

The Lead Voice



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - WINTER 2024/SPRING 2025



I am grateful for the opportunity to serve as the newly elected President of Clan MacLeod Societies of Canada, and would like to thank all our members for giving me the opportunity to represent them. I would also like to convey great appreciation for our outgoing President, Carol MacCrimmon, for the years of hard work and dedication she has brought to Clan MacLeod. I look forward to the challenges and opportunities ahead and will rely on council's guidance and wisdom as we move forward.

Areas of priority that I would like to focus on for the society include:

- Increase membership, particularly the next generation of MacLeods.
- Increase the society's presence at relevant community activities, gatherings, and events.
- Increase current member engagement and participation.
- Gain more of a presence in today's online world.

My formal involvement with Clan MacLeod began very recently. Having moved around the world for most of my life, I haven't had much of a chance to put down roots. Once I had settled permanently back home in Vancouver ten years ago, I began to reconnect more closely with family and I began exploring my MacLeod ancestry. This led me to join the Society. Sadly, much of the family that had knowledge of our deeper history are no longer with us, but I look forward to the challenge of tracing these roots.

I am connected to Clan MacLeod through my mother's side of the family. My great grandmother, Catherine MacLeod, was born in 1901 in Carloway, Isle of Lewis. Her family immigrated to Canada and settled in Alberta in the early 1900's. My knowledge of her side of the family is a very thin and I'm still trying to figure out the exact date she came over. My great grandfather, Kenneth MacLeod (Catherine had the same maiden name but they were not related), was the oldest of seven children. He was born in Balivanich, Isle of Benbecula, in 1902. In 1923 at the age of 21, his family (mother, father, and all seven children) boarded the S.S. Marloch and set sail for Canada. They settled in Alberta, and this is where my great grandparents met. They moved to Vancouver, raised their family there, and we are still here now. I have connections with some of Ken's siblings' families, and in 2023 a small group of us went to the Hebrides for the events surrounding the 100th anniversary of the sailing of the S.S. Marloch in Lochboisdale, South Uist.

I was fortunate to meet and form bonds with family members who are still living in the Hebrides. I instantly fell in love with the islands and hope to go back again someday soon.

I recently had the pleasure of attending a fascinating lecture and workshop with Professor Marjory Harper, titled "Show this letter to as many of our friends as possible": Scottish emigrants' correspondence in the 19th and 20th centuries. In speaking with Professor Harper after her lecture, she asked if I could spread the word to our fellow MacLeods that she is looking for participants to help with her research. See the notice below if you are interested.

I am looking forward to meeting and strengthening bonds with MacLeod's in our local community, across North America, and around the world. I encourage everyone to send me suggestions and ideas to consider, whether you are a recent member who has just joined, or a longtime member with greater exposure to Society affairs.

Hold Fast,

Chris Hodge

archiehodge76@gmail.com

Call for Participants

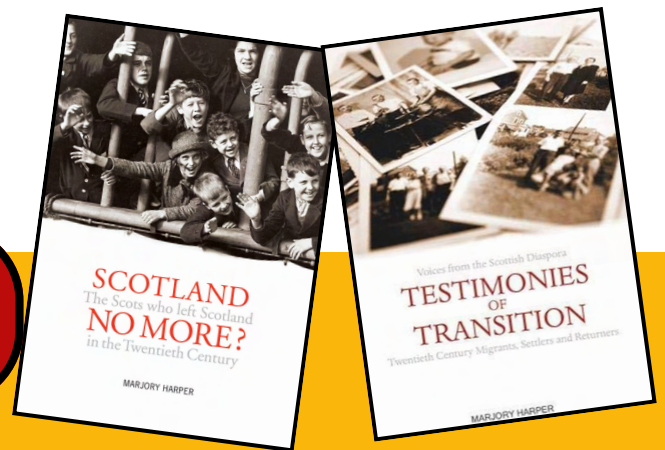


Marjory Harper is collecting Scottish emigrant correspondence from the 19th and 20th centuries for her research. If you have any family letters and correspondence that you or other members of your family have written, and would like to share them and be a part of her research, please get in touch.

