An Drochaid
The Bridge

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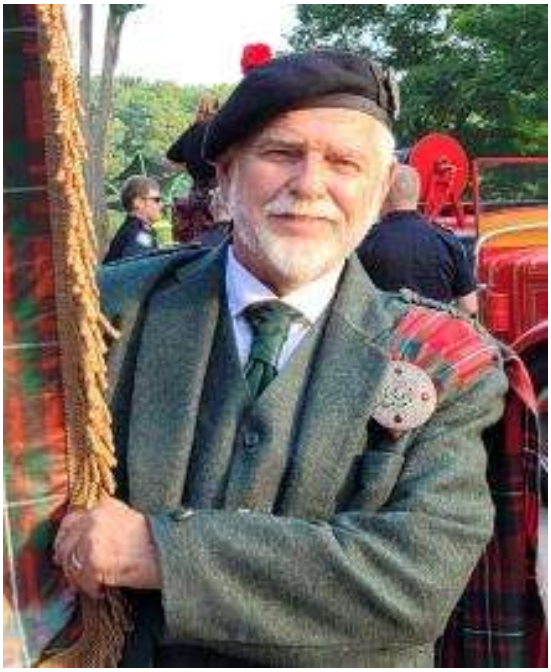
Frae the Chair

The Burden of History Conundrum



It would be nice to say that my household is completely out of the "Reno-geddon" that started in November immediately following our last AGM. However with there being over 100 boxes still to unpack, sort through, donate or simply throw away, finality is not yet evident.

The contents of the boxes are sadly the accumulation of the many years we've been at this house and the result of raising a significant pack of children, the eventual closing of IT offices/ training centers in Toronto and Ottawa plus ample evidence of my own wide range of interests. There's somewhere around 30 musical instruments and the number keeps growing.

Before starting the packing for the renovations I looked around and thought it's not too bad. Everything is organized. In my eyes there wasn't the 'hoarding' pathology that I know poor others are afflicted with. That perspective has changed somewhat.

I suspect that the hesitation to not get rid of anything that may be of eventual use has been inherited or learned through my own parents having gone through the depression and other hard times of want. I'm sure I'm not alone in this need to keep buckets of bolts, screws, nuts, keys, locks and…. But everything is organized!

I know I'm not alone in what may be part of us as humans. Even history has a hoarding problem. It just can't seem to let go whether catalogued, organized, stratified or not!

We see this regularly with news stories about a housing development breaking through a 6000 year old roof of a necropolis and sanctuary with the remains of 7,000 bodies in Malta. During the London HS2 railway construction, archaeologists finding a Roman mausoleum, three stone busts, and roughly 3,000 bodies.

When I was in my early teens, I lived next to an old 19th-century municipal building in the Dufferin-Rogers Toronto neighborhood. I recall that, after it was demolished, the remains were simply scraped into a bin destined for a landfill dump. I suspect that, someday centuries from now, archaeologists might similarly uncover that rubble and consider it a valuable piece of city and country history.

The building was full of equipment, photos, records and books of which my brother and I could only rescue a couple. One of those rescued is a rare single volume of The National Burns that I keep sealed in my freezer nowadays.

This burden presents a challenge not only with knowing what to keep and where to keep it but also somehow miraculously keeping a proper context, an understanding, a correct version of the story connected to what we are keeping.

For some of our organizations this means making a choice about historical items being handed off from one of their members. It is not uncommon for the children and other relatives not wanting to add anything to their own burden.

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Frae the Chair

(Continued from page 2)

I'm told that giving it to a regular museum, if they'll take it, means that the museum assumes complete ownership and the donor ends up not having any say in what happens with it from then on. All too often, the claim goes, the fate is for it to go into storage and perhaps never see the light again. Is that Hanger 51 end scene in Raiders of the Lost Ark true to real life?

Sadly, I've personally experienced what happens if a timely choice for disposition is not made for whatever reason. As a teen I was fortunate enough to get summer jobs with my municipality. The first was working on a garbage truck. Not the bin loader type as nowadays but where everything was done by hand. Late in my first summer with them, we rounded a corner and my companions, the old regulars, starting yelling back and forth in Italian with great excitement. As the very junior I rode on the back right side so I could not see what the buzz was all about at the curb. When we stopped I asked my companion on the other side of the back what was happening. He simply stated "Somebody died"!

Coming around the truck, I was confronted with a lawn full of old furniture and boxes stacked up in front of a 'deferred maintenance' house. It was explained to me that what the regulars had found is that the piling of up of boxes and furniture is usually the result of a senior passing away and the relatives just coming in to dump contents of drawers into boxes for disposal.

Minimal scrutiny, minimal desire to keep anything not of immediate value like money, no concern about history and stories that they may have heard but which have no meaning, no resonance in their lives.

Of course, the boxes were gone through by the garbage crew and some salvage was done. But the whole story of this is for another time. Lesson from this being that if you give it away while you can, then at least you know where it went and not have to worry that it was not saved from the curb.

A final fate I been told for heritage memorabilia is sending it off to others either of the same clan or heritage group with hopes for the best use of it. Or, as happened to me a couple of years back, giving to an organization that you hope may do the right thing. In my case I've been given a few boxes of geneology research and other materials for the Glengarry area MacDonalds that I'll take with me to the next Maxville games to hand over. Included is a few items of interest to United Empire Loyalist that will get to the right place as well.

What may come across as the ideal solution is getting the artifacts to a museum such the Clan Macpherson Museum which we have an article for later in this publication.

It is appropriate in closing to send our condolences to the family of the late Allan Willard MacLeod. Along with his many other contributions to community and the diaspora, he served as delegate to CASSOC as well as chair. You can find his obituary here.

William Petrie
Chair, Scots of Canada
chair@scotsofcanada.ca

Allan Willard MacLeod

April 29, 1930 - November 28, 2025

AGM 2025 - Draft Minutes

ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING (Draft Minutes)

Online

30 November 2025

Times: 12 p.m. PT, 1 p.m. MT, 2 p.m. CT, 3 p.m. ET, 4 p.m. AT and 8 p.m. UK

MINUTES

1. Opening and Welcome: Chair, William Petrie, called the meeting to order at 6 minutes past the hour and welcomed everyone to this Annual General Assembly Meeting.

Participants: There were 10 members of the Board present and 28 other Attendees, with a total of 36 member groups represented and 5 proxies registered. Therefore a quorum has been met. (List of participants attached) We received Regrets from Gerardine MacLean of The Antigonish Highland Society, and David Carrick, SoC Director – USA Liaison.

2. Agenda Approval: Moved by Denise Lagundzin, Seconded by Steven Logan, to accept the Agenda as distributed. Carried unanimously.

3. Minutes of 24 November 2024: Moved by Robert MacKenzie, Seconded by Kirstin Hunter, to accept the Minutes as distributed. Carried unanimously.

Business Arising: There was no Business Arising.

4. Treasurer's Reports: as found on https://www.scotscanada.ca/en/agm-2025. These were distributed to all members at the beginning of November with the Notice of Meeting. The reports were shown on screen and discussed.

Moved by Steven Logan, Seconded by Ian Ferguson, to accept the Financial Statements as presented. Carried unanimously

5. Committee Reports: All reports are online at: https://www.scotscanada.ca/en/agm-2025. These were distributed to all Members at the beginning of November with the Notice of Meeting. The reports were shown on screen and discussed.

Moved by Chris Hodge, Seconded by Denise Lagundzin, to accept the Committee Reports as presented. Carried unanimously

6. Motion:

Annual Public Accountant Motion: Moved by John Munro, Seconded by Della Ferguson, That CASSOC, as a Designated Non-Soliciting Corporation and per 182(1) of the Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act, resolves not to appoint a Public Accountant for Fiscal Year 2025-2026. Carried Unanimously.

7. Elections:

In accordance with our Bylaw - Section 27, for this first election after bylaw adoption, 1/3 of directors shall be elected for a three year term, 1/3 of directors shall be elected for a two year term and 1/3 of directors elected for a one year term. Incumbent directors are indicated by * in the following slate:

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(Continued from page 4)

Moved by Della Ferguson, Seconded by Chris Hodge, to accept the nominees as presented. Carried.

Bill thanked and congratulated the Board for volunteering their time and service to SoC. From now on, any new Directors will be elected to a three year term.

One Year Term	Two Year Term	Three Year Term
Jo Ann Tuskin*	John Duff*	Emily Redman*
William Petrie*	Paul Elliot*	Kirstin Hunter*
David Carrick*	Robert MacKenzie*	Chloe Harris*
Terry Myles*	Steven Logan*	John McKinnon
		Denise Lagundzin

8. Any Other Business: None

9. Announcements:

a. All member groups are asked to send their group news, announcements and photos to editor@scotscanada.ca for publication in the next newsletter as well as adding our Editor to their regular distribution list for news.

b. Bill announced that the board is working on the plan and format for our Tartan Celebration Assembly in Spring. Details will be posted online and in the newsletter.

c. Della Ferguson noted that several clans are finding a way of working together to support each other and there are plans for a Christmas Event.

d. Kirstin Hunter noted that they are planning something similar in Alberta; and that for some time at the Hawaiian Highland Games, a Red Deer Dance Life Member ran the Highland dance competition

10. Next Meetings:

Tartan Celebration Assembly: Spring 2026

Annual General Assembly Meeting: 29 Nov 2026

11. Adjournment: The Meeting was adjourned after 1 hr 30 mins.

Bill thanked everyone for participating and wished everyone all the best for the coming year.

