



# Clan MacKenzie Society in the Americas



## Cabar Feidh

The Canadian Chapter Magazine

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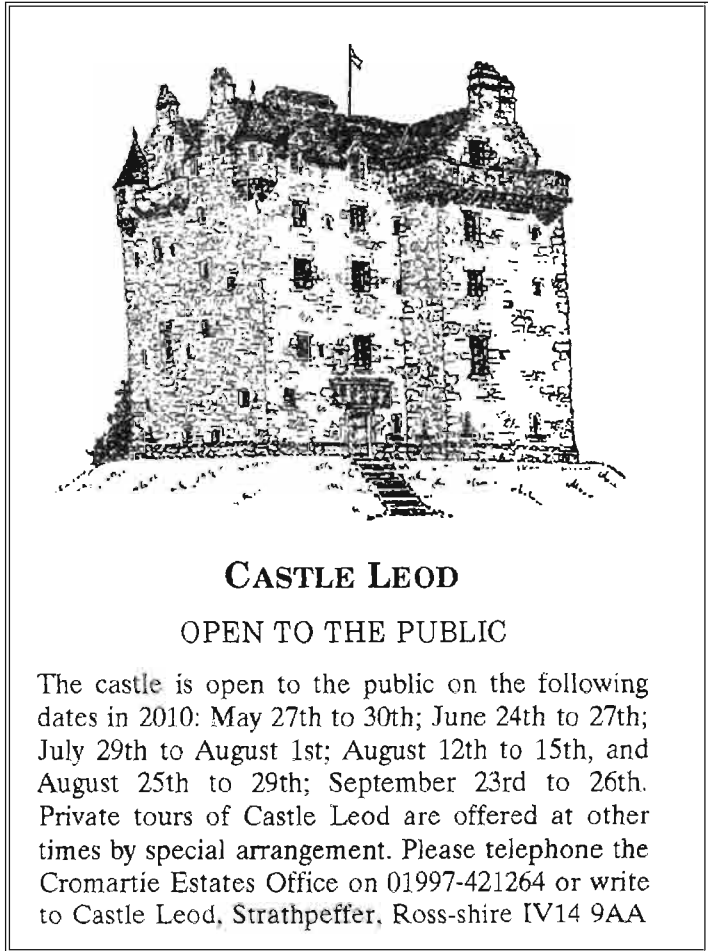
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### Mackenzie Chief

This is a portrait of Francis, Lord Seaforth, which hangs in the Seaforth Armouries in Vancouver. Members who attended the Clan Dinner there in December 2009 were able to see this fine portrait. See details of the Dinner from page 7



### CASTLE LEOD

#### OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

The castle is open to the public on the following dates in 2010: May 27th to 30th; June 24th to 27th; July 29th to August 1st; August 12th to 15th, and August 25th to 29th; September 23rd to 26th. Private tours of Castle Leod are offered at other times by special arrangement. Please telephone the Cromartie Estates Office on 01997-421264 or write to Castle Leod, Strathpeffer, Ross-shire IV14 9AA

#### CASTLE LEOD OPENING DATES

For those considering a visit to Scotland in 2010 the above opening dates to see Castle Leod are now announced so you can mark your diaries. There will be opportunities to see the castle during the Clan Gathering in August 2010.

#### Cabar Feidh Newsletter:

Members who wish to write to the Society with contributions to the Newsletter please send submissions to The Editor, Clan MacKenzie Society, 580 Rebecca St., Oakville, ON L6K 3N9. or e-mail to alan@mkz.com  
Clan Web Pages: www.clanmackenzie.com & www.electricscotland.com/mackenzie

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

Good morning Alan;

We just received our issue of the December Clan Newsletter, haven't read it yet but will a.s.a.p.

Getting this issue reminded me that a couple of weeks ago our son Geoffrey (London, Ontario) was selected to be the helicopter pilot transporting the Royals during their recent visit to South Western Ontario.

Here is a photo of the flight crew that took HRH Prince Charles from Niagara Falls to Toronto, following his visit to Dundurn Castle in Hamilton.

Our son Geoff is the one standing just behind Prince Charles shoulder. If you need more information please don't hesitate to ask.

Patti & Warren Mackenzie - London, ON. - mmslon@sympatico.ca



Alan,

I visited the Glen Ord single malt distillery and found it was started by a Mackenzie. Possible story here given the increasing popularity of single malts.

Keep up the good work.

Dr David P. Mackenzie, Oakville, ON

ED: The previous Clan Mackenzie Gatherings in Scotland included a tour of the Glen Ord Distillery and the Mackenzie tartan was worn by the people working there. We also received free samples of Glen Ord when it was owned by United Distillers. I see a visit to Glen Ord is not on the agenda for the Clan Gathering in August this year! However, see page 18 for the update on the Gathering and the Dalmore Whisky Distillery - another Mackenzie whisky!

\*\*\*\*\*

I downloaded Dr James MacKenzie's book "A History of Health and the Art of Preserving it" from Google in pdf format. Nice to have something from an ancestor over 200 years ago!

Heather MacKenzie, New Westminster, B.C.

ED: Many thanks for drawing this to our attention Heather. The actual website is a bit long and you are right, the best way is to Google it by giving the full name of the book and the author and up it comes!

\*\*\*\*\*

Keep up the great work on the newsletter. I know from experience what a lot of work is involved in putting together a newsletter. The clan newsletter is first class!

Eleanor Thomson, King Township, ON

\*\*\*\*\*

Your last newsletter was exceptionally awesome.

Isabelle Mackenzie, Florence, SC

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**UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN!**  
**BY SHARIE NORTHEY ARGUE**

**H**ow often have you said to a good friend or even a family member, "We must get together for a good visit, one of these days?" Then the days, months and years fly by, everyone is busy and you some day wake up with the realization that the time to see your friend or family member is past...it is perhaps too late, or they have moved far away, or you've just drifted apart and don't have much in common to visit about any more. This is a situation which seems to have gone on for far too long in our family!

I'm sure **John Mackenzie of Achall** or Atachol

(born about 1759, likely at Achiltiebuie, Scotland) was wishing his younger brothers well in the New World as they set out for a new life, new careers, and new family. As it was quite common at that time not to see family members for many years or perhaps ever again, I suppose it was accepted as what had to happen. Then the generations go by and family members have still not met.

**John's** younger brother **Roderick** left home for Lower Canada (later Quebec) about 1784. He eventually became known as **Roderick of Terrebonne**. The next brother to venture forth to the New World was **James** in 1794, to be followed by **Henry** about 1800 and finally **Donald [Donald Mackenzie - "King of the North West"]** about 1801.

Meanwhile, **John's** son **Kenneth** also ventured forth in 1817 to Lochiel Township, Glengarry County of Upper Canada (later Ontario). Also, several of **John's** cousins (children of his **Uncle John**) had come to the Maritime regions of Canada...the ancestors of Graham Campbell MacKenzie of Vancouver and possibly also of Ron McKenzie of Winnipeg.

As it turns out, **John of Achall** was my great-great-great-grandfather!

His son, **Kenneth** was the great-great-grandfather of both Joan MacKenzie of Galiano Island, British Columbia, one of the B.C. Clan Commissioners, and also of Margaret Ann Converse Burrill of Mayerthorpe, Alberta.

**John's** younger brother **Roderick of Terrebonne** is the ancestor of several more cousins, including Françoise Gaudry, Graham McTavish Watt, and Susan D'Ambrosio.

**James** was the grandfather of General Charles James MacDougall.

**Henry** was the great-great-great-grandfather of David Ford of Victoria, B.C.

**Donald**, the subject of the book *Donald Mackenzie "King of the North West"* by Cecil W. Mackenzie published in 1937, was the great-great-grandfather of Sprague Benjamin 'Ben' Mackenzie of St. George, Utah (formerly of Ohio).

