



The Green Banner Newsletter

Canadian Branch of Clan Macpherson Association

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Spring Issue

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Greetings cousins,

I hope that this newsletter finds you all well.

This summer is going to be a busy one with our branch attending 6 Highland Games in Ontario and 3 Highland Games in Alberta/Saskatchewan area.



On April 13, 2024 members of our branch will be gathering in Burlington to remember Gordon Macpherson with sharing stories and memories. Gordon's Sword is going to be presented to the Canadian Branch by Pam and Kirk McPherson. We will have a light luncheon and toast Gordon.

If you wish to attend, please email me at denise.lagundzin@gmail.com for details on the location.

Four members are needed for the positions of Treasurer, BC, Quebec and Eastern Ontario as well as Central Ontario. Please consider joining the council.

Planning is underway for the 2025 Joint Gathering—what for more details.

Warm wishes,
Denise Lagundzin, FSAScot

Registrar Report
Beverly McPherson Letford

Greeting cousins,

Please join me in welcoming our two new members Robert Kirk and Vance McPherson.

If you have not renewed your Annual membership, I encourage you to do so. We have a lot planned for this summer.

Warm regards,
Beverly McPherson Letford.



Robert Kirk



Born August, 1971, I am a Fire Prevention Officer for the City of Niagara Falls in Ontario, Canada. I have been married for 30 years to my wife, Rachal, and we have two adults daughters, Ivory and Shayla. My grandmother, Rita MacPherson Anderson, was born in Aberdeen in 1925 to George Anderson and Isabella (MacPherson) Anderson. I have always been interested in my family tree and I look forward to meeting the cousins some day. Of all the vacations my wife and I have gone on, Scotland was the only time I felt like I was going home.



I am Vance McPherson. I was raised in Menesetung (Goderich, Ontario), and I currently live in N'Swakamok (Sudbury) with my family. Readers of the Green Banner will already know my brother, Bruce, the Association's Western Ontario representative.

My path to joining the Association was a circuitous one. As a small child I remember knowing that I was Cat Clan before I understood that I was Canadian. As a teenager coming into consciousness as the internet was coming into existence, I consumed all that I could about my hitherto-unknowable Clan history. I did cringeworthy things like shouting *creag dhubh!* at sporting events, and cooler things like wearing a bit of our hunting tartan during my own competitions. In university, my dorm-room door featured a wildcat with *na bean do'n chat* written underneath. I was right into it.

In adulthood I drifted from Clan identity. In the first place, I couldn't bear the exclusivity of my version of it. I fell in love with an Anishinaabe / German / English woman, and we decided to raise our family Anishinaabe-first, in no small part because that is the land in which we live. In my work life I have enjoyed doing business and achieving results in Indigenous, Islamic, and Québécois worlds. During health struggles, the Irish community of Toronto and my aunt's practice of traditional Chinese medicine got me to the other side. My heart is so full of cosmopolitan expressions of humanity that there is simply no room for anything like nationalism or ethnic pride.

What is more, I have never been to Scotland. Neither have my parents. Or grandparents. Or great-grandparents. I must go back five to nine generations to find an ancestor who set foot on our ancestral lands. I never met anyone who met anyone who met anyone in my family who had even been there. These realities weighed on me.

Today I have the privilege of managing an education system with Anishinaabe Elders and Knowledge-Keepers, and we frequently talk about clan identity. It would not be appropriate for me to disclose any detail of my understanding of the Anishinaabe clan system, other than to say that it is ancient, complex, and every bit as integral to understanding historical Anishnaabe social organization as the clan system was in Scotland. On more than one occasion a Knowledge-Holder has assured me that clan identity is an essential component of personal identity, more important than nationhood, religion, or politics; that if you go back far enough all humans had clan systems, and the vestiges of a fully humanized clan system are still visible in Scotland.

Up to this point, I had understood the Scottish and Anishnaabe systems to be similar in name only. I had read what was written, that the Scottish system was feudal in nature and therefore thoroughly different from Indigenous systems. But something else that Anishinaabe scholars have taught me to do is to re-read history, and interpret its silences, its side-steps, its narratives that all-too-conveniently explain why everything turned out for the best.

So I set about re-learning our clan history, this time from the lens of Indigenous reconstruction, and boy, am I ever left with a lot of questions.

Why did I accept the commonly-held notion that Scottish clans arose out of the feudal era? I have lived in Zambia, and although modern interpretations of Christianity forbid it, late-night campfires reveal that many people know their clans well: lion, monitor, eagle, and so on. I have lived with the Denesuline, where colonization disrupted stable clan-based politics. I know in my heart and from my own experiences that the notion of clans, based partly on genetics but mostly on complex rules of adoption, are common through humanity. Yet somehow I accepted the assertion that Scottish clans didn't really get going until there was a Scottish nation-state. That, of course, is a convenient narrative if you want to centre a nation-state, which is in turn convenient if you want to, say, recruit a single king to your cause rather than wrangling several hundred chieftains.