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AGM 2025 - Draft Minutes

Participants

Name	Position/Affiliation
William Petrie	Chair
Jo Ann Tuskin	Secretary
John Duff	Vice Chair, & Clan MACFARLANE
Paul Elliot	Vice Chair & ELLIOT Clan Society
Chloe Welwood	Director – Youth, CELTIC STUDENTS Society
Kirstin Hunter	Director & RED DEER Highland Games
Robert MacKenzie	Director & Clan MACKENZIE
Steven Logan	Director & Clan LOGAN
Terry Myles	Director & Clan MACNEIL
Emily Redman	Director & SCOTLANDSHOP
Cameron Curwood	Clan BAIRD Society - Canada
R. Scott Buchanan	Clan BUCHANAN Society International, Inc.
Anne Cameron	Clan CAMERON Ontario Branch
Chris Bone	Clan CARRUTHERS Canada
Della Ferguson	Clan FERGUSSON Society of North America
Bart Forbes	Clan FORBES Society
Julie Hegle	Clan FRASER
Sylvie Thériault	Clan GREGOR Society – Canada
Laraine Strafford	Clan HAY Society
Pauline Hunter	Chief, Clan HUNTER
Rupert Irving	Chief, Clan IRVING - The Border Irvings & Irvines
Mary Erwin	Clan IRWIN Association
Paul Johnston	Clan JOHNSTON/E in America
Janet Kennedy	Clan KENNEDY Society of North America
Marcus Lennox	Clan LENNOX
Maggie McEwan	Clan MACEWEN
John McKinnon	Clan MACKINNON
Barbara McLennan	Clan MACLENNAN Canada
Chris Hodge	Clan MACLEOD Societies of Canada
Denise Lagundzin	Clan MACPHERSON Association – Canada Branch
Barb Duff	Clan MACRAE Society of Canada
John W Munro	Clan MUNRO Association of Canada
Andrea Grieve	Clan RAMSAY International
Scott Sinclair	Clan SINCLAIR Association of Canada
Ian Ferguson	Household Member – Ferguson
Andrew McMurtry	Household Member – McMurtry
Jenna Morton	Greater MONCTON Scottish Association
Geoff Innes	EMBRO Highland Games

Hutchison House - Upcoming Events

March 8, 2026 1pm to 4pm : Celebrating International Women's Day with Artist Don Stuart

Join us as we celebrate International Women's Day, on Sunday March 8, 2026 from 1-4pm with a special talk with artist Don Stuart creator of the 'Homage' Exhibit currently at Hutchison House Museum. In addition to speaking about the creation and history of some of the more fascinating pieces in the 'Homage' exhibit, he will be discussing about a project he has started in Nunavut- a weaving studio which produces the most amazing tapestries. This is an ongoing successful project that was started to provide work for women in the North.

Presentation to be held at Knights of Columbus at 1pm at 317 Hunter St W, followed by a reception at Hutchison House Museum (around the corner at 270 Brock St). Enjoy some light refreshments, explore the exhibit and talk further with artist Don Stuart at the museum from 2-4pm. Admission is $5 for PHS and Friends of Hutchison House Members or $10 for non-members. Tickets can be purchased by calling the museum at 705-743-9710 or emailing info@hutchisonhouse.ca.

Tickets will be available at the door or book ahead to ensure seating. More information can be found on our website at http://www.phs-hutchisonhouse.ca.

March 17, 2026 12:00 pm – 2:00 pm St. Patrick's Day Take Home Meal
Orders due by: Thursday, March 12 5pm
Pick update: Tuesday, March 17 12pm-2pm

Experience a taste of Ireland from the comfort of your own home with a delicious St. Patrick's Day take-home meal. Enjoy corned beef and colcannon with roasted carrots and Irish soda bread, followed by a scrumptious Irish apple cake with custard for dessert. Meals are $30 each. Pre-order your meal by Thursday, March 12th at 5pm. Meals will be able for curbside pick-up between 12:00 noon and 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 17th. For more information or to place your order, please contact the museum at 705-743-9710 or email info@hutchisonhouse.ca.

March Break

Looking for fun creative activities for children this March Break? Hutchison House hosts a variety of fun crafts and activities over the spring break. Day camps will run from 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on March 13th, 16th, 18th, 19th and 20th. Suitable for children aged 6 to 12. Please make sure to bring a peanut-free snack and indoor shoes. Each day is a different theme with different activities. Cost is $25 per program and pre-registration is required. For more information or to register a child please phone the museum office at 705-743-9710 or email at info@hutchisonhouse.ca.

Friday March 13: Flower Power - Spring is coming! Have fun creating fun suncatchers with dried flowers, created a bouquet using coffee filters and other fun floral crafts.

Monday March 16: Science Fun - Have Science fun by making your own bouncy balls, cloud dough and other fun science experiments.

Wednesday March 18: Crystal Magic - Children will create your own crystals by making egg shell geodes, borax snowflakes and crystalized trees.

Thursday March 19: Suncatchers - Children will create a variety of suncatchers using a variety of materials.

Friday March 20: Homemade Paper crafts - Children will create their own homemade paper to create fun bowls and seed bookmarks.

Clan Bell North America

Bells Scotch Whisky – A Toast to the Bell Legacy

When one raises a glass of Bell's Scotch Whisky, they are, in a sense, raising a toast to a name that carries centuries of Scottish heritage. For members of Clan Bell, there's a certain pride in knowing that one of Scotland's bestknown whiskies bears our name—and carries a story steeped in tradition, craftsmanship, and a dash of bold Scottish character.

A Humble Beginning in Perthshire

The story begins in 1825, when Arthur Bell, a modest tea and whisky merchant from Perth, Scotland, set out with a simple but visionary idea: to create a whisky that was not just strong in spirit, but smooth, balanced, and consistent in quality. At a time when most Scotch whiskies were sold as single malts—each with their own unpredictable variations—Arthur Bell began carefully blending whiskies from different regions of Scotland to achieve a harmonious taste. He was among the first true master blenders, and his name would soon become synonymous with excellence in Scotch.

The Bell's Blend

Arthur Bell's approach brought together the best of the Highlands, Lowlands, and Islay: malts for depth, grains for smoothness, and just the right touch of peat for warmth. The result was a whisky that became known for its approachable flavor—"easy to drink, difficult to forget."

By the late 1800s, Bell's Scotch Whisky had become one of the most trusted and recognizable brands in Britain. Arthur's sons, David and William, carried the legacy forward, expanding exports and helping Bell's become the #1 selling Scotch in the United Kingdom, a title it proudly held for decades.

A Name That Travels the World

Though the Bell's brand has changed hands over the years (it's now part of the Diageo family, which also owns Johnnie Walker), the name remains a proud emblem of Scottish craftsmanship. Bell's is enjoyed around the world—from small pubs in Edinburgh to grand celebrations abroad—making it one of Scotland's most widely distributed whiskies. For many, Bell's is more than just a drink; it's a symbol of Scotland itself—warm, welcoming, and full of character.

Interesting Tidbits

• "Afore ye go", the famous Bell's slogan introduced in the 1970s, became a beloved catchphrase across the UK—reminding folks to enjoy one last dram before heading home.

• Bell's sponsors the Bell's Decanter Series, featuring beautifully crafted porcelain decanters shaped like historic Scottish figures, castles, and landmarks—these are now soughtafter collectibles.

• The company's original motto was "To every man, according to his taste," a nod to Arthur Bell's commitment to quality and individuality.

A Toast from Clan Bell

While Bell's Whisky may not have been founded by our clan directly, it carries a name and spirit that resonate deeply. Like Clan Bell itself, it stands for tradition, resilience, and pride in Scottish roots. So, at your next gathering or Highland Games, raise your glass and say:

"Here's tae us! Wha's like us? Gey few, and they're a' deid!"

Clan Bell Kitchen Presents Traditional Scottish Bannocks

Few foods capture the warmth and simplicity of old Scotland quite like bannocks — hearty rounds of oat or barley bread, once baked on iron griddles over open fires. For centuries, bannocks were more than just a meal; they were part of Scotland's very rhythm of life — baked for festivals, shared among kin, and blessed with a wish for good fortune.

A Bit of Bannock History

The word 'bannock' comes from the Gaelic bannach, meaning a morsel or bit of bread. Early bannocks were cooked on a 'girdle' (a flat iron griddle) placed over the hearth fire. Using oats or barley, they became the daily bread of the Highlands and Borders — simple, sustaining, and steeped in tradition.

Ceremonial bannocks included:

- Bride's Bannock – baked for weddings, symbolizing prosperity.
- Beltane Bannock – made for May Day rituals.
- Yule Bannock – celebrating the return of the sun during win-ter solstice.

Traditional Scottish Bannock Recipe

Ingredients:

- 2 cups medium or fine oatmeal (not rolled oats)
- 1 tbsp butter or lard (plus extra for greasing)
- ½–¾ cup warm water or buttermilk
- ½ tsp baking soda
- ½ tsp salt
- Optional: 1 tbsp sugar or handful of currants for festive occasions

Instructions:

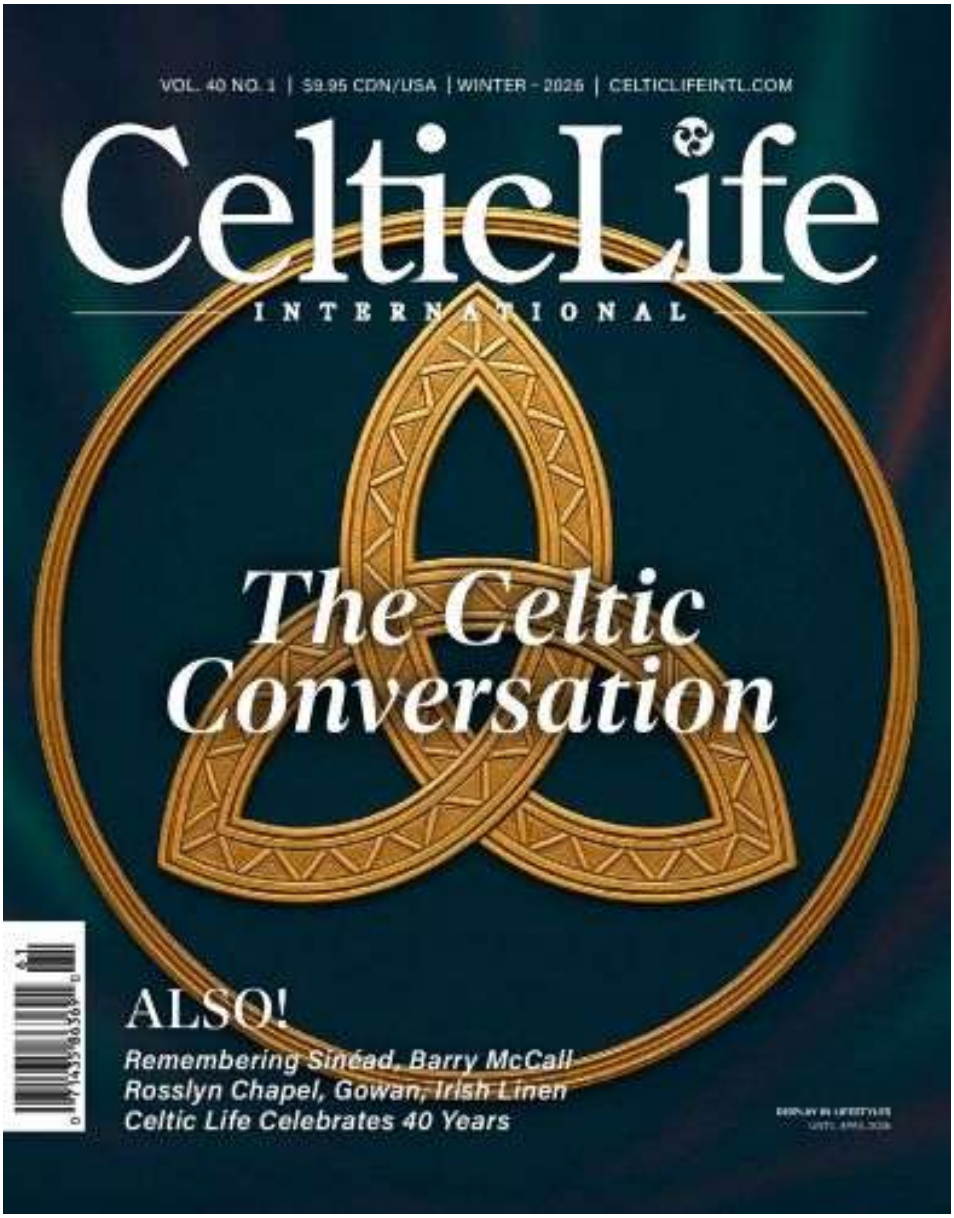
1. Combine oatmeal, salt, and baking soda in a bowl.
2. Rub in butter or lard until crumbly.
3. Gradually add warm water or buttermilk until a soft dough forms.
4. Turn onto a board dusted with oatmeal and shape into a ½-inch thick round.
5. Cook on a lightly greased griddle 5–7 minutes per side until golden.
6. Cut into quarters ('farls') and serve warm with butter, honey, or jam.

