



# CLAN ROSS

Association of Canada,  
Inc.  
Founded 1960

David C. Ross of Ross, Chief

SUMMER ISSUE  
AUGUST, 2008

An Cìrean Cèann Cinnidh



Clan Ross Gathering, July, 2008  
Giant MacAskill Museum, Englishtown, Cape Breton

# THE CLAN ROSS ASSOCIATION OF CANADA, INC.

**Motto:** *Spem successus alit* (Success nourishes hope)  
**Gaelic name:** Clann Aindrias (Clan Andrew)  
**Crest:** A hand holding a garland of juniper, proper  
**Badge:** Juniper  
**Pipe Music:** The Earl of Ross March

**Septs:** (according to Scottish Kith & Kin/Chief of Clan Ross)

Anderson	Denoon	Gear	MacCulloch	Taggart
Andison	Denune	Gillanders	MacLulich	Tullo
Andrew/s	Dingwall	Hagart	MacTaggart	Tulloch
Corbet/tt	Duthie	Haggart	MacTear	Tyre
Crow/e	Fair	MacAndrew	MacTier	Vass
Croy	Gair	MacCullie	MacTire	Wass

## EXECUTIVE OFFICERS:

### President:

Andrew Ross Thibodeau  
910 Dearness Drive  
London, ON N6E 1N5  
Phone: 519-680-7332  
Email: andyspeaks@rogers.com

### 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President:

Denis Ross  
929 Saugeen Street  
Kincardine, ON N2Z 1A9  
Phone: (519) 396-8791  
Email: sndross@bmts.com  
(April to November)  
saugensnowbirds@aol.com  
(November to April)

## COMMISSIONERS:

### Ontario:

Wendy F. S. Ross  
74 Queenston Street  
St. Catharines, ON L2R 2Z2  
Phone: 905-684-7758

### Manitoba:

Christine Turnbull  
19 Abraham Bay  
Winnipeg, MB R2P 1E9  
Phone: 204-633-5888  
Email: mbtartan@shaw.ca

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President:

#### Interim Secretary:

Donald Fraser Ross  
252 Hallmark Ave.  
Lower Sackville, NS  
B4C 3P9  
Phone: 902-865-9192  
Email: donaldross@eastlink.ca

#### Past President:

Denis Fletcher  
Treas/Mbsp (Interim):  
Barbara Fletcher  
66 Crestwood Crescent  
Winnipeg, MB, R2J 1H6  
Phone: 204-257-7511  
Email: barbf@miic.ca

### Nova Scotia:

Christopher Rayworth  
520 Tattenham Crescent  
Hammonds Plains, NS  
B4B 1V3  
Phone: (902) 832-9280  
Email: smore@ns.sympatico.ca

### British Columbia:

Dorothy O'Donnell  
1415 Hamilton Road  
Victoria, BC V8R 2Y2  
Phone: 250-595-5365  
Email: dmodonnell@shaw.ca

## COMMUNICATIONS:

### Newsletter Editor:

Patricia D. Ross  
Webmaster:  
J. Douglas Ross, FSA Scot  
15 Tepee Court  
North York, ON M2J 3A8  
Phone: 416-491-1861  
Email: patriciaross@rogers.com  
Email: jdr@greatclanross.org

### Association Website:

<http://www.GreatClanRoss.org>



STANDARD OF CHIEF DAVID CAMPBELL ROSS

## FROM THE EDITOR.

We hope that you have enjoyed many of the Scottish events taking place across Canada this summer. Many of you participated in The Clan Ross Association of Canada AGM held in Iona, on Cape Breton.

Members of the outgoing executive, Denis Fletcher (President), Ian Ross (Secretary), Barbara Fletcher (Treasurer and Membership) were recognized and thanked for their many years of dedicated service to the Association. The new executive was welcomed. At this time, two positions remain unfilled. Barbara has consented to act as interim treasurer and Donald Ross (Halifax) will act as interim Secretary. Contact information for the new executive is given on page 2. Details of our wonderful weekend have been chronicled by our new president, Andrew Ross Thibodeau, and will be presented in this and upcoming newsletters. The business of the AGM will be available in the next (Fall) newsletter.

The deadline for submissions to the fall newsletter is October 24, 2008.

### FERGUS HIGHLAND GAMES, AUGUST 9 – 12, 2008

The Ross tent attracted many visitors at the Fergus Highland Games until heavy rain caused the games to come to a halt mid-afternoon.



