









Blairgowrie & Rattray Highland Games September 3rd 2023





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<u>Committee Members 2023</u>

Pete Richardson Chairman Joselyn Turner Programme & Parking

Phil Murrie Vice Chair & Trade Stands Holly Richardson Programme

Gavin Hart Secretary Alan McCombe Tickets

Derek Balloch Signage & Parking Pete Hart Heavies

Stuart Samson Piping Linda Tosh Dancing

The History of Blairgowrie and Rattray Highland Games

Research done by the town's Our Heritage group has revealed that the history of Blairgowrie and Rattray Highland Games goes back more than 135 years.

Records of the Blairgowrie and Rattray Highland Games before 1887 may have been lost, as according to John A.R. Macdonald's The History of Blairgowrie (Town, Parish, and District)' which was published in 1899, "the Highland Games, which had been allowed to lapse' were revived in 1887 by The Loyal Order of Ancient Shepherds (Lodge Tullyveolan).

Back then the event was held on Fair O Blair Day in July and was known as the Highland Games and Military Sports. It was attended by a detachment of the 6" Inniskilling Dragoons whose band played during the day and the programme included some intriguing events such as:

Sword v sword
Sword v lance
Tent pegging
Lemon cutting
Grand ride and charge (musical)
Wrestling on horseback
Balaclava melee
Fencing (sabres)
Sword exercise at a gallop



The Games were held in Cleekerinn Park, also known as West Park (which is now the location of Lidl

and Home Bargains), and the Fair O' Blair was based around the Wellmeadow.

On Fair O' Blair Day, thousands of visitors would descend on the town, and for generations both the Highland Games and the Fair O' Blair attracted large crowds.

For Dundonians, this was the highlight of the Dundee Holiday Week and special trains ran from Dundee with cheap fares being offered by the railway company.

In the 19th century terpsichorean (dancing) competitions were for men. According to tradition, kings and clan chiefs used Highland Games to select their best men at arms, and the discipline to perform the Highland dances allowed men to demonstrate their strength, stamina, and agility. The 1920s was a time of mixed fortunes for both the Fair O' Blair and the Highland Games. By 1925 the Highland Games had lapsed and the Shows at the Fair Blair were no longer allowed on the Wellmeadow.

But by 1928 Blairgowrie and Rattray Highland Games were again held on Fair 0' Blair day with advertisements proclaiming 'Grand Cavalry Display by a Detachment of the Royal Scots Greys direct from Olympia Tournaments, London, accompanied by the World Famous Band of the Regiment'.

Sadly, by the mid-1930s the Blairgowrie and Rattray Highland Games Committee, despite fundraising attempts such as whist drives and dances, were finding it hard to meet financial ends, and no games were held in 1936, The games park was sold off to the County Education Committee for use as a playing field by Blairgowrie High School.

July 1951 saw an attempt by Blairgowrie Juniors Football Club to revive the games by holding a Fair O' Blair Day sports at Davie Park.

Since 1991 large crowds have been assembling at Bogle's Field, Essendy Road, Blairgowrie, for the Blairgowrie and Rattray Highland Games each September. Competitors for some of the piping, dancing, and heavy events come from far and wide.

Find out more about Blairgowrie and Rattray's history at https://ourheritageblairrattray.scot/

Chieftain's Welcome

Welcome, everyone to the Games!

Today you will see all the traditional events associated with a Highland Games together with others unique to Blairgowrie and Rattray. These include our community tug o' war which is open to all - please join in, and the Ardblair Stones Challenge - have a go at this! Additionally we have the hill race, a Mini Highland Games for our junior visitors, members of the Scottish Knight League appearing here for the first time, and the usual fine selection of attractions and stalls.

Following our dismal summer season, I sincerely hope that today is proving dry and sunny and that we are enjoying some long awaited good weather. As Chieftain I always like to meet our overseas visitors and look forward to speaking to many of you today.



Laurence Blair Oliphant of Ardblair and Gask Chieftain of the Games

Chair's Welcome



It gives me great pleasure to welcome everyone to the 2023 Blairgowrie & Rattray Highland Games, held at Bogles Field. The majority are local, but we know people have travelled from all over the globe to be with us. We thank you for being with us.

