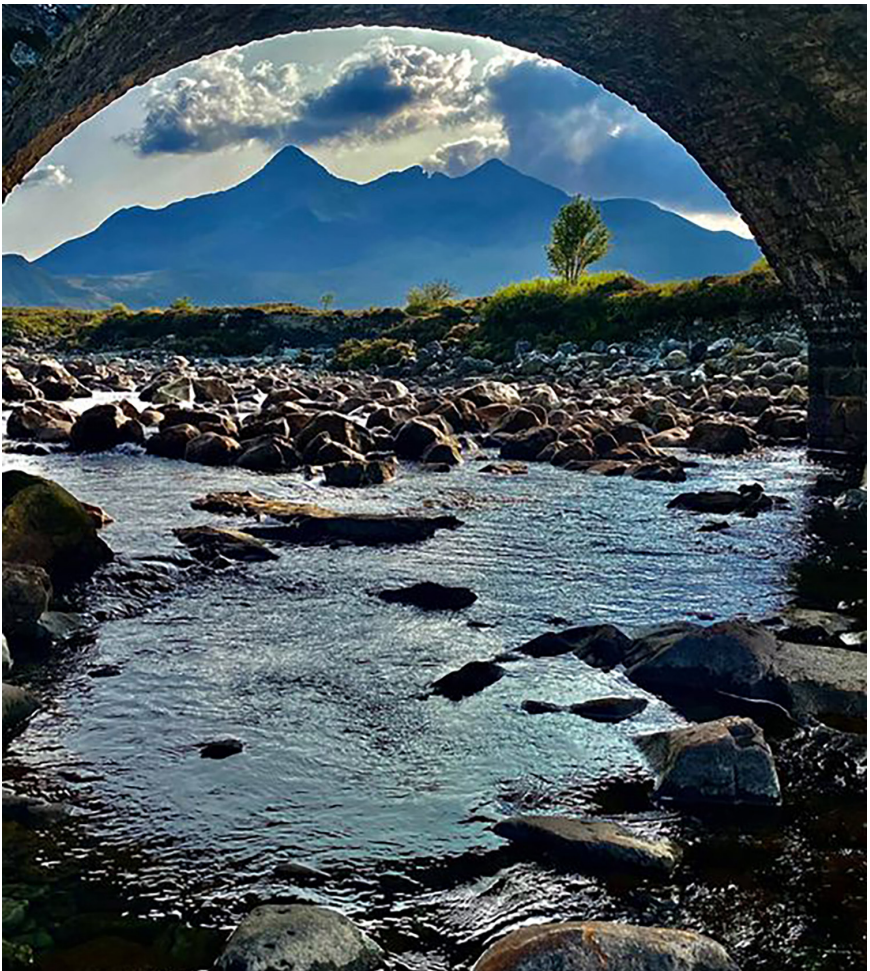




The Leod Voice



Clan MacLeod Societies
Canada National Council
Newsletter # 73, 2020



President's Report

by Judy Tipple

It is my supreme wish that all of you have remained safe and healthy as we navigate through this Coronavirus pandemic which we hope to be in its final stages.

Lately I have felt quite “bereft” and so had to look the word up in the dictionary to find exactly what it meant: “lacking something needed, wanted or expected.” Indeed, that was exactly how I’ve been feeling!



This year has been unlike any other in our lives and most of us will be happy to see the last of 2020, I am sure. However, in spite of how we wish otherwise, the end of the year won't bring with it the end of the pandemic. The changes we have experienced will be with us for some time to come and it will be our challenge to fill our lives with new, alternative, fulfilling activities and experiences. It is time to draw an inspiration from the the challenge faced by our ancestors as they left their homeland, heading out to the unknowns of the New World.

When will we next be able to attend the usual Highland Games with the socialization that one gets from visiting the various clan booths and sharing Scottish history and stories with new clan members; Answering questions from first time visitors to the Games and helping them to locate their ancestors on the detailed map of the Clans of Scotland at our booth; Joining in on the excitement of crowds witnessing the heavy events as a new member of the Canadian team achieves a personal best; Enjoying the precision dancing of the senior classes and the obvious nervous thrill in the performance of the junior competitors; The rousing skirl of the Pipes and Drums and the energetic display of the Pipe Majors?

So much for what we have missed, let us focus on what we have learned to do differently. The Fall Ceilidhs and Annual General Meetings have been replaced by virtual gatherings via Zoom or Skype; it has been interesting seeing the friendly faces and background computer areas as we talk. Most of us have likely incorporated into our routine some highland music and story telling features on Facebook or our favourite websites. The virtual one day presentation by the Victoria Highland Games and Festival was a valiant attempt to fill the void when the three day event had to be cancelled. Jim Mackenzie, a CMS Vancouver member, organized a great event with Malcolm and Karen MacLeod of Duncan assisting in the set up and take down.

CMSC is still seeking a treasurer, needed most urgently in order to submit the collected payments for the *Clan MacLeod Magazine* and Associated Clan MacLeod Societies dues. The alternative will be that each Society will need to make their payment to AMSC separately. If you could commit to take on treasurer for one or two years only the CMSC executive will be very appreciative.