Ben was the first person to have a DNA match with me, through testing done by my cousin Murray Mckenzie. I'd never met Murray, though he lives not five miles from me, until I began my search for a male cousin to do the DNA testing for my branch of the family. Then, when Ben called me to say his DNA was



*Sharies works on her computer and genealogy. A clearly enjoyable hobby!!*



*Ben Mackenzie - direct descendant of Donald Mackenzie, King of the North West, with Sharie*

a match, I didn't think it possible that we were related, as I knew all my ancestors had come from Scotland directly to Canada!

Well....little did I know then about my MacKenzie ancestry! Since then, I've amassed a database with nearly 35,000 'cousins' connected!

I'm always happy to learn of new cousins worldwide and welcome any information they can add to the database. In turn, I share what I can with them to help complete their branch of the family. Through this process, I've gathered many new friends, as well as cousins scattered all over the globe.

Over the past few years we've been fortunate to host numerous 'cousins' when they've been in our part of the world and we look forward to meeting many more of

you when possible!

Since Ben and I had 'found' each other through the early DNA testing, we'd been saying we must meet...but, as usual, time went by and we hadn't yet found the time or opportunity to do so. Finally, in March of 2009, my husband, Earle, and I set out to visit firstly Graham and his wife, Heather, in Vancouver, whom we'd met previously during a visit by them to



*Ben MacKenzie and Sharie Argue - March 2009, St. George, Utah*



*Sharie, Graham and Joan (BC Commissioner) - March 2009, Vancouver.*

Regina. While at their home, Joan MacKenzie made the trip over from Galiano Island to meet us as well. We had a wonderful day spent with her! Then after several days of enjoying fantastic hospitality, we continued on our trip to St. George, Utah, via Las Vegas. The drive from Vegas to St. George isn't long and the

scenery gets more spectacular as you near Sun River, St. George, where Ben and Marlene now make their home. The red rock, dotted with cactus and the spectacular shapes of the canyons create a very different landscape from our prairies around Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada!

Ben and his lovely wife, Marlene, were so welcoming! We spent several glorious days visiting, exchanging family tree information and felt that we'd known each other forever!

I guess familial ties really are strong! Our ancestor brothers would likely have been very surprised if they had ever thought about their various descendants meeting in the far future in yet another country, the USA!

On several occasions I've travelled with another MacKenzie cousin, Gail Coward, of Lethbridge, Alberta when searching out new 'cousins'. During one such trip which was to the Maritimes, when approaching the MacLeod booth at the Highland Games in Halifax, during the summer of 2007, we discovered Carol Hazelden whose ancestors go back to **John Mackenzie VI of Ballone**! As there was not a MacKenzie booth at that particular gathering, we had gravitated to the MacLeod booth, thinking that as Margaret, the wife of **Roderick Mackenzie, the Tutor of Kintail's** wife was a MacLeod, it was perhaps the closest we'd find to a relative that day! You never know where you may find a 'cousin'!

There are many other 'cousins' with whom I enjoy an e-mail relationship and hope that some day we'll meet in person!

Recently I discovered that another cousin, Lynette Edison, of Calgary, Alberta, lived in the same small Saskatchewan town as I did when we were little children. Our mothers were not aware that they were cousins! We've only been in contact now, nearly 55 years later!

In December 2009 my cousin Gail and I are travelling to Vancouver to take part in the Clan MacKenzie dinner which is being arranged by cousin Joan. While there we'll stay with cousins Graham and Heather and hope to meet cousins, Ron, David, Rod, etc. for the first time and perhaps also Alan McKenzie our Canadian Lieutenant to Cabarfeidh!

In the spring Joan and I plan to venture to Scotland and hike the Western Highlands where our common ancestors lived many, many years ago!

I look forward to meeting many more of you in the future. If a visit in person isn't possible at this time,

then please do contact me at [sharieargue@sasktel.net](mailto:sharieargue@sasktel.net)  
or write to: Sharie Argue, P.O. Box 3672, Stn. Main, Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada S4P 3N8 if you aren't online. I would be delighted to hear from you and share information with you!

Until we meet again!

Cheers,

Sharie.

ED: Many thanks to Sharie for this report and the way it shows the successes possible through DNA research in finding other Mackenzie cousins.

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## COLONEL ROB ROY MACKENZIE IN THE NEWS!

The following is from a recent article in the National Post which we picked up on the Internet:

**K**ANDAHAR CITY, Afghanistan -- If the Taliban make good on their boast to destroy Thursday's presidential elections in Kandahar, the first Canadian likely to know will be a cop from Vancouver.

Lt.-Col. Rob Roy MacKenzie, who normally works as a constable for Vancouver's SWAT team, runs NATO's Operations Coordination Centre -- Provincial Kandahar.

Connected by radio to all the Afghan and coalition security grids and by intranet to several others, the OCCP is the collection point and clearing house for all security information in Kandahar. As the central information hub it is also the place where leading officials from Kandahar, the Independent Electoral Commission, the UN, Canada and the U.S. will meet to consider how to respond to any Taliban provocations.

"I envisage a swift flow of information," said Lt.-Col. MacKenzie, who is an army reservist and former commander of the Vancouver-based Seaforth Highlanders. "We have faced these circumstances before and have learned how to respond.

"The decision makers will be here and they want to be here. We will provide information so that they can make sound decisions."

About 17 million Afghans are eligible to vote for 41 candidates for the presidency and about 3,000 candi-

dates for about 400 provincial council seats. But more than half of the voters may not show up at the polls Thursday.

Among the reasons are the high potential for terrorist attacks, widespread disappointment in the political system -- which is regarded as terribly corrupt -- allegations of vote-buying and bribery as well as double voting and suspicions that ballot boxes will be tampered with by supporters of the wily incumbent, Hamid Karzai -- who curiously has the declared backing of at least a dozen of the other presidential candidates.

Mr. Karzai is reckoned to still have a strong lead, but perhaps not enough to get the 50-per-cent-plus-one vote required to win a second term without a run-off. His chief rival is thought to be Mr. Karzai's former foreign minister, Abdullah Abdullah.

Because of security questions and the country's challenging geography, preliminary results are not expected for at least 48 hours and it could take weeks for all the votes to be tabulated. If a second ballot, most likely between Mr. Karzai and Mr. Abdullah, is required, a run-off election would be held in October.

In some ways, it is a miracle that the election is taking place at all. It was delayed from the spring because of violence. But fighting has recently reached new heights in the Taliban stronghold in the South and insurgents have recently taken the war to some previously quiet corners of western and northern Afghanistan as well as several of the key approaches to the capital, Kabul, to say nothing of the capital itself.

The security outlook in Kandahar was such that Afghan election officials called the election off altogether in two of the 17 districts -- Ghworak and Mianeshin -- because the Taliban were so dominant that it had been impossible for voters to be registered.

Kandahar City remained relatively calm on the eve of the election. But the Taliban were active in their usual strongholds in Zhari and Panjwaii, a Canadian military source said Wednesday, although it looked like part of their normal operations -- not something specifically designed to hinder the elections.

To try to minimize Taliban attacks on election day, Canada's battle group has conducted several weeks of "shaping" operations designed to seize bomb-making materials and keep insurgents on a defensive footing.

However, offensive operations by all NATO forces across Afghanistan are to be suspended Thursday so that troops can concentrate on protecting the elections.

While understandably vague about what Afghan and coalition forces in Kandahar might do if the Taliban attack voters or polling stations or the Afghan policemen and soldiers who guard them, Lt.-Col. MacKenzie stressed that many potential scenarios had been closely studied.