I would like to personally thank all the Sponsors with the wonderful support to allow us to put the Highland Games on for you all today. Our committee members who have worked throughout the year to bring new events and to ensure there are activities on for all to enjoy a family day out.

Once again we have our Community Tug o' War competition from a wide range of organisations and groups within the town.

Your compere for the day is Ian Stewart, Chairman of Perthshire Highland Games Association. He will keep you up to date with the timetable, results, and events taking place.

Thank you to all the volunteers who are giving up their time for a wonderful community event.

We hope you leave with long-lasting memories of Blairgowrie & Rattray Highland Games – We look forward to seeing you all next year!

Pete Richardson, Chairman

Our Compere



I've been involved in Highland Games for more years than I care to remember. Initially, my involvement was through the pipe band as a side drummer with the Vale of Atholl, however I then moved on from that and have been organising the track & field at Crieff HG since 2009 right up to the present day as well as doing part commentary for Crieff.

I was Chairman of Crieff HG in 2016/17/18 and still a CHG Director.

Currently Chairman of Perthshire Highland Games Association as well as being a track official at many Highland Games throughout the country.

Highlight of my Games 'career' was being invited to be Chieftain at the Ohio Scottish Games & Celtic Festival in the USA in 2017. Obviously, the opportunity to commentate at Blairgowrie & Rattray HG is another honour but more so a pleasure and one that I hope all those attending the games will enjoy!

Ian Stewart, Compere

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Beyond the excitement, 2519 Strathmore Squadron is dedicated to shaping well-rounded individuals with a strong sense of responsibility and community spirit. Through community engagements, parades, and ceremonies, you'll learn the value of service and develop a profound understanding of citizenship. Our experienced staff officers are committed to guiding you every step of the way, nurturing your talents, and helping you achieve personal and professional success. Don't miss out on this life-changing opportunity – join 2519 Strathmore Squadron RAFAC today and embark on a journey that will propel you toward a brighter future!

SCYD



SCYD is a youth-led youth organisation which aims to support and empower young people in their local community. We offer drop in services as well as focused group sessions, holiday activities and overnight trips, on top of this we offer multiple volunteering opportunities which allow young people to contribute to the community in positive ways.





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Piping

The Great Highland Bagpipe is perhaps the best-known of Scotland's musical instruments and an ambassador for Scotland throughout the world.

Evidence of the existence of bagpipes goes back centuries, with the earliest clear references to Scottish bagpipes found in a French historical report that mentions their use in a battle in 1547 when it is thought the pipes first replaced trumpets on the battlefield. Many now traditional battle tunes, marches, gatherings, salutes, and laments were composed around this time.

While the military tradition of the bagpipes remains strong, particularly on formal or ceremonial occasions, today the bagpipes are enjoying a resurgence in popular Scottish culture with young musicians and bands fusing traditional tunes and techniques with contemporary and modern musical styles.



The competition tradition of the Great Highland bagpipe is long-standing, with the first piping competition on record being held at The Falkirk Tryst in 1781. The format of the piping competition centres around three main disciplines - the Piobaireachd, the March, the Strathspey, and the Reel. All of these categories can be heard here today. Blairgowrie and Rattray Highland Games are also delighted that our solo piping competition is recognised and supported by The Competing Pipers Association, which draws many pipers to compete at our event, attracting a strong field of international, national, and local competitors each year.

The solo piping judges will be looking in each performance for all the features which make for good playing. The three main elements within this are, musical expression and phrasing, good technique in relation to the competitor's grade and a well set up instrument to deliver the performance.

Amongst the trophies presented on the day at Blairgowrie and Rattray Highland Games are the Angus Hotel Challenge Shield for the most points in the Open Senior event, the Region Centre France Cup for the Open under 18 years old, the Piob Mhor Cup for the best Open Local Senior Piper and the Jimmie McGregor Memorial Quaich for the C Grade Aggregate competition.