Christmas Scottish-Style — Then and Now

Article based on excerpts from online publication: <https://englishlive.ef.com/blog/english-in-the-real-world/christmas-traditions-in-scotland/>

Everybody knows the Scots love a party, especially when there's a glass or two of whisky involved, so it might come as something of a surprise to find that one of the biggest celebrations of the year was actually missing from the Scottish party calendar – for almost all of four centuries!

Prior to the Reformation of 1560, Christmas in Scotland was called Yule, and also Yhoill or Yuil. It was celebrated in much the same way as it was across Catholic Europe, with games, gifts and feasts. Following the Reformation, however, these traditional celebrations became frowned upon. As the church and state were then closely linked, Christian Christmas holidays and feast days were soon abolished altogether and were strictly enforced by law. Even up until the 20th century excessive feasting and celebrating at Christmas time was kept to a minimum, as the Church of Scotland, a Presbyterian church never placed much emphasis on the festival.

Christmas Day only became a public holiday in Scotland in 1958 and Boxing Day in 1974. People were accustomed to working on Christmas Day, and until as recently as 2001 there were threats of strikes when Scottish banks tried to offer their workers English bank holidays – giving workers more time off over Christmas, but less time off at New Year. The gift-giving, public holidays and feasting associated with mid-winter were therefore traditionally left for Hogmanay and New Year. It explains why Hogmanay was, and still is, by far the biggest celebration in the Scottish calendar – from fireball swingin' in Stonehaven to the explosive displays above the huge crowds at Edinburgh Castle.

However, with the church's influence significantly on the wane since the mid-20th century, Christmas celebrations in Scotland are now on a par with New Year and the Yuletide celebrations of the rest of the UK, Europe and North America. The capital city now hosts a traditional German Christmas Market each year, Christmas lights are strung up in the high streets of all of the main towns and cities – if they can survive

the Scottish weather, and carol singing is rife too.

Somewhat surprisingly, Christmas dinner is the one meal of the year that isn't traditionally coated in batter and deep fried in Scotland. Turkey, stuffing and all the trimmings are traditional, but as Scotland is home to great game hunting and fabulous fishing you'll often find some Scottish variants on the Christmas table – like wild salmon, pheasant, venison or even wild boar. The Scots certainly have a sweet tooth, and the wide array of Christmas puddings on offer goes to prove it. Besides the traditional British Christmas pudding, there's the rich Christmas Cake, which is usually iced with marzipan, as well as the equally heavy Cloutie Dumpling. If you fancy something creamy go for Cranachan, (made with oats, cream, raspberries and whisky) or boozy sherry trifle, and for a sweet treat with your cup of tea or coffee, make it some tooth-rottingly delicious tablet.



Anybody of a certain vintage that grew up in a Scottish sitting room will have fond memories of the Christmas booze display. Tins of McEwans Export and the Tennents Lovelies that never got drunk, bottles of Babycham and Advocaat Snowballs for the aunties and grandmas, sherry for your mum, and Bell's for your dad. If that's not enough, be sure to try and cram as much alcohol as possible into the meal itself – especially puddings – brandy butter, lashings of brandy in the Christmas pudding and oodles of sherry in the trifle – slainte!

CMSC MacLeod Tartan

Carol MacCrimmon still has Canadian Tartan items available to all members by order. The fabric is 54" wide costing \$65 per metre, men's ties are \$25, soft Tams are \$50, Serape Cape is \$150 and Ladies Sashes, \$50. To place orders and check for availability, please contact Carol at (c_macrimmon@hotmail.com).

For 14 oz kilt lengths 58" wide at \$300 contact Judy Tipple at 250-539-5475 or jmtipple@gmail.com.

Scotland's Hogmanay

Article adapted from: www.hogmanay-edinburgh.com/

[Editor Note: On October 1, 2020 City of Edinburgh Council made the following announcement: "There will be no public events which might encourage gatherings of people at either Edinburgh's Christmas or Hogmanay." Developments since then have confirmed the wisdom of that decision. The following article was written in a pre-COVID time and describes Hogmanay as it has been, rather than how it will be celebrated this year.]

Recognised globally as the home of Hogmanay, Edinburgh annually holds one of the world's biggest New Year celebrations. Thousands of people descend upon the old streets of central Edinburgh for a massive party of music, revelry and one of the world's great fireworks displays, with famous Edinburgh Castle as a backdrop.

The local Scottish folk take New Year so seriously that not only is January 1 a public holiday but they also take off the the next day as well to get over the New Year street celebrations. The number of people who head to Edinburgh each year has become so great that some years back the local council had to make the huge street party a ticket-only event.

While New Year's Eve is celebrated around the world, the Scots have a long rich heritage associated with this event, and have their own name for it, Hogmanay. There are many theories about the derivation of the word Hogmanay. The Scandinavian word for the feast preceding Yule was "Hoggo-nott," while the Flemish words (many have come into Scots), "hoog min dag," means "great love day". Hogmanay could also be traced back to the Anglo-Saxon "Haleg monath," Holy Month, or the Gaelic, "ogemaidne," new morning. But the most likely source seems to be the French. "Homme est ne" or Man is born, while in France the last day of the year when gifts were exchanged was "aguillaneuf." In Normandy, presents given at that time were "hoguignetes." Take your pick!

There are traditions before midnight such as cleaning the house on the 31st of December, including taking out the ashes from the fire in the days when coal fires were common. There is also the superstition to clear all your debts before "the bells" at midnight.