What if our clan is significantly older than anyone supposes? My brother's DNA work has established what I would consider to be a molecular clock. His Y-chromosome analysis looks to me like branching from the clan chief's line almost a millennium before any account of our clan's or any clans' origins; and several hundred years before Kenneth Mac Alpine invented the concept of Scotland.

Indeed, in "Window to the West" (2020), Bateman & Purser present nice archaeological data from neolithic sites suggesting that people of different Scottish regions had particular relationships with animals that correspond to modern-day clan mascots associated with those regions; so in MacKinnon traditional territory, stone-age humans are seen buried alongside wild boars, serpent mounds akin to swan necks are found in Campbell land, eagle stones marked the lands of Munros before the clan is recorded at having arrived at that land, and so forth. Prehistoric relationships with uncannily clear echoes in modern heraldry seem to me to debunk the idea that our clans arose out of feudalism and nationalism.

For that matter, what if our Cat is not, as is commonly supposed, a comparatively recent nod to our founding chief's association with Saint Cattan – what if it's the other way around? What if our ancestors needed to explain away a totem that an increasingly hostile church would consider to be pagan idolatry? What if they pointed to a similar-sounding saint's name (evidence for whose existence is limited to places named after him) and said, "this is whsay that it is bunk. But I have to ask, wouldn't this narrative at least be consistent with how many oppressed cultures have kept their knowledge alive?"

And, why did I accept that our clans were always fighting? I have reviewed the well-documented battles of our clan. Honestly, my immediate friends and family during my own short life have, on aggregate, fought in more wars and campaigns than our entire clan during its entire history. And at that, the most egregious fighting happened after the union of the crowns, when Anglo-Norman and Hanoverian

I do now see, upon revisiting history, that erasure was deliberate and brutal. The Statutes of Iona intentionally converted our leaders from being Gaelic-speaking protectors into English-speaking landlords (converted through residential schools, no less!). The same laws made the bardic tradition illegal, limiting our ancient method of y we honour the cat?" I have no evidence for this narrative whatsoever and anyone is well within their rights to relaying history and tradition. What is often overlooked, the same laws also outlawed ordinary clan hospitality. In Anishinaabe-aki, historically when a visitor arrived at a village, whomever was in their clan would be responsible for feeding, housing, and clothing them. I suspect the same ethic applied in the Highlands, and this was disparagingly labelled as "sorning" and made illegal on the pretext of eliminating extortion. Indeed, the laws proceeded to commodify hospitality, a good move for property-owning classes in a land whose former language has no construction for "my house," only "the house that is at me."

So here I am again: *is mise Pearsanach: 's ann do Chloinn a' Phearsain a tha mi*. This time, though, my interest is not in finding my nation or my in-group. I don't need that. Rather, I seek those non-appropriative ways in which I can re-cast my own story. I am not any sort of Indigenous; I am a settler person; I have had privileges that have come at the cost of oppression of others. I own that history and that present reality. But equally, I am Cat Clan, latterly called the Children of the Parson, but once called *Clann Mhuirich*, Children of the Sea. Our mascot is an animal that is at home only in vast forests, reminding us of what our land used to be. My ancestors were storytellers, and they had dozens of names for hills and valleys to describe the land to which they belonged with vanishing precision. We looked after each other. When a person came to our lands as a friend, they were given what they needed, and if they decided to stay, they could call themselves by our name. We did not orient to nation or language or religion or biological ancestry or political affiliation. This much, we know.

And I think it's so important, as our world seems to be plunging back into the dark days of nationalism and ethnocentrism, border walls and genocide, that I find those more ancient, more human ways of explaining who I am in relation to the world: ways that are honest, that tell true stories, and that honour and acknowledge the story of how I came to be where and who I am. And what's really cool is I even get a tartan or two that can short-hand that story.

Thank you for reading what I wanted to write about. I would welcome the chance to connect with anyone who can shed light on our shared history, whether they be folks who can help me assuage my skepticism of the commonly-held stories, or folks who share my interest in re-telling our stories in ways that may ring truer to what we know today.

Upcoming Events

The Canadian Branch has registered for the following Highland Games in Ontario
Tickets can be purchased in advance for a discounted price/ no refunds

The Following Games are being held in Ontario

Georgetown Highland Games
Georgetown Fair Grounds
One Park Ave, Halton Hills, ON L7G 3H9
Saturday June 8, 2024
Games open at 8:30 am
Clan Parade starts Saturday 12:00 noon
Adults \$20.00; Seniors & Students \$10.00; 12 & under with parent free

Northumberland Scottish Festival and Highland Games
(formerly Cobourg Highland Games)
Port Hope Agricultural Park
62 McCaul Street Port Hope, ON L1A 1A2
Saturday June 15, 2024
Gates open at 9:00am
Clan Parade starts at 11:45 am Saturday
Adults \$20.00; Free admission for children 12 and under when accompanied by an adult
(Saturday only)

Kingsville- Essex Highland Games
Canadian Transportation Museum & Heritage Village
6155 Arner Town Line, Kingsville, ON N9Y 2E5
Saturday June 22, 2024
Gates open at 8:00 am
Clan Parade starts at 12 noon
Adults \$25.00; Seniors & Students \$20.00; Children 12 & under Free