Fun Facts About Bannocks

- Robert Burns often mentioned bannocks as symbols of Scottish life.
- Bannocks were scored with a cross before baking to divide portions and ward off evil spirits.
- Travelers once carried dried bannocks in their sporrans for long journeys.
- 'Bannock Sunday' is still celebrated in parts of Scotland to mark the end of Lent.
- In Shetland, bannocks made with ancient barley (beremeal) remain a regional favorite.

Photo: Gemma Stafford

CelticLife
INTERNATIONAL



WINTER 2026

Our Winter 2026 edition explores Celtic identity through language.

Also, enjoy feature articles on Sinéad O'Connor, Scotland's Rosslyn Chapel, Gowan, Irish linen, Bretagne's coastline, Scottish artist George Wyllie, Irish celebrity photographer Barry McCall, Celtic Life's 40th anniversary, and more!

And, as always, we bring you the latest in Celtic news, views, reviews, recipes, fashion, culture, tradition, history & heritage!

Click here for more info and to subscribe today!

CIRA -Canadian Internet Registration Authority

1. Net Good Grants open February2.

Are you (or an organization you know) looking for funding for projects that connect Canadians and build a safer, more equitable internet?

Learn more or share this upcoming opportunity with your community.

2. Be thoughtful.

Looking to impress your better-half this Valentine's Day?

These 26 Canadian-made gifts are perfect for any special occasion.

3. Tap in.

Nothing quite says Canada like maple-drenched…anything.

Satisfy your sweet tooth with some of the best maple syrups in Canada.

4. Get perky.

CIRA's greatest advocates, our members, deserve some perks for all their hard work helping us advance our mission of a trusted internet for Canadians!

Treat yourself to exclusive offers from featured .CA businesses.

Become a member today, it's free!

5. Explore alternatives.

Payments aren't just about cash or cards anymore. Alternative payment methods like digital wallets and 'buy now, pay later' solutions are on the rise.

Learn how they can help you boost sales and reach more customers.

Celtic Students Society of the University of Guelph

Join us on March 21st & 22nd, 2026 to celebrate 102 Years of College Royal

An Annual Tradition Since 1925

College Royal is the largest university open house event of its kind in North America.

Each March, the University of Guelph opens its doors to the general public in a campus-wide open house that attracts thousands of visitors every year. For students, staff, and alumni,

College Royal is also a 12-day long event that includes popular events like Kick-Off Pub, Super Thursday, Livestock Shows, Square Dancing, the College Royal Ball, and much, much more.

College Royal is a 100% student run and organized event.

Whether you are a member of the general public curious to see what goes on at the "University on the hill", or a student looking to become involved, we invite you to join us.

Find out more on how to come join the fun this March!

The Celtic Students Society's display will be the first 2026 event that Scots of Canada will be attending with the banner of all members and its clan lookup resources!

Fergus Scottish Festival & Highland Games

Meet the 2026 Board of Directors!

The Fergus Scottish Festival & Highland Games hosted its Annual Meeting on December 4, 2025. This annual gathering of Festival Members highlighted accomplishments for the not for profit event, memorable moments from the 80th Anniversary, including the Scottish Saturday Night Concert and Highland Games competitions, and marked the launch of planning for 2026.

The Membership also elected its Board of Directors for the upcoming Festival year, pictured above (left to right): Sue Baker, Vice President Steve Clark, Kylie Burchat, Director at Large Ray Davies, President Christine de Nottbeck, Tayler Black, and Scott Russell.

As the Festival closes on a successful anniversary year, the Board of Directors looks forward to maintaining a great experience for all guests. "The Fergus Scottish Festival and Highland Games is a world-class event honouring all things Scottish within our Canadian landscape." says President Christine de Nottbeck, "The Board of Directors and I, along with our staff, are already hard at work with our volunteers and stakeholders to make the 81st Festival another one to enjoy and remember."

2026 Tickets

Don't worry - Admissions & Camping, and Clans & Concessions applications are all coming soon!

We're changing ticketing providers, so stay tuned for details on our website in the coming weeks.

Click here to learn more

The Twelfth Annual Great Canadian Kilt Skate

Every winter since 2015, hearty souls across Canada have taken to the ice wearing kilts. They do this to celebrate Scotland's contributions to Canada's multicultural heritage. They do it because it's fun: a good way to break the winter blahs by doing something that's both innervating and eccentric. The phenomenon is spreaading across borders and oceans. Once again communities are preparing to demonstrate their Scottish resilience with bare knees and ice.

As of publication, Kilt Skates have been held in Fredericton, Moncton, Antigonish and Winnipeg.

Upcoming are (click location for more information):

Renfrewshire, Scotland, February 21. 2026

Halifax, NS, February 21, 2026

Montreal, QC, February 21, 2026

Ottawa, ON, February 21, 2026

Toronto, ON, February 21, 2026

Concord, NH, February 22, 2026

South Glengarry, February 22, 2026

Renfrew. ON, February 22. 2026

Fergus, ON, February 22, 2026

Visit https://www.kiltskate.com/ for more details

Editors Note: Scots of Canada will be at the Toronto Kilt Skate on February 21, 2026. Please drop by!

Clan MacNicol Society of North America

First International Gathering of Clan MacNeacail in Halifax

Experience the first International Gathering of Clan MacNeacail to take place in HALIFAX, Nova Scotia, September 11-14

On September 11, 2026 at 3:00 pm, join MacNeacail (MacNicol/ Nicolson) Clan members and Clan Chieftains from Canada, United States of America, Scotland, New Zealand, and Australia as they welcome Chief John MacNeacail of MacNeacail and Scorrybreac. Everyone is invited to the historic raising of the Clan Chief's standard at the Grand Parade.

A welcome to Nova Scotia will be provided by the Honourable David Ritcey, Minister of Communities, Culture, Tourism, and Heritage followed by a welcome to the City of Halifax by Mayor Andy Fillmore.

The international gathering last took place in Portree on the Isle of Skye, in 2024.

It will be the second international gathering in Canada. The last one was Vancouver 2010.

All MacNicol/Nicolsons are called upon to join the International Gathering taking place from September 11 – 14, 2026 at the Marriott Harbourfront – and bring your friends and family!

Other gathering events include a banquet and ceilidh, Stories from Our Past and Present, DNA, Gaelic, Fraser Highlander (open to the public) and a guided tour (open to the public) to the Town of Pictou to visit the ship, Hector, which brought the first Scottish Highlanders to Nova Scotia!

Information for the 2026 International Gathering of Clan MacNeacail is available here: www.ClanMacNicol.org. Register by emailing: macnicolhalifax2026@gmail.com.

You can book the special rate at Book your group rate for Clan MacNeacail

Looking forward to meet you in Halifax

Jacques Mc Nicoll

Canadian Co-Commissionner

514-912-5439

MacDubhsith and Selkies : Exploring MacDubhsith and Selkie Folklore

By: Wendy MacPhee-Beckett

It seems that we have one of the oldest and most intriguing surnames amongst the clans. How neat! There are a number of interpretations as to the meaning of the name MacDubhsith, and of course there are a number of different Gaelic spellings. I am personally keeny interested in the idea of being descended from a dark fairy! I mean, who wouldn't want to be? So, if we go with the translation "son of the dark fairy" then my question is why.

There are a number of translations and explanations for our name but I like the idea of the dark fairy. I have read a number of interpretations of why we have the name we do and one line of thought had to do with physical features– dark hair and eyes. In North Uist, MacPhees are thought to have the "second sight". A mystical power to discern the future held over from Celtic times perhaps. Having dark features and mysterious gifts might lead others to think "fairy folk". Then we have the story of the Selkies which I really like, as do my grandchildren.

Who Are the Selkies? Seal by Sea, Human by Land : The word "Selkie" comes from the Scots word for "seal." In folklore, Selkies slip out of their seal skins to walk the shore as humans, often at night or under the moon. Such stories have been told for centuries.

Tales of Love and Loss : A fisherman might steal a Selkie woman's skin, forcing her to stay on land as his wife but if she ever finds her skin again, she returns to the sea, leaving her human family behind. Some tales tell of Selkies lured ashore by love, only to vanish when the call of the ocean grows too strong.

Symbolism of the Selkie : Freedom and Longing: Selkies symbolize the pull between two worlds, belonging to both, yet never fully at home in either.

Love and Sacrifice: Their stories often highlight the pain of separation, mirroring the struggles of coastal life where the sea both provides and takes away.

Cultural Memory: The selkie myth is a way to explain the sea's mysteries, its danger, and its beauty.

Myths and lore are such a wonderful part of the Scottish tradition and meant to be passed on. At the Highland games we celebrate the richness of the culture we are fortunate to be connected with. The music, the dance, the games, the food, the dress are part of that celebration but the stories are important, too– even the whimsical ones. There are many books for children about Selkies as well as some movies if you want to share the stories with our younger members.