The Hogmanay custom of singing "Auld Lang Syne" has become common in many countries. "Auld Lang Syne" is a traditional poem reinterpreted by Robert Burns, and later set to music. It is now common for this to be sung in a circle of linked arms that are crossed over one another as the clock strikes midnight for New Year's Day, although in Scotland the traditional practice is to cross arms only for the last verse.

The magical Firework display and torchlight procession in Edinburgh - and throughout many cities in Scotland - is reminiscent of the ancient custom at Scottish Hogmanay pagan parties hundreds of years ago. The traditional New Year ceremony of yesteryear would involve people dressing up in the hides of cattle and running around the village being hit by sticks. The festivities would also include the lighting of bonfires, rolling blazing tar barrels down the hill and tossing torches. Animal hide was also wrapped around sticks and ignited; these produced a smoke that was believed to be very effective to ward off evil spirits. Some of these customs do continue, especially in the small, older communities in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland where tradition, along with language and dialect, are kept alive and well.

Clans and Scottish Societies of Canada (CASSOC) News

The Fall edition of the *An Drochaid – The Bridge* is available from the website (www.CASSOC.ca) and contains many very interesting articles. Among them is *Souvenir Plots in Scotland – The Law* which may well interest many readers.

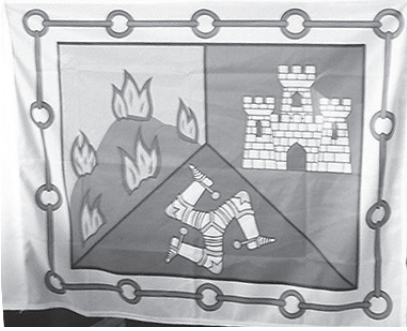
An Drochaid is well edited and issued quarterly. Clan MacLeod Societies of Canada is a member of CASSOC and would be pleased to have a correspondent who would report on Clan MacLeod news.

With a motto of *Together with Accord*, CASSOC is a valued collection of societies and organizations interested in celebrating Scottish Cultural Heritage and promoting all aspects of Scottish culture.

You may sign up to receive the newsletter when you go to their website.



ACMS Banner



The Burning Mountain represents the MacLeods of Lewis and the Castle is for the MacLeods of Harris and Dunvegan. The Three Legs of Man refer to the Clans' progenitor, Leod, who was a descendant of the Norse Kings of Man. The chain represents the links that hold the Clan together. The Associated Clan MacLeod Societies (ACMS) was granted Heraldic Arms by the Lord Lyon, King of Arms, Edinburgh in 1993.

Working and Living at Dunvegan Castle through COVID-19

by Georgia McClure of Victoria, South Australia

Taken from the October 2020 Newsletter from CMS Australia (South Australia) Inc edited by Alex McLeod

Georgia is the daughter of Rod and Davina McClure of Mt Macedon, SAU

My amazing experience of living and working at Dunvegan Castle and Gardens started when, as a young member of the Clan MacLeod Society for Australia for Victoria & Tasmania, I came across a Dunvegan Castle job advert in the Clan newsletter.

At the time, I was a Master of Teaching student at the University of Melbourne and realized that this was a once in a lifetime opportunity that could not be missed. With the support of my family, I applied for a position as a Castle Guide and was surprised to be accepted. Little did I know that I would not be able to fulfill my role but would instead experience far more.



In February 2020, I embarked on my journey to Scotland. The 28-hour plane trip consisted of memorizing facts and information regarding the history of Dunvegan Castle, including items of furniture, paintings and statues that are held within. I found that the Clan Chiefs were incredibly easy to remember, as the vast majority were named Norman. I was eager

to share my newfound knowledge with visitors, arrive at my new home, meet new friends and embrace all the beauty Isle of Skye had to offer.

My travels commenced just before the start of the pandemic in Australia and I could not have imagined the significant impact it would have on my new workplace. Upon arrival at the MacLeod Estate, I was informed by the Castle Custodian, Jeroen Roskam, that the castle would not be opening on the 1st of April. Instead, Scotland was entering a stage of lockdown to prevent the spread of Covid-19. I was pleased to find that I was not the only seasonal worker in this situation. A lovely French woman, Julie, had also found herself marooned at Dunvegan Castle and I felt comfort in knowing that I had found a good companion.

Hugh MacLeod of MacLeod met with us soon after our arrival to inform us that we were welcome to stay on at the Estate until the Castle reopened. I felt incredibly honoured to meet the Chief in person and grateful for his kindness. Julie and I offered to volunteer our time to assist in the upkeep of the Estate during lockdown to thank Hugh for his generosity.

The number of Estate staff members diminished dramatically over the next few weeks until only a small handful of us remained to maintain the handsome castle and gardens. Over the course of the next 5 months, our volunteering tasks exposed us to new skills and enhanced our understanding of the inner workings of a Scottish Estate. On Mondays, we spent our time in the gardens learning about efficient ways of weeding and planting under the careful guide of Head Gardener Una. From Tuesday to Thursday, we spent our days under Jeroen's direction, completing tasks around the castle. These jobs included, but were not limited to, painting rooms, cleaning artwork, artifacts and chandeliers, installing finger plates, cataloguing sheet music, organizing catering crockery and glassware, collecting stones for wall repairs, relocating wardrobes and furniture, treating for wood worm, staining floors and, of course, conducting regular coffee breaks. We ourselves soon became a part of the fabric of the castle and knew its workings well. Finally, on Fridays, we ensured the upkeep of the holiday cottages on the Estate and the offices.

