

March to the Rendezvous

march

Alexander Walker

MARCH TO THE RENDEZVOUS.

Scottish, March, G Major, AA'BB'.

Walker: A Collection of Strathspeys, Reels, Marches, &c., 1866; No. 184, pg. 63.

i. Dan Joe MacInnis, LP, c.1964.

ii. Theresa MacLellan, MacKinnon's Brook, Anthology CD, c. 2003.

A Clan Rendezvous has special significance to the Highlanders both in the historical sense and in the time of Alexander Walker. The word Rendezvous is from the French for a 'meeting', similar to the Scots word 'Tryst' (from Scottish as a variant of an old word, trist, "an appointed place or station in hunting") used in the text below.

The Old Highland Clans had a system to call the Clansmen together to a meeting point in times of danger. Walter Scott in 'Tales of a Grandfather' explains it in the 1745 Rebellion as follows:

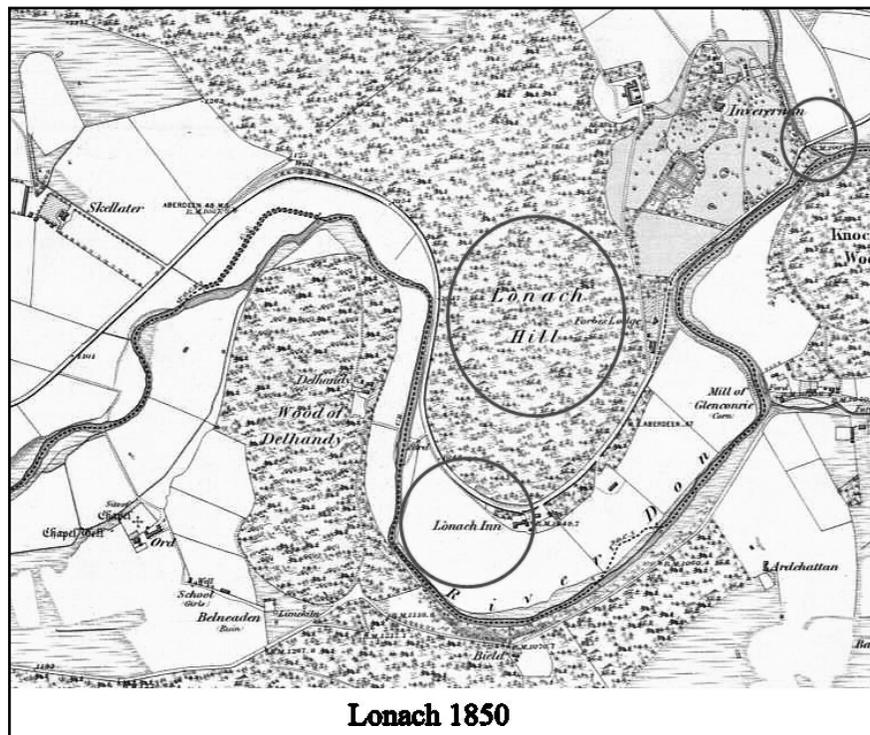
'On this raising the clans in the year 1715, the fiery cross were sent through the districts or countries, as they are termed, inhabited by the different tribes. This emblem consisted of two branches of wood in the form of a cross, one end singed with fire and the other stained with blood. The inhabitants transmitted the signal from house to house with all possible speed and the symbol implied that those who should not appear at a rendezvous, which was named when the cross was presented, should suffer the extremities of fire and sword.'

The history of the Forbes Clan in Strathdon has a similar call for the Clansmen to meet at the foot of Lonach Hill (shown on map below) as described in the 'Donean Tourist' in 1828

'Loanach was the station or rendezvous where the Donside clan assembled and was the war cry of the Forbeses during the feudal period. When any commotion ensued they sometimes reared the chroash dar raidh or cross of oak as a signal to assemble, at other times they suspended a shield from the branches of a tree which at intervals they struck with the blunt end of a spear. This sound which was called Beums geithe was the usual mode of giving the alarm or charge among most of our Caledonian tribes.'

enemy, steadily advancing to receive them.—Our Correspondent has now to record the peaceful reunion of the men of Strathdon and Corgaff, assembled by special invitation, with the tenantry of Inverernan, at a ball held in the spacious new steading at the Lonach Inn, occupied by Mr. A. Dunbar, and which stands in one of the most romantic and picturesque gorges of the upper vale of the Don, at the south base of the Hill of Lonach, the place of rendezvous of the Forbes clan in days gone by. The

Saturday 04 December 1858



Lonach 1850

Alexander Walker Connection

In Alexander's day there were two situations where the Rendezvous of the clans was important, Firstly at the annual Lonach Gathering, instituted by Sir Charles Forbes, the Lonach Highlanders marched up the Strath from the eastern end to meet the Clansmen from Corgarff in the western end at Inverernan at the Inverernan Bridge. They then marched together back down the glen to the site of the games at Bellabeg.

"LONACH" HIGHLAND AND FRIENDLY SOCIETY.

The anniversary of this Society of long standing took place on Tuesday, 21st inst. The Valley of Strathdon, from Corgarff to "Ben-Neue," at an early hour echoed back the shrill sounds of the great highland bag-pipe, as each district or sub-strath poured in its quota of clansmen, arrayed as in the feudal times of bygone history. The trysting-place or rendezvous, as usual, was at the Bridge of Earnan, at the eastern base of *Lonach Hill*, a delightful and very picturesque spot, surrounded as it is by the Mansion Houses of Edinglassie, Inverernan, Forbes Lodge, and Candacraig, with hills towering at an angle of forty degrees from the level carse of the valley. While colours were fluttering to the breeze, and pikes and Lochaber axes gleamed in the flickering sunbeams, the marshalling of the men proceeded, and marched on to Forbes Lodge, the shooting-box of George Forbes, Esq. (brother of the baronet of Neue). After receiving a hearty welcome from the worthy gentleman, and quaffing several rounds of "mountain dew" to the healths of himself and amiable lady, the march was resumed with vigour eastward to Castle Neue, where, being drawn up on the lawn, their highly-respected and worthy patron, Sir Charles Forbes, Bart., addressed them in his usual warm and patriotic strain.

Wednesday 29 August 1855

On the following day, about twelve o'clock, the clans began to muster at the usual place of rendezvous in front of Braemar Castle. The Clan Farquharson, commanded by George Murray Farquharson, Esq. (in the absence of his brother, Captain Farquharson, on duty with the Guards in the Crimea), assisted by Lord De L'Isle, Sir James Ferguson, John A. Farquharson, Esq., and P. M'Ligan, Esq., were the first to appear on the ground, and were joined in a very short time thereafter by the Clan Duff. About one o'clock, the Clan Forbes, with Sir Charles at their head, marched into the park to the martial sound of the bagpipes, and met with a hearty reception from the clans already there assembled. The appearance of so large a body of men, clad in the Highland costume, was highly picturesque, and the graceful manner with which they performed their various evolutions elicited universal admiration.

Saturday 22 September 1855

When the Lonach Highlanders went to the Braemar Gathering, they marched to meet up with the other Highlanders in front of Braemar Castle