CLAN ROSS
Association of Canada, Inc.
Founded 1960
David C. Ross of Ross, Chief

WINTER ISSUE
FEBRUARY, 2008

An Cirean Ceann Cinnidh

Photo by PDR

Brig o’ Doon Bridge, Burns National Heritage Park, Alloway, Ayr, Scotland
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
Andison
Andrew/s
Corbet/tt
Crow/e
Croy
Denoon
Dennen
Dingwall
Duthie
Fair
Gair
Gear
Gillanders
Hagart
Haggart
MacAndrew
MacCullie
MacCulloch
MacLullich
MacTaggart
MacTear
Taggart
Taggart
Tullo
Tulloch
Tyre
Vass
Wass

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STANDARD OF CHIEF DAVID CAMPBELL ROSS
FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers:

Another year of events has begun with Burn’s Day celebrations. The photograph on the front page shows Brig o’ Doon Bridge, made famous in Burn’s poem, *Tam o’ Shanter*, the story of a curious man who spied on witches. The hero of the poem, Tam, galloped across this bridge over the Doon River on his mare, Meg, to escape the devils and witches who were trying to capture him. It was a well known fact that witches and devils could not cross running water:

*Ah, Tam! Ah, Tam! thou'll get thy fairin!*
*In hell, they'll roast thee like a herrin!*
*In vain thy Kate awaits thy comin!*
*Kate soon will be a woeful woman!*
*Now, do thy speedy-utmost, Meg,*
*And win the key-stone o’ the brig;*
*There, at them thou thy tail may toss,*
*A running stream they dare na cross.*
*But ere the keystane she could make,*
*The fient a tail she had to shake!*
*For Nannie, far before the rest,*
*Hard upon noble Maggie prest,*
*And flew at Tam wi’ furious ettle;*
*But little wist she Maggie’s mettle!*
*Ae spring brought off her master hale,*
*But left behind her ain grey tail:*  
*The carlin claut her by the rump,*
*And left poor Maggie scarce a stump.*

Robert Burns, 1790

Have you registered for the Clan Ross Association Annual Gathering and AGM in July? What a wonderful way to greet old friends, meet new ones, and participate in the activities of the Clan Ross Association of Canada. The details of the program given in the last newsletter are repeated on the last page of this newsletter.

The deadline for submissions for the Spring (May) newsletter is April 27, 2008.

CLAN ROSS – MANITOBA CHAPTER BURNS DINNER – 2008
By Len Perry

A turnout of 79 fans of Robert Burns gathered in the Club Room at the Fort Garry Hotel this last January 19th for the 11th Annual Burns Dinner.

Chapter Past-President Don Ross and Dinner Committee Chair Denis Fletcher greeted guests, as they arrived, while Patricia and Roger Stagg circulated, selling silent auction tickets. MC David Ross officially started the proceedings by introducing Past-President Don Ross for a formal welcome.

Mary Ross presented a Burns grace before dinner. Then, with the skirl of pipes, Ian Ross came forward to give the “Address to a Haggis”.

After haggis, neeps, and a wonderful pork dinner, dancers from the Manitoba Highland Dance Association and the Southglen Fiddlers provided entertainment for the group.

Following these performances, Donna Fletcher, our keynote speaker of the evening, gave us a most entertaining “Immortal Memory”. Then, Bob and Allison Darling presented an enjoyable, light-hearted “Toast to the Lassies” and “Response”.

To wrap up this fine evening, Patricia and Roger Stagg conducted the silent auction and Donna Fletcher led one and all in singing “Auld Lang Syne”. We look forward to the 12th Annual Burns Dinner next year.
ONE POSITION DOWN … THREE TO GO!
- National Secretary Ian Ross

We have an excellent candidate for 2nd Vice President, to be elected at the July, 2008 Clan Ross Gathering/AGM in Cape Breton. Donald Fraser Ross of Halifax has “thrown his hat in the ring”. Don, along with Nova Scotia Commissioner Christopher Rayworth, has been instrumental in organizing the 2008 Gathering. Here, in his own words, is some information on Don, plus a picture of Don and wife Caroline in Scotland:

