

THE CLAN HOME ASSOCIATION

The first international Gathering of the Clan Home was due to take place in 2001, but owing to the foot & mouth emergency had to be cancelled at short notice. The postponed Gathering was eventually held in June, 2003; the main events took place at the Hirsell, the home of our chief, as well as at Hume Castle and the final dinner was held at Paxton. Many Homes and Humes attended from both north and south of the Border, with representatives from USA, Canada and New Zealand. It was during this gathering that it was decided by those present to form the Clan Home Association, and this was officially constituted in 2004.

The Association welcomes all of the name Home or Hume, those related by blood and those who wish to join by affinity or affection. The spelling adopted for the Association is the old spelling of the name, Home, though this has always been pronounced Hume, and many families up until some two or three hundred years ago used either spelling fairly arbitrarily, it seems. Once a more formal approach to writing and form filling was required, the two versions seem to have been fixed for future generations. There is no doubt that many changed from Home to Hume if they had frequent dealings with people outwith the Borders, to avoid problems of pronunciation. The name derives from the Old English 'Hôm', a dative form of the word meaning 'at the heights', which describes the rocky outcrop dominating the Merse on which the castle was built. It was Ada, daughter of 5th earl of March who brought with her the property on her marriage to her cousin William, son of Patrick of Greenlaw, in about 1230, and William thenceforward took the name of Home. When Hugh Hume, 3rd earl of

Marchmont (the Humes of Polwarth changed to 'u' in about 1640) purchased the barony of Home from the earl of Home in 1766, he changed the spelling to Hume.

I think we are the last of the great Border names to form a clan association, but by no means the least! Although the Scotts, Kerrs, Elliots, Armstrongs and others have preceded us, we look forward to a bright future and will encourage the formation of affiliated societies overseas wherever there are one or more of the name living. The many Humes in the USA descend from the most part from George Home, the forfeited son of the laird of Wedderburn who established himself in Virginia following participation in the 1715 Jacobite rebellion and a society is now flourishing there.

The Association has as one of its principal aims the promotion of a better understanding of the history of the Merse and of the dominant name in Berwickshire; until the early years of the 18th century there were over 40 Home lairds in the county and many others of the name. Today very few are still in their original properties, but there are over a hundred of the name in the Borders telephone directory. One of the other principal aims is to secure the long-term future of Hume Castle and once the Association had been formed, the way was open to begin to explore the possibilities of a transfer of ownership with the Berwickshire Civic Society. By the time you read this newsletter a happy outcome will have been achieved. The Association was advised that it would be best to form a trust in which the castle would be vested; following this, The Hume Castle Preservation Trust was incorporated and this has been given charitable status. It was to this trust that the castle was handed over in a 'Turf & Stane' ceremony on August 31st.

Thus, after a period of nearly one hundred years (following its disposal by the descendants of the 3rd earl of Marchmont), Hume Castle once more is in Home ownership and the Association looks forward to an active and interesting future both for the castle and the clan.

*Dr. Ian Maitland Hume
Chairman, Clan Home Association*



Handover of 'turf and stane' at Hume Castle

POLWARTH

*At Polwarth-on-the-Green
Our Forbears oft were seen
To dance about the thorn
when they got in their corn....*

The ancient village of Polwarth, which lies between Duns and Greenlaw, has always intrigued Border folk and, once again, it is of interest because the proposed future of its Church is under discussion.

The village is of great antiquity and was once of considerable size, but in the twentieth century local industries were undermined, there were more opportunities in the towns, and emigration increased. With the closing of the local school and village shop, people moved away and gradually the population declined.

In its heyday Polwarth was particularly famed for its souters (shoe-makers) as well as other trades, and many of its inhabitants were employed on local farms and at Marchmont House from 1790 onwards. Before the building of this Adam mansion, Redbraes Castle had stood nearby.

Lying in a hollow, Polwarth had been built on very boggy ground and almost every cottage had a hole dug in the floor to collect groundwater which would rise in the lower rooms. St. Mungo's Fair was held twice a year and King James V was reputed to have once come! Famous for its Thorn Tree around which the village maidens danced, poets and musicians came from far and wide to

celebrate the story and although the original tree died, its own saplings grow on the same site, enclosed by a fence of iron railings, on what was the centre of the village green.

In all probability, the first Christian Church was built in the sixth century. There is a record of the church being re-dedicated to St. Mungo in 1242 and again in 1703, and the present building was erected over the old foundations. In 1684 the kirk vault (which is still there) was the hiding place of Sir Patrick Hume who had been implicated in the Rye House Plot - a conspiracy to assassinate King Charles II. Only Sir Patrick's wife and daughter knew where he hid and each night Lady Grizel (his 18 year old daughter) would come in the dark to bring him food and drink. He finally escaped to Holland.

The Church building is described by Historic Scotland as "...one of the most significant buildings in the parish and, indeed, within Scotland as a whole". One of its unique features is the Latin texts on the exterior walls. The roof beams are hand hewn, the marks of the adze being clearly visible. Although the body of the kirk is traditional Scottish, the tower derives from a Dutch design. The rooms on its three floors are approached up a narrow stair: on the first floor is the vestry with its small window overlooking the body of the church, and up an even narrower stair is the room from which the beadle rang the bell. The original bottle-glass panes are still in the windows, and from the top room one can study the internal struture of the pointed octagonal roof.

Services have not been held here since 2004, but the Scottish Redundant Churches Trust will be keeping the building wind and water tight and is looking for new uses for this "most significant building".

Margaret Totty

APPLICATION FORM

(to be completed in Block Capitals)

I(full name)

of

..... (full postal address)

hereby apply for Membership of the Berwickshire Civic Society and agree to be bound by the Constitution thereof. I deliver herewith my first Annual Subscription of £5.00.

BANKERS ORDER

To the Manager of

.....

(insert above the name and address of your Bank)

Please pay now to the Royal Bank of Scotland plc, Market Square, Duns, Berwickshire for the credit of the Berwickshire Civic Society (Account No 00 11 16 67), and on the 6th April annually hereafter the sum of FIVE POUNDS (£5.00).

Name A/C No

Address

.....

Signed Date

Please send this application form, with cheque or Bankers Order, to:
Mr Robin Lindsay, Broomhill, Todlaw Rd., Duns, TD11 3EW