

Clan Ross

Association of Canada, Inc.

Founded 1960
David C. Ross of Ross, Chief



October 2006

An Cìrean Ceann Cinnidh

Clan Ross Association of Canada

National Gathering 2006



Clan Ross Members & Friends
at
Buxton National Historic Site School House

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's March

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

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

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STOP THE PRESS!

CLAN ROSS CANADA IS PROUD TO INTRODUCE PAT ROSS, THE NEW EDITOR OF THE NEWSLETTER



Pat is a long time member of Clan Ross Canada and, at the Annual Meeting in June, volunteered to accept the position of Editor of the Newsletter. She has a very busy life with a full time job and many activities and organizations with which she is involved. However, her love of writing and her academic background are superior credentials for this job, so there is no question it is in good hands.

In addition, Pat and her husband, Doug, are passionate Scots and regularly attend festivals and events celebrating their heritage. Doug has spent untold hours developing an expansive and delightful website all Clan Ross Canada members and others can explore and enjoy. As the prime photographer of events, Pat has also had a role in the success of this quality site. Her images and video footage add life and vitality to the records of activities chronicled for the visitor's interest. A partnership of mutual support and passion for all things Scottish will definitely benefit this newsletter as it has the website.

Clan Ross Canada will continue to be the beneficiary of the skill and talents of Pat Ross as she assumes her new responsibilities as the Editor of the newsletter.

Have fun, Pat, and good bye, everyone! Retiring Editor: Shelagh Rayworth

The Gaelic College of Celtic Arts and Crafts

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August 31, 2006

A' Charaid Chòir:

I am writing to you with an invitation to be part of an exciting project that we are undertaking at the Gaelic College. Since 1938, the Gaelic College has been a mainstay of Scottish Gaelic language, culture and tradition. The only institution of its kind in North America, the Gaelic College began with a beautiful log building constructed by local craftsmen and an enthusiastic mandate to preserve and perpetuate the language and traditions of the Highland settlers to the area. The College has grown over the ensuing decades and our programs and facilities have developed to service a growing interest in Scottish heritage as it has developed in North America.

This summer, we've embarked on an ambitious project that will see to the establishment of a Gaelic Heritage Centre within our Hall of The Clans museum building. This centre will be comprised of three parts: a Cultural Centre housing interactive interpretive stations depicting the linguistic, musical and dance culture of the Gaels of Nova Scotia. A Gaelic Learning And Resource Centre housing our library collection, computer research stations, as well as learning stations providing creative learning opportunities. Linking these centres is a hallway in which we will establish a Gallery of Gaels of North America.

Rationale for the Gallery:

Year after year we welcome students from every region of Canada and the United States who gather here at the Gaelic College to receive world-class instruction and to take part in informal ceilidhs and concerts celebrating our shared heritage. So many of our students will make reference to a parent, grand parent or great grand parent who was a Gaelic speaker or will make reference to their ancestral community in which Scottish Gaelic was a part of everyday life. We wish to create a Gallery here at the Gaelic College that will bring together images to honour those people who created the Scottish Gaelic presence in North America that we perpetuate today.

We wish to extend to you an invitation to submit a photograph or photographs of Gaelic speakers from your area for consideration for inclusion in the Gallery. These photographs may be of a single person or of a group.

Here are some guidelines:

Photographs must be accompanied by information on the people in the photograph. For individuals or groups of 2-4 people, this information should include the approximate year and locality that the picture was taken, the names of individuals in the photo as well as a brief biography if available, telling where they lived and their contribution to their community.

Group photos (more than four people) should reflect some aspect of community life – a work crew associated with a local industry or a group engaged in an activity representative of the community. It is often difficult or impossible to name everyone in a group photo such as this but information accompanying the photo should include the approximate date of the photo, the locality where it was shot and some information on the nature of the enterprise that brings these people together.

Keep in mind that in all instances we are seeking photographs of Scottish Gaelic Speakers in North America.

We can accept original photographs, high-quality print reproductions, or high-quality digitized images. Electronic / digital photo files must be high resolution -- at least 300 dpi -- to be usable for print reproduction. An 8" x 12" full-page image is roughly 2500x3500 pixels, often running 25 megabytes or more. We have the capacity to handle large files, but you may find it easier to have an image copied to a disk and mail it to us.

If you wish take part in this project, or would like more information, I'd love to hear from you. Please contact me at the address above by surface mail, email, fax, or phone. I look forward to talking to you.

