



# New Brunswick Scottish Cultural Association Inc.

IN UMBRA CARDUI VIOLAE VALESCANT

"In the thistle's shadow, violets grow stronger."

## For Immediate Release

NEW BRUNSWICK CELEBRATES TARTAN DAY

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[www.nbscot.com](http://www.nbscot.com)

One would not think that Tartan Day in New Brunswick, the Parliament of Canada, and a BBC popular history poll have very much in common. But they do.

In January 2007, the people of Britain participated in a BBC-sponsored "Top Ten" poll on Scottish history. Many will be pleasantly surprised that the Declaration of Arbroath, issued in 1320 A.D., was perceived as the second-most critical event in Scottish history.

Why does a 700-year old document, signed on April 6<sup>th</sup>, 1320 A.D., rank second in a Scottish popular history poll? The answer is surprising, considering that we celebrate the same event here, in North America under the guise of Tartan Day. According to Professor Ted Cowan at the University of Glasgow:

"The Declaration of Arbroath was a letter sent by the community of the realm of Scotland to the Pope in 1320, urging him to bring pressure to bear upon the English King to recognize the legitimacy of Robert Bruce's claim to be King of Scots. The Declaration has to be in the top 10 because it's an important document in its own right at the time when it was composed in 1320. But since then, over time, it has taken on a new importance. Freedom is the important thing. Freedom is what makes us who we are individually and it is freedom that makes us who we are as a nation."

In North America, respect for the Declaration of Arbroath has taken the form of Tartan Day, which is commemorated on April 6<sup>th</sup> annually. In the mid-1980's, Jean Watson of the Federation of Scottish Clans in Nova Scotia, rallied political forces across Canada and then in the United States to have April 6<sup>th</sup> proclaimed as Tartan Day. Her goal was simple: set aside one day for the opportunity to reflect on the contributions and sacrifices made by Scots and their descendants around the world. Heeding the call, the Tartan Day Movement spread quickly, first to all the Provinces of Canada, and then to the United States.

Today, Tartan Day is recognized in Canada, the United States, Australia, New Zealand and Scotland itself.

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Most recently, the New Brunswick Scottish Cultural Association (NBSCA) has been actively working with other Scottish-cultural organizations – including Jean Watson – and are lobbying Parliamentarians to enact Bill C-402, “An Act Respecting a National Tartan Day.” This Act will elevate Tartan Day to national status, and is a primary first-step on the road to having Tartan Day added to the calendar.

It is the sincere hope of the Association that in April 2008, all Canadians will all be celebrating National Tartan Day for the first time.

In 1993, Premier Frank McKenna declared that “Scottish immigrants and their descendants have played, and will continue to play a major role in the development of the Canadian and New Brunswick identity.”

For all these reasons, the Scots of New Brunswick celebrate their collective Scottish heritage annually, on April 6<sup>th</sup>, in commemoration of the Declaration of Arbroath.

The Executive and Board of Directors of the New Brunswick Scottish Cultural Association (NBSCA) encourage all members of the Scottish community to proudly wear the Tartan this week, and especially on April 6<sup>th</sup>.

For more information, please visit the NBSCA website at [www.nbscots.com](http://www.nbscots.com).

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