

CLAN GRAHAM SOCIETY AGM 2009 THE CANADIAN VIEW

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The first thing I need to do is to admit that this was my first AGM for Clan Graham Society. I had such a good time though that it will not be my last!!!

On Wednesday, September 9 (09/09/09!!), I flew from Toronto to Denver with Bill and Sheila Richardson. We arrived in Denver about 10:30 am Rocky Mountain Time (which will give you some idea of just how early our plane left Toronto!!) Bill and Sheila rented a car and drove straight to YMCA of the Rockies in Estes Park. I had a short detour to visit an elderly friend in Denver and then took a shuttle to Estes.

Normally, arriving at a hotel late at night is not a problem. But, as you will see from the photos I have included here (and the rest of the photos you can see on the link I have provided) this is NOT your normal hotel!!! The buildings are spread out. There are very few lights on the grounds. There are mountain lions in the surrounding hills and a ton of elk sharing the accommodations. Finding my room was a challenge but, having done so, I tumbled into bed exhausted.



Next morning I was greeted with the most gorgeous scenery imaginable. I couldn't see a thing when I had arrived and spent most of Thursday walking the property.

Thursday night was the Tattoo. What an experience. I described it to one of the local organizers as Buffalo Bill meets the Highland Games! The Fort Carson Colour Guard put on a truly magnificent display of swordplay while galloping through the field on horseback.



The US Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Band from 29 Palms California performed to their usual perfection.



To actually hear these fellows, go to these links on YouTube

www.youtube.com/watch?v=50bfBXdKnVg for the Drum Corp and

www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z3v_acBD2cw for an amazing trumpet solo



The 1st Battalion Scots Guards Pipes and Drums and the Wasatch and District Pipe Band added colour and bagpipes to the mix.

Friday was Games Day. I had to leave on Saturday for a family reunion so Friday was my only day at the Games. The weather co-operated wonderfully. The Games were spectacular with a truly Western take on Highland Festivals.



Right - This is the first time I have seen tribute paid to all the Celtic explorers who opened the West!!



Left – Richard and Kate Graham at the Graham tent

Friday night, all the folks who had been casual all day were all doodled up for the Annual Dinner. Because of the wonderful weather during the day – there was more than one sunburned face in the crowd (mine included!!)

The food was great, the company the same and the sunset that night truly spectacular.



Left – Bill and Sheila Richardson



Above: Kate Graham and Chieftain Richard Graham with Ann Belanger and Ivan Graham

Right – Bill Richardson (now Vice President of Clan Graham Society North America!!) with Chieftain Richard Graham



On Saturday (after I had left) there was a HUGE parade in town. Unfortunately, the weather was changing and by later Saturday there was a cold rain falling. But the parade – over a course of more than 2 miles!! - came off as planned anyhow. Clans, dogs, bands, horses – all there in full force. The parade route had to be cleared of elk before the parade could begin but I gather that is almost a daily occurrence in Estes Park!!





You can see by the photo at left that the weather continued to deteriorate but (by the look of the crowd) it had no affect on their enthusiasm at the end of the long parade route

That night, there was a silent auction of things donated to Clan Graham Society. The funds raised are for support of the restoration of Mugdock Castle in Scotland. Sheila Richardson brought a cute little Teddy bear dressed in Graham tartan (bought at the Kincardine Games!!). Bill Richardson brought some Graham glasses to be auctioned of (they fetched a steeper price after they were filled with Scotch it seems!). I donated some hand made greeting cards in a wooden box.



Ivan Graham (our Atlantic Canada representative) wins the prize for being most inventive though!! He auctioned off his yellow Nova Scotia fisherman's hat which he had worn to make his presentation to Council as well as to the Annual Dinner!! It was all as part of his ongoing advertising for the 2011 AGM in Nova Scotia.

The winner was Jennie Fitzsimmons of New York. She wore it the rest of the night!!! I must admit – it looked better on her than it did on Ivan!!!!



All in all it was lots of fun. In the next issue of the Laurel, I will add some of the things that were considered at the Council Meeting. You know the sorts of things? The ones I was afraid would make this a boring event. Not so!! I had a great time.



*Your sophisticated Canadian representatives at the 2009 AGM
L-R Ann Belanger, Ivan Graham, Sheila Richardson, Bill Richardson*

So – keep in mind the 2010 meeting (which includes a trip to Ireland and Scotland) and DEFINITELY the 2011 meeting in Nova Scotia!!

For more pictures than you could ever possibly want to look at –

www.facebook.com/album.php?aid=157428&id=717830066&l=6677dc6024