Contact details: **M.harper@abdn.ac.uk**

Prof. Harper is Professor of History at the University of Aberdeen and a Visiting Professor at the Centre for History, University of the Highlands and Islands. Her research focuses on British (particularly Scottish) emigration since 1800. Two of her monographs have won international prizes, and she has published around 100 articles and book chapters. Since 2017 her teaching has focused primarily on the development and delivery of an award-winning online multi-disciplinary Master's Programme in Scottish Heritage. She has also undertaken similar work in developing online training for the Scottish Tourist Guides Association.

Public engagement lies at the heart of Marjory's interests and she particularly enjoys engaging with local communities through public lectures. She also acted as one of three historical consultants to the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry, and contributes regularly to radio and television programmes such as **Digging Up Your Roots** and **Who Do You Think You Are?**





A rainbow separates Skye from the Glenelg mainland across the Kylehea Strait. Photo credit: Al McLeod

Glengarry My Home

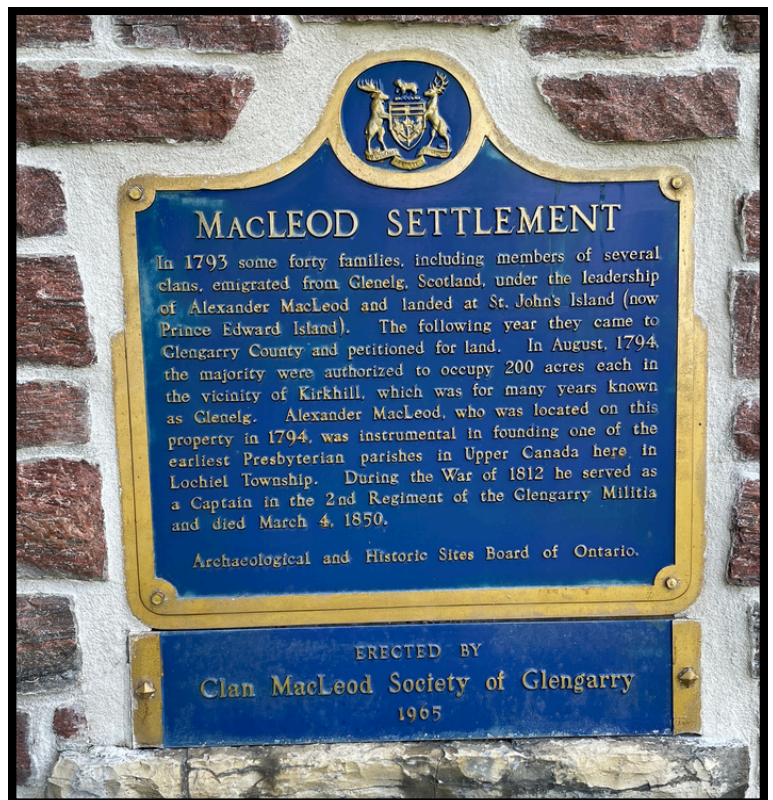
Now in the grip of another northern winter, I'm thinking back to the heat of high summer and my wonderful visit to the Clan MacLeod Society of Glengarry. At the end of July, en route to the Clan MacLeod North American Gathering in Livonia, Detroit, I was welcomed off the train in Alexandria by Clan Macleod Society Secretary Helen MacLeod, President Iain MacLeod and his sister Joan. Within a short space of time, we're at a local restaurant for lunch with other Glengarry Society members and then it's off to visit the wonderful local archive centre (how I wish we had one of those for Clan MacLeod in the United Kingdom!). From there we travel around the county to experience the key points that define the history and heritage of the MacLeods in Glengarry: the MacLeod Cairn that records the formation of the Society in Dunvegan, Glengarry in 1935, the two old Kirk Hill Churches facing each other on opposite sides of a country road, the grave of founding pioneer Alexander MacLeod, and the MacLeod plaque at the Pioneer Museum in Dunvegan. Former CMS Canada President Jim MacLeod drove over two hours to join us and the group could not have been more hospitable. It was a wonderful visit and especial thanks to Helen and the group for organising and making me feel so welcome!





