed to be, in spite of

the fact that I have played in some pretty remote locations! Possibly I had so much on my mind before the trip, I had overlooked the fact that the ‘Veteran’s Cemetery’ referred to by the woman who originally contacted me meant the *National Cemetery* on South Glenstone and NOT the Missouri Veteran’s Cemetery near Springfield Lake, where I have played many services in the past. It was only in hindsight that I discovered that technically there are two veteran’s cemeteries in Springfield. In this case, it was a full military service complete with four military branches represented, a gun salute, a canned rendition of taps

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### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Mark Your Calendar Now!

#### Saturday, October 25

Society Halloween party at Champ’s House

#### Saturday, October 25

Ceilidh in Harrison, Arkansas

#### Saturday, November 1

Kirkin’ of the Tartans and Annual meeting at Westminster Presbyterian Church

#### Tuesday, December 9

Boys of the Lough

West Plains Civic Center

#### Saturday, January 17, 2009

Burns Supper

Double Tree Hotel, Springfield, Missouri

#### Saturday, January 24, 2009

Tannahill Weavers

Lyric Theatre, Harrison, AR

and a very live and apparently unexpected bagpiper. In any case, several days later we were on our way to the Land of the Rising Sun to perform at the Isesaki Summer Festival.

Our trip was interesting, but lots of work: a twelve hour flight followed by a four hour bus ride,



Photo © Kevin Dennis

carrying a temple shrine in the city parade, marching in a parade (me with bagpipes and a kilt) in the omnipresent Japanese heat and humidity, planning an hour performance that was cut on-the-fly down to 45 minutes, and walking the 209 steps of Nikko thru a medieval, Shinto monkey forest to the tomb of Emperor

Tokugawa in 45 minutes! It was a marathon dodging French, Italian and Japanese tourists and cameras whilst staying on the path and trying to frame photogenic moments of our own. Relaxing is not the word for the trip. It's the kind of vacation that I *almost* like to take: ready to get back to my real life and job so I can take a



Photo © Kevin Dennis

Back to real life, last week at Wilson's Creek School I introduced myself to another teacher as "Jason Buffington" and she inquired as to my relation to any other Buffingtons in the area. (Evidently, Barbara Buffington was a respected singer, teacher and administrator for many years in

the Springfield school district). By some coincidence, her sister is married to Jason Buffington, Barbara's son and my namesake. I commented that it was interesting to finally almost meet the person that I have been confused with for years whenever I check out a book or a video. She added, "Apparently, there's another guy, too. Jason always gets these calls and he has no idea what they're talking about." I grabbed a bagpipe business card out of my bag and handed it to her. "This is it!" she exclaimed. By a stroke of cosmic irony, the other Jason Buffington is actually a plumber! I can just imagine the conversation because it's the same one that I usually get, "Hello...I have these pipes that bought off the Internet and I keep blowing and blowing, but I can't get a sound out of them!" Since we are all Jock Tamson's bairns, it's great to know that Mr. Tamson has a sense of humor!



## Featured Tartan and Clan: MacLeod

From Rampant Scotland: <http://www.rampantScotland.com/clans.htm>

The name was derived from an Old Norse nickname "Ljótr" meaning "ugly" and the original "Leod" (pronounced "lodge" in Gaelic) was said to have been descended from the Norse King Godfrey of the Isle of Man and the Hebrides. The MacLeods became established on Lewis in the Outer Hebrides and also on Skye, Assynt and Strathpeffer on the other side of Ross and Cromarty. Castle Leod in Strathpeffer was eventually taken over by the MacKenzies.

It was a MacLeod chief who established a college for MacCrimmon pipers in the middle of the 16th century. Chief Rory "Mor" MacLeod who lived at Dunvegan Castle on Skye was knighted around 1613.

In 1935, the chieftainship passed to Dame Flora MacLeod (who was the last person to be born at 10 Downing Street, the residence of the UK Prime Minister). Clan gatherings have been held at Dunvegan Castle which holds the "Fairy Flag of Dunvegan" and a medieval drinking horn (which holds a bottle and a half of claret) which is used at the inauguration of clan chiefs.

The clan motto is "Hold fast".