I descend on my father’s side from a Ross - McCaskill marriage, and on my mother’s side from a Ferguson - MacLeod marriage. (My Mother was a Ferguson. She was a member of the Cape Breton Gaelic Choir). My parents, four grandparents, and predecessors, are all of Scottish descent. My wife is Caroline Marie Boudreau, of Acadian - Irish background (Boudreau - Snow, a Cape Breton - Newfoundland mix). We both grew up in Cape Breton (C.B.). We have two daughters and one son. Our oldest lives in B.C. and the other two live in Ottawa. We now have four grandchildren. Caroline and I are ‘empty-nesting’ in Halifax. In addition to our modest home here, we own a cottage on the Bras d’ Or Lakes in West Bay, C.B. and a small piece of land at the old Ross homestead at Little Narrows, C.B. (We’ll drive right by it on our 2008 Gathering Saturday tour). Caroline and I were recently able to visit Scotland, which helped me with my Ross family research. Due to my 33 plus years of work (the last 14 with the federal government - TSB, and before that almost 20 years with the CNR), I have lived in six Canadian provinces and have worked in all of them. I’ve traveled extensively throughout Canada (and driven all of it by car). This allows me a pretty good understanding of, and respect for, the many different and interesting areas of our country. I think this would help should I get the chance to respond to member’s needs as part of your Executive.

There are still openings for any of you who would like to volunteer for three other national level positions that will become vacant as at the 2008 AGM:

Secretary and Treasurer These positions are for 2-year terms, with the right to run for unlimited repeat terms. Secretary Ian Ross (in the position since 2000) and Treasurer Barb Fletcher (in the position since 1993) will not seek re-election, so we must elect a new Secretary (who looks after all correspondence and meeting minutes, and maintains the by-laws) and new Treasurer (who looks after national funds).

Membership Chair The Executive appoints this position, which processes new member applications, maintains the mailing list and solicits annual dues payments. Barb Fletcher (also in this position since 1994) will retire as of the 2008 AGM. Barb advises the positions of Membership Chair and Treasurer are closely related, especially regarding membership dues. She suggests the two positions either be held by one person, or by two people in the same area working closely together.

It is, of course, still possible to declare yourself as an alternate candidate for 2nd Vice-President (which ultimately can lead to the position of National President). These are all excellent opportunities for members to be directly involved in decision-making and serve their fellow Clan Ross members. There is a flurry of activity at AGM time, but typically it only requires a few hours monthly. The requirements for being nominated are straightforward. You must have been EITHER:

- an officer in a formal regional Chapter, OR
- an appointed Regional Commissioner, OR
- a member in good standing for at least two consecutive years, AND … IN ALL CASES, you must be a permanent resident of Canada

If you would like to be nominated, contact President Denis Fletcher or Secretary Ian Ross. Contact info is on the inside front cover of this newsletter.
A VISIT TO BALNAGOWN CASTLE  
By Donald Ross, Halifax

During our recent trip to Scotland this September, Caroline and I visited Tain, and while we were in the area, Balnagown, northeast of Inverness. While in Tain we were told that the Ross Castle, Balnagown, was privately owned and not open to the public. However, later while shopping in a bookstore (for a book about Balnagown) the chap working there stated that the castle owner (i.e. Mr Mohamed Al Fayed) was known to entertain polite requests on occasion, depending on whether they are currently using the place or not. He suggested that we call the Manager of the estate and 'pour it on' so to speak. Basically his advice consisted of explaining to them that: 1 - we were Ross descendants from faraway Canada; 2 - we had come at great expense and with high hopes to be able to see the place; 3 - we understood this fine property was the ancestral home of the great Clan Ross; and 4 - that we understood that the current owner had done some great things there. It sounded like a plan to me, so that's what we did. I made several calls, and eventually we got the okay to go. A young Ross lad who works on the grounds met us at the gate and took us around. He talked about the property and its rich history. We didn’t get to go right inside the castle proper, as we were told the Fayeds were actually there at that time. Nevertheless, with some 60,000 acres now comprising the estate, there was lots to see. The Castle and grounds were stunning. Mr. Fayed has poured tens of millions of British pounds into improving the place since he bought it some 30 years ago, and it shows. The workers that we spoke with were very polite, and supportive of the current owner. And, unlike some of the castles we visited in Scotland, the condition of this property was excellent and would make any Ross proud. It was certainly one of the highlights of our three week trip.

CEUD MILE FAILTE

A hundred thousand welcomes to our new members

Ali Ross, Perth, ON
Patricia and Donald Brennan, Winnipeg, MB
Ross and Sandra Clarkson, Guelph, ON
Mary Hicks, Ottawa, ON