Our free time was filled with hiking and exploring the Scottish landscape and swimming in Dunvegan Loch. The climate (excluding the midges) and dramatic views that the Isle of Skye has to offer will be fondly forever entrenched in my memory. The sweet, untainted air and the sunlight shining through the trees and flowers in the gardens all add to the mesmerizing essence that Dunvegan Castle and Gardens holds. It is truly a special place. I have been fortunate enough to experience the

landscape around me change through the dramatic seasons without the bustle of tourists. It has been a fond time of peace, learning and friendship.

On August 1, the gardens officially opened for the remainder of the season. Unfortunately, due to social distancing restrictions, the castle itself remained closed. The gardening team worked tirelessly to prepare the gardens for opening and I observed as the beds filled and began to bloom with summer flowers. I was blessed to be offered a full-time position in the Ticket Office and I have spent my days since greeting all of our visitors and providing them with information about the gardens before they enter. I have valued meeting tourists from across Europe and have enjoyed listening to their stories and experiences.

I am aware that I have been given a once in a lifetime opportunity to become associated with this unique estate, to communicate with the Chief and to form close bonds with other employees. Jeroen, the Castle Custodian, has not only been an incredible supervisor, but he has also become a close friend throughout this time, and I thank him for his unwavering support and generosity.

Hugh MacLeod of MacLeod has been constantly present throughout the course of the pandemic. He has frequently updated all staff with notices regarding current situations, and there was continuous transparency as to how the estate was evolving. His support and kindness for all of us has been unwavering, and for this, I will be forever grateful.

I wish Hugh MacLeod of MacLeod and the Estate staff all the best in the upcoming season and thank them for being so accommodating, supportive and kind during my time at Dunvegan Castle & Gardens throughout 2020. I look forward to participating in the 2022 Clan Parliament when I will return to Dunvegan Castle, my forever home, once again.



Part of my Father's Story Found

by Edie Kernighan, CMC Vancouver

The Vancouver City Police Archivist (Joanne McCormick) contacted me a few months ago about my father, Kenneth MacLeod, as she was doing bios on all VPD Constables. She didn't have a photo so searched in Find A Grave <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/26261527/kenneth-macleod> and saw that I had put one up. It was too small for her to use so I sent her a few other photos to choose from. I told her that I had tried to get information about my father's time in Vancouver Police Department and wasn't able to. Joanne sent me all these documents and a brief write up.

“Your dad joined the Vancouver Police on March 10, 1942 and was appointed as Temporary Constable #290, for the duration of War. He was paid \$125 per month at the time, which was raised over the next years that he was working — last pay raise was Apr 1, 1945 when he was advanced to Temporary Constable 1st Class, at \$162.50 per month. On Sep 1, 1945, his services were terminated, as many of the policemen who had joined the war effort were returning. There isn't much else in his Service Record, I'm afraid.”

I know he loved being a police officer, plenty of fellow Scots to consort with and for a time he had the Fraser Street beat, near the family home. He could walk to work (didn't own a car until about 1954) and he knew many of the locals and most of the business owners. He had many friends and loved to visit with them.

After his job as a police officer ended, he worked for the City Yard on Sherbrooke Street, as a Store Keeper, also in walking distance from home. His duties included gassing up the trucks and looking after supplies. Sometimes he took us to work with him. I had to use the Men's room while he stood guard as there were no female employees.

He got Prostate cancer in 1958 and was off work before he passed away.

One of his previous jobs was as a miner at Britannia Mines, they sent one of the reference letters when he applied to VPD. I include a photo of him and his pals.





I also have a Foncie Vancouver street photo of him with me when I was five. This is the only photo I have of us together. We had very few family photos.



My Visit to Dunvegan

by John McLeod, CMS Vancouver Island

When I was a teenager, like many of my generation, my ambition was a life at sea. In this capacity I found myself stranded in England. Back then before England joined the European Common Market members of the Commonwealth could live and work in England. In this capacity I was able to get cheap digs with a hot plate, some dishes and a fry pan. My landlady was a widow who had lost her husband at sea during World War II. Her family all went to sea and her two sons were deck officers with Cunard Steam Ships. As a result I was considered one of the family. The locals either had family or relatives in Canada or knew some Canadian soldiers from WW I or WW II.

As a result I was more popular than I had ever been in my life. I was able to get a job in a Boat and Salvage Yard as a labourer. One of my work mates was a McKinnon whose grandfather had moved to England from Skye after World War I. As my ancestors had come from Skye also we decided that when we could afford it we would visit Skye.

On a visit to London I went to Canada House in Trafalgar Square where I met some of the staff who graciously gave me a bunch of Canadian newspapers and magazines to read. When I got back to my digs word had got out that I had some Canadian magazines. Being friendly and generous to my fellow Canadians, before I realized it I had given them all away. Back then there was very little news about Canada in

British newspaper; it was all USA or Australia as Canada seemed to be out of favour with the establishment, but was loved by the common folk.

Finally I had saved enough money from my job to make my desired pilgrimage to Skye. My McKinnon friend and I quit our jobs and bid farewell to our many friends and set forth on our great adventure.