Personal note: *I love the water, but more so when I was a youngster. We would go to the beach where my grandfather MacPhee lived and I would be the first one in and last one out. My grandfather would love to come and sit with us while we played in the water. He never failed to tell me I was like a seal! It has an extra special meaning now that I know the story of the Selkies.*

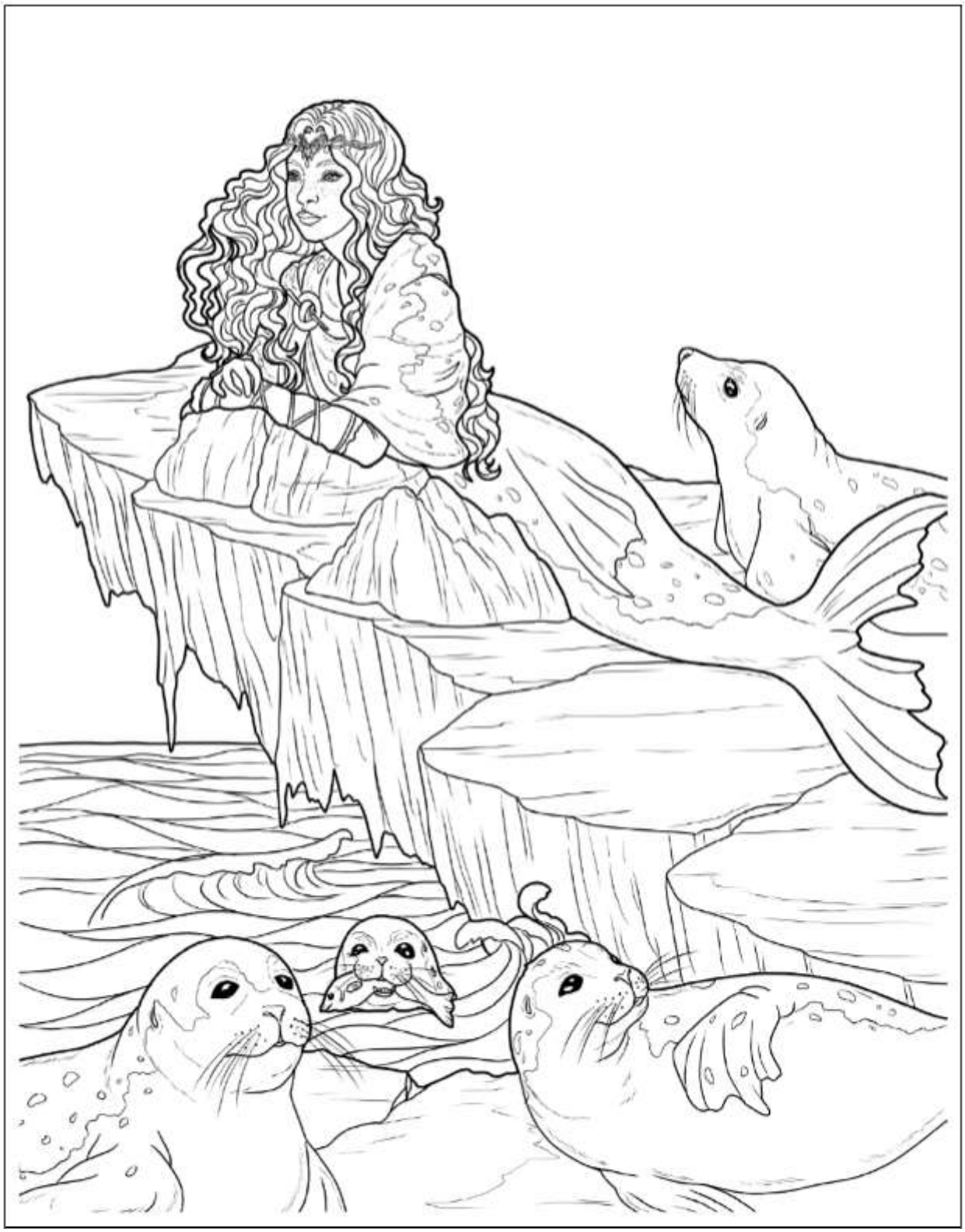
My grandchildren are seals too. They swim in the Bay of Fundy which is colder than cold even in the summer. I have to limit their time because I worry about hypothermia. They always protest when I ask them to take a break! I told them their love of the water is because they are water fairies called Selkies! Hopefully,

(Continued on page 17)

(Continued from page 16)

they will pass that story and that memory on to their children and grandchildren too.

Wendy has also shared a Colouring Page of the Selkie Folklore:



Clan Macpherson Museum Launches "Adopt An Artefact" Programme

by Donna McPherson Rucks, Museum Trustee

The Clan Macpherson Museum has preserved and shared its Highland heritage for over 70 years. Adopt An Artefact offers a unique way to connect with the Museum and to help keep our history alive.

Adopt An Artefact is a five-year sponsorship programme. Your adoption lasts for five years. Every adoption is unique - one artefact, one sponsorship. Surprise a friend or loved one by adopting in their honour, or choose one just for yourself! As of today, FIVE Artefacts have been adopted!

Our Adopt An Artefact team chose 42 Artefacts from the more than 1,000 objects in the Museum's care. Select your Artefact from the Adoption List, found online or at the Museum. Items are grouped into four sponsorship tiers: Bronze (£250); Silver (£500); Gold (£1,000); and Platinum (£5,000).

We'll show our gratitude to you with a personalised thank-you note from the Trustees, an official Adoption Certificate, a printed Adoption Card displayed beside your Artefact in the Museum; recognition in the Museum's Sponsor Notebook, and acknowledgment on the Museum's website and social media. If you wish, you may remain anonymous.

Visit our Support Us page at www.clanmacphersonmuseum.org.uk/supportus.html to learn more and get started. **Support the Museum by adopting an Artefact today!**

Please note: adoption does not mean you're purchasing the item - your sponsorship supports the Museum and its overall mission.

A Journey to Scotland on the Caledonian Sleeper

By Celia Hill, Surrey, BC

When did you last travel to Scotland on the overnight sleeper from London? For me it would be over well 50 years ago, so it was with great anticipation that I boarded the Caledonian Sleeper to Inverness last October. I grew up in London, and when I was in my teens my family used to take the 'car train' to Perth over night for our 2-week Easter holidays (our car got driven onto the train at Olympia, and then off at the other end – so convenient!).

Often we were in Speyside, staying at the Duke of Gordon hotel in Newtonmore, exploring the surrounding hills, or at Sligachan on Skye. My father would walk us in almost any weather, and there are photos to prove it! But more on my family heritage another time.

On this recent occasion my plan was to visit two cousins, one at Attadale on the west coast, the other outside Inverness on the east coast. On the sleeper I was comfortably installed right at the front of the train, and I slept well. One had to Navigate quite a few carriages to get to the restaurant car for breakfast. I did not choose the English full-on breakfast, which I later regretted – next time I will make up for that! The train went via Aberdeen (not the usual route), so we were an hour late to Inverness and I missed the first train to Kyle of Lochalsh.

I had time to walk to Leakey's bookstore in the old town, so with the help of Google maps I set off. I was hoping to find a certain book on the Scottish clearances, of course when I got there I realized that was a hopeless ambition.

After looking around, I went for a coffee nearby instead. It is the second largest second-hand bookshop in Scotland, and certainly worth a visit as it is set in a converted Gaelic church, and features high ceilings, some stained glass, and over 100,000 books!

I caught the next train and drank in the views of the moors, lochs and various rivers along the way. It was a beautiful sunny day, if only I could have been out there already. Attadale is a request stop, and the kindly conductor made sure I did that in good time. My cousin came to meet me, we crossed the road and once through the gate on the other side, we were in Attadale garden with the house just 2 minutes' walk away – how convenient is that?!

Attadale House

I should back up and explain that my uncle Ian Macpherson bought the Attadale estate in 1952. He and my father loved to

(Continued on page 20)

(Continued from page 19)

visit Scotland to walk and stalk each year, and it has been in the family since then. My cousin now running it – Lady Laird Joanna Macpherson (see the BBC series on Lady Lairds) – is uncle Ian's granddaughter, and I had not seen her since the early 2000s.

As it was the last weekend of the stalking season, there were a number of family and friends staying and the house was lively with social interaction. I enjoyed the buzz and conversations that accompanied meal times – which were a gastronomic treat in themselves, made by an excellent cook hired for the duration of a busy 2 weeks.

I was able to reacquaint myself with the lovely Attadale gardens, and the fall foliage was at its best. Of course the next day it was raining, but that didn't stop us walking up the track towards the bothy where filming was taking place for a Ffern perfume (there are many ways to support the cost of running such an estate!). The guests had all left by Monday midday, so Joanna and I had 24 hours together before I had to leave. We visited Loch Carron Pottery, Loch Carron weavers, and drove over to Skye for lunch. Our ancestors were from the Isle of Skye, not the Badenoch area, so perhaps that is why my uncle chose the wilds of Wester Ross to buy this property.

I would highly recommend this area and Attadale Gardens for a visit – it is open to the public all year round (mostly for self-guided tours). It is not a National Trust property, so a small entrance fee is charged.

Many visitors have been delighted to take a photo of themselves with the two Highland cattle, Nicky and Sophie, in the background!

See https://www.attadale.com/ for more information.

Robert Burns Celebrated in Macpherson Homes

Jessica Macpherson, daughter of Ewan Macpherson and Nancy Davis, had a Scottish theme on her Minecraft game.

Bruce McPherson with his 3 sons—William, James and Alexander. Special appearance by Bonnie the dog.

Below, some delicious Scottish fare.

Montréal Highland Games

Dear friends, clans, and community partners,

I am honoured and delighted to share that I am resuming my role as Clans and Communities Director for the 2026 Montreal Highland Games. I extend my sincere thanks to the Montreal Highland Games Committee for this renewed opportunity to serve, a privilege I deeply value.

I also invite you to save the date for the next edition of the Montreal Highland Games, taking place on

Sunday, August 2nd, 2026. We look forward to another memorable celebration of Scottish culture, heritage, and community spirit.

We are currently in the initial stages of planning and preparing the event. At this time, only entrance tickets are available for purchase, and we warmly encourage you to share this information with your members, friends, and families.

Ticket prices are as follows:

- $20 per person until July 3rd
- $25 per person as of July 4th
- Children 14 years old and under: Free
- VIP tickets: $295

Tickets may be purchased directly on our website: https://www.montrealhighlandgames.com/

The Clans and Non-Profit Registration Form is not yet available. I will send a follow-up email as soon as it is time to officially register for our event.