FLOWERS OF THE FOREST

Nancy Fair, Port Hope, ON

Arthur Edward Ross, MD, CM, San Mateo, CA, USA: Dr. Ross's daughter, Ali Ross, reported that her father, who passed away on October 24, 2007 at age 81, was a long-time member of Clan Ross, Canada. He received his medical degree from Queen’s University, Kingston, Ontario, and practiced medicine in Oakville, Ontario, for twenty years. In the late 1960’s, he and his wife, Janet, moved to Guadalajara, Mexico, where he was Co-Dean of medicine at the Universidad Autonoma de Guadalajara. He and Janet also treated the Hulchol Indians in the mountains north of Nayarit. He then worked in the USA before returning to Toronto to complete a post-graduate course in public health. In 1977 he served as Medical Officer for the Canadian High Commission in Lagos, Nigeria. After returning to Canada and the USA in the 1980’s, he and Janet retired to California.
THE ROSS-VIKING CONNECTION
By J. Douglas Ross, FSA Scot

On May 19, 2007, my wife and I travelled by ferry from John O’Groats across the Pentland Firth to the Orkneys. At mid-trip one could barely see out the windows of the passenger cabin, but with some difficulty I managed to stagger to the stairs leading to the upper deck. Two other members of our tour had already ventured up and they were hunkered down, one backed against a wall and the other seeking the safety of a bench around the corner. I wondered how the Vikings would have fared against the vicious rips and open skies aboard their longships or drekars. Well, they must have learned a great deal about the tides in order to explore lands from the United Kingdom to France or Spain and beyond.

The Picts held an extensive empire in Scotland and survived challenges by the Romans from the south in 84 AD. It was several centuries later that the Scots from Ireland and the Vikings from the north entered the picture. Sigurd Eysteinsson, known as “Sigurd the Mighty”, overthrew the early inhabitants of Orkney and ruled as the 1st Jarl of Orkney from c.872 to c.891. The Norse word for the Orkneys is Hrossay, meaning “Horse Island”. This Sigurd waged campaigns in Northern Scotland from Caithness to Easter Ross until his death and burial on the north shore of the Dornoch Firth. Those, who have an interest in the origins of names, may note that the ancient Teutonic term for a steed is “Ross”. During our tour in May, we found many examples how the cultures borrowed terms and names from each other for use in their own language. It is in this context that we should re-examine the old Gaelic term Ros for “promontory”, or high land jutting out into the sea, particularly since our savvy seafarers realized that this “Ros” had a Loch Eye exactly where they might expect it.

Between 894 and 936, the 2nd Jarl of Orkney, Einar “the One-eyed” Rognvaldsson, discovered that peat could be cut and dried for use as fuel, which earned him the nickname of “Turf Einar”. According to the Sagas, he may have collected this fuel as far south as the Black Isle, and it was not long before Viking resorts were being considered in Easter Ross by the Jarls of Orkney who followed. The great-grandson of Turf Einar was Jarl Sigurd “the Stout” Hlodvirsson, whose mother cajoled him until he challenged Findlaec, Mormaer of Moray (and father of Macbeth) to a battle at Skitten Myre in Caithness in 1013. Three of Sigurd’s bearers of the raven standard were slaughtered but, true to the mother’s prophesy, he won the battle. The second wife of Sigurd the Stout was a daughter of King Malcolm II of Scotland.

There was a pattern to the expansion of Viking influence. Their initial encounters began with vicious assaults upon coastal communities. Often they established semi-permanent resorts. Where there were weak defences or possibilities of economic development, they settled. In time, bonds of peace were made between powerful sea-faring neighbours through intermarriage between families. Trade involved more than material things. Language was also exchanged, vocabulary was enriched, and ideas were communicated.

One should not be surprised by the number of places on Easter Ross which can be traced to the Norse presence. Dingwall, Thing volir in Norse meaning a meeting place or parliament, became the administrative headquarters of Ross and Cromarty. The term Roke-a at the gorge of the Falls of Rogie means “a splashing foaming river” in Norse. Shandwick, is named from the Norse Sand-Vik, meaning “Sandy Bay” (similar to a place back in the Orkneys). Many old tales are told about the Gizzen Briggs, a dangerous foam-covered sand bar at the entrance to the Dornoch Firth, but its name also comes from the Norse, Gisner Brigga meaning “leaky bridge”. and the term “gizzened” is still applied to wooden tubs or barrels which have shrunk in the sun.

We must remember that the Norse Viking influence on the west coast of Scotland was probably greater. Nor should we forget that, during the course of Normanization by the Scottish kings, the paired districts of Moray and Ross were separated, a new Earldom of Ross was created and Royal Castles were built to secure the north against further uprisings. Some thought must been given to the number of Viking Earldoms which had been created as well.
The Norse influence cannot be denied. Many of the Norse surnames, such as MacLeod, MacCaskill, Maclvor, Macaulay, Gunn, Tolmie, and McCrailt are but a few of many still borne by Highlanders. A large number of the Christian names are also Norse. Tormod, anglicized to Norman, is the Norse Thor-modhr, Thor minded; Torquil is the Norse Thorkill, Thor’s kettle; Godfrey, the Norse Gudrod; Reginald is the Norse Rognvaldr, Ruler from the Gods; Ronald is another form of the same name. Somerled is a Norse name meaning “the summer sailor,” that is, the Viking who was known for his summer expeditions of terror.