I'm struck by the wording on the MacLeod plaque which says that the 4th July 1936 Gathering of over 1,000 MacLeods from all over North America in Dunvegan, Glengarry 'inspired the formation of Clan MacLeod Societies throughout the world, helping to preserve Scottish heritage'. I reflect that we are still on that journey today as, 90 years later, we strive to keep our societies together and our heritage alive.

Founding pioneer Captain Alexander MacLeod died in 1850 at the age of 81 after a long and eventful life. Perhaps its highlight may have been the epic sea voyages he made from Glenelg near Skye in 1793/4 leading a group of around 120 family and clan members to a new life in Glengarry county, surviving shipwreck, hunger and extreme cold as families waited for months on St John's Island for the ice to break in the St Lawrence River. Looking back, 230 years later, it's difficult to imagine the hardship that these brave Scottish emigrants and tens of thousands like them went through to reach a new life in the New World.



My father Iain's voyage of emigration ended in his untimely death in Montreal in 1954 at the age of 26 but I like to think he was following in the footsteps of our forebears, and it reinforces my determination to do all I can to preserve that heritage and culture and indeed the memory of those of our clan that came before.



Al, Wilma & Kevin on the road above Glenelg

Some months later, now early October, I am with Kevin Tolmie and his wife Wilma returning from a week's 'reconnaissance mission' to the isles of Skye and Raasay in preparation for the next Clan MacLeod Gathering and Parliament in August 2026 – do join us! On Skye we also investigate possibilities for potential project activities for a group of Young MacLeods in and around Dunvegan in the week before the Gathering in late July 2026. We also check out the availability of suitable accommodation around Dunvegan which ACMS plans to provide during that week before. We'd love the group to comprise a Young MacLeod representing every country where we have a Clan MacLeod society – just a dream at the moment but one we're working towards!

On the way back from Skye we cross by the old Kylerhea turntable ferry across the straits to the mainland and drive off at Glenelg where Alexander MacLeod had set out from all those years before. This is edge of Glengarry country, ancient MacLeod country, majestic misty mountains, dark lochs far below, and brooding skies. I thought of Clan MacLeod Society of Glengarry then and it felt like closing a circle that had opened back in the heat of summer as I stepped off that train in Alexandria. With every good wish in these uncertain times: Hold Fast and keep those lights and winter fires Shining Brightly!

Al McLeod

President,
Associated Clan MacLeod Societies 2023-2026



Clan Parliament



August 1-7, 2026



Sunset over Loch Dunvegan,
photo credit: Al McLeod

Dunvegan, Isle of Skye

There is a special push for young MacLeods to attend. Check out the YouTube promotion at the link below.

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/HcmKPdpMVPs>

Glengarry My Home

Composed by Ken MacRae



In the hills of Glengarry my heart lingers still,
By the lakeside, the burn side, the sturdy stone mill,
In my dreams there I wander with friends of my own,
In that old Scottish county, Glengarry my home.
Through the woods and the wilds all the highlanders came,
They brought fame to Glengarry and gave it the name,
And I cannot forget it wherever I roam,
'Tis a Scots bit 'o heaven, Glengarry, my home.

Though the heather blooms not where the Scotch River flows,
Still a love for the old land in every heart glows.
Don't forget the old county wherever you roam,
For it's proud you should be if Glengarry's your home
How I love the old country, 'tis heaven to see,
As I love the young lassie who's waiting for me.
And I cannot forget it, wherever I roam,
'Tis a Scot's bit 'o heaven, Glengarry my home.

It's been two-hundred years since the Highlander's song
First rang through the woods on the winter nights long.
They sang of their hills and the life they had known,
Of their once happy days in their old Highland home.
They were stripped of their Gaelic, their tartan and song,
They had nothing but memories which they passed along.
There's no myth, there's no wonder, just let it be known,
All their memories still live in Glengarry my home.

When the end of life's story comes closer to me,
By a bend in the river, I'll bide just a wee.
Be it hot day in summer or winter winds blow,
Have a piper play for me Glengarry my home.
Wrap me up in my tartan, and my old sgian dubh,
With my cromach in hand then I'll bid you adieu
Though it's far I must travel I'll not feel alone,
Heaven's filled with old friends from Glengarry my home.