The distinctive sound of the pipes stirs the soul of Scots wherever they are played, and we are proud to have them here at Blairgowrie and Rattray Highland Games

Stuart Samson MBE Piping Convenor, Blairgowrie and Rattray Highland Games

Highland Dancing

Highland Dancing is a hugely important part of any Highland Games, attracting competitors from all over Scotland as well as from other UK countries and from overseas. It provides a colourful display for all spectators.

The origins of Highland Dance go back hundreds of years with historical accounts from as far back as the 15th century and beyond describing forms of sword dancing as early as 1285.

However, over the years Highland Dancing has become a highly technical competitive sport and is now recognised as such by SportScotland. The intricately technical aspect of Highland Dance is due largely to the standardisation of the steps for competition by the Royal Scottish Official Board of Highland Dancing - the world governing body.

There are varying styles of dances within Highland Dancing such as Highland Fling, Sword Dance, Seann Truibhas and Reels, and Scottish National Dances such as Scottish Lilt and Flora MacDonald's Fancy, and are regularly danced within competitions and Highland Games. Also danced are character dances such as Sailors' Hornpipe and Irish Jig which is the Scottish version of the Irish Washerwoman

Judges evaluate the dancer's performance on three criteria - timing, deportment and technique, which obviously forms the bulk of the mark. Buoyancy within the dance and an ability to perform the steps to the correct rhythms are also important.

Highland Dancing is also a popular and excellent form of exercise not only for youngsters but for adults too who regularly attend classes provided by qualified teachers the length and breadth of the UK and across the world. It helps promote fitness, and encourages and develops social skills whilst ensuring one of Scotland's most enjoyable and colourful traditions are kept alive for future generations to enjoy and be part of.

I have taught Highland Dancing in Blairgowrie for over 30 years and it never ceases to amaze me of the enthusiasm the younger generation have for Highland Dance - it is wonderful to see and be part of.

Dance classes are held every Monday in Blairgowrie Community Campus from 5.30pm. There is a specially structured Nursery Class for children from 2 and a half years old, covering varying styles of dance. Highland Dance instruction starts from the age of 5.

For further information email lindatoshdancers@outlook.com or telephone 07889 301915

Linda Tosh, Highland Dancing Convenor



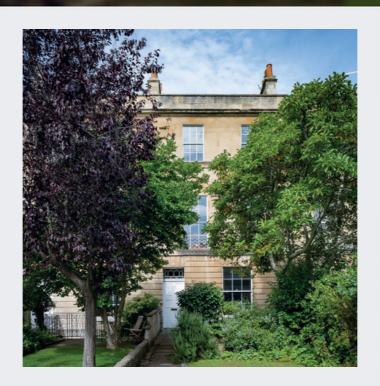




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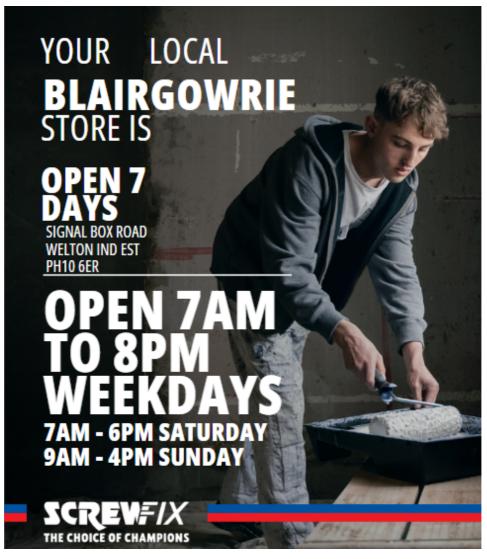
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Hodge Solicitors has merged with Coupar Angus firm Watson & Lyall Bowie as of February 2023

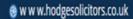
Both firms are long established in the area. As well as now having six partner solicitors, the firm also employs two trainee solicitors and fourteen support sta.

The property shop at 33 Wellmeadow will continue as it has done since opening in 2009 serve the people of Blairgowrie, Coupar Angus

and the surrounding areas with a welcoming and personal estate agency service.