I hardly recognized Angus McKinnon when we met up to leave as I had only ever seen him in overalls and a cap. Shaved, with his hair cut and turned out with his Harris Tweed jacket, he looked every inch a Scot, not at all a Londoner.

Angus had done his National Service in the British Army, serving in Scotland and Korea. As a result he had many friends in Scotland and a good knowledge of the country.

With British Rail Passes in hand we arrived in Glasgow. We got digs on Hillhead St, near the University and decided to stay a few days to acquaint ourselves with the city. We walked around Glasgow and visited some of Angus' friends, all of whom seemed to have friends or relatives in Canada.

We wound up in a Pub near John Brown's Ship Yards where many of Angus' Army buddies worked. It was a great reunion of old buddies and beer and a good time was had by all. Next day we went to Edinburgh to see the sights, then on to Sterling Castle, Dundee and Aberdeen. On to Inverness, Kyle of Lochalsh and then took the ferry to Skye. On the train in Edinburgh we were seated near a young lady of rare beauty who was travelling with her father, a retired British Army RSM. I could tell he did not approve of Angus and myself by the cold stare he gave us. It turned out that she was a widow, her name was Agnes and she was going to visit her sister in Inverness, her father getting off at Aberdeen.

Angus and Agnes seemed to get along very well, even more so after her father got off in Aberdeen. We all got off in Inverness and had lunch together in a local restaurant. Angus decided to stay in Inverness and I would see him later.

I got the train to Kyle of Lochalsh, then the ferry to Skye and the bus to Portree. I stayed overnight at a bed & breakfast in Portree. The landlady did not want to know my name or have me sign the register. One of the other guests came from Koln, Germany and he entertained us with stories of the Rhine River and its legends. My landlady surprised me with her intellect and knowledge of history and music. The other guests were from England, Wales and France; we all became one, brothers and sisters all thanks to the wondrous effect of Scotch Whisky.

The next morning I decided to visit Dunvegan and as there was no

bus until late afternoon, I decided to hitch hike to the Castle. I walked for about ten minutes before I got a ride from a tradesman from Glasgow. I told him I was from Canada and was going to Dunvegan. He informed me the Islanders were an odd lot, but likeable once you got used to them. He gave me a ride part way, then I walked for about five minutes before I got a ride from a local farmer. I told him I was going to Dunvegan to visit the Castle. He informed me that it was closed for repairs but I should walk around the outside. It turned out he was an ex-Royal Navy retired after 30 years service. We walked around the outside of the Castle and he was an amazing source of information. After about an hour of entertaining conversation he realized that he had to get on his way again. I decided to head back to Portree and get the bus back to the mainland. I walked for about five minutes before I was joined by a border collie who stayed with me while I continued on trying to hitch a ride. I came to a quarry where there were two men working. We chatted for a few minutes and one of them informed me that I would never get a ride with my dog. As I chased the dog away, I was amazed to see the look of pain and hurt on his face.

Minutes later I got a ride from a pair of locals in a Land Rover. The driver was red haired and looked like a real Scot, however, it turned out that he was English. His mate was a local who worked on one of the Estate farms nearby. They invited me for tea and they would give me a ride to Portree later. I told them that I was a MacLeod from Canada, but they introduced me as a tourist from Canada. After much good company, tea, scones and jam I bid farewell to the lady of the house and we set off for Portree. I bid farewell to my hospitable friend and got on the bus headed for the ferry, Kyle of Lochalsh and then the train to Inverness and finally back to Hillhead St in Glasgow. As I got on the bus in Portree it was quite full but I got a seat beside an elderly lady who was quite friendly and I introduced myself. She told me her maiden name was MacLeod but she had married a Fraser. She and her husband were now retired and she was joining him in Inverness. Mrs Fraser insisted I share her basket lunch with her while she told me hair raising tales of old wars and Viking raids. In no time we had arrived in Inverness and I bid farewell to my new friend.

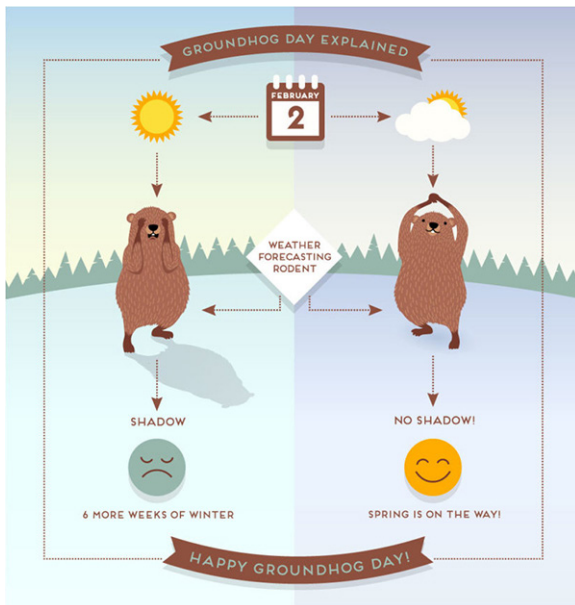
The train was busy with sailors and soldiers on leave and some Americans who were drilling for oil off-shore. I got talking to an American who was from Texas named Campbell, a driller on one of the oil rigs. Our North American accents got the attention of some of the sailors who had been to the USA and Canada and we swapped saltie dibs until they had to go. My Campbell friend got off in Edinburgh while I continued on to Glasgow to take the bus back to my digs on Hillhead St. The landlady

was pleased to see me, she gave me the address for Angus and told me she would phone him and let him know that I had arrived back. The next day Angus showed up and we swapped stories about what we had been up to.

