



Dualchas

A newsletter of Clan Donald Mid-Atlantic Region • July 2025 • Vol. 6 • Issue 2

Upcoming Events

Clan Donald USA AGM (Annual General Meeting)

Aug. 13–17, 2025
San Jose, California
clandonaldusa.org

Virginia Scottish Games

Aug. 30 & 31, 2025
5089 Old Tavern Rd
The Plains, VA
www.vascottishgames.org

Ligonier Highland Games

Sept. 13, 2025
Idlewild Park
Ligonier, PA
www.ligonierhighlandgames.org

Celtic Classic

Sept. 27 & 28, 2025
Bethlehem, PA
celticfest.org/2021-celtic-classic-festival-information/

Clan Donald will not have a presence at the following event, but you may want to attend.

Covenanter Scottish Festival and Highland Games

Sept. 6, 2025
Quarryville, PA
www.covenanterscottishfestival.com

Armadale, Clan Donald Lands Trust Update



Armadale Castle image from Strutt and Parker sales brochure

Since our April issue announcing the Clan Donald Lands Trust's (CDLT) intent to sell Clan Donald lands on the Sleat Peninsula on the Isle of Skye and the Clan Donald Centre, numerous clan members and officers worldwide and people opposed to the sale have spoken out. The listed sale of these historic lands—part of Clan Donald for over 500 years—is a pivotal, irreversible step — the most consequential event for Clan Donald since the purchase of these lands through global fund-raising by Lord Godfrey MacDonald in 1971. The following is a recap of steps by Clan Donald USA and others, as well as information about how you may be involved.

On March 27, the Strutt and Parker real estate company listed for sale the "South Sleat Estate," which comprised the vast majority of the last Clan Donald hereditary lands at Armadale estate on the Isle of Skye.

Reaction to the announcement was swift,

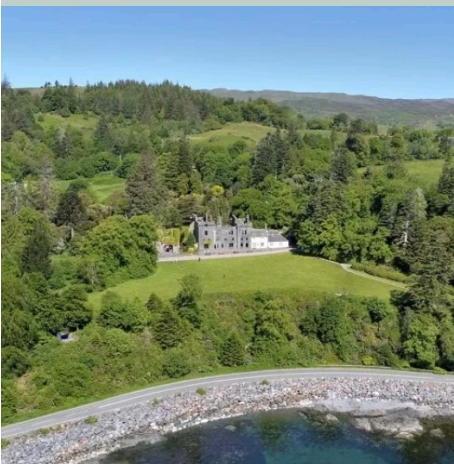
with Clan Donald officers and members calling on the Trust to halt the sale, or at least halt the sale of the Clan Donald Centre. Many concerns were filed with the OSCR (Organization of the Scottish Charity Regulator) by various people and organizations.

Lord Godfrey Macdonald and David Macdonald (CDUSA High Commissioner), as well as Clan Donald Canada and Clan Donald of Scotland, made public statements opposing the sale. Clan Donald of Scotland referred to it as "The Lands Trust Disaster." This is not an overstatement.

In early May the Sleat Community Council on Skye met and again discussed Armadale. The section of their recently published minutes relevant to Armadale is posted in full starting on page 9.

On June 12, the CDLT announced that the properties around Armadale Castle would

Continued on page 3



Cover Image from Strutt and Parker Sales Brochure



Victor Donham
Regional Commissioner

DUALCHAS is a Scots Gaelic word meaning heritage or culture

Mid-Atlantic Region

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Judy McDonald

Delaware Commissioner:

Brad Slader

Maryland Commissioner:

Vacant

New Jersey Commissioner:

Vacant

Pennsylvania Commissioner:

Vacant

Pennsylvania Convener:

Barry MacDonald

Dualchas Editor / Director of Communications: **Lynn Donham**

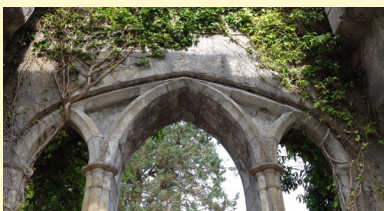
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From the Commissioner

Latha Math!!

After three Spring events in the Mid-Atlantic region (Southern Maryland, Fair Hill, and Carroll County), we are in the middle of the summer doldrums. Stay cool out there!

We're looking forward to our fall events with the first one, the Virginia Scottish Games, falling on Labor Day weekend. While not technically in our region, it is close to many members in the DC area. Clan Donald will be one of the honored clans so let's turn out in numbers. Southern Appalachian region will host our tent and will have plenty of refreshments. This is a two-day (Saturday and Sunday) event, so you'll have two chances to attend, or attend both days!

In mid-September the Ligonier Highland Games is our next event. Clan Donald is always the host clan at Ligonier, as Clan Donald members were instrumental in its beginnings. I'm looking forward to seeing all our good folks from western PA and further afield who attend. See you there!

We will also be attending the Celtic Classic event in Bethlehem near the end of September. We missed this event last year as it fell on the weekend of our AGM. We missed the year before because of Tropical Storm Ophelia making its way through the area. So, we're looking forward to seeing everyone this year. Fingers crossed!

The South Jersey Celtic Festival is a small event that we may be able to attend this year in October. Stay tuned.

The listing for sale of the properties that make up the Clan Donald Centre at Armadale, as well as the large estate that it is part of, is still on everyone's minds. It is the main topic at every event we've been to. I know several families that have planned trips to Scotland next year with the intent of visiting Armadale on the Isle of Skye. I can only hope the Clan Donald Centre is still there to greet them.

In August Clan Donald USA's AGM (annual general meeting) will take place in San Jose, CA. Our High Commissioner, Deputy High Commissioner, and every regional commissioner (along with many international clan organizations) are working hard to keep Armadale in the hands of the clan, but so far the trust that manages it on our behalf have not changed their position. At the AGM, the CDUSA Board will hold discussions about the current state of Armadale, and possibly bring the issue before the general membership. Clan Donald USA sent out a survey to all active members asking for their opinions on the issues surrounding Armadale. I hope you responded.

If it is important to you to keep Armadale, then I encourage you to join the organization "Save Armadale." Their web page is savearmadale.com. They are also on Facebook at "Clan Donald - Save Armadale" and Instagram at "savearmadale." I am deeply saddened that this division is happening within our clan. I did not ask for this fight, but I won't walk away from it either.

Again, this is my final year as Regional Commissioner, and we are looking for members to take leadership roles. Regional Commissioner Emeritus Bill Yoder and I will continue to support the region as best we can, but we may be depending on conveners and state commissioners to keep things running next year. We hope, though, that we will be able to find members to step up and take over the regional and deputy-regional commissioner duties. Remember, Clan Donald is a volunteer organization. We depend on you, our members, to volunteer where you can to help out. Please let me know if you think you can. My email is victordonham@gmail.com.

Thank you for your support of Clan Donald!

Yours aye,

Victor Donham
Commissioner, Mid-Atlantic Region
Clan Donald USA

CDLT Board Statement June 12, 2025 (excerpted)

The CDLT Board of Trustees has approved the marketing for sale of Armadale estate to commence on 14th June 2025.

Sadly, the necessity to sell is far from unique to hospitality or visitor attractions in the Highlands and Islands region, much down to relatively low footfall and short seasons. Furthermore, the practical requirement to restructure is not uncommon in the charitable trust or the business sector. The charity business is not viable in its current form without substantial investment from an entity with a new destination concept able to carry that commercial risk.