“There will be a lot more security than usual because there will be concentrations of people around polling stations,” said the 46-year-old former infantryman with the Princess Patricia’s Canadian Light Infantry. “Any incident will be communicated through us, whether it is an IED found by a civilian or an IED strike.”

Election security preparations in Kandahar began and ended with a blitz of high-level meetings. There have also been ‘war games,’ during which Afghan commanders explained to their superiors and to NATO’s top generals in the South how they would respond to a series of violent challenges.

It was because of his unique combination of military and police skills, including peacekeeping tours in Cyprus and Central America, and four years walking a beat on Vancouver’s gritty Downtown Eastside that Lt.-Col. MacKenzie was hand-picked to lead the OCCP for a 10-month tour of duty by Brig-Gen. Jon Vance.

When not bringing together all the top security officers in the province, he and his staff, which consists of about 15 Canadian soldiers and an American soldier, mentor and exchange information with about 45 Afghans soldiers, policemen and intelligence officers and speak on a daily basis with the governor. The unit also acts as a conduit for information between

Tooryalai Wesa, Kandahar’s Afghan-Canadian governor, and the Canadian-led Provincial Reconstruction Team.

“One of the advantages I have is that I am a police officer from a big city with some of the same big city issues that Kandahar has,” said Lt.-Col. MacKenzie, whose father was a Mountie. “For example, the major planning that has to take place to deal with issues such as drug trafficking.”

While here to assist Afghan authorities, Lt.-Col. MacKenzie said that the experience gained in inter-agency work with this country’s four security agencies and Kandahar’s government would help him when he returns to Vancouver in November to take a new police job that he expects will have an Olympic security connection.

But Lt.-Col. MacKenzie’s focus on Kandahar was so intense at the moment that he said that he had not had much time here to think about the security challenges that may exist in British Columbia next February.

Moments before an Afghan army general dropped by on an unexpected visit, Lt.-Col. MacKenzie said that he was optimistic that the Afghans and their coalition partners would be up to the challenge Thursday.

“We have very good folks who have given us a lot of information about the possibilities on election day,” he said. “We have thought about this and we have developed a plan of action.”

ED: Hamid Kharzai got elected and Colonel MacKenzie has returned home. I met him at a Seaforth Highlanders dinner and at the Vancouver Clan dinner. See the articles about these events.

## NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new members who have joined since the publication of the last newsletter:

Alexander MacKenzie

Aged 3

1217-429 Westwood Drive,  
Winnipeg, MB R3K 2B9

Kenneth Ian Mackenzie,  
74 - 8111 Saunders Road,  
Richmond, BC V7A 4L9

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## US CONVENOR OF THE CLAN MACKENZIE IN THE AMERICAS DIES

I am in hopes that I have reached a member of The Clan MacKenzie of the Americas. I would like to convey to clan members, that Gibson Rivers McKenzie died Sunday, January 17th, 2010. He was the convener of Clan MacKenzie of the Americas and instrumental in obtaining a chief for the clan.

The Birmingham News would like to do an article on Gibson. They want to speak to people who knew my father in regards to things Scottish. I am looking for Clan MacKenzie, St. Andrews or Caledonian Society members who knew Gibson and would like to speak to the newspaper on my Dad’s involvement in

the Clan as well as other Scottish activities.

I may be reached by phone, fax, email below.

Regards,

Lynn

M Lynn MacKenzie

4604 Sylvaner Lane

Birmingham, AL 35244

205.989.8043

205.747.0223 fax

mackenzie8@aol.com

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## VANCOUVER CLAN DINNER

DECEMBER 11, 2009

BY ALAN MCKENZIE

The strong Vancouver branch of the Clan Mackenzie held

another very successful Clan Dinner. Once again it was held at the Seaforth Armoury, the home of the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada.

For those that need reminding, the Seaforth Highlanders were originally raised from the Mackenzie Clan in Scotland in the 18th century by the then Mackenzie chief, the Earl of Seaforth.

Mackenzies feel at home in this environment. The troops wear the Mackenzie tartan and they play their pipe music "Cabarfeidh", one of the finest pipe tunes, in my opinion.

There were over 60 members present and we were particularly pleased to have among us the present Commanding Officer of the regiment, Lieutenant-Colonel Paul V. Ursich, CD, MBA. Furthermore we had the pleasure of the compa-

ny of Lieutenant-Colonel Rob Roy MacKenzie, the previous Commanding Officer of the regiment, who had just returned from Afghanistan. (Details of this officer are included in the article on pages 5 - 6).

The dinner and the entertainment was splendid and that included a song and a sword dance by Rob Roy MacKenzie's young daughter, Meaghan.

I have to thank former president Roddy Mackenzie for hosting me and my fiancée, Susan, at his lovely apartment in West Vancouver. Roddy had been recently engaged himself and a few days after the dinner he was married and you can see both him and his wife, Ka Hyun in the photos included in this Newsletter.

Joan MacKenzie with the support of the other commissioners in



Group Photo at the Vancouver Dinner - on the right in uniform is the Commanding Officer of the Seaforths, Lt-Col Paul Ursich and to the left of him also in uniform is Lt-Col. Rob Roy MacKenzie. Centre right kneeling is Roddy Mackenzie and his (now) new wife Ka Hyun on the extreme left and just behind her is Susan Lessard fiancée of Alan McKenzie centre left.

BC did most of the hard work in putting on this wonderful event.

Cabarfeidh sent in the following report which I delivered:

“Greetings from a snowy Scotland where for once December is turning out to be a nice month weather wise. I am sending this via Alan to read out at your dinner in Vancouver. I hope first of all that the dinner is successful, fun and a great place to meet and greet old and new friends. Being members of a clan is one of the best ice-breakers I can think of as we are all joined by sharing a similar name. Clans are very much in the



*Roddy MacKenzie chats with Lt. Col Rob Roy MacKenzie and Seaforth C.O. Lt. Col. Paul Ursich.*

news over here especially after the events in Edinburgh and a recent series of TV programmes on the history of Scotland. History is such an important subject as it helps explain the character of a nation, especially ones that like Scotland have been subject to the vicissitudes of hundreds of years and adjacent to more powerful nations. We, in Scotland, are still trying to establish exactly who we are and where we are going and undoubtedly the fact that there is a Scottish Parliament has helped concentrate many peoples minds on these salient facts. Though it is true that interest in this coun-

try has been greatest abroad, I now think folk are beginning to show a curiosity over here in what Scotland is and where, perhaps, it should be going.

“I am happy to report that as far as Mackenzies go, there is no lack of interest with no less than 10 independent Societies, five of them in Europe, which only goes to show that the pull of a great clan like ours is still there and for a multiplicity of reasons. Some of these can be directly related to the computer age of instant access to almost anything, not just to find information about Scotland and our clan but the fact that in



*Clan assembled for the Clan Dinner at the Seaforth Armouries.*

such a world borders and national identities can become blurred and the concept of a global society takes on a new meaning. To have established and firm roots in a clan can give a stability and sense of purpose, not to mention a common name and that I believe are points worth building on.

“So tonight I hope you can reflect for a moment on why in the 21st Century we are not just a throw back to the past but can give Scots and others empathetic to kinship a real sense of purpose and an identity. For those of you still undecided about whether or not to come over to Scotland for the International Gathering remember we have a great programme of events and you will be made most welcome and on that note may I also pass on the good wishes of the Clan Mackenzie Society of Scotland and the UK. Enjoy your dinner, have a great time and I wish you all a very Happy Christmas and may 2010 bring you every success and happiness.”