Angus had a job in Glasgow near the waterfront in a warehouse. It turned out that Angus was madly in love with Agnes, the young beauty we had met on the train travelling with her father. She lived with her Aunt and Uncle in Glasgow so Angus had rented a room just a block away. I would meet Angus after work in the same Pub near John Brown's Ship Yard. As I was running short of funds and living on money sent me from home it was time to get a job. In the Pub I met an American Seaman who told me his ship was short two ABs and one ordinary seaman. His ship was in for repairs and should be leaving in two days. With my Seaman papers in hand I saw the First Mate and he signed me on as ordinary Seaman and told me to report in two days. This gave me time to visit with Angus and Agnes or Agie as she liked to be known as. When time came to say good bye to my friends I gave them my parents address in Canada.

Several months later I got back home to Canada, my parents had some mail for me from Scotland. Angus and Agie had gotten married and were planning on going to Australia. We kept in touch by mail for several years, they had two boys while they lived in Australia, then a girl after they moved to New Zealand.

Last I heard from them they were all doing quite well and now had several grand-children and great-grand-children.



Winter Solstice in the Scottish Highlands

by Catherine Bentley

December 17, 2015 reprinted and adapted from www.truehighlands.com

Winter Solstice falls on December 21. In the northern hemisphere, this date marks the turning point of the season, the shortest day and the longest night. Nowadays at this time of year it is normal that people's attention turns to celebrating Christmas, however, the ritual and history surrounding the solstice in this country and all over Europe, predate the arrival of Christianity by thousands of years and many festive celebrations have been adapted from much earlier traditions.



The ancient people of northern Europe were hunter gatherers, many of whom worshipped the sun. In Norse mythology the sun is a wheel that changes the seasons and it was from the word for this wheel, *houl*, that the word yule comes. At the mid-winter solstice they would light bonfires, tell stories and drink ale, in addition to making sacrifices to the gods to earn blessing on the forthcoming crops.

This winter solstice was immensely important to them because they were economically dependent on monitoring the progress of the seasons. Food shortages were common during the first months of the winter, so this festival was the last celebration before deep winter began. Most cattle would be slaughtered so they would not have to be fed during the winter, so a plentiful supply of fresh meat was available. The majority of wine and beer made during the year was finally fermented and ready for drinking.



In Scotland, before the arrival of Christianity, on the solstice Celtic priests would cut the mistletoe that grew on the oak tree and give it as a blessing. Oaks were seen as sacred and the winter fruit of the mistletoe was a symbol of life in the dark winter months. It was also the Druidic priests who maintained the tradition of the yule log. The ancient Celtic

people believed that the sun stood still for twelve days in the middle of winter and during this time a log was lit, using the remains of the previous year's fire. It was believed it would conquer the darkness, banish evil spirits and bring luck for the coming year.

Whatever the exact origins of the rituals we practice this festive season, it does seem that there has been a growth of interest in traditional religions and practices. People who describe themselves as new-age or spiritual seekers have rediscovered the rituals of the ancients and have attempted to celebrate in a way that connects them to the past. One of the centres for this pre-Christian worship of the solstice will be at Callanish on the Isle of Lewis. These standing stones date from about 3,000 BC and, although academics still argue about their precise purpose, there is no questioning the powerful pull they have. Callanish Stones are older than Stonehenge.



Maeshowe is a Neolithic chambered cairn and passage grave on Orkney. It was built at around the same time and its architecture clearly links it to the solstice tradition. It is here at the winter solstice, the last rays of the setting sun shine through Maeshowe's entrance passage to pierce the darkness of the chambered cairn. This precise alignment allows the light at the darkest point of the year to illuminate this spectacular house of the dead. It is the source of many theories; does this shaft of sunlight carry away the souls of the dead? Did the entry of the sun represent rebirth, or a fertility rite of some sort? Or was it simply a calendar to remind Orkney's ancient inhabitants that the darkest time of the year had passed and that the light was once again returning? What is common in most solstice tradition is that this time of year is about coming together and remembering the past. Celebrations have evolved and changed, but the date of the solstice remains fixed. A convenient reminder that despite the vast changes taking place in our world today, some things will always endure, always link back to the past.



Maeshowe circular mound at Stenness on Orkney is 38 m across containing a chambered tomb older than the Egyptian pyramids, as seen from a distance.

The burial chamber is built of slabs of rock, some weighing up to 30 tonnes. Side chambers have fitted single slab ceilings. Excavation in 1861 shows carved runes left by the Vikings, similar to today's graffiti. At sunset on midwinter's day the sun shines down the length of the entrance passage to illuminate an area low on the rear wall. This information indicates when the days will be getting longer again.



The Story of Scotland

In the beginning when God was creating the Earth, he was sitting on cloud nine, telling his pal the angel Gabriel what he planned for Scotland. Gabby says he

“ I'm going to give this place high majestic mountains, purple glens, streams laden with salmon and trout, golden fields of barley from which a whisky coloured nectar can be produced, coal in the ground, oil under the sea, gas.....” Hold on! Hold on!

