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BLOG: NH HIGHLAND GAMES 2017

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The New Hampshire Highland Games & Festival (NHHG&F) is one of the largest and most diverse Highland Games held in North America and the largest cultural event. This celebration of Scottish heritage is held the third Friday, Saturday, and Sunday of September each year at Loon Mountain Resort in the White Mountains of New Hampshire.



GSA's were invited to experience the Highland Games on Friday, September 15th or Sunday, September 17 as a thank you for all we do for the tourism industry and to help generate referrals for the games. Here are some impressions and photographs from those who attended this year:

There was music for everyone from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Pipe Band to the Red Hot Chilli Pipers! -Yvonne G

Yvonne G. and I had a great time yesterday at the Highland Games... I wore my GSA shirt, and Yvonne carried a light backpack with the GSA logo. I particularly enjoyed listening to the various musical groups including the Brigadoon's who played a mix of Scottish folk songs. Their group featured many instruments including a fiddle. The energy of the Red Hot Chilli Pipers, an inter-generational group from Scotland, was contagious, and played to a full crown in the concert tent. Hand clapping and dancing, cheering and sing-along had everyone involved with this energetic group which included amazing drummers, a variety of other instruments besides the showcasing of 3 bagpipers. Meanwhile the sheep were herded through many obstacles on the hillside by amazing dogs, who circled, crouched, and used eye contact with the sheep to control and direct them. The weather was predicted to be a bit overcast with a threat of scattered showers, but the day cleared, and was warm and sunny for the most part. Shuttle buses were frequent and efficient, making access to the festival very easy. Thank you! - Jean S.



What a fun time it is to go to the Highland Games. I went with another GSA and our husbands. The Highland Games are a very well organized event from the shuttles to the layout of the land where all the festivities occur. The shuttles run regularly and we didn't have to wait. Once we got to the games it was an effortless process to pick up my ticket and my husband purchased his on the way in.

We had the opportunity to witness and enjoy many events, including the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Pipe Band and Dancers and watch the Sheep dog trials; both were very entertaining. We walked around the Clan tents and got to talk to a few interesting people. It was hot and humid and I wondered how those people in the wool kilts were keeping cool but they didn't seem to mind the heat. We sampled some of the Scottish food which was delicious. My favorite thing was listening to the Red Hot Chilli Pipers. They were loud, jumping and energetic. It was so much fun! Thank you for giving me the



opportunity to attend and enjoy the festivities. - Maryellen M.



Last Friday, Irene and I attended our first NH Highland Games at Loon Mountain. When we checked into the Will Call booth, I gave my name and was asked was that MacMullen? We knew then that we were in for a fun time.

We couldn't find the Clan Mullen tent; probably because I'm Irish, so we started to take in the multitude of activities offered. Just to give you a brief inkling of what we thought were some of the highlights among the highlights:

1. Red Hot Chilli Pipers - a 9-member Scottish ensemble of bagpipers, guitarists, keyboard and drummers. They were a very lively band that really got the crowd rocking with their songs and performance.
2. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police Pipe Band and Dancers - a moving performance from this world renown bagpipe and drum band.
3. Charlie Zahm - a singer and guitarist of Scottish folk songs performed for what seemed for hours. He was terrific.
4. And the Sheep Dog Trials - sheep dogs trying to corral sheep thru obstacles in a very large area. They were certainly entertaining.

Thanks for providing the tickets so we could attend. It was fun! - - Irene and Bob M.



My husband and I really had an enjoyable experience at the Highland games. We went with another GSA (Maryellen McG and her husband) and they were hoping to pick up some tips from my husband who was born in Scotland. When we got there, we went directly to see some of the regimented pipe bands. They perform their routine with military precision. We were pleased to see the Royal Canadian Mounted Pipe Band perform. After some pipe band performances, we went to the Sheep Dog trials. The dogs and the trainers are amazing! We can't get over how difficult it must be to train the dogs. They are so well trained and so responsive to their trainers. We unfortunately missed an earlier team that had a perfect run however, the dogs we saw were still enjoyable to watch. It's fun to hear about where the trainers and dogs are from. So many towns in New Hampshire are represented.

When the Sheep Dog trials took a lunch break, we also thought that would be a good idea. There were so many places to have lunch and of course there was an opportunity to try some traditional fare such as Haggis! The weather was really hot so I decided to have a "Shandy". I also talked Maryellen into trying a Shandy. She was not sure if she would like it since she is not a beer drinker but she found she enjoyed the drink. A Shandy is a drink made with beer and lemonade but here in the US it is usually made with Lemon Lime soda such as Sprite. This is something I have had many times when in Scotland with my husband and his family.



After lunch, we wandered around and listened to some music. The Red Hot Chilli Pipers are from Glasgow, Scotland and were great. They are not the traditional pipe band that you would expect, they give a new meaning to pipe music! They were really rocking the house down. We did hear traditional Celtic music both performed by bands as well as by a single vocalist. Going through the different tents and seeing all the different clans was fun. Of course, we tried to identify the tartan of my husband's family.

I would suggest a couple of things to make the experience more enjoyable. One is that most of the food (except the lodge) is cash so having cash on hand is helpful. Another suggestion is to make sure anyone going is aware that it can get very hot so dress for the heat and bring sun block!

Thank you for the opportunity to experience this great festival. - - Nancy S.

Yesterday Leo and I went to the Highland Games at Loon. Even though there were forecasts of rain, we ventured out. It turned out to be a beautiful sunny day all day.

What a well-organized event it is!!! We learned so much about the history of many of the plaids and names. Mac at the beginning of the last name means, "Son of".

We delighted in seeing the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Pipe Band perform, the sheep dog competition, Highland Fling dance instructions, and numerous vocal performers and bands performing all throughout the grounds. Have never been before, but plan to return again next year!!!

- Rita G. - Inaugural Class of 1996



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