Leis Gach Deagh Dhùrachd // With Kind Regards

Hector Mac Neil

**Gaelic Program Director
The Gaelic College**

CLAN ROSS ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

15th Annual Meeting since Incorporation

MINUTES

Sunday, June 25th, 2006
1:40 p.m. London time
Ramada Inn, London, ON

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

President Denis Fletcher called the meeting to order, welcoming the 24 members present. He introduced three Honorary Members in attendance: Gloria Ross, Sandy Ross and Eldon Ross.

MOTION: (Ian Ross/Don Ross of Wpg.) that the agenda be approved as distributed.

CARRIED

2. **MINUTES**

MOTION: (Ed Swinton/Doug Ross) that the minutes of the June 12th, 2005 annual meeting be approved as circulated.

CARRIED

3. **BUSINESS ARISING FROM 2005 MINUTES**

3.1 Current National Project (Restoration Work at Old Kildonan Cemetery in Winnipeg)

President Denis Fletcher reported that this project is now complete. All restoration work on the headstones is finished and a commemorative plaque with the Ross crest was erected yesterday on the site reading: "The restoration of the Alexander Ross pioneer family headstones has been made possible through donations from members of the Clan Ross Association of Canada, Inc. Work completed in 2005."

3.2 Next National Project Secretary Ian Ross summarized a detailed written report from 2nd Vice-President Andrew Thibodeau (attached), augmented with details from Past President J. Donald Ross who has been working with Andrew. This project is to erect a memorial plaque to Belleville native Dr. Alexander Milton Ross, world-renowned naturalist and builder of the "Underground Railroad". Unfortunately, both the Uncle Tom's cabin site and the Buxton site have recently declined our applications to erect a plaque, as they feel it does not fit with their current themes. However, Andrew has just received a strong expression of support from the Chatham-Kent Black Historical Society to have such a plaque in their new Freedom Park, which is expected to be constructed next year. It was noted that this plaque will be of significant size and content, as it is intended to be educational as well as being a memorial.

3.3 Associate Memberships

MOTION: (J. Donaldson Ross/Don Ross of Sarnia) that a new category of Associate Member be established, to include persons or organizations not qualifying as Ordinary Members because they do not bear the name Ross, or the name of a Clan Ross Sept, or are not related to the Clan by birth, descent or marriage. They:

- must support the objects of the Association
- will not be allowed to vote or to hold office
- will be subject to the same Annual Fees as Ordinary Members

CARRIED

3.4 Charitable Association

Ian Ross reported on his slow progress towards registration of Clan Ross – Canada as a charitable association. He noted a couple of potential obstacles to be overcome:

- a) As an organization with a mix of charitable and non-charitable activities will not qualify, we may have to set up a trust within Clan Ross with separate books

- b) As an organization must show that its activities provide a tangible benefit to the public as a whole, which must be expressed in precise terms in its governing documents, we may have to modify the objects as stated in our By-Laws.

The Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA) will not give advance specific advice on these matters, other than what is written in its lengthy application form and guidance manual. However, it will give a detailed critique of applications it receives. Therefore, Ian advised that he would proceed with the application form (rather than going to the trouble of making the above changes, which may prove unnecessary). Once the official critique is in hand, any required changes can be pursued with some confidence.

MOTION: (Doug Ross/Patricia Ross) that the National Executive be authorized to make whatever wording changes may be required to the Association's By-Laws should the application for Charitable Association status prove successful. **CARRIED**

Eldred Cook suggested that we acquire legal advice with expertise in this area, such as Carter in Oakville. Ed Swinton suggested that we consider saving the inevitable time expenditure by going direct to a separate foundation. Secretary Ian said that he would pursue these suggestions.

3.5 U.S. Member Fee

Treasurer/Membership Chair Barb Fletcher noted that the annual membership fee had been raised from \$US15.00 to \$US21.00 effective January 21, 2006 (as passed at the 2005 AGM), due to the higher cost of postage to the USA and the large bank fees now involved in cashing cheques in \$US.

4 TREASURER'S & AUDITOR'S REPORTS

Treasurer Barb Fletcher presented the audited financial statement for the 2005 fiscal year (ending December 31, 2005). Income: \$949.78 (down significantly from last year's \$3,022.94); expenses: \$924.21 (down significantly from last year's \$2,261.49). The bank balance at year-end was \$6,147.18, up slightly from \$6,121.61. The decrease in revenue was due to the delay in getting out invoices for memberships, caused by recent delays in issuing the newsletter. Barb reported that the missing revenues had now largely been received. The decrease in expenses was primarily due to 2005 not being a "public" AGM year.

MOTION: (Barb Fletcher/Eldred Cook) that the Treasurer's Report be accepted.