PDR

The Ross Tent



Andrew Thibodeau, Patricia Ross, and Doug Ross



ART

Saturday afternoon rain.

## Gaelic Fun for Clan Ross in Cape Breton

Written by Andrew Ross Thibodeau, Clan Ross President

The Rosses came from all over the continent: British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario, Virginia, Massachusetts, Maine, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, to enjoy the great hospitality of Cape Breton. The 2008 National Gathering of Clan Ross Canada was another fantastic success, and it was the fun of new friendships that really added to the appeal of this bi-annual gathering.

During the Saturday meals, you could see the essence of what these gatherings are all about. Veteran Gathering participants such as Ian and Jacquie Ross of Winnipeg, or Wendy Ross of St. Catharines, sat and laughed with newcomers such as Bill, Lilly and Cindy Ross of British Columbia. Angus Ross Campbell of Guelph chatted with "long-lost" cousins like Donald Ross of Halifax and siblings Warren Ross & Judy Ross Roy of Massachusetts. Angus had posted questions about his family trees on the web, and a few months ago was contacted by Donald and found out that their grandparents were related! Charlie & Betty Ross of Virginia got to enjoy time with Hal & Emma Underhill of Maine. They too found each other on the internet, researching family trees. Hal was hitting a road block on his family tree until he met Charlie online. They found a common link from over a hundred fifty years ago in Quebec. Families like Walter & Shelagh Rayworth (maiden name Ross) enjoyed the weekend with their son Chris (Clan Ross, Nova Scotia Commissioner), his wife Stephanie, and six year old daughter, Alex. Sisters Barb MacKenzie & Jean Harrington (maiden name Ross) from Dartmouth enjoyed their weekend. Barb brought her husband David MacKenzie while Jean shared the experience with daughter Jill Feindel. There was myself, flying in from London, sharing a room with my new buddy and new National Second VP, Donald Ross of Halifax. Doug & Patricia Ross of Toronto drove around the island on Saturday with the Rayworths from Amherst, Nova Scotia. When you take fun people who are willing to sit and meet new people and combine it with interesting activities in a beautiful setting, it combines to become an unforgettable weekend for all.

If you were to dial up perfect weather for a weekend, you could not get much better than what was given to us on the weekend of July 11-13. It was Sunny and 25°C each day, with cool evenings for sleeping.

### FRIDAY ARRIVAL AT IONA, CAPE BRETON

Our hosts for the weekend were Marie Keating and her family, the owners of the Highland Heights Inn in Iona in central Cape Breton. The hotel is located beside the Highland Village Living History Museum. Our setting was just incredible, with the Inn perched high on a hill overlooking the village of Grand Narrows and the Barra Strait that separates St. Andrew's Channel and Bras d'Or Lakes. Low rolling tree-covered mountains dominated the skyline while the sun reflected off the miles and miles of inland ocean that could be viewed from your room's balcony. No wonder tens of thousands Scots made this island home after the 1750's Highland Clearances. The similarity to the Scottish Highlands is unmistakable. Yet, Cape Breton retains a charm, a climate, and a culture unique to the world.



Over the course of the afternoon, our 29 participants arrived at the Inn. Impressively, Ian and Jacquie Ross drove their RV from Winnipeg and Shirley and Denis Ross drove theirs from Kincardine. Doug and Patricia from Toronto, the Rosses from Virginia, and the Underhills from Maine drove too. For me, to sit with a beer in hand in front of Ian and Jacquie's trailer, laughing with Denis & Barb Fletcher from Winnipeg while looking over the huge Bras d'Or Lake, was just a perfect start to the weekend. There were even Highland cattle grazing in the field behind us.

Soon the dining room was buzzing with the conversations of new friendships. The event started around 7:45 pm with a welcome from President Denis and the Gathering organizers Donald Ross & Chris Rayworth. I acted as the MC for the evening and shared many laughs from my collection of comedy insights selected from my love of Canada, Scotland, and history. Donald showed a short collection of PowerPoint pictures of his recent trip to Scotland where he traced his Cape Breton Ross roots to the Isle of Lewis. The photographs were stunning. We reviewed the plans for the weekend, including how we were going to handle a minor hiccup in our planning. You see, our Saturday bus tour was going to lack a key element ... a bus. We found this out very early that morning and had no opportunity to book another. Donald and Chris greatly appreciated everyone's flexibility as we organized vehicles to drive to our tour's 3 stops the next day. We ended up with six vehicles for 26 people. The evening concluded with some of us around a bright campfire on a stunning evening, watching the moon reflect in the lake as we told stories and ate left-over crackers and a cheese ball.

