

## Ashbourne Highland Gathering

On Sunday, 20th July 2014, the Clan Maclean Association of England and Wales will be attending the Ashbourne Highland Gathering in Derbyshire for the first time. This is one of the largest Highland Gatherings in the UK outside Scotland.



The Gathering was held for the first time in 1985, originally started by the Ashbourne Pipe Band as a pipe band competition but since expanded to a full-blown Highland Gathering, attended by up to 10,000 people.

The Gathering features traditional Highland Games, a Highland dancing competition, a pipe band competition, folk music and other events such as sheepdog displays. Last year these included llama racing! The

Hill Race is open to the public. There are also various trade stands. In addition, there are games and inflatables, helter-skelter and mini roundabouts and the opportunity to try target shooting skills at paintball, darts and football. The Gathering ends with a Grand Parade of Bands through the town. It is a fantastic day out for all the family.

Part of the Games field is reserved for Clan Corner, where several clans have tents. There will be a Maclean stand in one of these tents. The President of the Association, Nicolas Maclean of Pennycross, and the Vice-President, Nigel Alington, will be attending the Gathering and will take turns to man the stand.

For those who would like to make a weekend out of the Gathering, Ashbourne, the southern gateway to the Peak District, is set in glorious countryside and there are several stately homes, including Chatsworth (pictured), Sudbury Hall, Hardwick Hall, and Kedleston Hall within easy reach. Ashbourne itself is also worth exploring; it is a lovely old market town, having preserved its mediaeval street pattern and many historic buildings. Church Street is considered to be the finest street of Georgian buildings in Derbyshire, including the beautiful St Oswald's Church.



Ashbourne has Jacobite connections. During the 1745 Rising the Jacobite army, led by Prince Charles Edward Stuart ("Bonnie Prince Charlie") stayed overnight in Ashbourne. The army, estimated at 6,000 men and including horses, wagons and some cannon, marched through Ashbourne on its way south on 3rd – 4th December. It was in the market-place at Ashbourne that the Prince declared his father to be King of England, Wales and Scotland, which is commemorated by a Blue

Plaque (pictured) outside the Town Hall. The army then proceeded to Derby, 13 miles further south, where the decision was taken to abandon the invasion in the absence of

English and French support. The army returned through Ashbourne, where it stayed overnight, the Prince commandeering Ashbourne Hall in Cockayne Avenue for his quarters. Several buildings from the time still survive, including part of Ashbourne Hall.

Macleans formed part of the army. The story of one of them, Captain John Maclean, is told in his recently discovered diary, published by Birlinn in 2009 as *Witness to Rebellion: John Maclean's Journal of the Forty Five and the Penicuik Drawings*, edited by Iain Gordon Brown and Hugh Cheape. This is a first-hand account of the Maclean's experiences as an officer of Prince Charles Edward's army from August 1745, through Prestonpans and the taking of Edinburgh, the march into England to Derby, the withdrawal to Scotland and the final retreat to Drummoissie Moor near Inverness, where John Maclean was killed in the Battle of Culloden.

There's also a rather more ignoble Maclean connection. In December 1745, Alexander Maclean, a pedlar by trade and a straggler from Bonnie Prince Charlie's retreating Highland army, called at the Ship Inn (pictured) at Winkle, north-west of Ashbourne, and demanded food. The landlord, Joseph Cunliffe, succeeded in wresting Maclean's musket from him and held him at gunpoint until the arrival of the local magistrate. Maclean was imprisoned in Chester Castle and later at York, where he was sent for trial. He pleaded guilty ("Confesseth and Sayeth that he was Born in the Highlands of Scotland and was taken in wth the Rebels at Athol in Scotland aforesaid and marched with them until he was apprehended") and was sentenced to death on October 2nd 1746. The sentence was commuted to transportation for life. Until 50 years ago, the 'Rebel Gun' could be seen at the Inn, hanging on a lintel above the bar.



There are more links with the Jacobites in Derby, 13 miles south-east of Ashbourne, including several surviving streets and buildings associated with the Jacobites' stay in December 1745. There is also a statue of Bonnie Prince Charlie on the green by the Cathedral. The Derby Museum has a Bonnie Prince Charlie Room (pictured), which contains a model reconstruction of the Prince at his desk during his stay in the city, as well as an audio presentation, information panels, a Stuart family tree and a very good collection of Jacobite medals.