It should be noted that despite substantial annual external charitable funding, the CDLT has incurred losses every year since the centre opened. This funding is no longer available. Charities are only legally permitted to operate commercial ventures as long as they are profitable and contribute to sustaining the charity's purposes.

The idea of selling the wider estate and using the proceeds to bolster Armadale was the initially preferred conclusion. However, the estate sale proceeds are unlikely to be sufficient for the capital requirements of Armadale.

The Trustees' objective is to find suitable buyers who will bring serious investment, prosperity, training, and employment to the community for the long term.

Ranald Macdonald, Younger of Clanranald (Chair of Trustees and heir to Clanranald)

Sir Ian Macdonald of Sleat, Bt. (Chief, Macdonalds of Sleat)

Major (Ret.) Bruce Macdonald (Chamberlain, The High Council of Clan Donald)

Diane Carey-Schmitz (Past High Commissioner, Clan Donald USA)

Armadale, CDLT Update

Continued from page 1

be listed, and on June 14 Strutt and Parker advertised the remainder of the estate, but broken up into smaller pieces to be bought piecemeal or all together. <https://www.struttandparker.com/properties/armadale>

The CDUSA Board of Trustees met June 17. The board voted to draft a resolution opposing the sale of the Clan Donald Centre at Armadale. The board also voted to create a survey to solicit views of CDUSA members on the sale of Armadale.

On July 1 the CDUSA Board met again and unanimously approved the resolution. On July 4 it was sent to CDUSA members, CDLT board members and CEO, the Sleat Community Council and relevant Scottish authorities, including those overseeing the Scottish Land Reform Bill. On July 11 the survey was sent to all current CDUSA members for whom we have email addresses. The resolution is presented on page 8 and the survey on page 9. We do not have the results of the survey yet.

In April, a Facebook group called "Clan Donald - Save Armadale" formed with various people throughout the world opposed to the sale. This Facebook group now has over 560 members. Out of this group an organization, Save Armadale, emerged. It is now an official organization in the United Kingdom, and it has raised funds for legal fees in its efforts to

stop the sale of the Clan Donald Centre at Armadale. It has produced a flyer and tri-fold brochure that can be distributed at events. CDUSA High Commissioner has given permission for these to be distributed at Clan Donald gatherings and other events. A "fight song" of sorts was produced by a Save Armadale member and shared through Facebook. If you are on Facebook, here is a link to that song: [\[link\]](#) (You may need to join the group in order to see this post) The author of the song sent me the lyrics, so if you want them just email me and I'll send them to you.

People have continued to file concerns with the OSCR regarding the Trust's sale of Armadale lands. In June, a question posed to the Scottish Parliament by one of its members addressed the issue, mentioning reports of complaints submitted by the Trust's beneficiaries to the OSCR. Coverage of this question is on page 10.

UK media have eagerly covered this "clan war." Links to several of these articles are at the end of the CDUSA Resolution on page 9.

Despite the above developments, there has been no change in the CDLT trustees' position on the sale of Armadale. If they have responded to anyone at all, it has been only to reiterate their position.

We strongly support the CDUSA resolution opposing the sale. We also believe that it is not the CDLT board's decision to sell the estate. These lands and the Clan Donald Centre were purchased for perpetuity by clan members worldwide, and the Museum of the Isles was built by the clan to tell our history and heritage. The Trust has no authority to sell the lands and center — only Clan Donald can make that decision. Once they're gone, they're gone.

We hope you will use the information enclosed to stay current on developments, lend your voice as you deem fit, and join Save Armadale. We appreciate your support in any way possible, and we hope for your best wishes.



Upcoming Events in the Mid-Atlantic



Top left: Clan Donald after the clan parade at 2024 Virginia Scottish Games. All others: Scenes from 2024 Ligonier Highland Games (courtesy of Ligonier Highland Games)

Bring your family and come join us at these events. Enjoy the hospitality, meet other Clan Donald members, and enjoy the festivals!

Virginia Scottish Games vascottishgames.org

The pipes are calling! Join us in The Plains, VA, for the 51st Virginia Scottish Games. Held on Aug. 30 and 31, you can enjoy everything from heavy athletics to competitive dancing, living history demonstrations, sheepherding, a British Car Show, and of course music. Try your hand at Scottish Country Dancing, Whisky and Gin Tastings, or learning a little Scottish Gaelic. Clan Donald is a 2025 Honored Clan, so be sure to join us on either or both days!

Ligonier Highland Games ligonierhighlandgames.org

The 66th Ligonier Highland Games will be held on Saturday, Sept. 13, at Idlewild Park in Ligonier, PA. Clan Donald is always the host clan at Ligonier, as The Clan Donald Educational and Charitable Trust is the parent organization that oversees and makes possible the Ligonier Highland Games. Enjoy watching competitions in heavy athletics, highland dancing, Scottish harps, and Scottish fiddles, as well as pipes and drums. You can see demonstrations of Scottish weaving and sheep shearing, and see living history and military re-enactors. If you're feeling competitive, you can take part in Ladies Haggis Hurling, the Keg Toss, or a shortbread contest. See you there!

Celtic Classic celticfest.org

The Celtic Classic will be held on September 27 and 28, although some events will be held on Friday September 26. It takes place on the streets of Historic Downtown Bethlehem, PA. This 38th annual Celtic Classic is presented by Celtic Cultural Alliance, an organization dedicated to preserving and promoting the Celtic heritage through education, musical presentations, and traditional competitions in athletics, piping and dance. Clan Donald will be in the Celtic Heritage Hollow along with other clans, the children's activity tent, and cultural events such as Celtic storytelling, poetry, workshops, and lectures. Stop by and see us if you go!



Spring Events Coverage

The weather was not kind to us again this spring. It felt a bit like Scotland! At Southern Maryland off and on rain led to a wet parade of tartans. Heavy rains the week before Fair Hill led them to

scrap the planned area for the clans and squeeze us into a narrow, soggy strip of grass behind the main field. And at the Carroll County Celtic Festival the threat of storms had them bring all the clans

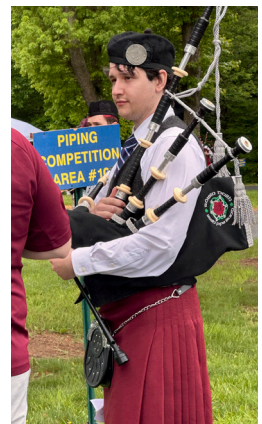
inside the main building with all the vendors and the traditional music stage. But we managed to have fun in spite of the weather, greeting old friends and meeting new ones.



Southern Maryland Celtic Festival. Left: The MacDonald Pipe Band of Pittsburgh marching onto the field. Right: The Seán Heely Celtic Band. From left to right: Agi Kovacs, Seán Heely, Kevin Elam, and Abbie Palmer



Above and right: Scenes from Fair Hill Scottish Games





This page: Scenes from the Carroll County Celtic Festival in Westminster, Maryland



Bonnach Strughain and the Celebration of Michaelmas

Published with permission of Coinneach MacLeod, from his book the Hebridean Baker at Home: Flavors and Folklore from the Scottish Islands

The 29th of September is Michaelmas, signifying the end of the harvest, the start of autumn, and the beginning of shorter days. On the Hebridean islands of Uist and Barra, to celebrate Latha Fhèill Mìcheil it is traditional to bake a Bonnach Strughain the evening before.