Carol MacCrimmon, Marjorie-Anne Dent & Lynn Bennett at the Canada AGM, NAG 2024

Clan MacLeod North American Gathering 2024



In between Clan MacLeod Parliament gatherings in Dunvegan, Scotland, the Clan hosts a North American Gathering (NAG), alternating between Canada and the United States.

On Thursday, August 1 this summer, Cathie White and I hit the road, and travelled to Livonia, Michigan for the 2024 NAG.

Thanks to John and Judy MacLeod of Naperville, Illinois for being the primary organizers for this gathering that was held in the lovely Livonia Marriott Hotel. They were assisted by other members of the Clan MacLeod Society USA, Great Lakes Region.

This was a smaller than normal gathering with just under 50 participants. Many American MacLeods had just visited the Grandfather Mountain Highland Games in Western North Carolina where Clan MacLeod was the "Honoured Clan" of the year and Chief John, MacLeod of Raasay, was serving as the Chieftain of the Games. MacLeods always like to meet a Clan Chief!

The Friday NAG program included Kevin Tolmie, the Clan President for Scotland, who gave an overview of Scottish and Clan MacLeod history and genealogy. Women attendees had a Zoom conversation with Novelist Barbara E. Bull who features MacLeod characters in her books, while the men headed out to watch a video about Ford cars, and then went outside to admire the Ferrari owned by a friend of John's.

In the evening, Bob McLeod gave the Stanley MacLeod Lecture about "The Lost McLeod Ship: The Story of the Marquette & Bessemer 2". His nephew Patrick McLeod showed the slides for the presentation. The exact location of the sunken missing ship has still not been completely confirmed!

Saturday morning after the Association of Clan MacLeod Societies (ACMS) meeting, the five Canadian attendees, all from our Central Ontario Society, met on Zoom with other Clan Executive Members from across Canada.



In the afternoon, we all boarded a highway bus for a tour of downtown Detroit. Our Tour Guide was a 30 year old Indigenous man who was very knowledgeable about the history of Detroit. I learned that in recent years, following the Detroit Riots of 1967, Detroit has been undergoing major restoration projects, including a restored waterfront. We drove around the Belle Isle Park, a 982 acre park in the international waters of the Detroit River. We stopped outside the "Motown Museum" that had a sign reading, "Hitsville USA" as Detroit was a major music recording centre for soul music with a pop appeal.

There was evidence of Henry Ford, Founder of the Ford Motor Company, throughout the city, including the very large campus of the Henry Ford Hospital. We viewed wonderful heritage and contemporary architecture of buildings including "The Detroit Institute of Arts" and "The Detroit Public Library". We passed the "Detroit Tigers" Football Stadium. We were awed by the amazing Aztec art in the "Guardian Building" which houses the Bank of America and other financial corporations.

The day culminated in the Clan Banquet and Ceilidh with everyone donning their kilts and tartan sashes, and several women wore the fascinators that they had made during the day. The after dinner entertainment featured a local choir wearing tartan sashes of different Clans. They were accompanied by a violinist.

A highlight of the evening was the Silent Auction which offered great bargains of all kinds of MacLeod paraphernalia as well as the announcement of the Clans Person of the Year Award which was given to Jeff & Cynthia McLeod from Gadsden, Alabama. Jeff told me that he and Cynthia had staffed over 15 Clan MacLeod Information Tents at Highland Games in the United States.

Saturday, after attending the US Clan Society Meeting, NAG attendees loaded back in to a shuttle bus to travel to "The Detroit St. Andrew's Society Highland Festival" at Green Meade Farm. The Games were kicked off by a "Kirkin of the Tartan" ceremony, and the Clans Parade which was led with pride by the Clan MacLeod.

Every evening during NAG, the Hospitality Suite was open to host MacLeods to enjoy Scottish whiskey and other beverages, along with snacks. I got to taste Tennessee moonshine for the first time!