## **SATURDAY TOUR OF CAPE BRETON**

### **The Little Narrows Ferry**

Our tour first took us 15 minutes west of Iona to cross St. Patrick's Channel on a ten vehicle ferry at the picturesque village of Little Narrows. The \$5 trip was remarkable because it was the shortest car ferry I had ever been on. The crossing took about ... 45 seconds. It was as short as the ferry from the Isle of Mull to the Isle of Iona in Scotland ... but that one was only for people. Donald Ross's father's home stood right beside the small strait and he told us how his ancestor Alexander Ross, born in 1789, originated this ferry service in 1832 and that his Ross family had worked it continuously for over 130 years from that date. Four



Generations of Rosses ran the ferry until it was taken over by the provincial government in the mid 1960s. In fact, there were two other Rosses that were operating ferry services in the pioneering days of early Scottish settlement in Cape Breton: a John Ross family managed a ferry service across the Great Bras d'Or at a location still known today as Ross Ferry (This ferry no longer operates and has been replaced by the large Seal Island B on the Trans Canada Highway at the foot of Kelly's Mountain.) and a Hugh Ross who operated a steamer service in the Sydney area that sailed all the waters of the Bras d'Or Lakes from Whycomagh, Baddeck, West Bay and St. Peter's.

### **1. First Stop: The Giant MacAskill Museum, near Englishtown**

Like many people, I was completely unsure what this museum was going to be about. The half hour visit proved to be very interesting.

According to the Guinness Book of World Records, the tallest recorded true giant (non-pathological, with normal physical proportions) was Angus MacAskill. He was born in the Outer Hebrides Island of Berneray in Scotland and his parents emigrated to Englishtown in 1831. Up to his early teens, Angus's size was average. By the time he was 20, he was 7 foot 9 inches in height. His hands were 13 inches long and 7 inches wide. His boots were 18 inches in length! To all who knew him, he was a kind and gentle man who was a tireless fisherman and farmer. For many years he traveled in shows allowing him to see many parts of the world where people were amazed by his size.

The museum is a volunteer effort by the Giant MacAskill Heirs Association, and we met Emiline, whose grandfather was the brother of the giant. She enjoyed sharing stories that have become legends in the

area about the abilities and kindness of this man. We learned about how he helped his neighbours move large items such as boats or nets full of fish. Angus passed away at age 38 in 1863.

## **2. Second Stop: The Gaelic College, St. Anne's.** [www.gaeliccollege.edu](http://www.gaeliccollege.edu)

Our next stop took us to another completely unique Cape Breton sight. The Gaelic College's first facility, lead by a Rev. A.W.R. MacKenzie, opened in 1938 in a one- room log building. From its humble beginnings, the College has gradually expanded and gained an international reputation for its contribution towards the promotion and preservation of the culture of the Scottish Highlanders. Students come from across the world to attend courses on Highland Bagpipes, Fiddle, Step Dance, Small Pipes, Pipe Band Drumming, Gaelic Language and Song, Highland Dance, Piano, Celtic Harp, Weaving, Spinning, Dyeing, and playing the Bodhran.

Our first presentation was with Bonnie (McLeod) Thornhill. She gave us a very interesting account of the first settlers in the area and and told the story about the Rev Norman MacLeod from Assynt, Scotland who landed in the Pictou area then later St. Ann 's with his fellow kinfolk and followers. After settling in St. Ann's for over 30 years and establishing a thriving community including the building of a large church, schools and shipbuilding, the decision was made to again set out , this time for the warmer climes of the southern hemisphere. He built ships in St. Ann's and set sail to the other side of the globe to Australia, then New Zealand. In all, six ships departed Cape Breton with nearly a thousand



Scottish/Canadians. Most settled in the Waipu area of New Zealand and because of this there is now a twinning society of Baddeck / St. Ann's with Waipu, as these communities share such a common bond of ancestry. Bonnie mentioned that many Ross settlers played a prominent role in the travels and adventures of Rev Norman MacLeod's group, as well as those who decided to remain in Cape Breton. It was obvious that she had done some specific research just for our visit. She remarked that according to her readings "some of the brightest and most educated in the area were Rosses". The first grist mill for example was established by a Ross.

Next, Jenna gave us an overview of the College and its programs.