I met Theresa 20 years ago when we sang in the Glasgow Islay Gaelic Choir. We have been great friends ever since. Theresa is passionate about keeping island traditions alive, and here she shares a Bonnach Strughain recipe handed down to her.

Serves 24

For the scone mix

350g (12 1/2 oz) self-rising flour
110g (4 oz) butter, cubed
1 tsp baking powder
60g (2 oz) sugar
1 egg
200 mg (3/4 cup + 1 tbsp milk)

For the treacle butter

4 eggs
120g (4 1/2 oz) sugar
250 ml (1 cup) milk
4 tbsp black treacle (molasses can substitute)
450g (1 lb) self-rising flour
2 tsp baking powder
2 tbsp vegetable oil

METHOD

To make the scone mix:

Preheat the oven to 200 degrees (425 degrees F)

Sieve your flour, then add the

butter and rub it in lightly with your fingertips until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs.

Stir in the baking powder and sugar. Make a well in the mixture, lightly beat an egg before pouring it in along with the milk and then combine quickly with a table knife.

Tip the mixture onto a well-floured surface, gently bring together into a round shape slightly smaller than your average ovenproof skillet, place the scone on top and bake for 30 minutes until a skewer comes out clean. Leave it in the skillet, though as you'll be baking it some more.

To make the treacle butter

While the scone is in the oven, prepare the treacle batter. Whisk the eggs in a bowl until light and fluffy, then whisk in the sugar for a further 2 minutes, before adding the milk and the treacle and mix until combined. Add the flour and baking powder a bit at a time, continuing to mix well. Finally, mix in the oil.

When the scone comes out of the oven, pour two-thirds of the treacle batter over the top of the cooked scone, spreading it with a palette knife to cover the top and sides. Reduce the temperature to 180 degrees C



(400 degrees F). Place back in to cook for a further 16 minutes.

Now, remove it from the oven. Using a wire rack, turn the scone over and then place it back in the pan upside down, cover with the remaining treacle batter and cook for a final 16 minutes. Serve to friends, family and villagers just like the old days.

Celebration of Michaelmas

The holiday is observed on this day in the Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Anglican churches worldwide, but not recognized as widely in the US.

Michaelmas, like Groundhog Day in the US, was a predictor of weather:

"Michaelmas Day be bright and clear there will be two 'Winters' in the year".

Along with St. George, Michael was considered the patron saint of chivalry during the Middle Ages. Babies born on Michaelmas were called Michael or Micheál in honor of the Saint.

"May Michaelmas féinín on you."

On the Isle of Skye (in the Hebrides), there is a rhyme about the "Michaelmas daisy" or Aster that flourishes between August and October. The daisies were given as a present on Michaelmas.

*"The Michaelmas daisies, among dead weeds,
Bloom for St Michael's valorous deeds.
And seems the last of flowers that stood,
till the feast of St Simon and St Jude."*



Continued Armadale Coverage

Clan Donald USA Passes Resolution

Resolution of Clan Donald USA Opposing the Sale of Armadale Castle, Gardens, and Museum of the Isles by the Clan Donald Lands Trust

WHEREAS, Armadale Castle, Gardens, and the Museum of the Isles, located on the Sleat peninsula of the Isle of Skye, represent the spiritual and historical heart of Clan Donald, embodying over 800 years of heritage and serving as a global focal point for Clan members and the Scottish diaspora;

WHEREAS, the Clan Donald Lands Trust (CDLT), established in 1971 through the collective efforts of Clan Donald members worldwide, including significant contributions from Clan Donald USA, was created to preserve and promote the history, heritage, and culture of Clan Donald and the Lordship of the Isles for the benefit of Clansmen and the local community;

WHEREAS, Clan Donald USA members and Clan members worldwide are the rightful beneficiaries of the Clan Donald Lands Trust, entitled to the preservation of its assets, including Armadale, to fulfill the Trust's charitable purpose of promoting Clan Donald heritage;

WHEREAS, the proposed sale of Armadale Castle, Gardens, and the Museum of the Isles, announced on March 24, 2025, as part of the broader South Sleat estate sale, was made without meaningful consultation with Clan Donald USA or the wider Clan, resulting in widespread feelings of hurt and concern among members;

WHEREAS, the Clan Donald Lands Trust has cited financial challenges, including increased operational costs and reduced grant funding, as the basis for the sale, yet has not provided transparent financial disclosures, such as audited accounts, or adequately explored viable alternatives, such as community partnerships or management reforms, that could preserve Armadale's cultural and economic significance;

WHEREAS, the Clan Donald Lands Trust's

proposed digital platform to replace Armadale's physical presence is insufficient, as it cannot replicate the emotional, cultural, and economic significance of the Clan's historic heart, lacks detailed plans for feasibility or engagement, and fails to support the Sleat community's local economy;

WHEREAS, Armadale is integral to the identity and economy of the Sleat community, supporting local employment, crofting, and tourism, and its sale without broad stakeholder input undermines principles of fairness and community engagement, particularly in light of the Scottish Parliament's ongoing debate on the Land Reform Bill, which emphasizes consultation for significant land transactions;

WHEREAS, Clan Donald USA, representing over 2,000 members, has historically provided substantial financial and moral support to the Clan Donald Lands Trust, including through the efforts of past High Commissioner Ellice McDonald, Jr., and other benefactors, and views Armadale as a shared legacy that must not be treated as a mere real estate transaction;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Clan Donald USA:

1. Strongly opposes the proposed sale of Armadale Castle, Gardens, and the Museum of the Isles by the Clan Donald Lands Trust, as it undermines the Trust's founding purpose and the interests of its Clan beneficiaries worldwide.

2. Urges the Clan Donald Lands Trust to immediately pause the sale process to allow for meaningful consultation with Clan Donald USA, the wider Clan, the Sleat community, and other stakeholders to explore alternatives that preserve Armadale's heritage and community benefits.

3. Demands greater transparency from the Clan Donald Lands Trust regarding its financial situation and decision-making process, including detailed evidence of the claimed financial necessity (e.g., audited financial statements) and docu-

mentation of efforts to explore all possible options to retain Armadale.

4. Supports efforts by the Sleat community and Clan Donald members worldwide to pursue legal and strategic initiatives to halt the sale and secure a sustainable future for Armadale under new management that includes Clan and community representation and honors the Trust's charitable purposes.

5. Commits to mobilizing Clan Donald USA members to raise awareness and advocate for the preservation of Armadale as the Clan's spiritual home, ensuring its legacy for future generations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution be communicated to the Clan Donald Lands Trust, its Board of Trustees, and CEO Alex Stoddart, as well as to the Sleat Community Council and relevant Scottish authorities, including those overseeing the Land Reform Bill.

Adopted this 1st day of July 2025 by the board members of Clan Donald USA by unanimous decision from all those attending. Two were unable to be present.