## An Interview with Melissa and Alastair Haddow, Pt. 2

By J. Beau Buffington

*This article is the continuation of an interview that I did with the Haddows in the Summer of 2008. Part 1 appeared in the Summer 2008 issue of the Tartan Telegraph.*

**BB:** So let's back up to the point that you were living in Scotland. What brought you back to the States?

**MH:** We came back because we had promised my family when we married that we would move back.

**AH:** *You* promised them.

**MH:** Well, yeah that was part of the deal! And the first six months that I was there, I was very, very, **very** lonely. I thought *I can't survive over here* because Ali was hardly ever home. But then I grew to absolutely fall in love with it. It was always expected we would move back, so we did. But I will say that we have been very blessed...almost every year...with a few exceptions, but almost every year we have taken all our children and gone back to Scotland. They have their own set of friends, in fact one of their friends from across the street is coming in August, so we've maintained extraordinarily close ties. I mean we have friends there, they have friends there. We even took Andrew...

**AH:** When my dad was dying in the hospital, we took him over as a baby so my dad could see him.

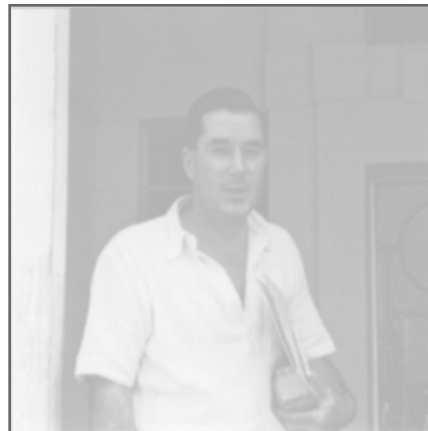
**BB:** Melissa said that your dad gave him a kilt pin....

**AH:** It was a quaich. You know, the little cup that they drink out of?

**BB:** Was it a ritual?

**AH:** I think it's done in parts of Scotland, where they will hand this feeding bowl for their next of kin.

**BB:** So Alec handed the bowl to Andrew?



Alec at the East African Virus Research Institute Entebbe, Uganda – circa 1956

**AH:** Right.

**BB:** Was there anything said?

**AH:** No, I don't think he said anything, he just wanted him to have it.

**BB:** And so Andrew kept the quaich after that?

**AH:** Yeah. He's got that and there's a horned spoon to feed out of it with.

**MH:** I will say living over there totally made me what I am...there's no question. It just changes you. It's such a different perspective.

**BB:** What is it about August, going back in August. Is that just when you have free time?

**AH:** Usually the warmest!

**MH:** June, July...we were often there on Father's Day. The kids think of summer being hot living here, then you go over there and you're bundled up in sweatshirts. You know his mother – Ali's mother – their home didn't have central heating or anything so it was pretty cold. I can remember when Ali and I lived in this one room with a ceiling that was probably 25 feet tall, so all the heat would rise to the top. I mean we lived in *one* room! We shared a bathroom with some other folks, and then the kitchen was so short...it was the old coal cellar in this mansion. And we had the library room. I had to take my shoes off to get in this little, tiny kitchen. No refrigerator, no nothing. We used to put bricks in the oven at night when I was cooking dinner. About half an hour before we went to bed, Ali would go down to get the bricks out. We'd put two bricks in the bed...to heat up the bed. The temperature in that room was probably in the mid 50's. I loved that part about Scotland, but it gets very cold

over there. So with the kids, we would try to take them over when it was warmer.

**BB:** Did you ever go to the World Pipe Band Championships or Argyllshire Gathering?

**AH:** I went when I was a kid. That's a long time ago! My dad would go to all of them.



**Young Alec**

**MH:** In fact, your dad would go off to Dunvegan. He'd get all of his finery together...and head to...wasn't it Dame MacLeod?

**AH:** Dunvegan is where the MacLeod castle is. They'd have a piping contest there every year...the golden chanter for piobaireachd music. He was one of the judges.

**BB:** The Silver Chanter?

**AH:** Yeah, the Silver Chanter. That's it.

**MH:** Well, you were in the metals!

**BB:** Right! So, I'm still wondering about this transition from Scotland....

**AH:** I took a residency at the University of Iowa in internal medicine, and then a fellowship in infectious diseases. Andrew was born there and that's where Melissa's family is originally from.

**MH:** All of my family historically, including my brothers, they've all gone to the University of Iowa. So that's how Ali ended up at the University of Iowa....my family had gone there...it was an excellent school.

**BB:** Where is that?

**MH:** Iowa City. It's one of the Big Ten universities.

**BB:** So your family is not from Chicago originally?

**MH:** Well, they're originally from Iowa. They're from a little river town in Iowa. I really grew up in a suburb of Chicago. So, Scotland was very different! {laughs} We moved here [Springfield] in 1980.

**BB:** So, how long were you in Iowa?

**MH:** 1975-1980. Five years. When we moved back to this country, when we moved back to Iowa...I went back to college and graduated in Iowa.