Over half of the important place names in Lewis, Harris, Jura, Mull, and a large number in Skye are Norse, in Skye a very large proportion. All the place-names terminating in bost, nish, and a, ay, or ey are Norse, with “bost” meaning a township or stead, “nes” meaning a point or promontory, “ey” meaning an island. Uig is the Norse “Vik,” a bay, from which comes the word Viking; Sleat or Slate in Skye is the Norse “Sletta,” a plain; Staffa and Staffin are both derived from the Norse. Staffa means a staff, or rod, to which their basaltic rocks bear a resemblance. Uist is the Norse Ivist, a habitation. Eriscay is Eric’s island, Barra is Barr's island, Barr being a contraction of Saint Find-barr, a saint whose day was celebrated on September 25th.

In 1996, a government policy allowed Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) and English to be used when old or damaged signs were replaced, provided that agreement was obtained through a local consultative process. Areas such as Inverness, Wester Ross and Easter Ross, Skye and Lochalsh, and Badenoch and Strathspey clearly indicated a desire for bilingual signs. In fact, approval and support of Gàidhlig study in the local schools has grown in Skye and the County of Ross since 1980.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Obtained from: http://www.GreatClanRoss.org

May 17 - 18, 2008: Victoria, BC. 71th Annual Victoria Highland Games, Bullen Park in Esquimalt. (250)598-1531 evenings and (250)598-8961 daytime: http://www.victoriahighlandgames.com
June 6 - 7, 2008: Callander ON (near North Bay). Celtfest in Callander's Centennial Park: http://www.celtfest.org
June 21, 2008: Spencerville, ON. Veterans' Memorial Highland Games: http://www.veteransmemorialhg.com

.........Continued on page 9.
THE DRINKING OF ATHOLL BROSE
(with apologies to Robert Service and his “The Shooting of Dan McGrew”)
… By Ian Ross, November, 2007

The Murray clan was whooping it up in their Atholl Castle keep;
The piper was playing a rant so long and loud it would make you weep;
At the back of the hall sat Atholl’s Earl, quietly getting “fou”;
And helping him suck the whisky back was the Lady of Atholl, too.

When out of the night, and into the din and the glare from the ramparts high,
There stumbled a Highlander out of the north, with a devilish mob by his side.
With his hairy face, and his dagger brace, and his kilt all covered with dirt,
He banged on the door with his great claidhmor (as moat water dripped from his shirt),
There was none who could place the stranger’s face, they were certainly at a loss.
Just what did he want? …. but he set them straight, crying “I am the Earl of Ross!”

There’s men that somehow just grip your eyes, and hold them hard like a spell;
And such was he, for he looked … you see … like a man who had been through hell.
“I’ve burnt the castle at Inverness, and Urquhart castle, I think,
And after I’ve stormed Blair Atholl, here, I’ll bloody well need a drink!”
The Murrays moaned as to their fate, just what could they possibly do?
But the last to speak was Atholl’s Earl, and the Lady of Atholl too.

“Just whisper, my dear,” The Murray said, “so that savage Ross can’t tell
What you and I are going to do with our precious booze … and our well.
We’ll chuck it all in so that hound of hell can’t drink it up, the noo.
But what of our honey, our cream and our oats?” …. His Lady said, “Chuck them in too!”

The Ross and his mob hurled themselves at the walls, like the ocean’s pent-up flood.
Screaming for whisky and women and more, till their eyes were most blinded with blood.
The lust awoke to kill, to kill … as they battered the gates with a crash.
But the ramparts held …. though the siege was long, The Ross and his men couldn’t pass.

“Fall back to the glen”, he said to his men, “to rethink our soldiering.
And while in this spot, since the day is hot, I’ll first take a drink from this spring.”
Now the valley sloped, straight down from the moat, so this spring was fed from the well.
Geological fault produced single malt, oatwater, cream, honey …. how swell!
The Ross guzzled deep, then fell as in sleep, while high overhead, pulsing bright,
The Northern Lights swept, while Earl Murray crept, to capture The Ross in the night.

As the Lights faded out, I ducked down my head, as two swords clashed in the dark,
And a woman screamed, a torch flared up … the scene before us was stark.
Now these are the simple facts of the case, and I guess I ought to know.
They say that the Ross was dazed by this “hooch”, and I’m not denying it’s so.
I’m not so wise as the lawyer guys, but strictly between me and you …
The Ross got the whisky, oats, honey and cream …. and the Lady of Atholl too!