I took the opportunity of taking the remains of the new inventory to the dinner advertised in the previous newsletter and nearly all of it was sold. We have very little left and in fact we have orders for more items once the new stock is ordered.

The Vancouver branch have set a standard of excel-



lence in putting on these wonderful dinners. It was so encouraging to see so many present. Well done!!

I shall leave the pictures to tell the story.



*Roddy's fiancée Ka Hyun (now his wife) with Susan Lessard, Alan's fiancée.*

**ANNUAL ORTONA DINNER  
SEAFORTH ARMOURY  
DECEMBER 12, 2009**

While making arrangements to attend the Clan MacKenzie dinner in Vancouver, Roddy Mackenzie kindly made arrangements with the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada for me to attend their annual Ortona Dinner at the Seaforth Armoury on the day following the Clan Dinner.

Roddy has maintained a strong presence with the Seaforths and is involved with the Patrons group and writes the newsletters for them advising of the many upcoming events. His formal title is the Communications Coordinator of the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada Patrons' Corps.

Since my own uncle John McKenzie and my grandfather Archibald McKenzie were once regular soldiers with the Seaforth Highlanders in Scotland I felt very

privileged to be allowed to attend this function. It was with some surprise therefore when I received a tap on the shoulder from the Commanding Officer Col. Paul Ursich to follow him as I was to be at the top table. The reason being that I am the Lieutenant to Cabarfeidh in Canada and that is a title well recognised by the Seaforths. I found myself seated next to Col. Rob Roy MacKenzie and Corporal Stephen Claver (the vice president of the Mess Committee).

This dinner was a very special occasion as the regiment celebrates its 100th Anniversary on November 27, 2010.

The Ortona Dinner takes its name from the Battle of Ortona in Italy and the Christmas Dinner held on Christmas Day 1943 while the Seaforths were still participating in the battle. Extraordinary as it may seem the four companies of the Seaforths were able to have a full Christmas Dinner and that fact is commemorated each year by the regiment by having the same meal for all the soldiers in the regiment. That menu comprised:

**Vegetable Soup**

\*

**Roast Pork, Mashed Potatoes  
with Gravy, Peas and Carrots**

\*

**Mincemeat Pie, Oranges,  
Chocolate, Nuts and Raisins**

\*

**and Beer!**

Present on the top table was retired Col. David Fairweather, who participated in the original Christmas Day dinner in 1943 while a young Lieutenant. He received a long round of applause



**Annual  
ORTONA DINNER**

SEAFORTH ARMOURY  
Vancouver, B.C.  
12 December 2009



from the rest of the regiment.

I think I can do no better than reprint the extract from the War Diary of the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada for:

**Ortona December 20th to 28th  
1943**

**Christmas Day 1943**

The QM Capt D.B. Cameron spent a busy morning fixing up details for the Christmas Dinner to be held in the church occupied by BHQ. The Protective Group sent parties of men around ruined houses in the town collecting chinaware.

0900 hrs: The setting for the dinner was complete, long rows of tables with white table cloths, and a bottle of beer per man, candies, cigarettes, nuts, oranges and apples and chocolate bars providing the extras. The CO Lt-Col SW Thomson, laid on that the companies would eat in relays in the order of C-A-B-D, as each company

finished their dinner, they would then go forward and relieve the next company. The first company was to be in at 1100 hrs. 2 hours was to be allowed for each company for dinner. The menu for the dinner being Soup, Pork with apple sauce, Cauliflower, mixed vegetables, mashed potatoes, gravy. Christmas pudding and mince pie.

1100 hrs: C Company was the first Coy to eat dinner in the church, a dinner that no one had felt possible under such conditions, but no one had truly tested the ingenuity and resourcefulness before of the RQ Capt DB Cameron and staff. From 1100 hrs to 1900 hrs, when the last man of the Battalion reluctantly left the table to return to the grim realities of the day, there was an atmosphere of cheer and good fellowship in the church. A true Christmas spirit. The impossible had happened. No one had looked for a celebration this day. December 25th was to be another day of hardship, discomfort, fear and danger, another day of war. The expression on the faces of the dirty bearded men as they entered the building was a reward that those responsible are never likely to forget. When C Company had finished their dinner, they relieved A Company so that they might come back the 300 or 400 yards for the same, and so A Coy relieved B Coy and B, D Coy.

1930 hrs: The latter were to become reserve Company, but the situation had grown tense with C Company on the left flank. Capt J McLean took his company back into the fight. Christmas Day was no less quiet than the preceding ones, but it is one which this Regiment will never forget. Pipe Major Essen played his pipes several times throughout the meals. During the dinner, the Signal Officer, Lt W Gildersleeve played the church organ and, with the aid of an improvised choir, organized by the Padre, carols rang throughout the church.

## CASTLE LEOD PROJECT FUNDS FROM CANADA

I am obligated to correct the article on the Castle Leod Project which was written by Cabarfeidh in the December 2009 issue. In particular the following comment made on page 8 of that article requires some further explanation and correction. The paragraph in question read as follows:

“With the roof replaced both to time and budget no building work was possible for several years due to lack of capital. However a steady trickle of funds came in over the years in particular from the Clan Mackenzie Society of Canada due to their successful handling by Alan McKenzie of the Lottery. When this benefit ended . . . .”

It is true that we were able to submit large sums to the Castle Leod Project in the earlier years thanks to the large income we were receiving from the Nevada Lottery outlets we had in Ontario. However, the decision to send monies to the Castle Leod Project was, of course, a committee decision and not my personal decision. By December 2008 our Society had sent over 56,000 pounds.

While the Castle Leod Project remains an important issue for the Clan Mackenzie as a whole in the world by preserving the last remaining Mackenzie castle still in Mackenzie hands, the substantial drop in funds remitted in recent years has been due primarily to the fact that the Nevada Lottery has restricted our use of lottery monies and they do not include the Castle Leod Project. The main use of lottery funds is now restricted to the publishing of the Clan magazines and for the funding, where required, of the DNA Project. The present funds sent to the Castle Leod Project (the Clan Mackenzie Charitable Trust, a Scottish registered charity) now comes from personal donations specifically directed for that purpose.

In this respect while we still receive a few thousand dollars annually from members by way of donations, very few members specify where these funds should be directed even though the membership renewal forms ask for members to choose between the Castle Leod Project and General Clan Funds.

On a further point of clarification, Canada Revenue Agency does permit donations to the Castle Leod Project but it is incumbent upon our Society to obtain up to date reports from the Project. We do this every five years by visiting the Castle as well as reviewing annual financial statements as they become available.

The important repairs to the roof of the castle some years back were financed by the Clan Mackenzie Charitable Trust and to that end a major part of that financing came by way of a loan from Cabarfeidh himself to the Charitable Trust. Cabarfeidh has told me that he has no intention of seeking a repayment of that loan.

Another final point that needs to be stressed on this subject is that the main old castle (which is not occu-

pied by Cabarfeidh and his family) was leased for 99 years at a peppercorn rent to the Clan Mackenzie Charitable Trust (CMCT). The CMCT has a lease on the old wing of the castle and the billiard room because it is so important historically. All the rooms in the old wing (or tower) of the castle are under the aegis of the CMCT. So often we hear of complaints of Chiefs of Clans seeking funds from their clan members to put money into their homes. In fact Cabarfeidh has gone out of his way to avoid the simple way out by giving the Castle to the National Trust for Scotland and being allowed to live there with no further financial responsibility for its upkeep.

Cabarfeidh once told me "If anyone ever offers you a castle, don't take it"!