References:

- Armadale Castle. (2025, March 24). Statement from the board of trustees of the Clan Donald Lands Trust. <https://armadalecastle.com/statement/>
- *Daily Record*. (2025, April 15). Furious US descendants of Highland clan 'betrayed' at shock sale of castle. <https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/furious-descendants-highland-clan-betrayed-35059610?utm=>
- *The Scotsman*. (2025, June 11). Clan moves to stop sale of 210-year-old castle on Scottish island as members claim 'it is ours'. <https://www.scotsman.com/heritage-and-retro/heritage/clan-moves-to-stop-sale-of-210-year-old-castle-on-scottish-island-as-members-claim-it-is-ours-5170226>
- *Daily Mail Online*. (2025, June 15). Historic island castle is on the market but furious clan members are plotting to block the sale. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14814593/Historic-island-castle-market-furious-clan-members-plotting-block-sale.html>



Clan Donald USA Survey

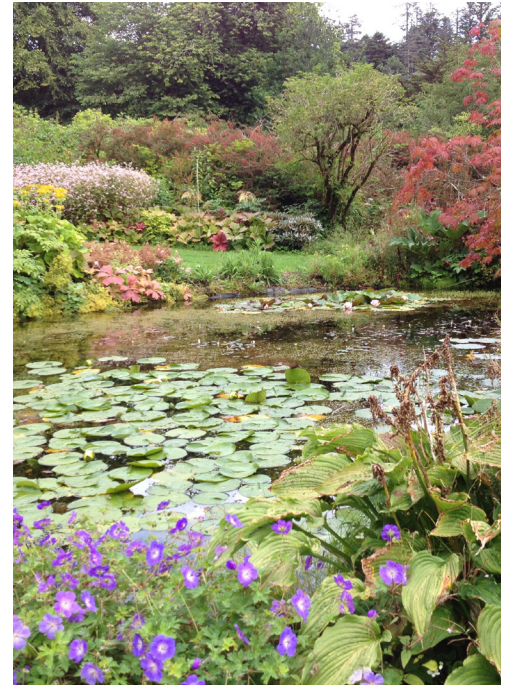
Sent to General Membership July 11

The following survey questions were sent to the current membership of Clan Donald USA in order to ascertain the level of support for the CDLT and its actions.

- Do you support selling the greater estate if that is the only means to preserve the Clan Donald Centre at Armadale including the castle, gardens and museum?
- Do you support the Trustees selling the Clan Donald Centre at Armadale including the Castle, gardens and museum?
- Would you donate/support or continue

to donate to the Clan Donald Lands Trust with the current trustees and management in place?

- If efforts are unsuccessful in stopping the sale, would you donate to/support another location for the Museum and the Clan Donald Centre within the Highlands and Islands?
- In the event that the Clan Donald Centre and the greater estate are sold, do you support the Trustee's goals of reforming the trust into an organization which gives grants to support Clan Donald worldwide?



Sleat Community Council

From Approved Minutes for May 6 Meeting

Item 5 The Clan Donald Lands Trust – a community update

Andy W said there was little new knowledge. The Secretary has written to CDLT to ask to halt sale, and others from national agencies, MSPs and MPs support that. There has been no reply.

There is no sense that CDLT is listening to its members and beneficiaries. CDLT does not own the estate - it holds it in trust and has not spoken with the beneficiaries. The Sleat community is not a beneficiary. David Macdonald (a previous International Director of CDLT on Skye and now Chief Commissioner of Clan Donald USA) states that CDLT action has no support from clan members.

Alex Stoddart has set up a Sale Liaison Group and asked Sleat Community Trust for three names. Those of Donaidh Macdonald, Eilidh Grant and Andy Williamson were submitted. Andy W was dismissed as being unacceptable. There is no representation from Sleat Community Council, whose councillors are elected to represent Sleat.

At the public meeting at SMO on 7

April there was little enthusiasm for a community purchase of the farming and crofting land. It is not in any financially viable state - the community would not have the resources to buy and turn it around. There are pockets of cultural environmental and archaeological interest.

There was interest in the Castle and Gardens when that appears on the market. Again, that area has been run into the ground with between £2-6m needed to bring it up to scratch. It was suggested a community-led group be set up to bring ideas together. It is difficult to get involved because the CEO has shown no appetite to talk about a community buyout.

Issues can only be resolved by dialogue but that is probably not possible or likely. Our MP Angus Macdonald's grandfather was one of the founding trustees of CDLT and so he's interested in what is happening. Andy W reported he has had several conversations with Angus Macdonald who has also met with the CDLT Chairman, Ranald Macdonald, Younger of Clanranald. Andy W

will attempt to meet with the CDLT Chairman, and it is a hopeful sign that Angus M is managing to mediate a little.

As far as community actions are concerned there is a plan to organise a community exhibition of the history of the estate, with pictures and stories of all the previous community engagement, which might not be known by a lot of more recent Sleat residents, and to demonstrate what it could be like in the future.

The Museum building and contents is apparently causing some concern in national museum circles - that the archives are in a building that needs maintenance. It would not be just a case of the community taking over a museum, as it needs considerable financial input. There is a lack of technical information about the state of the museum. This is also the case with the state of the Stables building.

There is not just Sleat community interest in the sale. Wider Clan Donald interest from around the world are expressing outrage at this situation. Clan Donald Members (some 2 million MacDonalds around the world) are the 'beneficiaries' of CDLT. They have an interest in Armadale because of the historical connection, but they have little sense of connection



Sleat Community Council Meeting Minutes, cont.

with the Sleat community itself.

The Sleat community has a sense of connection with the Castle and Gardens because of the economic importance to Sleat. There is an understanding of the history, but apart from MacDonalds locally there is no real interaction regarding the ethos of 'Clan Donald'. This lack of interaction has changed dramatically through the large number of emails and messages from clan members around the world who want to help, who want to know what's going on, who want to find out how to support Sleat.

Is the sale legal? It is possibly illegal on several issues: the selling of assets, and

the general management of CDLT. It is clear they have breached their moral duty to the beneficiaries. These will become legal duties under new Land Reform and Charity Acts on the horizon.

Duncan M commented on the general lack of community response to the various erroneous public comments made by CDLT management in the press and emails. In a recent WHFP article the CDLT management stated the operation is financially untenable because of the low number of MacDonalds coming through the gates, and that it is financially unviable because CDLT was never set up to be a commercial tourism venture. The first is irrelevant

and the second is totally untrue. It is time to address such misinformation.

Rob W said it is difficult to understand the motivations of the CEO to talk down and run down the business. It would be remiss not to make correct some of this misinformation.

Further comments from the public touched on the general low cost in running Gardens; the possibility of finding a new rich land-buyer; the overly high value placed on the land-sale; and issues of Right-to-Roam and closure of the gardens to the public.

Question Submitted to the Scottish Parliament

The following question was submitted to the Scottish Parliament on June 23, 2025 by Ariane Burgess, MSP for Highlands and Islands, Scottish Green Party. It was answered by Mairi Gougeon on June 26, 2025.

Question

To ask the Scottish Government what engagement it has had with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) regarding the reported proposed sale of

Armada Castle and estate by the Clan Donald Lands Trust, in light of reports regarding complaints submitted by beneficiaries and public interest in the potential impact on community access.

Answer

We have not had any engagement with OSCR concerning the proposed sale of Armada Castle and estate by the Clan Donald Lands Trust.

Charities and OSCR are independent of government, and so it would not be appropriate for Scottish Ministers to intervene in any complaints that have been submitted.

[Editor's Note] There have been multiple concerns submitted to the OSCR regarding the trust's proposed sale of Armada Castle and estate.