### **Angus McLeod's Presentation on Gaelic**

Then, Angus McLeod, one of the Gaelic instructors, had us laughing at his wit and stories. When I asked how to spell one of the Gaelic words he had spoken, Angus made us roar in laughter with the line "it's spelled how it sounds." This is funny because NO Gaelic words are pronounced they way they are spelled. For example, "Ceilidh" is pronounced "Kay lee" (meaning party) or "Faire" is spoken as "felcha" (welcome).

Angus opened his presentation by introducing a short film that he was the star in. In order to qualify for full government funding, it had to be 6 minutes in length. Their goal was to release the first North American movie completely in Gaelic. Initially, some were skeptical about the audience for such a film. As

one lady from the review board said, “How many people would want to see this ... twelve?” They were ultimately successful in getting the film produced and to their great delight; it has been a great success. It has been shown at film festivals worldwide and was even nominated for a Genie award (an Oscar for Canadian films)! It was called “The Wake of Calm MacLeod” and we watched it with English subtitles.

Well, I have never been so moved by such a short film. The movie was simply wonderful, alternating between moments of powerful sadness to sudden periods of rip roaring laughter. I loved it so much, and I want to share it so much, that I bought the DVD in the gift shop. (\$20 for a 6 minute movie seems high, but I knew the funds were going to a good cause with the College and its work with the Gaelic language)

My favourite line from the movie ... “what are stories without an audience ...”

As a professional speaker, I couldn't agree more.

Angus then shared his own story with us. He was late to learn to speak Gaelic, starting to work on it as an adult. Both his parents spoke the language at home and were descended from immigrants from the isles of Lewis and Harris.

English is what he called a “dental language”, where sounds all come from using the areas of the jaw, teeth and tongue. Many sounds in Gaelic use the nasal passages and the throat. Angus explained that Gaelic is originally from Ireland, but has evolved over the centuries to different dialects. For example, he can speak with someone from northern Ireland, but as he goes further south their version of the language changes so much, he cannot speak their Gaelic.

Gaelic is now a language option at many Cape Breton schools and the island is a world leader in preserving it through writings, performance and singing. We saw evidence of this several times during the weekend when young folk in various locations we visited would converse fluently to us in Gaelic, or speak of their studies or musical interests.

Andy talked about the difficulty in singing in Gaelic. In most languages, you adjust the words of a song to the timing and rhythm of the music. For example, if singing the word “love”, if you stretch it to “loooooove” to go with the music, it does not adjust the meaning of the word. Gaelic is the opposite. By extending the sound of a word, it changes its meaning. For example, “bata” is stick, but if pronounced “bataaaa” it's a boat. He gave a funny example of hearing a song in Gaelic and where the word should have been “peaks” (of a mountain), the singer accidentally said the equivalent of “putting an old horse out to pasture.”

Gaelic music is so difficult to write. It's not about technical perfection; it's about getting the meaning out. Farmers and fisherman all had beautiful voices as they sang a Gaelic song, but four people would have four different ways of singing the same song. His people, from the Isle of Lewis, sing a very ornamental version of Gaelic.

He knows a few people who have learned Gaelic in 2 years, but for most, it takes several years. At the college they have a 200 hour complete immersion program that could get you to the level of a 10 year old. Online, they have an internet based program that can have you close to fluent in 3 years.

One theory places Gaelic's origins before 1000 BC. It has been written since 700-800 AD. A challenge is that as a people, they learned that if it's important you DON'T write it down. They valued person to person contact. Scottish Gaelic grew out of the Irish version over 1000 years ago. Angus told us that he can read material from over 700 years ago. In comparison, English as we know it has been written down only from the last 500 years.

### **A “Milling Frolic”**

Angus took us into the College's impressive hall of the Clans, which is used as a performance theatre. Crests and tartans of all of the major clans adorned the walls. Only 6 clans received a special display that included a detailed history and a mannequin wearing the kilt. Clan Ross was one of them! This is because Ross is one of the main Clan families that inhabited this area. For example, one of the Ross

families provided the largest of the six vessels that went to New Zealand. Another was married to Rev. Norman MacLeod's daughter.



Eleven people joined Angus for a "milling frolic". Decades ago, women would sit around a grooved table and rotate newly created wool cloth on the table, pounding it and working it into its completed form. As they did this they would sing a Gaelic song to keep the rhythm as they passed it along to ensure all areas of the cloth were touched. All of us sang the chorus, while Angus did the rest of the singing. We got a great pace going and the song was quite infectious!