Interjected the bold angel Gabriel, ‘are you not being a little too generous to these Scots ?’ Back came the almighty one's reply, “Not really, wait until you see the the neighbours I'm giving them !!!!!”

How the Highlanders took Nova Scotia

For half a century Nova Scotians were taught to be ashamed of their Highland origins. Now, with their own tartan, music, folklore, flag, college and pageantry, they are making the place more Scottish than Scotland.

Article by John Maclure from November 12, 1955 *Maclean's Magazine* can be read by following the link <https://archive.macleans.ca/article/1955/11/12/how-the-highlanders-took-nova-scotia>.

Another bit of trivia

by Malcolm MacLeod, CMS Vancouver Island

When we were in London in November 2019, we stayed with Norman Malcolm MacLeod whom we had met via the DNA project which showed that he was a relative of mine. Norman has been trying to find the link. We had never met personally before but I had introduced him to the Clan MacLeod Society which he joined on the spot and soon became a board member. Clare Moncrieff of CMS England (who sadly could not join us) had arranged for us to get together in London and we met at a Scottish restaurant with David, Al, Norman, a new member Molly Simpson who says "I'm 23 and living in London currently. I'm half English and half Scottish on my dad's side of the family; all my descendants on my mother's side are MacLeods from Skye."

We had a wonderful get together at which I knocked over some glasses because there were too many tall ones and I was speaking with my hands. Such makes for a memorable occasion.

CMSC membership registrar, Diana MacLeod of Stratford, ON with her darling daughter Josephine



A MacLeod Book in High School Curriculum

by Rod McLeod, *from Clan MacLeod Society NSW newsletter, editor Peter MacLeod*

When grandson Jahan, in his second last year in high school, mentioned that in English he is reading *Island*, a book by Alistair MacLeod, I naturally pricked up my ears. Knowing nothing of an author by the name of Alistair MacLeod, I wondered: who is Alistair MacLeod, and why is he set for study at senior Higher School Certificate level. So, I engaged in a little research.

My research begins with a misstep. Entering Alistair McLeod and not sure of the correct spelling, I am introduced to several Alistair McLeods. Brisbane based, Alistair McLeod is a famous chef, with regular TV shows and appearances, and much in demand for hosting dining events. Not the right one it seems. Like myself, this Alistair is a McLeod with forebears from Northern Ireland.

Then I found the author, Alistair W. MacLeod, a celebrated novelist, short story writer and academic. His ancestors came from the Isle of Eigg. Alistair was born in 1936 in Saskatchewan, Canada. When he was 10 years old the family moved to a farm in Dunvegan, Inverness County, on Nova Scotia's Cape Breton Island. He became first a school teacher, then a University lecturer, and eventually Professor of English at the University of Windsor, specializing in British authors of the nineteenth century. He died in 2014 at the age of seventy-seven.

Cape Breton, with its deep Scottish inheritance, its grey rocks, long sea swept coast line, and the tough lives of its people, form the themes of this author's writing. Conflict between the old traditional ways and the intrusion of new ways is a recurring theme. He is considered a master of the art of short-story writing. Literary specialists say his style ranges from poetic, as in his novel *No Great Mischief*, to the evocative and sometimes gritty tone used in his short stories. They say his writing style shows influence from nineteenth century British authors, most obviously Thomas Hardy, but there is also influence from modern writers such as Ernest Hemingway, James Joyce and D H Lawrence. Others say the quality of his writing is unique.

While, from my McLeod point of view, it is nice to see a MacLeod book chosen for study in the school curriculum, I wondered if a gifted Australian short-story writer, such as Henry Lawson or Steele Rudd (A. H. Davis) telling stories of our own country, would be a more useful option. Now, having read some of the stories in *Island*, I understand why

Alistair W. MacLeod is regarded as a master of the short-story form, and well worth studying.

Cape Breton (Ceap Breatainn in Gaelic, Cap-Breton in French) is an island of 10,311 sq kms, its northern and western coasts face the Gulf of Saint Lawrence, its eastern and southern coasts front the Atlantic Ocean. A rock-filled causeway, 1,385 metres long, connects it to mainland Nova Scotia. Gaelic settlement in Cape Breton occurred between 1770 and 1840 when Gaelic speaking Scots left the Highlands and Hebrides, large numbers migrating to Cape Breton and nearby Prince Edward Island. These immigrants maintained their Scottish customs and traditions; Gaelic was the language of work and family life. Today few speak Gaelic fluently and Scottish traditions have faded somewhat over time. There have been government efforts to stimulate Gaelic language and cultural influences over the past few decades and Cape Breton boasts a Gaelic College.



Oh Covid-19 How I scorn thee Let me count the ways.

I scorn thee to the depth and breadth and height
my soul can reach, isolated, out of sight,
For the end of my being human, a loss of grace.
I scorn thee for interrupting every day's need,
by sun and candlelight.
To scorn thee freely as men strive for rights,
to work purely, or to return to play.
To scorn thee with the passion which also has no cure
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.
I scorn thee with a contempt, as we all seemed to lose.
With our lost ones. I scorn thee with the breath,
tears of all our lives; and if God choose,
I shall scorn thee better after death.

by Editor Alex McLeod, South Australian Newsletter, by the inspiration from
and apologies to Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

Flowers of the Forrest

Wesley Morrison MacLeod

Proud of his Loud MacLeod Tartan
by Stephanie MacLeod, CMS Ottawa

In early September, my father (Wesley Morrison MacLeod) died of pneumonia during the last stage of his battle with Alzheimer's. As per his wishes, he was cremated in his MacLeod of Lewis housecoat, holding fast to his Scottish heritage till the end.