Contact Details

Blairgowrie

Tel: 01250 874441

28 Wellmeadow, Blairgowrie, PH10 6AX

Coupar Angus

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Heavyweights

One of the most popular attractions at Blairgowrie and Rattray Highland Games is always the heavyweight competitions.

Throughout the day, competitors take part in a number of different disciplines and tests of strength including the Shot Putt, the Hammer, the Weight Over the Bar and of course, Tossing the Caber.

The heavyweight competitions can trace their history back centuries to when clan chiefs would choose their strongest, fittest and quickest men for battle by pitting them against each other in tests of strength.

One of the simplest competitions was the Shot Putt when, competitors would throw large boulders for the men's competitions as far as possible. As the boulders were not the same size or shape, the weight is now standardised at 16lbs and 22lbs and a regulation steel ball has replaced the stones.

Throwing the weight for distance comprises a steel ball on a chain with a handle attached. Competitors use one hand and turn three times to build up momentum before releasing the handle and throwing the weight forward. At Blairgowrie and Rattray Highland Games we have competitions for both the 28lb and 56lb weight for distance.

We also have light and heavy sizes for the hammer competitions. Competitors swing the hammer shaft above their heads before releasing it behind them.

The weight over the bar competition hasn't changed much over the years. It began with entrants throwing large stones over a bar which is gradually raised higher and higher. The winner of the knock-out competition is the person who throws the standardised weight over the highest level of the bar without knocking it down.

Tossing the caber is perhaps one of the most iconic events at any Highland Games and is said to have come from clans needing to build rudimentary bridges across small ravines or to transport logs by throwing them into rivers and burns.

The idea is to throw the pole directly ahead and judges score the event according to how straight the throw is. The biggest of the three cabers at Blairgowrie and Rattray Highland Games are around 22 feet long and weigh around 80 kilograms.

Blairgowrie and Rattray Highland Games was one of the first in Scotland to have a women's heavyweight competition back in 2018 and we are also proud to have a strong junior section in the discipline.

I have been working hard with a group of around a dozen youngsters over the last few years, training them in technique as well as core fitness and nutrition. The level of commitment that the local junior heavyweights have demonstrated to their training - even throughout the coronavirus pandemic - and to competing in games up and down the country is a clear sign that the future of the sport is in safe hands.

Pete Hart, Heavyweights Convenor

Your Tug of War judge today, Scott Cameron.

I have been involved in tug of war since a young lad of 15 years old and pulled competitively for over 25 years.

I started off my Tug of War journey with Blairgowrie young farmers, that team then morphed into Mountblair who competed all over Scotland through various highland games and shows.

During that time, I was lucky enough to represent my country through competition and coaching, taking me as far a field as Sweden, Switzerland, Italy, Ireland, Wales and England.

Although retired from the sport physically now, I still have a keen interest, and coach the Isla primary school children every year to prepare them for their summer inter school competitions.

Heavyweight Records for Blairgowrie and Rattray Highland Games

Event	Open	Local
Shot putt to 16 lbs	Hamish Davidson, 1980	Pete Hart, 2008
	58 feet 9 inches	41 feet 9 inches
Shot putt to 22 lbs	Hamish Davidson, 1980	Pete Hart, 2009
	49 feet 5 inches	35 feet 1 inch
Weight for Distance 28 lbs	Hamish Davidson, 1979	Pete Hart, 2011
	88 feet 9 inches	67 feet 9 inches
Weight for Distance 56 lbs	Lorne Colthart, 2016	Pete Hart, 2011
	44 feet 10 inches	36 feet 4 inches
Hammer 16 lbs	Bruce Aitken, 2000	Pete Hart, 2008
	150 feet 3 inches	119 feet
Hammer 22 lbs	Stephen King, 1998	Pete Hart, 2008
	124 feet 8 inches	100 feet 2 inches
Weight over the bar	Bruce Robb, 2009	Pete Hart, 2010
	16 feet 6 inches	14 feet

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The Ardblair Stones

Ardblair Stones are named after Ardblair Castle, home of the Blair Oliphant family who also run the Ardblair Estate on which the Blairgowrie and Rattray Highland Games are currently held.