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## THE PACKET LETTERS, NOTES AND OPINION

### MACKENZIE REMEMBERED BY ROBERT LEGGET

*The following article comes from the August/September 1990 issue of The Beaver. Robert Legget is the author of "Ottawa River Canals and the Defence of British North America" published by University of Toronto Press.*

In mid-July 1789 Alexander Mackenzie, then a young fur trader in his 26th year, spent two nights and a day on Garry Island at the extreme northern tip of the great delta of the river that now bears his name. In his Journal, he called it

Whale Island because of the large number of white whales which he and his men had seen in the waters around the island, but modern studies suggest beyond doubt that it was the Garry Island of today. Mackenzie had just completed his remarkable journey from Fort Chipewyan in search of "Cook's Great River". Since he did not find this, it is said that he described "his river" as the River of Disappointment. Later explorations have shown that it was the northern section of what is today known as the Mackenzie River system, twelfth largest in the world.

His complete journey, from Fort Chipewyan to the Arctic coast and back, involved a journey of about 3,200 miles. This he and his men accomplished in 102 days, with no loss of life or serious injury, aided by generally friendly Indians encountered along the route. This constituted one of the greatest canoe journeys on record. One might have expected Canada to have given some recognition to the bicentenary of this feat. So far as can be ascertained, the issue by the Royal Canadian Mint of the 1989 silver dollar, bearing a picture of Mackenzie, his voyageurs and his Indian companions, is the only permanent bicentennial memorial in Canada of Mackenzie's first great journey.

This country, however, is not given to "hero-worship" or to marking such personal accomplishments. Rather do we celebrate political events, such as the bicentenary of the establishment of the province of Ontario (although unfortunately in the wrong year). As it is, there are far too many well informed Canadians who are not

even familiar with the name Alexander Mackenzie; either the great fur trader-explorer, or his namesake the second Prime Minister of Canada who, by a strange coincidence, was born in the same village as that in which the explorer died in 1820. The explorer was then on his way back to his small estate at Avoch, north of Inverness from Edinburgh where he had been receiving medical treatment. It is thought that he died of Bright's disease occasioned by his arduous travels as a young man.

Not only did he make his remarkable journey down the Mackenzie River in 1789 but, after getting some training in navigation, he was back again at Fort Chipewyan in 1792, spending that winter at Fort Forks on the Peace River with a small group of men (including two of the voyageurs who had been on the Mackenzie River with him), proceeding to the West in the late spring of 1793, reaching the Pacific coast on 22 July, the first white man known to have crossed the continent north of Mexico. And this was twelve years before the much better publicised Lewis and Clark expedition, the idea for which might possibly have come to President Thomas Jefferson from his reading of Mackenzie's *Journals*, published in London in 1802, an early copy having been purchased by the president.

Hope had been entertained that some permanent marker might have been erected on the Mackenzie River in July 1989. But the Northwest Territories Council was not sympathetic to the idea, the decision being made to mark the bicentenary with a major canoe race

down the river, with local celebrations at communities along its length.

Mackenzie was not completely forgotten in the rest of Canada in July 1989. A group of twenty-five students from Lakehead University, under the leadership of Professor Jim Smithers repeated Mackenzie's canoe journey, starting at Fort McMurray.

Far across the sea, at Avoch in Scotland, 15 July 1989 was marked by a ceremony at Mackenzie's grave.

Mackenzie lived in the United Kingdom after his last major stay in Canada in 1808. He had a house in London where one of his first visitors was Lieutenant John Franklin R.N., who came for advice about reaching the Arctic Ocean down the Mackenzie River, which he did in 1821. Sir Alexander, as he had become in 1807, married a distant cousin, Geddes Mackenzie in 1812. They had three children but there are today no direct descendants. Through his wife, he purchased the small estate of Avoch, about ten miles northeast of Inverness, and there the family settled. At his death, his body was returned to Avoch and buried in the local churchyard. Lady Mackenzie lived until 1860 and her body was buried in the same grave as were those of two of their children. Two grey granite headstones record the deaths, the stones being built into the west wall of a neat walled enclosure, entered through a gateway in the south wall.

For many years the grave has been tended by a man of the village, Gregor Macintosh, and his wife Annie. Although they knew little about Canada at first, or about Mackenzie, they knew that he was a

great man, his grave worthy of the attention they gave it. They hoped that one day somebody from Canada would turn up. Occasional visitors from Canada did come to see the grave. In 1986 three such visitors were Dr. and Mrs. R.V.V. Nicholls, late of McGill University and Montreal and now residents of Merrickville, Ontario, and Hugh McMillan of the Ontario Archives in Toronto. They were all impressed by the beauty of the setting of the grave, the graveyard high on a hill overlooking the Moray Firth, and by the attention given to the grave by Mr. and Mrs. Macintosh.

Later that year, Dr. Nicholls told me about the grave and so in April 1987, when visiting members of my family in Edinburgh, I managed to make a brief visit to Avoch. This was a moving experience for me but as I studied the headstones I found myself saddened and puzzled by the absence of any reference to Canada or even British North America. The inscription for Sir Alexander merely says that he was: "The Explorer of the North West of America and discoverer of the Mackenzie River".

Standing there on that lovely spring day, I decided that I would do my best to have something done.

Upon returning to Canada, I found that my feelings were shared by other Canadians. I therefore approached the Secretary of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board who gave me a most sympathetic hearing. I was encouraged to prepare a submission to the board even though to get one of the well-known bronze plaques of the Board for the grave would mean violating two of the board's guiding policies - no plaques outside Canada, and no plaques on graves except those of

the Fathers of Confederation. The necessary brief was prepared and submitted in time for consideration by the board at its meeting in November 1987. Instead of rejecting the submission out of hand, the board agreed to have their policies reviewed to see if there was need for any change.

This was done during 1988 and so my request came before the board at its meeting in November of that year. The operating policies were confirmed and so the submission was rejected.

The Historic Sites Board had already recognised Mackenzie's explorations in Canada, not only by a plaque at "Mackenzie's Rock" at Bella Coola, but also by the erection of a plaque at Fort Providence on the bank of the Mackenzie in the North West Territories. Recognition of Mackenzie at his grave in Scotland, however, would have to be achieved in some other way.

If a plaque was to be obtained and installed for dedication on 15 July, time was running short. It would have been possible to raise the necessary funds from private sources but all concerned were agreed that, if at all possible, it should be an official plaque from the Government of Canada. An appeal was therefore addressed to the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, John H. Parker (now retired but still active in Northern affairs) since the Mackenzie River lies wholly within the Territories. He indicated that he would be glad to help, having some funds available.

Then things began to move. The Department for External Affairs gave the venture its "blessing"; the High Commissioner for Canada in London expressed his interest; the

staff of the Historic Sites Board shared their experience in procurement; the Department of the Secretary of State was helpful in several ways, checking the inscription and having it translated (my main mistake being that I quite forgot to have it translated into Gaelic!) and in facilitating transport of the crated plaque (weighing 125 lb.) to London by courtesy of the Air Transport Command. Once at Heathrow, the awkwardly shaped crate was speedily delivered to Avoch. A mason was standing by and very soon had the plaque in place, well secured in a niche in the north wall of the grave's enclosure.

We assembled at the grave on the morning of 15 July, exactly two hundred years since the day that Mackenzie and his men spent on Whale (Garry) Island at the end of their journey down the great river. A Canadian flag flew over the grave, being later flown from the village flagstaff for a week; another hung over the plaque. Just inside the churchyard a "guard of honour" was lined up, consisting of all the Brownies of Avoch, with some Guides. Pipe Major Andrew Ventners was in attendance. Promptly at eleven o'clock, George Finlayson of the district council started the proceeding with a speech of welcome in which he sketched Mackenzie's career, with special reference to his journey down "his river".