For more Information

Armada Castle: www.armadalecastle.com

Clan Donald Lands Trust: <https://armadalecastle.com/about/who-we-are/>

Clan Donald USA: clandonaldusa.org

Clan Donald Society of Scotland: clandonald.org

Sleat Community Council: www.sleatcommunitycouncil.org.uk

Sleat Community Trust: www.sleat.org.uk

Strutt and Parker, Estate Agents Robert.McCulloch@StruttAndParker.com or Euan.MacCrimmon@StruttAndParker.com

Save Armadale:

savearmadale.com

On Facebook: Clan Donald - Save Armadale

On Instagram: savearmadale



Cover of Save Armadale's tri-fold brochure

Help Wanted: Newsletter Editor

After five years of producing the newsletter, Lynn Donham is retiring from this role Jan. 1, 2026.

The newsletter is published, and emailed as a PDF, four times each year. The main communications tool for the Mid-Atlantic region, Dualchas newsletter promotes upcoming events, recaps events afterwards, covers news of interest to Clan members, and includes photos, information about tartans, and other content about Scottish history and culture. It's a lot of fun, and a great chance to use your creativity and to follow your interest in all things Clan Donald!

The Editor builds a small team to submit articles, assigning articles to the team and others, and taking or asking for photos of events. The editor may create the layout for the newsletter, or recruit others to assist with this. All positions are volunteer.

Lynn Donham will work with the new editor and team to ensure they are totally familiar with the process, by January. The newsletter is currently produced in InDesign, but it could also be produced in Microsoft Word.

Please contact Lynn at 404-441-7297 or lynndonham@gmail.com if you are interested.



Upcoming Events

Scottish Maryland Celtic Festival
April 26, 2025
Jefferson Patterson Park
St. Leonard, MD
www.scmf.com

Fair Hill Scottish Games
May 17, 2025
Fair Hill Grounds
Elkton, MD
www.fairhillgames.com/

Carroll County Celtic Festival
June 14-15, 2025
Carroll County Agricultural Center
Westminster, MD
carrollcountycelticfestival.com/

Clan Donald USA AGM
(Annual General Meeting)
Aug. 13-17, 2025
San Jose, California
clanusa.org

Clan Donald will not have a presence at the following events, but we invite you to attend.

Garrett County Celtic Festival
June 7, 2025
Pineville, MD
garrettcelticfestival.com

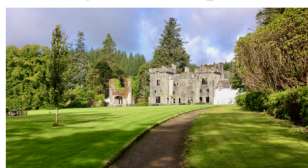


Part of Clan Donald Estate on Skye with Cuillin in the background

Dualchas

A newsletter of Clan Donald Mid-Atlantic Region • April 2025 • Vol. 6 • Issue 1

Clan Donald Lands Trust Puts Skye Estate Up for Sale



Armadale Castle ruins at the Clan Donald Centre, Sleat Peninsula, Isle of Skye

The Trustees responsible for managing Clan Donald's Armadale Castle and estate announced March 24, without prior notice, that the property and assets are for sale. The bulk of the 20,000-acre estate is listed for \$5.75 million. The Clan Donald Centre, including Armadale castle ruins and buildings will be listed later this spring for an undisclosed amount. As of this writing (April 19), there has been no change in this position.

Armadale's sale has consequences for everyone in Clan Donald, so Dualchas will dedicate this issue to inform Clan members as thoroughly as possible. This is the link to the estate agent's brochure and listing of Armadale: <https://www.strofford-parker.com/properties/sleat-estates>. It contains fascinating details about the property.

Most Clan members learned of the sale through word-of-mouth, a BBC article, or through social media. Armadale represents several hundred years' of unbroken

connection with the Clan and the family of Lord Godfrey Macdonald, High Chief of Clan Donald, and is the last of Clan Donald's ancestral lands in Scotland. As did everyone else, Lord Macdonald's family learned of the intended sale through the public statement from Clan Donald Land's Trust (CDLT) [see Page 5], as Lord Macdonald had resigned from the CDLT board Feb. 28 of this year. See his statements on pages 5 and 9.

Considered the spiritual heart of Clan Donald, Armadale and its 20,000-plus acres have been protected by the CDLT since 1973, after a multi-million-dollar global campaign paid death taxes and other debts, so Armadale could be held in perpetuity for Clan Donald. Clan members in North America contributed the largest part of funds for the purchase, in response to efforts by 23-year-old Lord Godfrey Macdonald.

Continued on page 3

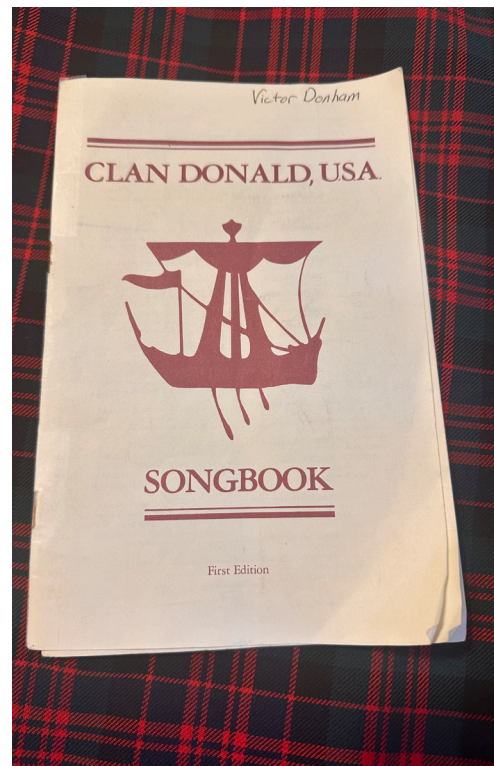
Sing Me a Clan Donald Tune!

The Clan Donald songbook has been around for a number of years, saving lyrics to songs that have been popular with members through the decades. But at least in our region, many of the tunes have been forgotten.

Lynn and Victor Donham are working to create a second edition of the Clan Donald songbook, that will include lead sheets and chord notations for the music as well. Clan Donald members will receive the songbook free via email as a PDF, which can be printed or viewed on most devices.

If you have any background information on this first edition of the songbook, we would like to include credits to those who created it, and a publication date, if it is available.

We also plan to have song workshops to revive members' familiarity with these tunes, and maybe more. Stay tuned for details.—*Lynn Donham*



Display in the Museum of the Isles at Armadale

MacDonald vs MacLeod: A Bitter Feud

From Bagtown Clans: Tales of Forgotten Scottish History

In the wild, wind-lashed reaches of the Scottish Highlands and islands, few rivalries were as enduring—or as brutal—as that between the clans Macdonald and Macleod. Both ancient, both proud, both deeply entrenched in the history of Skye and its surrounding isles, their mutual antagonism shaped the politics, legends, and bloodshed of the region for centuries.

The Macdonalds, known as the Lords of the Isles, wielded immense influence over the Hebrides and parts of the mainland. The Macleods, with strongholds like Dunvegan Castle, carved out their own domain in Skye and beyond. Though they shared marriages and occasionally aligned in interest, the overarching tale of these clans is written more in betrayal and war than alliance and peace.

One of the darkest chapters in their shared story is the horrific burning at Trumpan Kirk.

The Fire at Trumpan Kirk and the Battle of the Spoiling of the Dyke

Imagine it: a Sunday morning, still and sacred. The Macleods of [Waternish] are gathered in church when their ancestral enemies, the Macdonalds of [Clanranald], arrive silently by sea.

Fastening their boats to the rocky arches along the coast, they encircle the church and set it aflame. All perish except for one woman who, in a desperate act of survival, squeezes through a window — leaving behind a part of herself — and escapes to raise the alarm.