The Ardblair Stones are nine reinforced concrete spheres ranging in weight from 18 to 152kg (40 to 335lbs). The stones must be loaded sequentially from lightest to heaviest onto whisky butts. The event is judged on the time taken and the number of stones successfully loaded.

The reigning, and two-time World's Strongest Man, Tom Stoltman, currently holds the World Record for loading all nine stones in the fastest time with an incredible 21.81 seconds at the 2019 Blairgowrie and Rattray Highland Games.





The women's World Record currently stands at seven stones, loaded in a remarkable time of 37.14 seconds, also obtained at the 2019 Blairgowrie and Rattray Highland Games. is held by three-time World's Strongest Woman Donna Moore from North Yorkshire.

Are you ready for the challenge?

Here are our top nine tips for lifting the Ardblair Stones:

- 1- Stand directly over the stone with your feet on either side
- 2 Use your legs, not your back, to squat down; don't bend over the stone
- 3 Put your arms around each side of the stone as far as they will go.
- 4 You can rock the stone to get your fingers as far beneath it as possible
- 5 Squeeze Your arms into the stone, as though you are trying to crush it using your hands, arms, shoulders and chest
- 6 Using your legs, pushing down through your heels and keeping your back straight, pull yourself and the stone up
- 7 For heavier stones, you can lift them into your lap for a moment while in the squatting position to adjust your grip or to catch your breath
- 8 Try rolling the stone up your chest rather than pushing it up the barrel
- 9 Don't rush, concentrate on the stone you are lifting and ensuring your technique is the best it can be.

And if you fancy training for the Ardblair Stones challenge, all you need is a smooth stone to practice with.

Charlie Blair Oliphant, Ardblair Stones





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Blairgowrie & District Rotary has been supporting the community of Blairgowrie and the surrounding areas for 75 years, and is delighted to be able to help once again by sponsoring the Kiddies' Highland Games

If you are interested in learning more about Rotary in general, or Blairgowrie & District Rotary in particular, please contact our Secretary:

Deborah Rogers
secretary@blairgowrie.rotary1010.org





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REGISTRATION TIMES FOR ENTERING EVENTS

11.00	Highland Dancing	Register at Highland Dancing Area
11.00	Dog Show	Register at Dog Show Area
12.30	The Hill Race	Register at Secretary's Tent

MAIN COMPETITIONS & EVENTS

(Located at Centre of Running Track)

10.00	OPEN EVENT - Junior Heavyweights Sponsored by Forthroad FORTHROAD	Light Shot Scots Hammer Throw Weights for Distance Tossing the Caber
11.00	LOCAL EVENT - Heavyweights	16lb Shot 16lb Hammer Throw 28lb Weight for Distance Tossing the Caber Light Shot Light Hammer Throw Weights for Distance
	PHGA League	Tossing the Caber
12.00	GRAND PARADE & OFFICIAL OPENI	NG OF THE HIGHLAND GAMES
12.30	Chieftain of the Games - Laurence Blair Oliphar Blairgowrie & Rattray Pipe Band & Ardblair Higl Community Tug O War (OPEN TO EVERYONE	nlanders
13:00	Dog Show	
13.00 - 13.15	Blairgowrie & Rattray Pipe Band - Display	
13.10	OPEN EVENT - Hill Race	
13.15	OPEN EVENT - Heavyweights	16lb Shot 16lb Hammer Throw 22lb Shot 22lb Hammer Throw 28lb Weight for Distance
14.15	OPEN EVENT - Tug O War - Heats	
15.00	Massed Pipe Bands - Blairgowrie, Alyth, Coupa	r Angus and the Marching Drum Corps
15.15	OPEN EVENT - Tug O War - Ladies Teams LOCAL EVENT - Tug O War	
15.45	OPEN EVENT - Heavyweights 56lb Weight Ove Tossing the Caber Team Tug O War	r Bar
17.00	CLOSING OF THE HIGHLAND GAMES	- LOWERING OF THE FLAGS WITH PIPES & DRUMS