Kincardine Scottish Festival & Highland Games
310 Durham Market St N, Kincardine, ON N2Z 1Z9
Saturday July 6, 2024
more details to follow

Cambridge Scottish Festival
Churchill Park
200 Christopher Drive, Cambridge, Ontario
Saturday July 20, 2024
Gates open 8:00 am
Clan March at 12 noon

Advanced ticket prices available online now
Senior (60+) -\$18.00 , Youth -\$18.00, Adult-\$20.00,
Children (12 & Under)-Free

Yours truly has been asked to be "Clan Chieftain of the Cambridge Scottish Festival"
I will be Opening and Closing the Games in addition to presenting Trophies to the Pipe
Band Competitors.

Fergus Scottish Festival & Highland Games
400 Tower St S Fergus, ON, Canada N1M 3R9
Saturday August 10, 2024
more details to follow

Highland Games in Alberta

Red Deer Highland Games Association
Harvard Business Park
June 22nd, 2024

The Gathering of the Clans Festival
Sedgwick Ab
August 24, 2024
more details to follow

The Canmore Highland Games
Centennial Park, Canmore
September 1.2024

Check their website for more details

Canmorehighlandgames.ca

Thank you to Bob and Sylvia Macpherson for representing our clan!



Bruce McPherson
Ontario West Councilor



During my studies at the University of Windsor, I was interested to find a reception centre and lounge named after a Leon Zenos McPherson. Always the genealogist, I decided to conduct some research into whom this centre was named after and determine what I could about his McPherson line.

Leon was born January 24 th , 1909 in Dundas, Wentworth County which is just outside of Hamilton, Ontario. He appears to have moved to the Windsor area with his father, Emery Havilah McPherson and his mother, Victoria Isabel James sometime between the years of 1911 and 1921. It appears that Leon was called to the bar and was an esteemed lawyer in the area, also contributing to the University and it's Alumni Association. A local law firm still bears his name in the area, even though he passed away in 1997. Mr. McPherson had a lounge named after him in a residence which was demolished in the early 2000s and a replacement then opened in a new residence in 2003. It appears that some of his descendants still live in the Windsor area.

Working backwards from Emery, I found Leon's father to be another Zenos McPherson born on the 2 nd of January, 1849 in Gainsborough township, Lincoln County (near St. Catherine's Ontario). Zenos' father was a Samuel McPherson also born in Gainsborough and his grandfather a David McPherson (whom had a large family including our current registrar!)

Always happy to determine the family lines of another M(a)cPherson who contributed to the overall well being of the community in which he lived.

Slainte!

Bruce McPherson

Treasurer's Report

The clan association is in good shape financially at the end of February. We have \$7,598 in our current account and \$11,631 in our Life Membership Fund. We are showing a gain of \$47.00 year to date.



The Robbie Burns Dinner was held at the Crieff Hills Retreat Centre with 18 people attending. Everyone seemed to have a good time and enjoy the dinner. Unfortunately the event failed to pay for itself and cost the association \$463.00

We have had 20 annual membership renewals to date and are looking forward to more with the delivery of Craig Dhubh.

I am planning on retiring from the treasurer's position at the end of next year and the clan will require someone to take over the position. The job is not particularly onerous but it does require regular (monthly) attention. Most of the work is done by a spreadsheet which would be passed on to my replacement.

Ken Gillis

Help Wanted

As well as the Treasurer Position needing to be filled,

The positions of BC Councillor,

Quebec and Eastern Ontario Councillor, Central Ontario Councillor

are also open.

Please consider donating a little time to make the

Canadian Branch successful and fun.

Thank you



Clan Macpherson Museum



Alexander Macpherson, younger of Pitmain has been elected by the Trustees to replace Bruce Macpherson as the Convenor of the Clan Macpherson Museum Trust.

We all thank Bruce for the work he has done on behalf of the Trust.

Flowers of the Forest

Audrey Macpherson Collins
Dec 22, 1927- January 30th, 2024

Audrey Macpherson was very proud of her Scottish heritage. Her father, Hume Macpherson was Clan Chairman in the 1960's. Many ceilidhs and clan celebrations were held at the family farm in Stouffville, ON.

Audrey had 3 brothers, Robert, Doug and Don who predeceased her. Doug's wife, Agnes Macpherson still lives in Toronto ON.

Audrey was a musician, an artist and loved nature. She especially loved her Lighthouse cottage in PEI where she spent many summers with her family. Audrey was fortunate to have 5 very special grandchildren and 6 great grandchildren who will certainly carry on her love for fun and adventure.



THE GREEN BANNER is Published three to four times each year to bringing
Information of interest to the members of the
Canadian Branch of the Clan Macpherson Association

Officers:

Denise Lagundzin, FSAScot Chairman

Ken Gillis, Honorary Treasurer

Janet McCredie, Honorary Secretary

Beverly McPherson Letford, Registrar

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Webmaster: Ewan Macpherson PhD

Editor: Denise Lagundzin FSAScot

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