The countryside answers her cry. Men gather arms, women sharpen blunted arrows. The counterattack is swift and fierce, and the Macdonalds are routed. But the tide, which had aided their arrival, now betrays them. As they flee, they find their boats hanging in mid-air, tethered to rocky arches that are now high above the receding water. Cornered like otters on a drying riverbank, they are slaughtered.

Their bodies are buried beneath a turf dike built to protect local crops from the sea — hence the name of this battle: The Spoiling of the Dyke. Legend says that even the victors mourned the destruction of their labor. And yet, such regret did little to stem the rivers of blood that would follow in the years to come.

The Cave of Eig: A Reprisal in Snow and Smoke

Revenge, however, is never a solitary act in Highland history. The Macleods

would not forget Trumpan. Sometime later, in an eerie twist of fate and weather, they discovered their enemies once again in hiding — this time, sheltered in a cave on the Isle of Eig.

A snowfall betrayed the location. A man had emerged from the cave, curious to see if the danger had passed. Against the skyline of the Sciur of Eig, his silhouette was spotted. The Macleods returned, tracked the footprints, and found the hidden sanctuary.

They did not attack with sword or dirk. Instead, they sealed the mouth of the cave with kindling, set it alight, and suffocated all within — women, children, elders. The bones, it is said, remain there still.

Was this a just revenge or a monstrous atrocity? It depends on who tells the story — and on which side of the ancient feud their blood runs.

Dirks at Dinner: The Tense Hospitality at Dunvegan

The mutual hatred between these clans found expression in subtler, though no less sinister, ways. A tale survives of Donald Gorm, the Macdonald of Sleat, seeking refuge from a storm at Dunvegan Castle, seat of the Macleods.

It was a night fit for legends—the kind that coils into the memory of a land and never leaves. Rain lashed the cliffs of Skye. The sea, snarling and slate-gray, hurled itself at the rock-bound coast as a winter storm rolled in from the Atlantic. Atop that rock stood Dunvegan Castle, the ancestral seat of Clan Macleod, its ancient walls braced against centuries of such weather.

Inside, Malcolm Macleod, the clan chief, stood at the head of his table in the torch-lit hall. The long table groaned with the weight of meat and drink, and his gentlemen lounged in various states of drink and laughter. Then came the remark—a curious prophecy or provocation. “If Macdonald of Sleat were at the foot of my rock



Ruins of Trumpan Kirk, Waternish Peninsula, Isle of Skye



MacDonald vs MacLeod: A Bitter Feud

Continued



Image from Bagtown Clans: Tales of Forgotten Scottish History

seeking a night's shelter," said Macleod, "I don't think I could refuse it."

It must have seemed like idle musings to his men. But then came the news: Donald Gorm Macdonald, chief of the Sleat Macdonalds and bitter rival to the Macleods, was indeed below—his barge driven back from a stormy voyage to Harris. He sought shelter.

Beneath the Salt: The Cold Welcome

The Macleods, though shocked, extended the offer of hospitality. It was, after all, a sacred Highland custom to welcome even enemies in need. But sacred customs often clash with seething grudges.

Donald Gorm and his twelve guards, dripping sea spray and weariness, were ushered in. He sat not beside his host, but at the far end of the table—"beneath the salt," the symbolic mark of inferior status. To add insult to injury, a boar's head—a dire omen to any Macdonald—was the centerpiece of the feast.

Macleod, perhaps regretting his slight or masking it, invited Donald to the high seat. Donald declined, stating coldly, "Wherever Macdonald of Sleat sits, that's the head of the

table." The air bristled with tension. Then came the dirks.

Macleod proudly passed around his heirloom dagger. His men admired it as it moved down the line, until it reached Donald Gorm. He said nothing, merely passed it along. A silence. Macleod then challenged, "They say your dirk is finer—will you show it?"

Donald Gorm rose, drew his blade, and held it high. "Here it is, Macleod of Dunvegan, and in the best hand for pushing it home in the twenty-four islands of the Hebrides." The hall fell silent.

Macleod, now angered, pressed again, asking where the next best hand might be.

Donald raised his left. "Here," he said, with a cold grin, "and in the second best hand."

The Barn and the Betrayal

Dinner ended with forced pleasantries. Macleod offered Donald a guest room near his own, but the Macdonald chose instead to sleep in the barn with his men, claiming preference for the "fresh heather" over a swan-feather bed. He may have sensed something—or

perhaps he simply didn't trust the peace.

One of Donald's men had a sweetheart among the castle staff. She passed him quietly in the great hall and whispered, "Beware. The barn will be red flame by midnight."

Donald acted quickly. He led his men quietly out of the barn and into the shelter of a wind-shadowed rock nearby. They said nothing. They waited.

At midnight, the barn burst into flames. The sea, calm now in the moonlight, turned crimson with reflected fire. Inside the castle, Macleod and his men likely drank to their deception, assuming their enemies were consumed in sleep and flame.

But at dawn, the sound of bagpipes rose like a curse.

The Macdonald's March

Donald Gorm, unburned and unbeaten, led his men past the castle gates in full formation. The piper played a taunting tune. As they reached their boat, Donald shouted back to Dunvegan:

"Macleod, Macleod of Dunvegan! I drove my dirk into your father's heart—and for last night's hospitality, I'll drive it into his son's!"

Then they were gone. Back to Sleat. Back to legend.

Shadows and Legacy

Was it hospitality or homicide? Did Macleod truly intend to murder his guests, or was it a servant's warning misunderstood? The Highland code of hospitality was sacred, but so was vengeance.

This—half history, half oral tradition—has become a key parable in the annals of Highland clan rivalry. It encapsulates the fragile balance between honor and hatred, between ancient codes and darker impulses.

Donald Gorm's survival and bold retreat sealed his legend, and Dunvegan's stone walls still echo with the memory of that night when flame lit the sky

MacDonald vs MacLeod: A Bitter Feud

Continued

and loyalty, once again, proved to be as sharp as a Highland dirk.

Myth, Memory, and the Haunting of Ancestral Soil

Today, the Macleods and the Macdonalds exist more as surnames than war banners. Their castles, like Dunvegan and Armadale, stand not as fortresses but as tourist attractions. The battlefields are fields again. The dirks are museum pieces, the ghosts domesticated into guided tours.

Yet, in the misted glens and under the shadow of Skye's black peaks, the stories remain potent. The Fairy Flag of the Macleods still rests, unused, in a glass case. The bones of Macdonalds may yet lie in the sealed cave of Eig. And the blood-stained dike of Trumpan, now carpeted with wild grass and silence, waits for someone to remember what was buried beneath.

The legacy of Macdonald vs. Macleod is not only about feuds or power. It's about

how memory, myth, and land become inseparable in the Highland imagination. It's about the stories that survive longer than the bloodlines that bore them.

This article is adapted from two articles in Bagtown Clans' "Tales of Forgotten Scottish History": Macdonald vs. Macleod and The Night Donald Gorm Stayed at Dunvegan. Both of these articles were adapted From: Smith, A. (1865). A summer in Skye. London: Sampson Low, Marston.