Over the past few months, I have been reflecting, curious about what makes a person born on one continent (North America) identify so strongly with his ties to another continent (Europe). What makes a man so proud to wear a bright yellow, itchy piece of cloth? To tell you the truth, I'm still not sure.

When I was a teenager, my father would put on his vivid, tartan housecoat on Sunday mornings to make porridge and read the newspaper. If I had a friend spending the night, I would sometimes try to hide the flashy housecoat on my father, not wanting to be embarrassed by the sight of the loud MacLeod tartan.

Somehow, my father always managed to find my hiding spots and never mentioned the fact that his housecoat had gone missing (yet again). I guess he was wise to my antics and realized that, as a shy teenager, I had yet to proudly embrace my clan connection.

Now, as the mornings get colder and I naturally gravitate to making porridge oats for breakfast, I think of my father and wonder if I, too, will soon be wearing brazen, yellow tartan clothing and not caring who sees me.

He was loved and cherished by many people especially his wife Bernice, his children Stephanie, Ian (Theresa), Neil, Melanie and Amanda MacLeod, and his brothers Bruce (Florence) and Ray MacLeod (Marilyn). He was also blessed with many nieces, nephews.

We send our condolences from his clan friends to all of Wesley's family.



Alexander Canaday McLeod

Dr. Alex McLeod passed away November 6, 2020 at his home in Nashville. Born in Fayetteville, North Carolina in January 1935, Alex had been a resident of Nashville, Tennessee since the 1960s. He was predeceased by his parents, Dr. Walter Guy McLeod and Dr. Vida Canaday McLeod and his brother, Robert Franklin McLeod. He is survived by his wife of 55 years, Dorothy Woods McLeod; his children, Alexander Woods McLeod (Sarah) and Dorothy McLeod Poli (Peter).



A Princeton University Class of '56 graduate with degrees in German and Music, Alex chose to follow in his parents' footsteps as an MD. From 1962 to 1964, Alex served as a US Naval Flight Surgeon assigned to the Marines, receiving the National Defense Service Medal and the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (Cuba). Alex subsequently moved to Nashville and practiced general internal medicine for more than 30 years.

Alex and his wife Dorothy (Dotsie) traveled extensively exploring six continents. An avid academic there was never a time Alex did not have a research project in the works, publishing articles in medical journals, researching the Second World War, or Highland Scots history and McLeod genealogy.

He served two terms as president of Associated Clan MacLeod Societies and was the Genetics Study Group Project Administrator setting the Clan DNA Project in motion. Both of his children have fond memories of many trips to Scotland and the Isle of Skye, where Alex made certain they would receive a first-hand account of their heritage.

He will be remembered for his fondness for his many Skye Terriers and sole Springer Spaniel, his daily feedings of the Koi fish in the backyard pond and his ability to never fail to smirk as he told one of his numerous jokes.



Editor's Page

Please take the time to make this newsletter a two way communication. CMSC executive needs to hear from you regarding the future of our organization and filling the positions of treasurer and vice president. Share links and YouTube programs, books and videos which you find interesting.

Most of this issue is made up of stories and imported articles because of event cancellations and limited attendance at our usual pleasurable and gregarious activities. My thanks goes to those who sent material for *The Leod Voice* over the past months, it is delightful to read personal stories from our readers.

My overall reflection on 2020 is that has been a blank year. Hopefully you will have gotten through it in good health and with a positive attitude which can be helpful in 2021 and beyond. When travel restrictions are lifted and we can gather in larger groups, we will once again experience *Clan Togetherness*.

The Young MacLeods Gathering in South Australia for April 2021 has been cancelled. It is expected that the North American Gathering postponed from 2020 may be held in July 2021 in Lovinia. Planning continues for Parliament for July 23-30, 2022 in Dunvegan when we will be able to see the impressive refurbishment that has been ongoing in the Castle and Garden over the past several years.

It has been challenging to remain optimistic and upbeat. I hope I have provided encouragement and positiveness here. We have experience new opportunities to meet via Zoom and other virtual venues. Life has changed and will continue to change; may we infuse that change with all the hope, peace, joy and and love we are capable of bringing to it.

We need to consider the use of email and digital publications in order to reduce the financial burden of the costs of printing and postage which have increased steadily in the past few years. Do we really need to hold the newsletter in our hand to read it?

The movement toward multi-clan organizations such as CASSOC will enable the interest in Sottish Culture and Heraldry to remain alive and grow. Clans have so much in common and sharing planning and organizing events makes good sense.

Membership Registrar Diana Macleod, cmscmembership@gmail.com is looking forward to receiving the membership list from each society by March 1, 2021.



Newsletter Timelines:

Spring—May 1

Fall—October 1

Membership and
Executive Changes:

March 1 and
September 1

*Finally my wish to you all;
May you Hold Fast and Shine Brightly
with Good Health, Peace and Contentment
throughout the New Year.*

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