**BB:** And what's your area?

**MH:** I have a Bachelor's of Science in Nursing and a Master's of Public Administration. I lead a non-profit organization currently.

But I worked in nursing when we moved here, and I developed a nursing unit. I'd worked in nursing for quite a time. But, when we were living in Scotland, I wasn't allowed to work, and I didn't really go to school. I did take a few classes and I sang with the Bach choir - I painted - it was quite an eclectic existence. So I took those years off, and when we moved back, I went back to school.

**BB:** So, where did you start school?

**MH:** I started school in Wisconsin and finished up in Iowa. When we moved back to this country for Ali to do his fellowship, I went back to school. I think I took people aback living over there (Scotland), because you know, this was in the 70's. So, I arrived over there wearing braless body suits...much smaller than I am now..

**AH:** Ah, we don't need to know all that!

**MH:** And blue jeans that I had embroidered all the way up the leg with peace signs and flowers. And there I am: I mean talk about an anomaly! They looked at me like, "Where did she come from?"

**BB:** So, you've been in Springfield since 1980. How was the transition here? From Iowa to here.

**MH:** Well, actually Iowa City is a fairly small town. But, of course, the University of Iowa is a very large school, probably 25,000 now. The University of Iowa is a very cosmopolitan university. I mean, there were people there from all countries in the world. I don't



know, I can't speak for you, but when we moved here, Springfield felt very parochial to me after having lived in Scotland then at the University of Iowa. The Springfield now is so much different than the Springfield of 1980 – and so much more enjoyable. But, I mean we liked it here, we made great friends right away. Ali wore – from the moment we came here – Ali has always worn his kilt whenever there's any formal occasion, which to begin with in 1980 was an anomaly. And so he'd have his picture taken at any event we were at, so it would be in the paper or something...

**AH:** But Andrew wears his kilt to bars. He'll wear his kilt with western wear.

**MH:** Yes, he'll just wear his kilt out. He doesn't wait for special occasions.

**AH:** My father said that the interpretation of the kilt, of what should be worn with the kilt was wrong, that the Scots of those times were very flamboyant. They'd wear whatever they wanted to with it, and that we've turned it into a uniform, which isn't what they originally did.

**BB:** So, the idea of a tartan being associated only with a particular family...your father didn't agree?

**AH:** He went along with that, but he also felt that you should....you know, that the tar-

tan and its clothes were flamboyant and that you should adapt into whatever style or feeling you had at the time and not be bound by any regulations and rules. He said that they were created by a group of snobs to confine the spirit of the Scots to conformity. He said that wasn't part of the Scots' spirit. He said a lot of the kilt fabrics were very muted and didn't necessarily have the distinctive patterns that they have now

**MH:** And in fact, our kids noticed that last summer, when we took the new son-in-law, not the newest son-in-law but the other son-in-law over, and we went to some highland games. And of course, there were all these young men in kilts with all kinds of t-shirts ...funky outfits going with the kilt throwing the caber. And that was kind of interesting to see, because it's more like Andrew wearing his western shirt with his kilt. But I love the kilt, it's a beautiful piece of apparel.

**BB:** So, when did you become aware of the St. Andrew's Society? Has that been a recent development?



Melissa and Alastair in Scotland

**MH:** There was some meeting that we went to about 20 years ago.

When did it form here, Beau? It wasn't called the St. Andrew's Society back then, though. It was called the Celtic...

**BB:** Yeah, there was a Celtic Society.

**MH:** Right, we went to one meeting, one Burn's Day with that then we haven't done anything until recently. It obviously didn't strike our fancy. I don't remember that much about it. It was very small, but there was no newsletter, no nothing. I don't even remember how we heard about...oh we heard about the Burn's night from you. That's how we heard about the Burn's night.

**BB:** Oh, ok.

**MH:** Because when I got your name from the piper that had piped for Catherine's wedding, you said, "Are you going to the Burn's night dinner?" and that's how we ended up there. That was kind of exciting. And we'd love to go back and do more things. So that's how we heard about it is, frankly, through you.

**BB:** Well I....I pat myself on the back for that!



*I would like to sincerely thank Melissa and Alastair for their generosity. I appreciate the opportunity to hear their story and to share it with the members of the St. Andrew's Society of Springfield.*

JAB

If you have ideas / submissions for future issues or if you are interested in advertising in the newsletter contact [buffpiper@hotmail.com](mailto:buffpiper@hotmail.com).