I take great pride in reconnecting with the clans and organizations I work with throughout the year. Serving you, our valued and privileged guests, remains one of the most meaningful aspects of my involvement in the Games, and I look forward to welcoming you all with the warmth and respect you deserve.

More information will follow in the coming months. For now, please mark your calendars, help us spread the word, and encourage your communities to secure their tickets early. I look forward to seeing many of you there as we gather once again in the spirit of friendship, heritage, and Scottish pride.

Warm regards,

Steven Logan
Clans and Community Organizations Director
Montreal Highland Games

Northumberland Scottish Festival & Highland Games

We welcome all Clans to attend the 62nd Northumberland Scottish Festival and Highland Games in Port Hope Agricultural Park!

Our new location allows better access to Clan Avenue and provides dedicated free parking for Clan representatives! Not only that - there's no charge for your site and entry.

Check out the Festival Site Map to see where your Clan Gazebo could be positioned.

If you're interested in being part of our Festival, please complete the online form at

https://www.northumberlandhighlandgames.ca/clans

or send an email to northumberlandgamesclans@gmail.com

Below are images of Scots of Canada's booth at the 2025 Northumberland Games.

Clan Munro Association of Canada

Frae the President's Pen:

Dear Cousins

Christmas is in the air. Carols are being sung, and Grandpa duties are happily being called upon. Buying presents for my grown-up children has become less of a chore – I just buy them all books they'll never read! But choosing gifts for my two grandsons – that's an entirely different story.

The nine-year old is the more challenging of the two. Do I buy him a tech toy, or something more meaningful, like a book that I loved from my own childhood?

I will, no doubt, end up buying both. The almost two-year old is much easier to satisfy. Just as long as it's non-toxic, most things are fair game.

And speaking of gifts, don't forget that membership of the Clan Munro Association of Canada can be purchased as presents for other family members. Please contact Jo Ann Tuskin or visit our website for further details.

I still enjoy going to Midnight Mass, mainly because of the family memories that it conjures for me. Like many of you, I no longer have any immediate family left, so being in situation that brings so many senses to life – colour, lighting, sound, and smells (High Church Anglican service with incense!). And it feels naturally good to get emotional commemorating my brother, my Mom and Dad in such intimate surroundings. And I'm very fortunate to have a beautiful pre-Raphaelite church five minutes' walk from my front door.

More importantly for me, I'm also very lucky to have many close friends nearby to keep me buoyed up throughout the seasons. This time of year, serves as a poignant opportunity to be thankful for all that we have – and to remember those who may not have the same kind of wealth, neither tangible or emotional.

I am heartened to read daily that Canada appears to weathering the 'interesting' times in which we live, with strength and decorum. Of course there are differences of opinion. That's the nature of democracy and freedom of thought and expression. Whenever I travel abroad, I am so proud to be able to tell people I'm a Canadian – I always will be.

I will bring this edition of President's Pen to a close by wishing you all a very joyful Christmas Holiday and a very happy and healthy New Year!

Yours Aye,
Dear Friends,
J.W. Munro

St Martin-on-the-Hill, Scarborough – photo courtesy of 'ship-of-fools.com'

Clan Ramsay International

Saint Andiol 1782 Festival - Scotland Meets Provence

Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, France

This June, the "Saint Andiol 1782" festival once again proved to be a privileged meeting place for those who keep the heritage of the Scottish clans alive. In the midst of this unique atmosphere of tradition, Clan Ramsay held a distinguished place, combining historical elegance, fraternity, and a genuine sense of sharing.

From the earliest hours, Clan Ramsay stood out through its warm welcome and the dignified display of its colours. Carefully woven tartans, proudly raised banners, and a composed, respectful bearing reminded visitors of the deep roots of a lineage whose story spans centuries without losing its radiance. Both enthusiasts and curious guests found in the clan's tent a memorable and attentive interlocutors, eager to pass on the spirit and living memory of their tradition.

Yet it was above all, within the fraternity of clans that the day revealed its true depth. The cordial and sincere exchanges with the clans Scott, Leslie, MacMillan, Home, Lamont, and MacKinnon and several others gave the festival the tone of a genuine gathering of families, united by history and strengthened by mutual respect. These moments, simple in appearance, carried a quiet significance: the rekindling and reaffirmation of bonds forged long ago and renewed with each encounter.

The event was also marked by an important moment for Clan Ramsay: the welcoming of Christophe's household into the Clan. This integration, carried out with solemnity and goodwill, was a reminder that belonging to a clan is not limited to ancient lineage, but is expressed through a living commitment to loyalty, honour, and mutual support. Surrounded by the clan, Christophe received the fraternal tribute of his new family, sealing a new page in the long history of Clan Ramsay.

Thus, the "Saint Andiol 1782" festival will be remembered as a moment when Scottish traditions and Provençal conviviality met in perfect harmony. Clan Ramsay's presence brought authenticity, warmth, and a sense of historical continuity, honouring both the past and the future.

We are so ready for 2026.
Ora et Labora.

Submitted by:
Laurent Jaunaux-Ramsay
Clan Ramsay International
Convenor Europe

Clan Ramsay International

159th Scottish Highland Gathering & Games

Scottish Sisters Make History at California Highland Games

Pleasanton, California
30 & 31 August 2025

The Scottish Highland Gathering and Games held every Labor Day weekend at the Alameda County Fairgrounds are the oldest and largest Scottish gathering in the western US. These games hosted the 2025 Women's Scottish Heavy Athletics World Championships and also featured the 49th annual U.S. Scottish Heavy Athletics Championships for both men and women attracting top professional competitors from all over the world.

My fiancée, Andrew Clementino and our friend, Dave Ramsey, helped greet many new visitors interested in Ramsay clan history and joining CRI. Dave and his family -- including wife Kathy and their daughters, Hailey and Jessica, and Kathy's sister Jean -- have been coming to these games for over 30 years. They've been a terrific presence and help setting up and hosting at the Clan Ramsay tent.

Clan Ramsay had very special guests this year, sisters Louisa and Juliet Ramsay from Glenisla, Perthshire, Scotland. Juliet, who just turned 16!, placed third overall at these games, a remarkable achievement considering the depth of international heavy event experience these women bring from all corners of the globe. Just a week before, Juliet broke the women's Scottish national record for the hammer throw of more than 31m/102ft and she won the overall trophy in Scotland's first ever World Female Heavy Events Championship held in Loch Ness at the Glenurquhart Highland Gathering and Games which were held on 25 August 2025. Way to make us Ramsay-proud, Juliet!

Submitted by:
Craig Ramsay
Northern California Commissioner
Clan Ramsay International
craigsramsay@gmail.com

Homage to a Clansman

Clans Unite at Menin Gate to Honor Fallen Heroes

Ypes, Belgium
04 October 2025

This year numerous clans and dignitaries came together at the Menin Gate to pay Homage to a Clansman.

We marched along the Ypres Hall main street, towards Menin Gate, behind the Clan Hay Pipe Band. The Last Post was played by buglers at the gate. After, the following exhortation was given by Mary Lamb, President Clan Lamont. "They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old, age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn, at the going down of the sun and in the morning, we will remember them."

By Marc Ryckaert - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0

The clans observed the Minute of Silence in memory of the soldiers who fell on the field of honor with banners being lowered as a sign of mourning and respect.

Then each clan laid a wreath of poppies in front of the monument accompanied by the pipe band. The clan representatives were invited to remember their loved ones resting in Belgium and France.
For Clan Ramsay:

Lieutenant Charles John Alexander Ramsay Age 33
Captain Stuart Ramsay Age 30
Lieutenant Alexander Ramsay Age 27
Lieutenant Neil Ramsay Age 34
2nd Lieutenant Alexander Ramsay Age 30

The Kohima Epitaph was read by Tom Hye, representative of the Earl of Erroll, High Constable of Scotland: "When you go home, tell them of us and say, for your tomorrow, we gave our today." Followed by the playing of, "The Floo'ers" by bagpipe.

The clans headed back towards Grote Markt Ypres where the Honor Ceremony was held at the Pub "Les Halles" where representatives of each clan offered a toast to the King and clan leaders.

Lunch was taken at the "Flanders Field Museum Restaurant" in the market square in Ypres, a "vol au vent" with Belgian fries washed down with good beer and wine.

Submitted by:
Christian Jamin Ramsay
Commissioner North Europe
Clan Ramsay International

DotScot Registry

Eleven years ago Scotland finally took its place on the internet when a small, Glasgow-based not-for-profit company dotScot Registry applied for the .scot domain. The application was supported by letters from the Scottish Government and parliament, Scottish organisations at home and around the world and renowned Scots including Sir Sean Connery and Sir Tom Farmer.

.scot is a community domain intended for Scottish businesses, charitable and cultural organisations and those connected to Scotland by birth, heritage or affinity wherever they are based. As far as we know, it is the only community domain in existence that is used by the government, parliament and national health service in its home country and by organisations and individuals in 62 countries around the world.

Canada was a key part of the vision when a domain for 'the worldwide community of Scots' was first mooted. Historically Canada has been the most popular destination for Scottish emigrants.

There are more than 5 million Canadians who claim some kind of Scottish connection, either because they were born in Scotland, have Scottish heritage or have lived or studied there at one time. The number is even higher when you add 'affinity Scots' or 'Scots adjacent', a term coined by Canadian newspaper editor Richard Dal Monte to describe those who have a Scottish partner (like himself). The large number of Scottish cultural organisations in Canada eligible for a .scot domain was also a key consideration at the time.

Recently a second Scottish domain was created to offer an alternative to .scot. The new domain is .co.scot and it is hoped that its availability will encourage even more members of Scotland's global affinity network to "bring their Scottishness online".

Voices Behind .scot and .co.scot

Harry McGrath, Chair and Head of Engagement and Global Outreach at the DotScot Registry, sees a pivotal moment in the evolution of Scotland's internet identity:

As someone who lived in Vancouver for many years and worked closely with the Scots-Canadian community when I was the Coordinator of the Centre for Scottish Studies at Simon Fraser University, I am keenly aware of the interest there is in all things Scottish and the number of Scottish groups across Canada that work tirelessly to emphasise and celebrate their Scottish connection. I have worked on various initiatives to draw these groups even closer to their homeland and to other Scots around the world but none that has more potential to do that than the widespread adoption of a .scot or .co.scot domain.