I encourage you to attend the next NAG which will be held in 2028. It is quite possible that our Central Ontario Society will be the Hosts, so you will not need to travel far to attend it! It will provide you with a great opportunity to meet MacLeods/ McLeods from all over North America, and a few from overseas. I hope to see you there!

by **Barbara Jean McLeod**

Vice-President, Clan MacLeod Society of Central Ontario

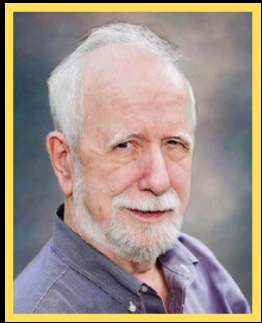
Canadian MacLeods at Livonia NAG 2024
Standing L-R: Barbara Jean McLeod, Carol
MacCrimmon, Lynn Bennett, Marjorie-Ann Dent
Sitting: Cathie White





Dunvegan Castle Gardens,
photo credit: Al McLeod

Flowers of the Forest



Iain "Glen" Sinclair

October 31, 1934 - May 5, 2025, **Clan MacLeod Society of Central Ontario**

Glen and his wife Virginia have been part of the Clan MacLeod Society for decades and helped to form a vital core of our society. Glen shared his passion for history and his love of music through many ceilidhs over the years. We will miss you.

Diane Taylor

passed away March 18, 2025, **Clan MacLeod Society of Vancouver Island**

Diane Taylor was a retired teacher who joined the society after stopping by the clan tent at the Victoria Games nine years ago. She will be missed.



Rosalie Nichols

passed away February 26, 2025, **Clan MacLeod Society of Canada**

Wife of former USA President Weedon Nichols, Rosalie Nichols passed away after an illness. Married to Weedon for over 64 years, many Clan MacLeod members would remember Rosalie from North American Gatherings and Parliament. Our condolences to Weedon on his family.

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to the **Clan MacLeod Society of Vancouver Island** for winning the Best Clan Tent award at the 162nd Victoria Highland Games and Celtic Festival (May 17-18, 2025).

From left-right: Graham Macaloney, Chieftain of the Games, Chief Warrant Officer (ret'd) Steve S. Kelly, Malcolm MacLeod (Pres of Vancouver Island, VP of CMSC), Karen MacLeod, Treasurer of CMSC and Laurie (MacLeod) Craven.



WHAT'S UP IN CENTRAL ONTARIO?

Central Ontario has had an active year with both a Fall Ceilidh and Spring Social. In November, the society hosted a pot-luck dinner .

Featured entertainment included a humorous and informative workshop with long-time highland dance instructor and judge Marjorie-Anne Dent (seen right with her demonstration dancer of the evening, Savannah Pugliese - granddaughter of Carol MacCrimmon).

Society members were also introduced to Ryan MacLeod, musician and bard (see right).



Central Ontario hosted a Spring Social on May 31st. MacLeods met at the Arboretum, part of the Royal Botanical Gardens in Burlington to catch the last part of the famed lilac season

A scrumptious dinner awaited at a nearby church for the nearly 40 participants of the evening. Clan members were piped into the building by Christine Goleb. Bard Ryan MacLeod kept the audience captive during his storytelling of an old Norse tale. Central Ontario welcomed the Royal Scottish Dance Society of Hamilton to perform some demonstration dances before inviting the group to join them in some ceilidh dancing to round off the evening.



Dancers from the Royal Scottish Dance Society of Hamilton



Ready to dig in!



INTRODUCING Ryan MacLeod

Ryan MacLeod, also known as **MacLeod the Bard**, is a Guelph-based harper and host of Bedtime Stories on CFRU 93.3FM. Ryan has performed at festivals across Ontario as well as Clan MacLeod events. Ryan has two goals: to play harp inside Dunvegan Castle, and to become well-versed enough in MacLeod lore to become the official bard of Clan MacLeod. You can check out some of his storytelling on YouTube



<https://lnk.bio/MacLeod.the.bard>



Barbara (MacLeod) Armstrong

by Jim MacLeod



On August 24, 2021 Clan MacLeod lost a leader and supporter of all things 'MacLeod', in Canada and beyond. Barbara's efforts and her support of all activities and initiatives that bore the name MacLeod are well known, respected and documented.

In memory of Barb, a bench has been donated and installed in her beloved village of Dunvegan, Ontario on the grounds of The Glengarry Pioneer Museum (<https://glengarrypioneermuseum.ca/>). Barb grew up in Dunvegan and the bench has been located beside a plaque that commemorates the establishment by her father (John D. MacLeod) of the first Clan MacLeod Society outside of Scotland on November 2, 1935 and of the subsequent gathering of North American MacLeods held in Dunvegan on July 4, 1936. Barb attended this historic gathering at the tender age of 7 months.