MAIN AREA RUNNING TRACK

			•
13.15	YOUTHS EVENTS	90m Sprint - Heats & Final	
		800m Run - Heats & Final	
		Best Junior Heavy of the Games	
	OPEN EVENTS	90m Sprint - Heats & Final	
		800m Run - Heats & Final	
		1600m Run - Heats & Final	
		600m Cycle Race	
14.15	YOUTHS EVENTS	200m Sprint - Heats	
		1600m Cycle Race	
	OPEN EVENTS	200m Sprint - Heats	
	G. 2 2.2	3200m Cycle Race	
15.15	YOUTHS EVENTS	200m Sprint - Final	
		1600m Run	
	OPEN EVENTS	200m Sprint - Final	
		400m Run	
		3200m Run	
		De'il Tak the Hindmost Cycle Race	
•			

PIPING

(Area behind the main catering marquee)

10.30	OPEN EVENT - SOLO PIPING	CPA - Piobaireachd Senior Piobaireachd Senior Light Music Senior Open Piping Junior Under 18 Light Music
11.30	OPEN EVENT - JUNIOR SOLO PIPING	Solo Piping
13.30	LOCAL EVENT - SOLO PIPING	Solo Piping - Junior Solo Piping - Senior

HIGHLAND DANCING

11.00	OPEN EVENTS	Beginners Novice
14.00	OPEN EVENTS	Intermediate
		Premier
(Adults

The Ardblair Stones - At the end of the Main Arena

All Day Open to everyone- a personal challenge of strength in lifting the stones

The Dog Show - at the end of the Main Arena

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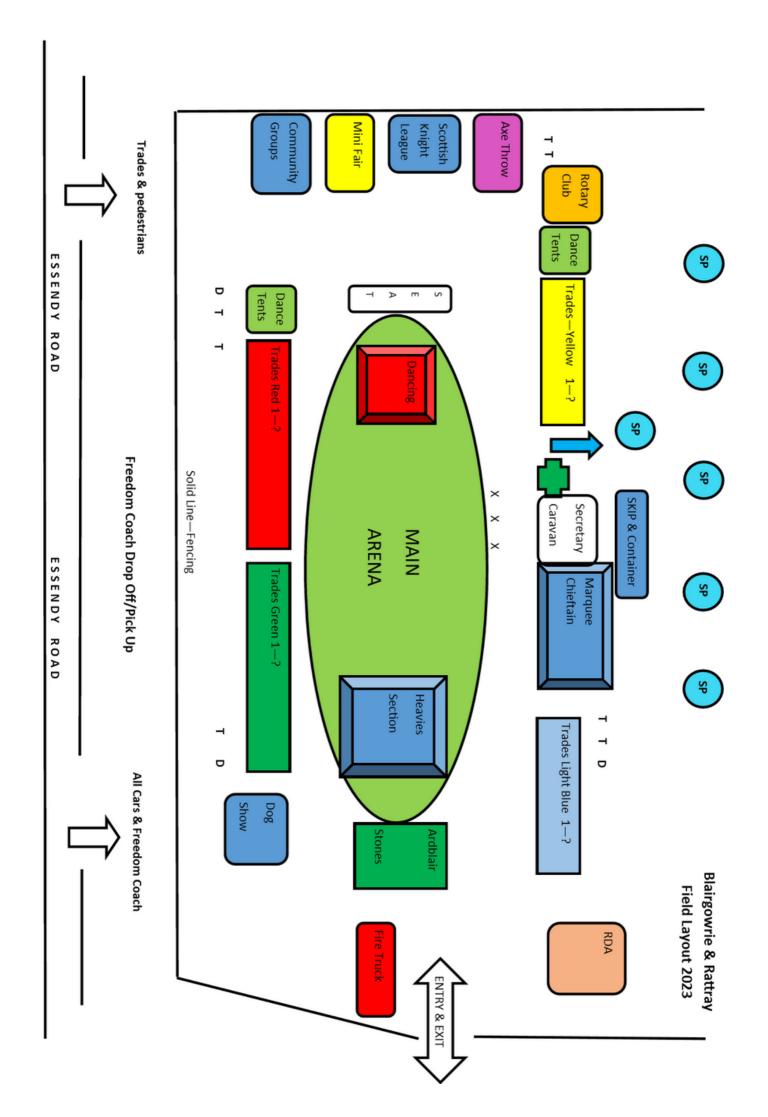