The Honorary Consul for Canada in Glasgow, Duncan J. McKichan (in the absence of the High Commissioner, who was out of the country) unveiled the plaque. A prayer of dedication was said by the Reverend Allan MacArthur. Pipe Major Ventners played the Mackenzie Gathering Piobaireachd and the company dispersed. Some visited all that is now left of Avoch House - the gatehouse only since the house burned down many years ago.

Signs have been erected on the road leading to Avoch indicating the location of the graveyard and Mackenzie's grave. On the wall surrounding the grave visitors now find a fine bronze plaque with the Canadian coat-of-arms at the top and this inscription in both the official languages of Canada under the name, Sir Alexander Mackenzie:

*In mid-July 1789 Alexander Mackenzie reached the shore of the Arctic Ocean from Fort Chipewyan on Lake Athabasca, having traversed the great river that now bears his name. He returned safely on 12 September, after having travelled by canoe more than 3,000 miles in 102 days, assisted by friendly Indians*

*and propelled by four French voyageurs. In 1792 he left Fort Chipewyan again, wintered on the Peace River and, once more guided by Indians, reached the Pacific Ocean at Bella Coola on 22 July 1793, the first explorer to cross the continent. He returned safely again to Fort Chipewyan with all his party.*

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### IMPORTANT DNA DEVELOPMENT

The DNA Project for male members seeking possible family connections with other Mackenzies with matching or near matching DNA of the y-chromosomes continues to grow and we now have 250 people signed up for this Project.

However, there have been a number of new developments using DNA which can find relatives through both the male and female lines and this will likely be of interest to the numbers of members whose family name is not Mackenzie or who cannot find a living relative with that name to do the test of the y-chromosome. What is this all about? See the following message sent to us from Family Tree DNA which undertakes the tests on our Mackenzie DNA Project. I think you will find this interesting!

*Dear Family Tree DNA Group Administrator:*

*"This is the most exciting genetic genealogy breakthrough since the company launched its Y-DNA test, which uncovered relatives in the direct paternal line", says Bennett Greenspan, founder and President of Family Tree DNA.*

*Family Tree DNA is pleased to inform you of the pre-launch of our newest test: the autosomal-based Family Finder test. This pre-launch will progress in phases so that we do not exceed our lab's capacity, and to ensure delivering results in a timely basis. A limited number of our customers are being offered the Family Finder Test during the prelaunch. We anticipate Family Finder will be offered for general release in the middle of March at the breakthrough price of \$249. (This is in US dollars).*

*While the Y-DNA matches men with a specific paternal line, and the mtDNA finds potential relatives only along the maternal line, Family Finder can look for close relationships along all ancestral lines.*

*You may now match to male and female cousins from any of your family lines within five generations. The science behind it uses linked blocks of DNA across*

*the 22 autosomal chromosomes and matches them between two people. Based on this concept, our bioinformatics team has worked extensively to develop the calculations that would tell you the closeness of the relationship.*

*The possibilities to find matches abound:*

- \* Aunts & Uncles, Parents and Grandparents*
- \* Half siblings and 1st cousins*
- \* 2nd, 3rd, and 4th cousins*
- \* Possibly 5th cousins and beyond!*

*When you take the Family Finder test, your results are compared against our Family Finder database.*

*You will be able to:*

- \* sort your matches by degree of relationship*
- \* view their names and e-mail address for immediate communication*
- \* download your raw data*

*Read more about Family Finder testing and Projects.*

*Special Note: The Family Finder test requires an untouched vial of DNA. If your kit does not have an extra vial on file, we will mail a collection kit for a new FREE DNA extraction. After ordering you will be notified by email whether we are able to use a stored vial or will be mailing a new collection kit.*

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ED: This is clearly going to extend the range of choices for proposed DNA research and I have noticed that there has been a lot of e-mail chatter going on at the International Society of Genetic Genealogy on this new method of extending genetic research. I shall probably "test the water" with this to see if I get any interesting feedback. But, like all of the y-chromosome tests, as new members join the DNA Project there are always new possible family connections springing up.

I shall report further on this interesting development as new information comes along.

Alan McKenzie, DNA Project Administrator.

## **CLIMBING AROUND IN MACKENZIE COUNTRY**

BY JOHN MACKENZIE, EARL OF CROMARTIE

The winter of 2009/2010, at least for mountaineers and skiers is going to go down as a good one in Scotland. Despite the increasing trend for warmer winters, this does not preclude snowy winters and this one has been snowy consistently from November up to date so far with a long-term forecast for more of the

same. We have a Maritime climate that in winter means a freeze-thaw cycle which lets fresh snow consolidate to iron-hard neve or snow ice; perfect for climbing provided you know how to use ice axe and crampons. Apart from walking and climbing the other skill is the ability to navigate in a white-out, a common occurrence and to judge both weather and avalanche conditions. As winter climbing is such a popular sport here there is a national weather and avalanche forecast updated daily for mountain areas and these have undoubtedly saved many lives. Professional mountain guides and outdoor centres train and assist people to increase their skills and with modern equipment plus the know-how to use it accidents and fatalities are now fortunately rare.

We are lucky in having real mountains but on a human scale. Basically ours are like the top 'interesting' bit of the Alps but without the slog to reach them and at the most a long day, often starting and finishing in darkness, suffices. With a fickle climate most winters are a series of wild weather with short interludes of high pressure calm and blue skies. More often the battle against wind and poor visibility is the norm and the old adage that anyone who can climb safely in Scotland can climb safely anywhere in the world is, with a pinch of salt, true. Basically you just wouldn't head out in the Alps or Himalayas on what we here would consider an 'average day' as the scale of the Greater Ranges is so much bigger.

This winter has been different. The winds have been slight, the temperatures quite low for Scotland, about -20c to -25c and there has been more than 10m of snow in some areas high up. Snow just kept on falling and all the 'Old Timers' started reminiscing of winters in their youth. The cash-strapped ski centres are actually making a profit and the outdoor centres are raving about brilliant climbing conditions. The popular crags in the Cairngorms for instance now see up to 200 people a day queuing for routes on weekends.

The North-West Highlands, Mackenzie country in so many respects, has been no different save the lack of queues and the chance to visit remote mountains and coiries where you are likely to be the only people there. Early this winter in December and January there was so much snow it wasn't possible to get onto the mountains. Thigh deep powder was everywhere and given the high angle of many slopes, avalanches were rife. However to compensate all the low-level icefalls

were 'in condition' and, like many others, I took full advantage of these all-too-rare periods to climb frozen watercourses. Near the end of January the snow in the mountains and hills began to consolidate and some great routes were done, some being truly marathon epics lasting over 30 hours of a high order of difficulty, mostly by the young and fit. However the oldies like myself were not left out. In particular I had my eye on two lines, one on *An Teallach* and other on



*Roger Webb seconding pitch 2 to Tulach Ard*



*Andy Nisbet leading pitch 3*

*Ben Wyvis* that had eluded me for some time. Indeed the latter route on Wyvis I had been up to on three previous occasions, each time either conditions or weather were just not good enough. All the planning in the world won't suffice in a sudden thaw or other setback.