In 1976 Barb was the Event Co-ordinator, Convener, and Chairwoman of the first MacLeod North American Gathering (NAG) held in Cornwall Ontario, organized by the Clan MacLeod Society of Glengarry, with the assistance of the Ottawa and Central Ontario Societies. In 2008, Barb played a similar role in the holding of the North American Gathering (NAG 2008) held in Ottawa, Ontario.

Barb was President of the Clan MacLeod Society of Canada from 1994 to 2000. In 2008, Barb was presented with the Outstanding Clansperson Award.

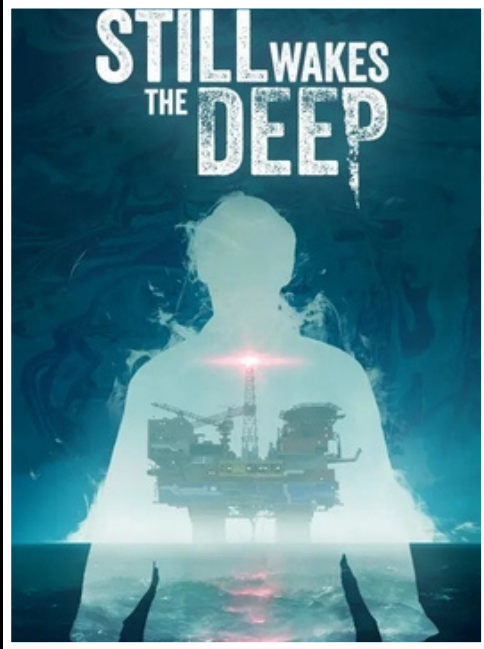
Barb had also attended numerous North American Gatherings, as well as Clan Parliaments held at Dunvegan Castle, Isle of Skye, Scotland.

Support for the realization of this honour was thanks to the generosity of:

- Glengarry Pioneer Museum, Dunvegan, Ontario
- Clan MacLeod Society of Glengarry
- Clan MacLeod Society of Ottawa
- Clan MacLeod Society of Canada, &
- Family and Friends.



A new way to bring back Gaelic?



The new horror video game, **Still Wakes the Deep**, is set aboard an oil rig in the North Sea has an unusual option for a video game produced in 2024: Scots Gaelic. Creative Director of the game, John McCormack, pushed for the inclusion of the Gaelic language option to ground the game in it's deep Scottish culture and history.

Scots Gaelic has seen a steady decline in the last 300 years. While 23% of the population spoke the language in the mid 18th century, only 1.3% of the population can speak Gaelic today. The hope is that small initiatives such as this will reach out to the population to remind people that Scots Gaelic is not a relic of the past but continues to be an important part of Scottish culture and identity.

Please check out the original article by Lewis Gordon on Polygon, <https://www.polygon.com/features/486346/still-wakes-the-deep-scottish-gaelic>

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<https://hebridespeople.com/visitor-centre/>

On Behalf of Northton Heritage Trust ;

Elizabeth McLeod-Rivera
NHT Contributor Director ,
and proud
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Scottish Handfasting



Handfasting in Scotland has a history reaching back centuries. The term comes from the Old Norse word “handfesta” meaning “to strike a bargain by joining hands”. This pre-marriage ceremony signalled a commitment between two individuals to live together (usually for a year and a day) with the intent to marry if they decided they were compatible. In a time when clergy were fairly scarce in Scotland and could not visit more remote areas on a regular basis, this tradition was important in the formation of bonds and families. There is clear evidence of handfasting dating back to the 12th century and was most likely around for much longer.

Handfasting was not only used by common folk. Nobles of the upper class would also use this ceremony as a way to test whether an alliance between clans or families would be beneficial. Those who know their MacLeod history would be able to connect this to our infamous feud with the MacDonalds of Sleat. The MacDonald chief handfasted with a MacLeod woman, but at the end of the year, he sent her back to MacLeod territory in a manner that was a direct insult to the Chief and his clan, causing a feud that would last over a 100 years.