REMINDER: January 1, 2008: MEMBERSHIP DUES ($15) (or US$21 to cover US postage) FOR THE CLAN ROSS ASSOCIATION OF CANADA ARE NOW DUE IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN YOUR ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP STATUS. DONATIONS FOR NATIONAL PROJECTS MAY ALSO BE INCLUDED.
UPCOMING EVENTS, Cont’d.


July 11-13, 2008: Iona, Cape Breton Island, NS. 48th Anniversary Gathering of Clan Ross Canada. Highland Heights Inn. See Clan Ross Association of Canada website http://www.greatclanross.org for registration, general outline of events, and details about reservations. Printouts and other handy information are available online. [Check the Fall Issue of the association newsletter as well.

July 12, 2008: Haliburton Village, ON. Haliburton Highland Games at Head Lake Park (705)457-3543: http://www.haliburtonhighlandgames.com


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CLAN ROSS CANADA –GATHERING AND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

July 11-13, 2008, Iona, Nova Scotia

Do you enjoy - - - - meeting new people? Exploring Canada’s rich history? Great Scenery? Friendly People? Celtic Entertainment?

Then come and join your fellow Clan Ross members from across Canada (and the USA) in beautiful Cape Breton, in Canada’s “New Scotland”. Afterwards, stay on and tour the rest of the incredible Atlantic Provinces.

Place: Highland Heights Inn in Iona, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia
Special $95 (+tax) room rate, call (902) 725-2360 to reserve

Events:
- Friday evening, July 11 - Registration and Reception at Highland Heights Inn
- Saturday, July 12 - Bus tour (Cape Breton Gaelic College in St. Ann’s, Giant Angus MacAskill Museum in Englishtown, and Glenora Distillery and Restaurant/Pub near Mabou)
- Saturday evening, July 12 - Entertainment with Burns’ Address to a Haggis, Slide presentation on Cape Breton, Cape Breton piper, and Celtic fiddler

Other Local Attractions:
- Fortress of Louisbourg, near Sydney - the largest reconstructed 18th-century French fortified town in North America
- Cape Breton Highlands National Park - 1st national park in the Atlantic Provinces. Home of the incredible scenery of the world-famous Cabot Trail
- Antigonish Highland Games, the oldest continuous games in North America, July 18-20. Call (902) 863-4275 or www.antigonishhighlandgames.com
- The Hector Heritage Quay in Pictou, Nova Scotia, landing site of the first Scottish settlers
- Visit the Clan Ross monument at Lord Selkirk Provincial Park, PEI, plus the Scottish Immigrant Memorial and St. John’s Presbyterian Church at Belfast, PEI
- Kings Landing Historical Settlement, an early 1800’s living museum 34 km west of Fredericton, N.B. www.kingslanding.nb.ca/
- Enjoy the many beaches, walking trips, golf courses, etc.
Did you know . . . before Canada became a nation, between the years of 1817 and 1838, the population of Cape Breton increased by about 30,000 persons (most of these were Highland Scots)?

Registration Form
CLAN ROSS - CANADA - GATHERING AND AGM
July 11-13, 2008 Iona, Nova Scotia

Please include fees for events with the Registration Form. Non-Clan Ross members are more than welcome to attend the weekend events. Please note that Accommodation and Meals (except light lunch with tour) are NOT INCLUDED in these fees. Fees cover tours (and a light lunch with tour), the bus, meeting room rental and entertainment.

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM, NOTING THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE TO ATTEND EACH EVENT

NAME(S): _______________________________________________________________________________
ADDRESS: ________________________________________________________________________________
HOME PHONE: ____________________ E-mail: ________________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People Attending</th>
<th>Cost per person</th>
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<tr>
<td>Registration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reception, Friday night (7:00 pm)</td>
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<td>Bus Tour only, during the day on Saturday (09:00 - 6:30pm)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evening Entertainment only, Sat night (7:30 pm till ?)</td>
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TOTAL AMOUNT $_______

Please make cheque payable to Clan Ross - Canada and note on it ‘2008 AGM registration’

Send Registration Form and Fees for the AGM 2008 to: Barbara Fletcher, Treasurer, Clan Ross - Canada, 66 Crestwood Crescent, Winnipeg, MB, R2J 1H6. Phone 204-257-7511. Email: barbf@miic.ca

Questions? Contact: Christopher Rayworth, N.S. Comm., (902) 832-9280, E-mail smore@ns.sympatico.ca; or Donald Ross, Clan Ross N.S., (902) 865-9192, E-mail donaldross@eastlink.ca