*An Teallach* is one of Britain's finest mountains, indeed many consider it the finest. In English it means

'The Forge' on account of its cloud-making ability and its serrated and pinnacled summits and two mighty coiries (ice-scoured bowls) holding great crags of terraced Torridonian sandstone put it in a class apart. Very popular as a long day out in summer it sees a steady trickle of fatalities every year and has gained a reputation. In winter there are few accidents, it being so obviously and immediately more difficult and thus attracts the (one hopes) more competent. There are of course many winter climbs up its crags, long icy gullies and intricate buttresses that combine ice, frozen turf and rock with routes up to 500m high set in a remote location. With three friends, Andy Nisbet, the first climber in the world to have broken through Grade 8 in winter; Dave McGimpsey, the youngest of our team (at 40) and Andy's usual winter partner and



*Summit photo of John Mackenzie, D.McGimpsey, R.Webb and A.Nisbet.*

hugely fit; Roger Webb, one of the pair involved in the 33 hour epic in Knoydart and another very competent climber and, of course, myself. The coveted line was situated in the remotest coire on the mountain, *Toll an Lochain*, 'the hole of the lochan'. A good three hour walk is often needed from the road at Dundonnell to reach the lochan in question and we started soon after 7.30am on the 9th February.

There is no track and the ground in summer a maze of bogs, rocky knolls and heather. Now it was under snow, not all of it consolidated and no doubt from the air our tracks would have looked like drunks leaving a pub on a Friday night. Gradually gaining height and skirting the flanks of the other major coire we arrived at the frozen lochan soon after 10am to be greeted by

the fantastic crags arced around us like a huge armchair. We were headed for a hidden corner high up on the face of *Corrag Buidhe* (the Yellow Finger), so far unclimbed due to it not being seen from the coire floor but only when on the summit ridge looking down. Both Andy and I had spotted it independently and Roger was sure it was one he had tried with a friend who developed such bad tooth-ache that they had retreated. I had no illusions this was going to be a soft option but was prepared for hard times ahead and having studied the summer photographs, merely convinced myself that the problems simply multiplied in direct ratio with the number of times the photos had been examined! Andy too was pretty sure the bottom overhang could be a real 'stopper' but the only way to find out was to poke our noses right at it.

First though we had to get to it. A long and relatively easy gully called '*Constabulary Couloir*' needed to be climbed to a point below where the corner could be seen high up on its right retaining wall. We soloed (unroped) up easy snow and three short stretches (pitches in climbers terms) of ice within the couloir to where we could see the elusive corner. It looked amazing, very steep and with the left wall of the right-facing corner a sheet of white ice over 100m high. Having quit the couloir we now continued up fairly broken ground of short steep ice pitches separated by banked terraces before at last standing in a huddle below the corner having already climbed over 300m from the foot of the couloir. Stamping out a good ledge (a 'stance') and with excellent belays in the rock beside a pinnacle; Andy was in a hurry to lead the first pitch. He disappeared from sight around to the right so we three simply paid out the rope and told him to get on with it as it was a cold day with a thin wind. Time passed and a somewhat anxious voice floated down to 'watch the rope as he was at the overhang'. The rope didn't move out at all for another considerable time and the only signs of life were bits of ice and snow being cleared by his axes. Eventually movement resumed and he reached a stance higher up where I knew a chockstone blocked the corner. More words wafted down to the effect that there was no stance and only room for one. 'Tough' we all replied, we were all coming up and so we did, one by one.

The overhang was avoided by deft and technical moves under it on thin ice and, above, a vertical corner with a thin but secure strip of frozen turf allowed progress to the chockstone. On arrival I could see Andy

perched on top of it so I simply excavated the loose snow from underneath and burrowed into the gap created to sit quite comfortably with his crampons on my head admittedly but otherwise it was a three star bijoux residence with a fantastic view out over the surrounding and distant hills. Once the rather greater bulk of Roger arrived things indeed started to feel a little cramped but our small cave by that time must have been the most sheltered spot on the mountain with Roger blocking the entrance to any weather or wind.

Dave was now leading the next pitch on superb ice that ran down the left wall making what could have been a testing section without the ice into something still respectably hard but certainly not desperate. Wonderful moves followed one another to a more genuinely cramped stance of two footholds hard against the corner, but we managed to improvise and a final pitch up the superb ice led to much easier ground



*Closer view of Toll an Lochain with summit of Corrag Buidhe above. Constabulary Couloir is the big easy gully leading to the U-shaped notch with Tulach Ard on the steeper buttress up and right.*

that led to the top of *Corrag Buidhe* and the end of the route. Here we met a roped party doing the traverse of the *An Teallach* ridge which in winter is a long and excellent day with both route finding and some technical difficulties and they had certainly picked a good day for it.

To descend needed a bit of prior knowledge to avoid the notorious 'Bad Step' the scene of many accidents (they always seem to be called that). This involved descending a pair of parallel gullies down the back of the mountain then traversing steep snow rightwards to reach a small col that overlooked the corniced exit of *Constabulary Couloir*. This we descended, all 350m of it, fortunately a great deal less arduous to descend than





*An Tealleach - Dave McGimpsey on Tulach Ard, Pitch 1.*



*The corner line of Tulach Ard in summer*

ascend on the soft snow that lay in it. This took a little time and care as though it is relatively easy ground it is still a graded climb and a slip would be a poor choice. We avoided the three ice pitches near the bottom by a neat jink to one side where a simple parallel gully took us back to the loch where we had started the ascent.

It was now 4pm and it would be dark by 6. We walked out with head torches in jacket pockets and as it got progressively darker so we found more bogs under the soft snow and stumbled over little drops that came more and more invisible until at 6pm it was just about possible to see Andy three metres in front of me. We called a halt at a burn crossing and switched on lights. There seems to be some unwritten code that in

order to save battery power it is first necessary to experience near Stygian darkness rather than switch them on 10 minutes earlier. It was always thus. We reached the road at 7pm, wet with sweat and fairly tired. Given that the route was good, was quite hard and had been a bit of a battle all told the name '*Tulach Ard!*' seemed appropriate in such Mackenzie country.

In winter progress up steep ground whether it be ice, snow, turf or rock depends on a pair of technical axes with reverse-curved picks shaped a bit like a banana. With a curved shaft to hold onto, the downwards striking action forces the tip of the serrated pick to lodge securely. On one's boots a pair of front-point crampons act as a steadying platform and a means of stepping up as most weight unless on truly vertical ground is on the feet. This technique is called 'front-pointing' and has revolutionised climbing on snow and ice all over the world. Modern ropes of 50 or 60m length and gear that can be slotted into cracks like nuts or expanding cams plus more traditional slings that loop around spikes or chockstones are also carried as well as a few pitons where no other gear can be used. In the UK there is a presumption against the use of pitons or 'pegs' unless absolutely necessary and all gear is placed 'on lead' by the first climber and removed by the last, so leaving the cliff unscarred and unmarked. This type of climbing is called 'traditional' as compared to 'sport' where expansion bolts are placed permanently in rock, especially in European limestone which is usually poor in cracks but leads to a very safe form of rock climbing. All these devices are attached to the ropes via carabiners or snaplinks and are used for protection only and not for direct aid.

I have to admit modern gear is a far cry from when I first started winter climbing over 40 years ago with a single ice axe and crampons, a rope and a sling or two where instead of the neat and quick front-pointing technique, progress was by cutting steps slowly and arduously leaving arms as strong as wet newspaper. Routes that might have taken ten hours or more can now be climbed in perhaps two or three and the sport is very popular with climbers coming from all over the world to such famous areas as *Ben Nevis* whose 600m cliffs give literally hundreds of different routes, summer and winter.

Clothing is layered, a base layer (long johns and top) of fine merino wool, a fleecy synthetic shirt and in my case durable windproof salopettes with extra warmth provided by a thin fleece and a thinsulate jack-

et. All this is topped by a wind and waterproof jacket. Under average Scottish conditions, especially when waiting around at stances, you need the lot! In bad weather they will keep you alive. I wear two layers of gloves, a thin underlayer and strong fingered overgloves and on my head a fleecy balaclava and of course a helmet. Climbing boots are rigid and insulated and I find a single pair of stockings warm enough. All this clothing and gear weighs and together with food and liquid (dehydration being common but avoidable), a rucksack of 25 to 30 lbs is normal, though I try to limit it as much as possible by handing the heaviest items to the youngest and fittest in an attempt to slow them down a bit!