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DotScot Registry

(Continued from page 28)

Hannah Mondiwa was born in Malawi, raised in Scotland and now lives in Surrey, British Columbia. She is *the .scot ambassador to Canada* and says:

So many Canadians I meet are proud of their Scottish heritage, and I think many of them would be drawn to having a domain that showcases their Scottish identity. Personally, although I haven't lived in Scotland for many years it will always be home. I still visit regularly and carry Scotland with me everywhere I go. For that reason, choosing a .scot or a .co.scot domain was a natural fit.

Gavin McCutcheon, Managing Director of DotScot Domains, emphasises that affordability and accessibility were key motivations behind the expansion:

The new .co.scot domain option builds on the strengths of the traditional .scot domain but at a significantly lower cost and is ideal for businesses, communities and individuals with a Scottish connection wherever they are based.

.scot and .co.scot domains are available from domains.scot

Want to know more about .scot and why you might want to consider it for your website address? Please visit dot.scot

St. Andrew's Society of Montreal

Don't miss the Great Canadian Kilt Skate

Montreal

Saturday, February 21
3:30 to 5:00 p.m.
Westmount Recreation Centre

It's time for the Great Canadian Kilt Skate! Put on some tartan and join us on the ice as we celebrate Scottish culture and heritage in true Canadian fashion. Let's show the world our Scottish spirit!

This event is FREE for all participants. Please RSVP in advance. We are already expecting a good crowd, but we have the rink all to ourselves this time and would love to fill it!

RSVP for the Kilt Skate

Local bagpipe scholar makes research trip to Scotland and England

As part of his Concordia University master's research, piper Alan Jones undertook an intensive UK study trip this fall, including a visit to Edinburgh where he met with noted bagpipe scholar Dr. Hugh Cheape. Through arrangements made by Dr. Cheape, Alan was granted rare access to historic bagpipe collections at the University of Edinburgh and National Museums Scotland. These sessions provided a rare, up-close look at how British and Irish bellows-blown bagpipes evolved, and showcased the many non-Highland piping traditions preserved in museum collections.

Beyond Edinburgh, the study trip included visits with leading pipemakers, curators, and scholars across England and Scotland, as well as research at the Bodleian Library in Oxford.

We look forward to hearing more about Alan's research as he works to complete his thesis!

Above : Alan Jones on discogs.com, click image to find out more about his music

Below : Dr. Hugh Cheape and Dr. Calum Robertson at National Museums Scotland

Six Nations Rugby Championship

We're in the middle of the Men's Six Nations Rugby Championship. The championship is an annual international rugby union competition between the teams of Scotland, England, Ireland, Wales, France and Italy. Here is a list of Scotland's matches:

Saturday, February 7, 9:10am
Italy defeated Scotland by 18 to 15

Sunday, February 14, 11:40am
Scotland defeated England by 31 to 20

Saturday, February 21, 11.40am
Wales v Scotland

Saturday, March 7 9.10am
Scotland v France

Saturday, March 14, 10.10am
Ireland v Scotland

The tournament will be broadcast live in Canada by DAZN: visit the DAZN website to subscribe. Good luck to Scotland!

North Lanark Highland Games

Join us for the 41st Annual North Lanark Highland Games!

Celebrate the Scottish culture and heritage of the Ottawa Valley at the 41st annual North Lanark Highland Games in Almonte, Ontario. The Games offer a traditional format and size attracting about 3,000 visitors. Twenty pipe bands, a hundred dancers and champion heavyweight athletes combine to present what is recognized as one of the Ottawa Valley's premier summer events.

With Mini-Highland Games and free admission for kids 11 & under, and the picturesque Mississippi River as the backdrop, the Almonte Games have a reputation not only as having the prettiest site but also as being the friendliest Games on the Ontario circuit.

Registration is now open for clans.

Please register using the online form here CLAN REGISTRATION FORM

For registration of other groups, visit https://almontehighlandgames.com/registration/

For more information contact

Jason Bagshaw
Concessions Director
North Lanark Highland Games
Almonte Ontario Canada

Email nlhgconcessions@gmail.com

www.almontehighlandgames.com

St. Andrew's Society of Toronto

Join us for a belated Tartan Day celebration with a night of Scottish cuisine and camaraderie in downtown Toronto. The St. Andrew's Society of Toronto (SAST) will be returning to The Chefs' House for our annual Spring Dinner.

This innovative restaurant operates as part of the Hospitality & Culinary Arts Program at George Brown College (GBC). SAST is proud to work with GBC as part of our mission to support post secondary education.

Key Details

Tickets will be $90 for Society members and $95 for non-members. The evening will begin with a cocktail reception at 6:30pm. Attendees will be seated for dinner at approximately 7:15pm.

The dinner menu will be as follows. A vegetarian option will be available at checkout for the same price as the featured three-course option.

Appetizer: Cold-smoked Salmon with Fennel, Grapefruit, Aioli

Main course: Roasted Lamb Loin with Toasted Barley, Asparagus, Onion Soubise

Dessert: Sticky Toffee Pudding with Vanilla Ice Cream

The dress code for this event is business casual. Kilts and tartans are always welcome but aren't mandatory.

The featured speaker will be announced shortly.

We look forward to seeing you on April 10th. This event has sold out the past two years so get your ticket today! Click image above to buy tickets!

St. Andrew's Society of Toronto

The Fitzgeralds are a dynamic family act made up of three siblings - Tom, Kerry and Julie. Growing up in the Ottawa Valley, the trio were inspired by the music of Irish, French and Scottish immigrants. Those influences combined to create something so special that it must be seen to be believed. Prepare to be amazed by their fast feet, faster hands and incredible stage presence.

This show is hosted by the St. Patrick's Parade Society in partnership with the St. Andrew's Society of Toronto. Early Bird tickets are $30 until February 12. Advance tickets are $35 and $40 at the door (while supplies last).

Attendance is open to audiences of all ages. This is a seated event with no standing room tickets available. Only 100-seats will be available for this intimate performance. Don't delay as this event is sure to sell out!

Click the image above for tickets

December 21, 2025

The Scottish Banner will soon release our first edition of 2026, now is the time for the annual Clan, Family and Society advert renewals to take place. As we have your Clan/Society listed in our pages, soon we will be sending out accounts for 2026 (January-December), if your organisation does not wish to renew your advert with us, please do let me know as soon as possible. If you wish to again continue running the Clan/Family/Society advert, then no action is needed and an account will be issued in early January (unless already paid).

New for 2026! Our Clan/Society ad fee will now be for placement on our website, this includes a year round placement on our new page Calling the Clans at www.scottishbanner.com, our web traffic surpasses our subscription numbers and your ad will be clickable direct to your website or social media page.

Ads will continue to appear in our digital edition and placed once during the year on our social media channels-reaching tens of thousands of Scots!

Standard rates continue to be heavily discounted for Scottish community groups at $80.00.

If your group intends to run your ad in 2026, we always advise ad refreshes when able and update any contact details, please send in a readymade PDF advert to this email should you have any new ad content. Please also find attached our December issue and the current ad we are running. Please find also attached our ad size guide and request you send us any ad updates by PDF in these dimensions.

If you have any queries, please do let me know.

Thank you to all our Clan and Society friends for their continued support this year, and very best wishes for the upcoming holiday season!

Best wishes,

Sean Cairney

The Scottish Banner

E: info@scottishbanner.com

the Scottish Banner

50 Years Strong - 1976-2026 www.scottishbanner.com

A' Bhratach Albannach

Dear Friends,

Please find below links to the latest issues of the Scottish Banner if you wish to share with your membership.

Some of the latest edition's content will also be available on our website throughout the month at: www.scottishbanner.com/category/article/

We hope your membership enjoys our content and we invite all Scottish community organisations to keep us posted on their news or events for future editions.

Keep up with what is happening across the Scottish community, with the world's leading international Scottish event listings, at: www.scottishbanner.com/events/

Please encourage your membership to subscribe with us, in order to help to continue to create our unique content for the international Scottish community at: www.scottishbanner.com/subscribe/

Any queries please do get in touch.

Kind regards,
Susan Leslie
The Scottish Banner
E: info@scottishbanner.com

December 2025

January 2026

February 2026

Clan Sinclair Association (Canada)

William Sinclair and the Teutonic Knights

by Chief Malcolm Sinclair

For a long time I have wanted to know more about William Sinclair who fought with the Teutonic Knights in Lithuania in 1358 and why was he there. In his book 'St Clairs of the Isles, Roland St Clair quotes from Rotuli Scotiae which states "..... Sir William Sinclair, Lord of Roslin, ... with a train of sixty horse and a strong body of foot soldiers, passed through England for the continent eager for distinction in foreign wars, with which they had no concern, and foolishly deserting their country when it most required their services." He was following other Scots on an expedition to Prussia to fight for the Teutonic Knights. I recently attended a lecture on them given by Aleks Pluskowski who has written a number of books on the Order. Afterwards I emailed him and this is his reply.

"This is a fascinating insight into the Teutonic Order's so-called "Reysen" into Lithuania. I'm delighted to learn about your ancestor's involvement. According to the most comprehensive study of these campaigns (Die Preussenreisen des europäischen Adels by Werner Paravicini), there was one in January 1358, which was a siege of a stronghold the Germans called Dobitzen (or Dobizen), located in Samogitia which is in western Lithuania (although at the time was semi-independent of the Grand Duchy). The campaign is mentioned in the chronicle of Hermann von Wartberge, a priest of the Order. I had a quick look and the details are very limited. The army was led by Goswin von Herike, the Livonian Master, and 100 men perished during the siege, including two

(Continued on page 39)

BUBIAI HILLFORT image credit Siauliai tourism information Centre

(Continued from page 38)

brothers of the Order.