Get to Know the Scottish Shortbread Company

When Victor Donham and I convened the Clan Donald tent at the Carroll County Games this spring, we met Ian and Maggie MacDonald, of the Scottish Shortbread Company. Not only did they have fine shortbreads and assorted Scottish gifts in their attractive booth, they also shared their special MacDonald Blend Coffee. You may find their wares at: www.finescottishshortbread.com/



Ian tells this story about the company's roots:

"My grandmother was an entrepreneurial type of tough Scottish woman. To support her family during the hard times of the first World War, she baked pies and



sold them from her pram with my aunt in the carriage. Fresh pies kept the baby warm and added an income that was needed to keep the family from starving during those hard times.

"After the war she brought my dad and aunt to the United States where they settled in Rochester, New York. A domestic her entire life, cleaning and cooking for the wealthy in town, she found that her talents were a gift and passed them on to my mother. In 1982 she gave me her prized shortbread recipe which I held on to not knowing what to do with it.

"Cissie" (as she was affectionately known by all) made her shortbread only at Christmas time and special occasions as the recipe was expensive to make and the arthritis in her hands kept her from being able to do it most of the year. She had a joy about life that I hope is reflected in this family recipe that is carried on by my mother and by me as a third generation shortbread baker.

"Cissie would say to us; 'Whits for ye'll no go past ye!' If it's meant to be it will be."

Flavors of Fine Shortbread:

Traditional Scottish Shortbread
Toffee
Orange Cranberry
Cherry Almond
Maple Walnut
Cinnamon Pecan
Whisky Pecan (made with Lagavulin 8yr old single malt)
Barry's Irish Cream
Barry's Irish Cream w/ chocolate drizzle
Lemon Lavender
Candied Ginger
Millionaire

We can attest to the fine texture and delightful flavor of the traditional shortbread and the Lemon Lavender! – Lynn Donham



MacDonald of Glencoe Tartan

By Peter Eslea MacDonald, Tartan Historian, Principal Advisor on Tartans to Clan Donald

Introduction

In the 1980s the weaving firm D.C. Dalgliesh Ltd wove a tartan they called MacDonald of Glencoe (Plate 1). Whether it was woven as a special commission or was one of the firm's stock patterns is unclear but the pattern was later added by the House of Edgar to their Mutedcolour range (Plate 2).

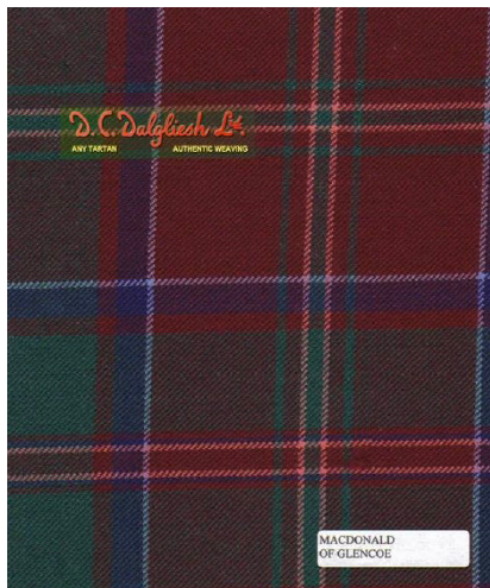


Plate 1. MacDonald of Glencoe. D. C. Dalgliesh Ltd

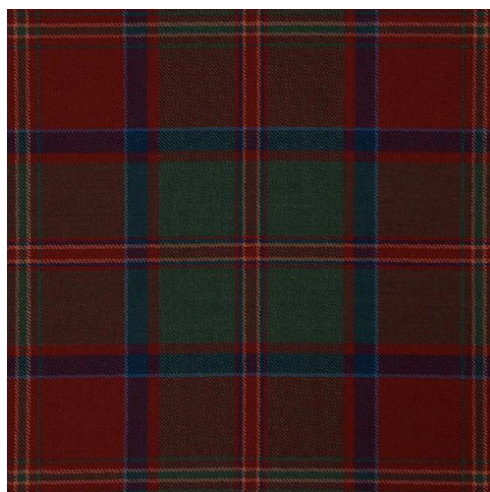


Plate 2. MacDonald of Glencoe. House of Edgar

These modern versions are based on records of a specimen in the collection

of the West Highland Museum (WHM), Fort William. According to the museum's Annual Report for 1939, the tartan is listed as "*Piece of Old Hard Tartan¹, spun, woven and dyed by John Rankin, Glencoe, about 200 years ago. Presented by his great-grand-daughter, Miss Mary A. Rankin, Glencoe.*" Based on this history, the specimen dates to c.1740

A MacDonald Tartan?

The concept of clan tartans began in the early 19th century whereas this tartan is at least 70 years older. The attribution of this pattern to the MacDonalDs appears to have been by Dalgliesh who knew of the Glencoe connection and added MacDonald, either out of ignorance of the original weaver, or simply to make it more commercially appealing. The MacDonalDs have long been associated with Glencoe, so too, but less well known, families of Hendersons and Rankins. In fact, a Rankin is said to have been the first man killed during the infamous massacre in 1692.

Assuming the tradition associated with this piece is correct, it could be argued that the tartan should be called *Rankin* or *Rankin of Glencoe* rather than MacDonald. However, there is another old specimen associated with the MacDonalDs, discussed later in this



Plate 3. The original specimen woven by John Rankin. Photo E F Williams

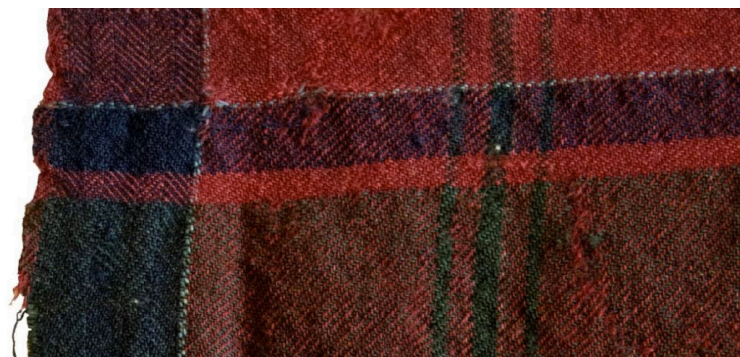


Plate 4. Herringbone selvedge mark. Photo E F Williams

paper, which may have a bearing on the use of the design in the Lochaber area.

The Original Specimen

The WHM specimen measures 20.5" x 14.5" and was woven at 46 ends per inch (epi) using singles (unplied thread) in the warp and weft. It has one selvedge and three rough edges meaning that this was cut from a larger piece (Plate 3). The blue at the edge of the piece is extended to form a selvedge mark which is herringboned with 54 ends alternating in 5 irregularly sized alternating bars and a final red stripe of 8 ends with the last to paired through the same (2nd) heddle (Plate 4) and (Fig 1).

Continued on next page

1 Hard tartan is a term that refers to a type of traditional fine, coarse material that was tightly spun and woven. Some older examples were lindsey-woolsey (having a linen warp and woollen weft). This type of cloth went out of fashion in the mid-1800s.



MacDonald of Glencoe Tartan

Continued



Fig 1. Arrangement of the irregular herringbone at the edge of the broad red.



Plate 5. Probable layout of the original warp with four half setts, part of the fifth and the selvedge mark.

A selvedge mark comprising a blue bar, often herringboned, with a final red stripe is typical of 18th-century civilian plaiding. Such patterns were woven offset² and designed to be joined to form double-width cloth in which the pattern repeats correctly across the whole width. In this case, the original material is likely to have been off-set, 24 inches wide with 4 half setts and into the 5th as far as the LB and finished with the selvedge mark (Plate 5). When joined, two lengths would have 8 half setts (4 full repeats) plus a selvedge mark of each side (Plate 6).