*ED: Our thanks to Cabarfeidh for this introduction to mountain climbing in the Highlands. In the next issue he will talk about the climbing around Ben Wyvis, close to Castle Leod.*

## TWO NEW UPDATES ON THE MACKENZIE CLAN GATHERING -AUGUST 2010

Ian Blake in Scotland has sent us new updates on the Clan Mackenzie Gathering in August. On a personal note I am pleased about the Highland Clan Archive Centre and will visit there. Here is what Ian says:

Whyte & Mackay are bottling a very special single malt to celebrate the Twenty Ten Gathering and to support the Castle restoration and future Society activities. It is to be called **The Dalmore Mackenzie**. Dalmore distillery was, as you know owned till the mid sixties by the Mackenzie family. Derek, youngest son of that family, a personal friend of fifty years and CMS member is involved from the family archive side (he began his career in whisky at Dalmore.) The initial launch takes place in March at The National Gallery of Scotland beneath the picture by Benjamin West depicting Colin, first of the Mackenzies, saving King Alexander III from certain death on the antlers of a wounded stag.

However there will be a Highland launch to coincide with the Gathering. I think they will want to observe and film and no doubt offer a dram at the torchlight procession/opening ceremony/bonfire BBQ at the Castle on Monday evening. They are going to mastermind the Whisky Dalmore on Thursday evening - a competition to discover which of us has the best 'nose' for a fine malt, probably judged by Richard Paterson the master blender who has created the new

malt and they will be part of the helicopter expedition to The Princes Cave on Friday (in which STV are also interested.) I think that they'll also provide a dram for the Dinner. Thus there will be the opportunity for those at the Gathering to be part of the launch of a new malt (3000 numbered bottles.) It will market at £100 per bottle - with a special discount for Clan Mackenzie Society members. I hope there will be a chance to arrange trips on the Thursday for groups of 30 to visit Dalmore distillery and I have asked Derek to be there to talk about the family's involvement.

Also on Thursday it seems it will be possible for parties of 30 at a time to visit the new **Highland Clan Archive Centre** and be shown round by **Alastair Macleod** the delightful Highland Council genealogist. The centre only opened last autumn. Attendees will incur no extra cost - all part of the activities available at or from The Community Centre on the Thursday.

Details on how to enroll for the Clan Gathering were contained in the previous newsletter. If you need help e-mail me at [alan@mkz.com](mailto:alan@mkz.com) .

## HIGHLAND GAMES

There is very little in the news about what Highland Games are available this year. Here is what we know for certain so far:

June 12 - Georgetown Highland Games

July 1 - Embro Games

July 24/25 - Highlands of Durham Games, Uxbridge.

July 30/31 - Glengarry Highland Games, Maxville

August 7 - Fergus Scottish Festival

September 4 - Calgary Highland Games.

Springbank Park for All Seasons

September 5 - Canmore Highland Games, Alberta

September 10-12 - Trenton Scottish Irish Festival

## PRESIDENT TO BE CHIEFTAIN

Congratulations to our President Norman MacKenzie who has been chosen to be the Chieftain of the Canmore Highland Games in Alberta this year. He is well known for holding his Drum Major Workshops there. Indeed he will be holding another workshop this year but this time in Calgary.

For those interested Norman can be contacted at: [dmjrmac@sympatico.ca](mailto:dmjrmac@sympatico.ca)

## CLAN MACKENZIE SOCIETY OF CANADA - PROPOSED CHANGE OF NAME

At a recent meeting of the local Committee in Ontario it was proposed that the name of the Clan MacKenzie Society in Canada needed to be updated. The Proposal therefore needs the Approval of the Members to be put into effect. The Proposal is as follows:

That the present name of the Society is **Clan MacKenzie Society in the Americas - Canadian Chapter**. It is proposed that the name be changed to the more simple version **Clan Mackenzie Society of Canada**.

Subject to the Approval of the Members we shall submit permission to change the name to the Canadian Customs and Revenue Agency

### Voting Slip

I support the change of name from Clan MacKenzie Society in the Americas - Canadian Chapter to Clan Mackenzie Society of Canada

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

I do NOT support the change of name from Clan MacKenzie Society in the Americas - Canadian Chapter to Clan Mackenzie Society of Canada.

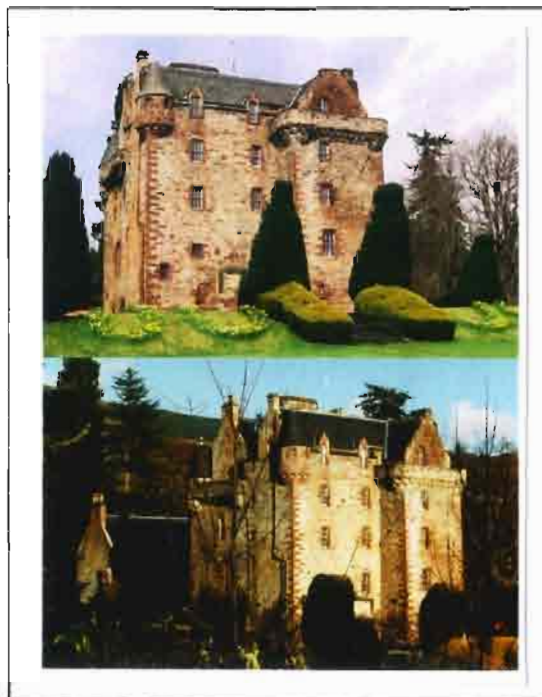
Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

This vote may be sent to the treasurer, Alan McKenzie at 580 Rebecca Street, Oakville, Ontario L6K 3N9 or e-mailed to him at alan@mkz.com

TOP MARKS! Below are two Christmas cards we received. The top one is from the Clan Mackenzie Society in Scotland sent by our good friend Mark Courtney. The card below came from Markus Kewitz, the president of the Clan Mackenzie Society of Germany.

### Castle Leod

Evidence points to a castle on this site from the times of Norse occupation, when the low-lying strath of the River Peffery was a long time from proper drainage to make agricultural pasture, and boats were able to sail from nearby Dingwall (Norse, *thing* = parliament; Norse, *vollr* = field) to the castle, built on a man-made mound here. In circa 1606, Sir Rory Mackenzie modified and added on to the existing structure of Castle Leod (*Leod* is probably derived from a Norse word), creating a magnificent, compact, red sandstone tower house. 1616 marks the completion date of this 5-storey, L-plan castle or perhaps the date of its major additional building. Certainly, not long after it was finished, a substantial addition was built in the re-entrant angle of the traditional L-plan, transforming the castle's shape to nearly square. Each wing of the L-plan had boasted a crow-stepped gable end with corbelled parapet walk, all left intact, with the gable end of the re-entrant addition making a fine side-by-side pair with that of the original west wing—the pair flanked by charming conical-roofed corner turrets, or *bartizans*. A single-storey addition to the east and low wing to the north were added in 1851, with a two-storey west wing being added to the latter in 1874. Some rebuilding of these wings took place in 1904, with a further extension added in 1912. Major renovation work continues to be undertaken on the fabric of the castle, which is the seat of Clan Mackenzie.



CASTLE LEOD, STRATHPEPPER, SCOTTISH HIGHLANDS.

*Top*, southern elevation viewed from front lawn.  
*Bottom*, viewpoint also showing western elevation and gable end of 1874 extension to earlier wing (not visible).



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