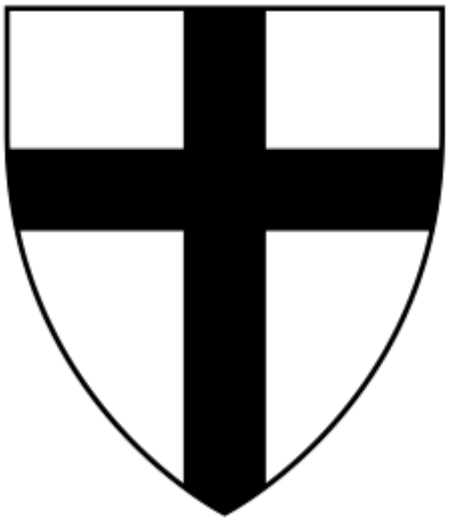
The stronghold in question is Dubysa in the Šiauliai district of Samogitia, or Šaule as Samogitian. It has been identified by archaeologists as the earthworks at Bubiai. It was the target of several attacks, having been burned down by the Order in 1348 and rebuilt, then destroyed again in 1358. You can find more info here:

https://www.baltukelias.lt/en/sightseeing-places/bubiai-hillfort/

Regarding named individuals, in 1357-8 these are four lords from Gascony, one from Artois, one from Poitou and one from Normandy. East European chronicles mention Scottish participation in the Order's campaigns only once, in 1397. According to Paravicini, the Rotuli Scotiae record only four letters of safe conduct to Prussians issued to the first group you mention (Bisset & company, a total of 12 people), on 20 August 1356, and then mention David de Barclay (1363), John de Abernethy (1377) and Adam de Hepburne (1378). In 1377, Duke Albert III of Austria enlisted three Scotsmen, including one William for his campaign with the Order against the Lithuanians, but no surnames were recorded. I suppose because Prussia is not specified in relation to Sinclair, only 'foreign wars', Paravicini did not pick this up from the Rotuli. But if they did go to the north-eastern frontier, then the likely campaign was the one in January 1358 against Dobitzen."

I have not found out much more but as with a lot of history there is still a lot of unknowns. Was the William who Duke Albert enlisted 'our' William Sinclair? If he took horsemen and foot soldiers with him, I would have thought there would be more records of this. Did he actually join up with the Teutonic Order?

The other thing that interested me was that the Teutonic Knights banner is remarkably like ours. The Teutonic Order or to give it its full title - the Order of Brothers of the German House of Saint Mary in Jerusalem - is a Catholic religious institution founded as a military society c. 1190. So, I wondered whether we had copied their banner following William's short time with them? Sir William Sinclair who signed the Ragman Roll (the list of the nobility and gentry of Scotland who subscribed allegiance to King Edward I of England in 1292) used a seal showing a cross engrailed, together with boars' heads although the heads disappeared very soon. Another William Sinclair, who apparently was not a knight so presumably a different person, also used a cross lozengy for engrailed in the 13th century so I do not think there can be any link with William Sinclair of Roslin half a century later and the Teutonic Knights.



The coat of arms in the style of the 14th century for the Order of Brothers of the German House of Saint Mary in Jerusalem

Clan Sinclair Association (Canada)

Sinclair Charters at the University of Guelph

By Rory Sinclair, Hon. President

In 1996, I visited the University of Guelph collection of old Scottish charters some going back to the wars of Independence of the early 14th Century. I had heard that they possessed seven very old Sinclair Charters the oldest being the 1400's. Of course, it was no secret to the academic world which unfortunately can be somewhat opaque to the lay world. I phoned the University and confirmed that yes, indeed, they had the Seven Charters. I phoned ahead to make the appointment and was greatly assisted by Professor Elizabeth Ewan of the School of Scottish Studies as well as Ms. Darlene Willsie of the Special Collections Department.

The earliest charter of this collection is dated 20 March 1491, and deals with the transfer of the Barony of Pentland from Oliver Sinclair son of Earl William Sinclair (builder of Roslyn Chapel) to his son George, who married Agnes, daughter of Robert Lord Chrichton of Farquar. George died without, issue and the estate passed to his brother William (d. 1554).

The next charter which is dated 8 November 1513 and transfers the Barony from George to William (see above). William, who was knighted by James V, married Alison Hume and was succeeded by his son William (d. after 1602).

The next charter is dated 25 August 1542 and is from James V to this William and confirms him in the Barony of Pentland. This charter is attached with the Great Seal of James V (1512-1542) and which is in excellent condition. According to The History of Scottish Seals by Walter deGray Birch, James V used two seals during his reign. The seal attached to this charter is probably the second seal since the author states that the first was used only for a few months and gives the death of James V as a December 7, 1542. See below for a photograph of the Great Seal of James V.

William of Roslyn, married Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Walter Kerr of Cessford and had two sons, Edward and William plus three daughters.

The last four charters of the collection are from William to his sons Edward and William are dated 1542, 1554 and two in 1574. The first, dated 1542, has a small red seal with the legend in Gaelic. The third, dated 1574, bears the seal of Sir William Sinclair and is signed: "W.Santclair of Roislin, Knecht'. Add more variations to your collection for spelling of 'Sinclair' and Roslin'.

Edward Sinclair married Christian, daughter of George Douglas of Parkhead but died without heirs and was succeeded by his brother William who married Jean, daughter of Edmonston. It was this William who built the vaults and great turnpike of Roslin Castle, as well as one of the arches of the drawbridge, a fine house near the Milne and the Tower of the Dungeon where the clock was kept. (Father A. Hay,v Genealogie de les Sainteclaires de Rosslyn)

Rory Sinclair
Hon. President

Wee TV Channel - Robert Burns for Young Scots

New Wee TV Channel Brings Robert Burns to Life for Young Scots

Calling all bairns, parents, and educators! There's a braw new digital destination for young Scots to explore their linguistic heritage, and it's packed with the works of Scotland's national bard.

Scots Hoose has just launched Wee TV, a dedicated online channel bursting with songs, stories, and activities—all in the vibrant Scots language. And for those keen to introduce the next generation to Robert Burns, it's a goldmine.

Presented by the engaging duo Benjamin and Molly, Wee TV makes Scots fun and accessible. Young viewers (and the young at heart) can sing along to beloved classics, including several Burns favourites reimagined for little ears. The channel features lively versions of "Up in the Mornin' Early," "Leezie Lindsay," "Charlie is my Darling," and "The Deil's Awa'."

But the fun doesn't stop with Burns. The growing library also includes traditional Scots sangs like "The Three Craws," "Ally Bally," and the ever-popular "Ye Cannae Shove Yer Grannie Aff A Bus." For story time, there are Scots tellings of favourites such as "The Wee Bannock" and "The Three Wee Pigs," plus interactive activities to get bairns moving and learning body parts in Scots.

It's the perfect resource for parents, grandparents, and early years educators looking to share the richness of the Scots language in a bright, modern, and utterly engaging way.

Explore Wee TV today and let the sangs and stories begin!
Click here to visit Wee TV

The Society of Antiquaries of Scotland

Preserving the Past for the Future: The Society of Antiquaries of Scotland Launches "Heritage Hub" Campaign

Deep within the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh, tucked away in the rafters, lies the current home of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. For years, this small office space has served its purpose, but its limitations are clear: it is inaccessible to the public and unsuitable for visitors. Now, the Society is embarking on an ambitious project to change that, launching a capital fundraising appeal to create a new "Heritage Hub" that will be open to all.

The proposed Hub will be located in a prominent space directly across from the National Museum, transforming the Society's public presence and accessibility. This move represents a monumental step forward for the organisation, which holds one of the most significant collections related to Scotland's past. The new facility will provide a dedicated space for the public to engage with history, offering access to collections, expertise, and resources that have long been hidden away.

To bring this vision to life, the Society is actively seeking donations and support. A promotional video on YouTube provides a compelling look at the project and its importance, while their website offers in-depth information on the appeal and how to contribute. For anyone passionate about Scottish heritage, this is a unique opportunity to help build a new gateway to the nation's rich and ancient story.

YouTube link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W1cYv6fbzJs&t=25s
Website info: https://www.socantscot.org/uncategorized/society-launches-capital-fundraising-appeal/

V&A Dundee in Lego

A Dundee man, Brian McNicoll, has created a model celebrating an iconic Scottish building. The V&A Dundee, Scotland's design museum, by renowned Japanese architect, Kengo Kuma, has been a renowned building in Dundee since 2018. Brian has created a LEGO Ideas model of the building which is live on LEGO's official platform where public support can help decide which designs become real LEGO sets.

If you're interested in seeing Brian's creative tribute to Scottish culture and world-class design become a LEGO set, please click here and vote for his model.

From Culloden to Canada: The Surprising Story of Fraser's Highlanders in Quebec

By Ewen Booth

Many historians credit the first arrival of the Scots to North America with the "Highland Clearances" and the arrival of the immigrant ship "The Hector" to what is now Pictou, Nova Scotia. In Nova Scotia they have just finished restoring a replica ship and will be relaunching it this summer as a tourist attraction in commemoration of the event in 1773.

Using genealogy to assist in his research, Ewen has been able to identify the world events and the happenings which led the Scots to travel to North America and settle here.

The Scottish people are not whom we think they are today. There were three distinct groups which were culturally different in many ways. "The Highlanders," who are most associated with the image of a Scot today, spoke Gaelic, wore tartans and kilts and were Catholics and Protestants. They also followed a Clan system. "The Lowlanders" spoke Scots and English and wore clothing more common to the English with tweeds more predominant and the odd kilt. They were also Protestant. There were some clans but mostly were comprised of families. The Third group were "The Lowland Protestants" who had settled in Ireland on plantations, who still identify themselves as "Ulster Scots" or the "Scots Irish." A large area where they lived is now "Northern Ireland."

For the sake of this article, I am going to present the second identified migration of the Scots (Highlanders) to Quebec. This historically was one of the most important groups to leave a footprint in Quebec history and as you read along you will see why.

From 1756 to 1763 the world was having a world war. Many countries were fighting in what is known as the "Seven Years War." In North America, the French and the English colonies were fighting. Initially the French under the leadership of Montcalm were successful against the English colonist and the British troops. As a result, King George II, and his son; The Duke of Cumberland decided to send a large army to north America to end the costly fighting "once and for all." One of their plans was to create regiments to simply fight against the French for the duration of the war. They saw a potential army sitting in the highlands of Scotland, not only as adversaries but also as a group to exploit, as there were still fears of yet another Jacobite uprising. (The last Jacobite uprising was crushed by Hanoverian supporters in 1746) The term "No great mischief if they fell" was used to identify the situation. (If those who opposed the Hanoverian King were killed in the service of the King while fighting the French, then two birds were killed with one stone.) Three Highland regiments were to be sent to North America. The 42nd regiment (The Black Watch) was already in North America and the Caribbean fighting. The other two regiments eventually became the 77th regiment of foot (Montgomerie's Highlanders, raised by the Chief of Clan Montgomerie) and the 78th regiment of foot (Fraser's Highlanders). The 77th also fought in the Colonies and in the Caribbean.

