

Brunch with Graham McTavish at Fergus Scottish Festival



By Constance Scrafield

How do you Outlander fans feel about having Brunch with Graham McTavish? For a \$100 ticket, you can join Graham McTavish, Gillebride MacMillan (Gaelic scholar) and Douglas Gibson (former president and publisher of McClellan and Stewart) for a beautiful catered brunch at the Wellington County Museum and Archives just outside Fergus going to Elora.

Mr. McTavish is joining the Fergus Scottish Festival to meet and greet fans during the entire three days, August 10 to 12, as well. Highlander author Diana Gabaldon is busy writing her new book, so, she's not touring, as Lee Puddephatt, Marketing co-chair for the festival said, in a conversation about what is new and original to this year's Scottish Festival.

To explain the strong ties between Ms. Gabaldon and the Fergus Highland Games, Ms Puddephatt said that 25 years ago, when she wrote her first book, the Fergus Scottish Festival invited her to come with her book. She's had a strong attachment ever since.

The brunch is a new idea we thought we'd try.

Far from the only new idea this year at the Fergus Scottish Festival, there is a really fresh face with some of the events and entertainments.

The new biggest news is the Canadian Scottish Athletic Federation with the Women's Heavies is hosting the 2018 Women's Championship on Sunday [August 12]. This is talking about women's heavy events, caber tossing, lifting, etc. These ladies are in full competition, on par with what has been generally considered a man's sport.

The women are so strong but, aside from this, they are also professionals in their fields teachers, physiotherapists, Ms. Puddephatt observed.

Speaking of gentlemen's sports, there is also a whiskey tasting coming to the Fergus Festival lead by a lady, Raj Dillon, whose actual company is called The Angels Must be Drunk, is inviting the ladies (and their gentlemen, of course) to come to learn and imbibe.

Said Ms. Puddephatt, A bunch of women friends of mine are coming for a girls' weekend. Such is the beautifully spreading focus of the event.

There is all the usual four pillars of competition, Ms. Puddephatt said, but we were talking about innovations and new ideas added to the fine traditional fare.

The Heritage Tent this year is sponsored by the Ontario Genealogical Society where you can learn all about yourself, including getting your DNA checked for your lineage. (See how close to the possible 4% Neanderthal you have in you. Plus the rest, of course. Lots of room for surprises there.)

They the Society were ecstatic to do it.

In other big news, to make up for the nearly catastrophic storm that swept through the venue last year on the Friday, drenching the Main Field and everybody in it, cancelling the Red Hot Chilli Pipers' concert, the band is coming for a late evening concert after the Friday Tattoo, and doing another show on the Saturday.

They felt so badly about the cancellation because of the weather last year that they offered to do two shows this year, commented Ms. Puddephatt. They've never done that before.

Additionally, the other bands joining in the Festival's fun are Albannach, Glengarry Bhoys and there a Celtic Traditions concert at

the Grand Theatre in town.

?Lots of new young people are coming; they are into to it,? she said. ?A funny thing about the festivals, we are all working together ? it's just people: they are all run by volunteers. We're growing. Last year, 16,000 people came over the weekend in spite of the weather that Friday. It's really wonderful.?

The McKiddies section is a blast this year too with a terrific list of activities. That is one to check out on the website.

?Naturally, the festival is going green again this year with a water station so people can fill their own water bottles; there's a ban on plastic straws and disposable water bottles. Careful re-cycling. Whatever we can think of.?

There is so much to think about in order to make sure everyone is having a good time; is happy and comfortable and their needs have been considered. Volunteers took dementia training this year to be able to assist as needed.

Everybody come and have a fantastic time. For lots more details, check out the website at www.fergusscottishfestival.com