Handfasting declined as the rise of Protestantism in Britain grew. The church did not view handfasting as an approved union between men and women and in some places, banned the practice altogether. Today, many marriage ceremonies today pay homage to this ancient practice by include a handfasting ritual.

**CMCS is looking for a
new Newsletter Editor**

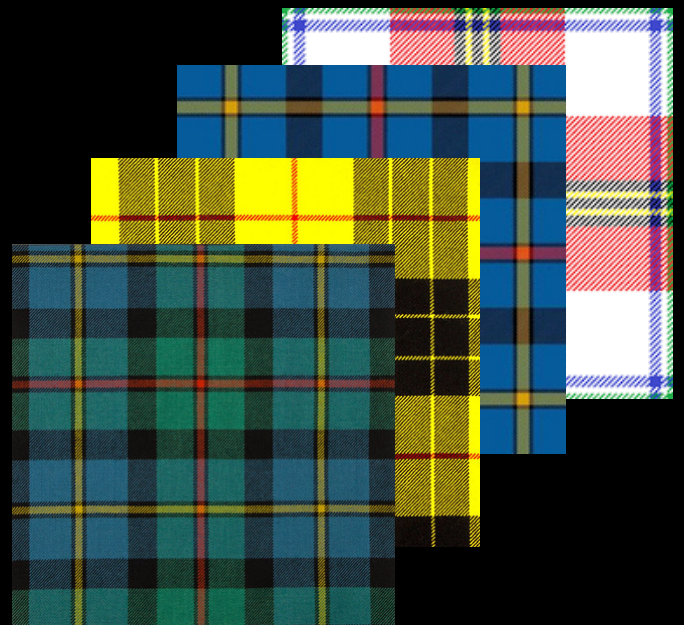
for the *Leod Voice*

**If you are interested,
please contact**

Karen McCrimmon

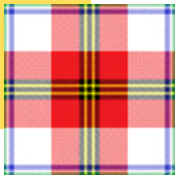
Secretary, CMSC

mccrimmon.karen@gmail.com

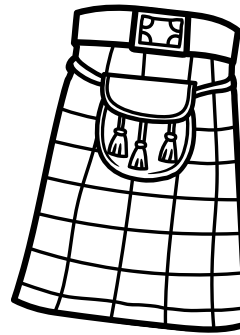


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For all inquiries,
please contact
Carol MacCrimmon at
c_maccrimmon@hotmail.com

Looking for Young MacLeods

ACMS has put out a call for Young MacLeods who are interested in attending Parliament 2026. Each National Society is being asked to nominate an individual aged 18-30 who could come to Scotland the week prior to Parliament to help with set up and to then join Parliament (2 week stay). ACMS will provide 2 weeks of accommodation and provide transportation while on Skye.

If you are interested, please email Carol MacCrimmon Pugliese, c_maccrimmon@hotmail.com



EDITOR'S NOTES



Well, the Fall publication of the *Leod Voice* became the Fall AND Spring publication as life became busy for me. I am the mother of 2 teenage boys and between extra curricular activities and my busy career as a high school teacher in Toronto, “free time” is something that is generally reserved for summers. Even now, as I finish the final touches on this issues, the season has flipped into the summer and we have moved into 40 degree weather here in southern Ontario.

My own challenges in completing this issue have made me appreciate (even more) those that have donated their time and effort to our society over the years. To Carol MacCrimmon Pugliese, who is an inspiration to me - thank you for your leadership in both the Canada and Central Ontario societies over the years. You have always been so open to taking on new initiatives and to helping others so that they too can experience the sense of family and kinship that connects us to each other. This on top of your busy family, work and dancing careers. Your willingness to continue with CMSC as consultant has been so helpful for our executive.

I would also like to extend our greatest gratitude to Neil MacLeod (Almonte, ON) for his 12 years as Website Co-ordinator. It was a job that many of us simply could not do but was vital in maintaining and promoting our society. We hope that you are still able to join some of our on-line meetings. We would miss your piping send off!

To all of the volunteers in clan executive roles across Canada. You are the heartbeat of our Societies - thank you.

Hold Fast,

Karen Macleod McCrimmon

President, Clan MacLeod Society of Central Ontario
Secretary, Clan MacLeod Societies of Canada