The 78th regiment of foot made a lasting impact on the history of Quebec in a way that many do not realize. The regiment was raised by Simon Fraser, the son of the Clan Chief "Simon Fraser." The Chief had

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The Thistle and the Fleur de Lys

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served as an officer in the Black Watch and in the last Jacobite uprising in 1746 he sympathized with the Jacobites and as such was arrested and hanged for treason. His title, lands and monies were also seized by the king. When the son was asked to raise a regiment to fight the French in North America, he was eager to gain favour to the King and have everything returned to him. The regiment was raised in the Highlands of Scotland and they along with the other highland regiments were given permission to wear the kilt and use the bagpipes. The regiments also all spoke Gaelic and were comprised of Catholics and Protestants. Many had been professional soldiers in the armies of other countries, including France prior to joining the Frasers.

1760 Portrait of Volunteer Sergeant Malcolm MacPherson of Phonnes (78th regiment of foot) titled "A Pinch of Snuff" by William Delacour (Private collection)

The Frasers fought at Louisbourg, Quebec, Ste-Foy, and were present at the surrender of Montreal. With Nouvelle France being an occupied territory, the British wished to safeguard against the return of French ships and troops and established a garrison system up and down the Fleuve St-Laurent. In the British Garrison system, they did not build building to house the soldiers but would travel house to house and place soldiers where there was room to live amongst the local inhabitants. When they arrived at the larger Manoir of the Priest or the Seigneur they would often put the officers quarters in those locations, and groups of soldiers in barns and other outbuildings. They were also encamped in tents during the summer months. The inhabitants would receive compensation for the troops boarding in their residences, but not always welcome.

From 1760 to 1763 the Fraser's were garrisoned in this fashion in many of the small rural parishes and in Quebec. When not conducting garrison duties, the soldiers were allowed to undertake civilian roles to keep them from getting bored. Many of the soldiers had trades (i.e.: Tonnelier, Blacksmith and carpenters) and others farmed, fished, hunted, and sailed the river with their new friends. They also helped rebuild buildings destroyed during the conflict. The soldiers supplied their food rations to the lady of the house as they ate out of the same pot with the rest of the family. It was a time of an uneasy peace, but prosperity and economic growth in the local parishes resulted because of this. The soldiers participated in all social aspects within the parishes attending weddings and funerals and celebrating feasts together.

During this time, the soldiers were not allowed to marry Canadian women as it was an "occupied territory" and neither side knew who would retain the land at the end of hostilities. The British had regulations against the marriage to the enemy because of this. Each regiment also had to manage the number of wives, and camp followers simply due to logistics and cost of travel.

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The Thistle and the Fleur de Lys

Major Richard Short (1759). Three officers of the 78th regiment are walking on Cote de la Montagne, Quebec.

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After the Treaty of Paris was signed in 1763 and the King of France signed over Nouvelle France and all of its citizens to King George III, there was a lasting peace on the land with the end of the war. The 78th regiment was to be disbanded, and the soldiers were offered three choices.

- To return to Scotland and be discharged
- To transfer to another regiment and continue their military service
- To discharged in Canada and remain living here.

Over 150 officers and soldiers of the 78th regiment decided to remain in North America, many of them settling in the new colony of Canada. Starting in November 1763 numerous parish records indicate numerous marriages between former soldiers and French-Canadian women. This group settled in the small parishes, Quebec, Trois Riviers, and Montreal mostly blending in with the local population and future generations becoming French Canadian and disappearing into history. Soldiers were entitled to petition for land grants, for their service to the King, however it is discovered that during this period that many of the land grants were given to the officers and sergeants, with many of the soldiers and corporals not having records of receiving lands contrary to popular belief.

Do not forget that there were many Scottish families who had already migrated to Nouvelle France with the

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The Thistle and the Fleur de Lys

(Continued from page 46)

French military and early colonists and settled here. There was Scottish settlement in the colony from both sides of the conflict.

With this group within the next several things three things happened.

- Many who returned to Scotland now returned to colony with their families and friends.
- Many who remained in the military also later settled in the colony
- Those who did settle initially also sponsored family members to sail to the colony from Scotland to settle.

During the American Revolution, many soldiers rejoined the military to defend their lands with the Royal Highland Emigrants (84th regiment of foot) and Canadian Militia. This group where the first to stand "shoulder to shoulder" with their French-Canadian families and neighbours to defend Canada from the Rebel invasion in 1775.

In 2018 the "Fraser's Descendants project" was created to track the history of these soldiers and Ewen continues to seek out their history. French Quebec family names include Blackburn, Harvey, Nairne, Cormack, McSween, McKinnon, Ross, McDonald, McNeil, McLeod, McMullin, McNichol, Fraser, and many others who settled with this initial group of highlanders in 1763.

Many predominant French Canadians are the descendants of this group, Including Eugene Etienne Tache who designed the Provincial Legislature building, Melange Militaire in Quebec and the original Palais de Justice. Eugene Etienne Tache first penned the motto of Quebec "Je Me Souviens" with many people interpreting the meaning differently. Tache simply explained it was for the future to decide when asked. Tache's mother is the granddaughter of Hugh Fraser, a soldier of the 78th regiment of foot who married a French Canadian and settled in Beaumont in 1763. His cousins he grew up with were all named "Fraser" and were the merchants, Lawyers, Notaries and bourgeois of the south shore and Quebec City.

Many of the children of these soldiers became the "movers and shakers" of Canada along with their French-Canadian families. It is estimated that up to 64% of traditional French-Canadian families could have the blood of this one group of highlanders in their DNA. The roots of this Gaelic speaking group of highlanders run deep in Quebec and Canadian history, the music and culture.

The Province of Quebec has "Le Plaid du Quebec" (image to the right) which was created in 1965. The province has never official adopted it as their official tartan, but it is available for all Québécois to wear and enjoy.

Pipers and Speakers

The following are affiliated with our membership and available for bookings.

Piper	Locale	Contact Info
Rory Sinclair	Toronto	http://www.caledoncounty.com rorygus.sinclair@outlook.com
Mike Chisolm	Greater Vancouver Area	604-628-8140 http:// bagpipervancouver.com
Callum Gauthier	Ottawa / Rideau River / Toronto	613-620-1014 Callum.gauthier5@gmail.com
William Morrison	Western Ontario	226-600-3472 piperwilly@hotmail.com
Jenna Denisson	Greater Montreal Area	514-835-6320 www.jennadennison.com dennison.jenna@gmail.com
Ewen Booth	Quebec City - Montmagny area	514-966-0205 or info@tourschardon.com

Speaker	Topic(s)	Contact Info
Christine Woodstock	Scottish Genealogy	Genealogytoursofscotland@gmail.com
Rory Sinclair	Scottish History and Culture	http://www.caledoncounty.com rorygus.sinclair@outlook.com
Ewen Booth	Scottish-French & Military History in Early Canada	Email; genealogy@tourschardon.com Cell 514-966-0205

Media Guidelines Reminder

Media Guidelines Reminder

As we become more engaged with various forms of media, we need to set boundaries for acceptability when content affects our fellow members and the public as a whole, particularly regarding what reflects on **Scots of Canada** as an organization. **Scots of Canada** is an organization formed to promote Scottish culture and heritage.

Here are guidelines to help with this:

- No media content is allowed that promotes a political viewpoint, whether for a party, government, labor organization, or activist activity, without the advance consent of the Board of Directors.

- No media content is allowed that violates the terms of membership as set out in the bylaws, specifically regarding the making of false statements, defamation, intimidation, or the attribution of false or defamatory statements, or any dissemination of misinformation or unsubstantiated information specifically meant to bring disrepute to an individual or group.

- No media content is allowed that promotes the violation of intellectual property and copyright laws or that lessens respect for the laws and standards of heraldry in Canada and internationally.

About Scots of Canada

Founded in 1976 as Clans and Scottish Societies of Canada, our purpose is:

To advance Scottish Cultural Heritage in Canada, such Scottish culture be defined to include, but not be restricted to, traditional Highland, Island and Lowland cultures, whether in Scotland, Canada or wherever Scottish Culture may be expressed;

To foster the organization of and co-operation and communication between Scottish federations, clans, societies or groups through the initiation and co-ordination of projects and undertakings;

There are two types of membership now available in Scots of Canada.

Organizational Memberships are open to any and all organizations which promote or encourage some aspect of Scottish tradition or culture, represent a link between the Scottish people and their descendants and relations in Canada, or seek to develop an understanding of the role Scotland and its culture has played in the development of Canada and its history.

All of the original memberships in Clans and Scottish Societies of Canada have now been converted to the equivalent Organizational Membership class

Household Memberships are open to any household with a postal address where one or more residents of the household identify with a Scottish Heritage by birth, descent or an inclination. Over the next couple of months a new site scotsofcanada.ca will be extended to provide registration, services and benefits to this new membership class. Extension of the same will be extended to Organization Members over the next few months.

Patrons:

Charles Edward Bruce, Lord Bruce, DL MA MSc FSA Scot
Major The Hon. Sir Lachlan MacLean of Duart, Bt. CVO DL

Meetings 2025: Fall Annual General Assembly - November 30, 2025 3PM Virtual

Websites and Emails:

We are now in the process of transition for our web and mail services from a legacy domain of cassoc.ca, a transitional domain of scotscanada.ca to a new domain of ScotsOfCanada.ca. During this time we will be using all three domains for email with automatic readdressing or forwarding depending on where we are in the migration of services and email accounts

Equivalent email addresses are in place for each domain name. Your patience is much appreciated.

An Drochaid - The Bridge

This Winter 2026 edition features as its cover the Greig Street Bridge, a footbridge across the River Ness located in Inverness, Scotland.
It is a suspension bridge built in 1880–1 by the civil engineer C. Manners in conjunction with the Rose Street Foundry for a cost of £1,400.

Photo by Robin Canfield on Unsplash

An Drochaid - The Bridge is usually published quarterly for each season.
Submissions are welcome, though articles may be edited for length and content.
Whenever possible, please provide PDF, Word, RTF or text formats
Submissions are due as follows :
Winter: January 11, Spring April 12, Summer: July 12, Fall: October 11,

Any member of Scots of Canada may submit an article or ad at no cost. A grant of right of use for publication and posting on the web is implied. Submitter must be able to legally provide the contents. For instance, please ensure that you have image rights for persons in photographs.

Publication of material is at the sole final discretion of the newsletter editor. Format, length and content may be adjusted by the editor as deemed necessary. Scots of Canada assumes no responsibility nor liability for submitted content in terms of factual correctness or right of use. All submissions will be published with the implied or explicit attribution of source.

Taylors Tartans is a home based business in rural New Brunswick that sells products made out of our provincial tartans.