## St. Andrew's Society of Springfield Hosts Kirkin' of the Tartans

The Scottish Saint Andrew's Society of Springfield will host the Kirkin' of the Tartans on Saturday, November 1, 2008, at Westminster Presbyterian Church, 1551 E Portland St, Springfield. The service will begin at 7.00 pm and will last approximately one hour.

The Kirkin' Service is a traditional Scottish-American church parade (Kirk is the Scottish word for church) to honour Scottish heritage and the feast day of St. Andrew, Scotland's patron saint, on November 30. The service will also recognize the Scottish roots of the Presbyterian Church.

The Kirkin' service began during the Second World War, when Rev. Peter Marshall of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church held services entitled "the Kirkin' of the Tartan" to raise funds for British war relief. The service includes traditional Scottish prayers and hymns, kilts & tartan, bagpipes, and other aspects of Scottish culture. Scottish attire is encouraged, but not required. An offering will be collected for an appropriate charity, in keeping with the spirit of the original Kirkin'.

After the service, there will be a reception in the parish hall with traditional Scottish food, and music.

The event is free and open to the public – all are welcome, regardless of heritage – you do not have to be Scottish to attend!

For more information, please contact Todd Wilkinson at 417 890 5653, or by e-mail at [scots@springfieldscots.org](mailto:scots@springfieldscots.org).

## Tune of the Season: *Squinting Patrick's Flame of Wrath*

From Alec J. Haddow's *The History and Structure of Ceol Mor*

In 1602 we know that Donald Mor MacCrimmon was at Dunvegan, as it was in that year that he composed the three famous piobaireachd which marked the reconciliation of Ruaridh Mor Macleod of Harris and Dunvegan, and Donald Gorm MacDonald of Sleat. It was some time after this, that his young brother Patrick was murdered in Kintail.

According to Angus Mackay's account Padruig Caogach lived in Glenelg. While washing his face in a burn, his foster brother, a Kintail man (I think a Mackenzie) with whom he had a quarrel, stabbed him from behind. Donald Mor, at Dunvegan took his pipes to MacLeod's room and threw them on the bed. Macleod heard the tale and promised revenge in 12 months, wrongly thinking that by then Donald's rage would have cooled. No action having been taken, Donald set off for Glenelg but found that his quarry had retreated to Kintail, where he now went. Having located the man, he was enraged because the village in which he was sheltering would not give him up, and by night fired the thatch of eighteen houses, several lives being lost.

Donald, now himself a fugitive from the Mackenzies, took refuge in Sutherland and escaped to Lord Reay's county where he remained for some time under the protection of Donald Duaghal Mackay (afterward Lord Reay) with whom he had been acquainted formerly. Seamus MacNeill adds the interesting note that while in the Mackay country he taught piping to some of them who later migrated to Gairloch, to become one of the most important piping families.

This is a wild and very irregular tune, full of devilment. It recalls a phrase from Stevenson's "Tale of Todd Lapraik" in "Catriona" where Todd's coraith is described as "dancing alone in the black glory of his heart".



## Voyager Records Presents Reissue of Classic Missouri Fiddling Anthology

**Produced and Edited by Howard Marshall, Vivian Williams, and Phil Williams**

**98 page book with two Compact Discs containing 52 tracks. \$29.95**

Voyager is pleased to announce the revised edition of *Now That's a Good Tune: Masters of Traditional Missouri Fiddling*, a Grammy Finalist project in 1989. The original double LP album and book were produced by the Missouri Cultural Heritage Center, a division of the Graduate School and Office of Research at the University of Missouri, under the direction of Dr. Howard Marshall, and in cooperation with the University of Missouri Extension Division.



The original production, long out of print, became a collector's item as well as a rich source of traditional fiddle styles and repertoire for other musicians. The book is a "must have" for scholars of traditional fiddling in Missouri, one of the most influential regions for the development of fiddling in North America. The type of fiddle music depicted in this book and CDs can be heard in Missouri today, and its influences can be followed across the Western U.S.A.

The stories of the fiddlers, their philosophies of fiddling, and the importance of fiddle and dance in their communities appeals to historians, teachers, scholars and musicians. This well-written book gives insights into the importance of fiddling in the life of the individual and of the community. The master fiddlers fea-

tured all contributed to the vitality of Missouri fiddling traditions and helped younger players carry on these traditions.

Purchase from the Voyager website at [www.voyagerrecords.com](http://www.voyagerrecords.com) or through Howard Marshall at [MarshallH@Missouri.Edu](mailto:MarshallH@Missouri.Edu) (tel. 573-642-6226).

*Professor Marshall presented two programs comparing traditional American music and Celtic music at the Southwest Missouri Celtic Heritage Festival and Highland Games in September 2008.*