PRIZES AND COMPETITIONS

Blair Engineering Trophies	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th
HILL RACE (Mens and Ladies)	£50	£30	£20	£10	£5	
First runner home wearing a kilt- a						
bottle of Champagne						
HEAVY EVENTS:						
OPEN:						
THROW LIGHT SHOT	£20	£15	£12	£10	£8	£5
THROW HEAVY SHOT	£20	£15	£12	£10	£8	£5
THROW LIGHT WEIGHT FOR DISTANCE	£20	£15	£12	£10	£8	£5
THROW HEAVY WEIGHT FOR DISTANCE	£20	£15	£12	£10	£8	£5
THROW LIGHT HAMMER	£20	£15	£12	£10	£8	£5
THROW HEAVY HAMMER	£20	£15	£12	£10	£8	£5
CABER TOSS	£20	£15	£12	£10	£8	£5
THROW WEIGHT OVER BAR	£20	£15	£12	£10	£8	£5
TUG O' WAR	£100	£80	£60	£30		
SCOTTISH OPEN						
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CPA-B GRADE	£70	£50	£40	£30	£20
CPA-C GRADE	£40	£30	£25	£20	£15
SENIOR PIOBAIREACHD	£100	£60	£40	£30	
SENIOR MARCH	£40	£30	£25	£20	
SENIOR STRATHSPEY AND REEL	£40	£30	£25	£20	
JUNIOR MARCH (Under 18's)	£20	£15	£10	£5	
JUNIOR STRATHSPEY AND REEL (Under 18's)	£20	£15	£10	£5	
C GRADE OPEN MARCH	£30	£25	£20	£10	
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LOCAL					
SENIOR MARCH	£25	£15	£10	£5	
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JUNIOR MARCH (Under 18's)	£15	£10	£5		
JUNIOR STRATHSPEY AND REEL (Under 18's)	£15	£10	£5		
CYCLING					
800m Open	£28	£23	£18	£12	£8
1600m Open	£28	£23	£18	£12	£8
3200m Open	£28	£23	£18	£12	£8
De'il tak the hindmost	£28	£23	£18	£12	£8
800m Youth Cycle	£18	£14	£10		
1600m Youth Cycle	£18	£14	£10		

HIGHLAND DANCING	
PRIMARY (Age according to entry)	Highland Fling, Sword Dance, Pas de Basques & High Cut Medals
Beginners (Age according to entry)	Highland Fling, Sword Dance, Seann Tribhas, Hullchan, Flora, Lilt Medals
Novices (Age according to entry)	Highland Fling, Sword Dance, Seann Tribhas, Hullchan, Flora, Lilt Medals
Intermediate (9 years and under)	Highland Fling, Sword Dance, Seann Tribhas, Hullchan, Irish Jig, Sailors Hornpipe Medals
Intermediate (12 years and under)	Highland Fling, Sword Dance, Seann Tribhas, Hullchan, Irish Jig, Sailors Hornpipe Medals
Intermediate (15 years and under)	Highland Fling, Sword Dance, Seann Tribhas, Hullchan, Irish Jig, Sailors Hornpipe Medals
Premier (9 years and under)	Highland Fling, Sword Dance, Seann Tribhas, Hullchan, Irish Jig, Sailors Hornpipe
Premier (12 years and under)	Highland Fling, Sword Dance, Seann Tribhas, Hullchan, Irish Jig, Sailors Hornpipe
Premier (15 years and under)	Highland Fling, Sword Dance, Seann Tribhas, Hullchan, Irish Jig, Sailors Hornpipe
Adults	Highland Fling, Sword Dance, Seann Tribhas, Hullchan, Irish Jig, Sailors Hornpipe















Thank you for attending Blairgowrie and Rattray Highland Games We look forward to welcoming you back next year on

Sunday 8th September 2024

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