Our visit concluded with free time to explore the many interactive displays of Gaelic and Scottish emigration history in the hall. The college fed us an excellent soup and sandwich lunch, including dessert in the cafeteria. By 1:15 pm, after enjoying oatcakes and bottled water supplied by Caroline Ross (Donald's wife), we were off again to our last stop.

Our Saturday Tour of Cape Breton will be continued in the next newsletter.

Photographs were taken (in order) by Patricia Ross (PDR), Andrew Thibodeau (ART), PDR, and Donald F. Ross



## **CEUD MILE FAILTE**

### **A hundred thousand welcomes to our new members**

David L. Ross, Shubenacadie, NS  
Gordon M. Ross, Brantford, ON  
Randy and Barb Ross, Milton, ON  
Keith Wootten, Corbeil, ON

# THE HIGH ROAD

Compiled by Doug Ross from Several Sources

*The Bonnie Banks o' Loch Lomond* was written during the Jacobite uprising of 1745 in Scotland. In ancient Celtic lore, The Low Road was the underground spirit route by which you would return if you were killed away from your homeland.

Several wounded members of the army supporting Prince Charlie (and an autonomous Scottish kingship) were left behind in Carlisle near the Scottish border as they retreated north to Scotland, and they were thrown in the Carlisle jail by the English soldiers. The song tells of two Scottish prisoners during this period of history. One was to be set free, and the other was to be executed for the crime of rising against the Hanoverian king of England. The release and execution of the two were timed for the same hour.

The freed man would travel home to Scotland the conventional way, tramping wearily for many miles by The High Road. The condemned man, travelling with the speed of a spirit by The Low Road, would be transported instantly at the moment of death, and he would be the first to arrive home. So...

*O ye'll tak' the high road, and I'll tak' the low road,  
And I'll be in Scotland afore ye,  
But me and my true love will never meet again,  
On the bonnie, bonnie banks o' Loch Lomond.*



... And there is another, later connection in the literary tome by James Boswell, *The Life of Johnson*. A frequent butt of Samuel Johnson's acerbic witticisms is Boswell's own country. Setting aside any attempt at diplomacy, Johnson once remarked, "Sir, let me tell you, the noblest prospect which a Scotchman ever sees, is the high road that leads him to England". Since Boswell came from the Lowlands of Scotland, it was a wonder that he became friends with Johnson in view of the latter's prejudice against all things Scottish. A total conversion was impossible, but Johnson's attitude mellowed somewhat after his *Journey to the Western Isles* of Scotland in 1776.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**August 30, 2008:** Calgary, AB. Calgary Highland Games. Shouldice Athletic Park. (403)280-9670. Website: [www.calgaryhighlandgames.org/](http://www.calgaryhighlandgames.org/)

**August 29 - 31, 2008:** Quebec, QC. 3rd Quebec City Celtic Festival. Website: <http://festivalceltique.morin.org/en/home.php>

**August 31, 2008:** Canmore, AB. 18th Annual Canmore Highland Games. Centennial Park. (403)678-9454. Website: <http://www.canmorehighlandgames.ca>

**October 10 -18, 2008:** Cape Breton Island, NS. Celtic Colours International Festival in various communities throughout Cape Breton. Phone: 1-877-285-2321.

**November 29, 2008:** Toronto, ON. St. Andrew's Ball, co-sponsored by the 48th Highlanders and the St. Andrew's Society of Toronto. Held at the Royal York Hotel. Reception begins at 6:00 PM. Phone: (416)449-8070. Website: <http://www.standrews-society.ca/ball.cfm>

**November 30, 2008:** ST. ANDREW'S DAY. Scots around the world celebrate this day to honour the Patron Saint of Scotland. Traditionally, The *Order of St. Andrew* or the *Most Ancient Order of the Thistle* is an order of Knighthood established by King James VIII of Scotland, and it is restricted to the King or Queen and sixteen others.

**December 1, 2008:** The 48th ANNIVERSARY of The CLAN ROSS ASSOCIATION Of CANADA in terms of its continuous existence since the meeting of "revitalized founders" in Montreal on December 1, 1960, the day after St. Andrew's Day. **Help us to celebrate our 48th Anniversary by encouraging another Ross or Ross Sept to become a member.**

**December 27 - 30, 2008:** Toronto, ON. Preparing for Hogmanay. Gibson House , 5172 Yonge Street at Park Home Avenue (between Sheppard and Finch Avenue) from noon to 5 PM. Event Hotline: 416-395-7432.

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Clan Ross Association of New Zealand, Inc, AGM, Historic Empire Hotel, Ross