No dye analysis has been conducted on the piece but if tested, it is probable that the dyes were those typically used in 18th-century rural tartan; cochineal and indigo for the reds and blues respectively; indigo and an unknown yellow source for the green.

The Sett

The Glencoe tartan is amongst a group of traditional patterns that can be described as having alternating red and green grounds, separated by a blue bar. This basic arrangement was often decorated with finer stripes. The red and green grounds are sometimes of



Plate 6. Layout of the joined cloth: Eight half setts and the selvedge marks.

equal size, as is the case here, but more commonly, the red ground is proportionally larger. A number of late 18th- and early 19th-century tartans followed this structure (Fig 1).

Several include

a triple-stripe; a broad one flanks by two narrow ones, on the red. This triple-stripe arrangement was called the *MacDonald Motif* by D.C. Stewartⁱ because of the propensity of old tartans associated with the clan that include it (Fig 2).

The close similarity between the Glencoe and Keppoch tartans is apparent when the setts are compared in the same shades (Plate 7). The red and green are

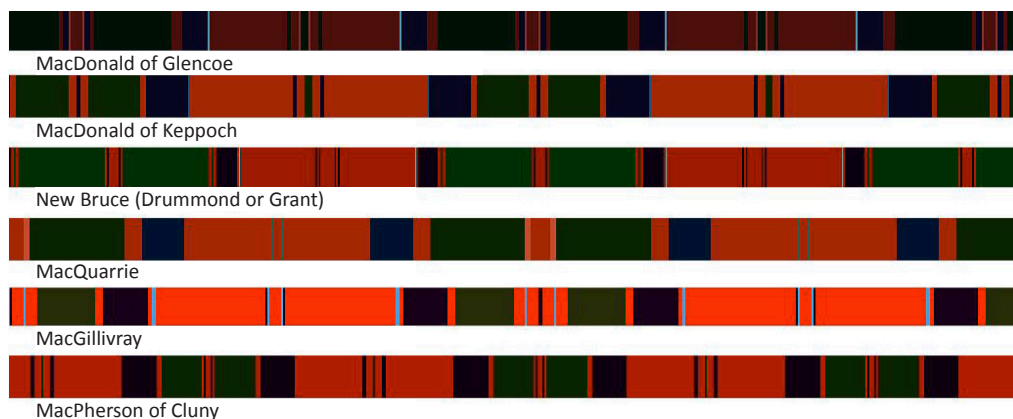


Fig 2. 18th and early 19th century designs with alternating red and green grounds separated by a blue bar.

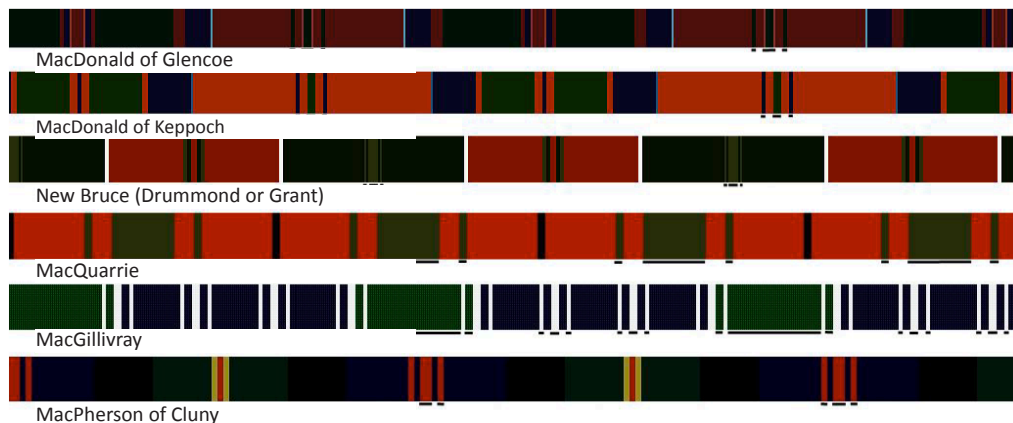


Fig 3. 18th century tartans associated with Clan Donald that include the 'Triple-Stripe Motif'.

2 The traditional method of offset weaving is discussed here - http://www.scottishtartans.co.uk/Joined_Plaid.pdf



MacDonald of Glencoe Tartan

Continued

different sizes in the Keppoch tartan, and the blue proportionally large but the tartans are otherwise structurally close.³ Both the original specimens are from locations some 30 miles apart by road⁴, but closer using the old mountain passes, in what is now Lochaber⁵. There were no clan tartans in the 18th-century, however, the similarity in the design of the two tartans hints at the possibility that they are in some way connected, perhaps from the same weaver or weaving group/tradition.

Conclusion

According to family tradition, this piece was spun dyed and woven c.1740 by a Rankin from Glencoe and was handed down in the family until it was donated to the WHM in 1939. The quality of the spinning and weaving, plus the inclusion of a herringbone selvedge mark, all support an early-mid 18th century date for the specimen. It is likely to have been from a length of offset plaiding intended for joining in

the traditional manner used for plaids. The lack of the joining selvedge, or a turned edge, in the specimen means it is impossible to tell whether the cloth was ever joined or used 'single-width'.

There is a close similarity in the design with that of the MacDonald of Keppoch tartan, another mid-18th-century pattern with close geographical ties. The similarities are so close that they may point to a common or popular design in the Lorn and Lochaber area, they might even have been woven by the same weaver or weavers.

There is no definitive proof that the piece had any direct connection with the MacDonalds of Glencoe and the name for the tartan appears to be an attribution by D.C. Dalgliesh Ltd c.1970. Notwithstanding this, it is the name by which it known today and generally accepted as a MacDonald tartan.

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About Peter MacDonald

By Lynn Donham

Peter Eslea MacDonald is an internationally recognised Tartan Historian. He has been studying and researching tartan for the past 40 years and is the leading authority on 18th and early 19th century patterns and techniques, particularly those of the weaving firm William Wilson & Son (1765-1926). He is a self-taught hand-weaver with some 30 years of experience and has demonstrated and lectured widely, including in the USA, Canada, Japan, Korea and New Zealand. Over the years he has woven hundreds of yards of tartan, recreating traditional techniques such as herringbone selvedges, off-set patterns and working in traditional natural dyes.

Peter had the privilege of weaving a length of material in the Prince Charles Edward tartan that was used to make the first kilts for Princes William and Harry. More recently, Peter organised recreations of a late 18th century specimen of that pattern for HRH King Charles and the Duke of Rothesay tartan, both of which are often worn by the Prince.

His research has uncovered a number of historically important relics associated with the Jacobite Rising in 1745. Current research projects include a study of tartans associated with Flora MacDonald, traditional selvedge techniques, and the development of regional patterns in the 18th century.



Plate. 7 Comparison of the MacDonald of Glencoe and MacDonald of Keppoch tartans. © The Author

³ http://www.scottishtartans.co.uk/MacDonnell_of_Keppoch.pdf

⁴ MacDonald of Keppoch lived at Keppoch House in Glenroy, some 3 miles east of Spean Bridge. <https://canmore.org.uk/site/23795/roybridge-keppoch-house>

⁵ Historically, Keppoch was in Lochaber and Glencoe in Lorn.