CARRIED

5 APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR

MOTION: (Barbara Fletcher/Ian Ross) that Tony Fletcher, partner in the legal firm of Fillmore & Riley, be re-appointed Auditor for the Clan Ross Association of Canada for the 2006 fiscal year. **CARRIED**

6 MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Membership Chair Barbara Fletcher reported that there were 122 memberships (203 members), including 6 Honorary and 1 Life Member, at June 20, 2006. This is a significant decrease of 30 memberships since June 12, 2005 ... but about the same as the 125 memberships at July 20, 2004. Of the total, 107 memberships (181 members) are in Canada, 14 memberships (21 members) are in the USA and 1 membership (1 member) is in Scotland. Barb noted that the membership decline was primarily because of the late newsletter.

MOTION: (Barbara Fletcher/Jacquie Ross) that the Membership Report be accepted.

CARRIED

Eldred Cook suggested that:

- Bereavements be included in the Membership Report. Barb agreed to do that.
- If a member was in a nursing home and funding was an issue, that the Executive considers amending the By-Laws so that such members could continue to be members and receive the newsletter at no charge.

7

NATIONAL PRESIDENT, PROVINCIAL COMMISSIONERS, WEBMASTER AND NEWSLETTER EDITORS' REPORTS

Highlights of verbal and written reports as follows:

National President Denis Fletcher

- Thanks to 1st VP Don Ross of Winnipeg for taking on the Presidency of the Manitoba Chapter
- Thanks to 2nd VP Andrew Thibodeau for his amazing efforts in putting together this AGM
- Thanks to Andrew and Past President J. Donaldson Ross for their efforts on the national project honouring Dr. A. M. Ross
- Thanks to Webmaster Doug Ross for his dedicated work on the website
- Thanks to Shelagh Rayworth for taking on the job of Newsletter Editor

British Columbia Commissioner Dorothy O'Donnell

- Declining membership on Vancouver Island has made it difficult start a local chapter
- Planned attendance at the Highland Games to stir up interest had to be canceled due to surgery, but is on the agenda for next year

Manitoba Commissioner Christine Turnbull

- There was no report received, but 1st VP Don Ross and President Denis Fletcher outlined last year's activities, including: another very successful Burns Dinner, exhibit at the Gathering of Nations, running a successful booth at Folklorama, the annual Night at the Races and a delightful Christmas Party at the historic McBeth House

Ontario Commissioner Wendy Ross

- There was no Ross tent at Orillia this year, due to the recent passing of Margaret Montgomery. Wendy will be attending Kincardine and Gloria & Sandy will attend Embro
- 2nd VP Andrew Thibodeau has launched a unique line of Clan Ross apparel
- The status of the Great Clan Ross book has to be discussed
- Wendy will submit a tribute to Margaret Montgomery for the next newsletter
- Wendy called a brief meeting of Ontario members for after the AGM

Eldred Cook asked that we check to ensure that funds for Clan Chapter sales are properly put through the books.

Nova Scotia Commissioner Christopher Rayworth

- Nothing has happened since last year to reestablish the NS Chapter. It is hoped that a meeting of a NS Chapter can be organized before Christmas
- It is hoped that some events will be attended this summer

Webmaster Doug Ross

- Emphasis continues to be on membership, mirroring the newsletter
- A number of changes and additions were made during the past year. Any member who wishes to keep up-to-date with Association business and preliminary reports is invited to contact the webmaster by e-mail or "snail mail". If you use the latter, please send a stamped self-addressed envelope with your request.

Newsletter Editor Shelagh Rayworth

- Have published two lengthy editions since June 2005, the last being 20 pages and both with colour on the covers. Hopefully, production quality has helped to make up for the lack of four issues.
- Thanks for article contributions from: Ian Ross, Art Ross and Doug Ross
- Many thanks to Webmaster Doug Ross for providing access to a wealth of information and getting the newsletter published on the Electric Scotland website.
- I will do one more newsletter to report the results of the AGM, and then materials will be turned over to a new editor to whom I wish great success

8 HONORARY MEMBERS

President Denis noted that no new Honorary Members had been proposed. In response to a concern raised by Ed Swinton that the Executive should beware of having too many such members, Secretary Ian Ross noted that at the 2001 AGM it was agreed that automatically appointing new Honorary Members at each AGM was inappropriate. We are a relatively small organization and would run the risks of: a) making appointments for less than distinguished service, and b) reducing the fees-paying base. This AGM endorsed that 2001 discussion.

MOTION (Eldred Cook/Wendy Ross) that all officers' reports be adopted **CARRIED**

9 ELECTION REQUIREMENTS

Secretary Ian Ross advised that President Denis, Treasurer Barb and Secretary Ian Had all advised that they would continue for additional optional two-year terms, eliminating the need for mandatory elections at this AGM.

10 NEW BUSINESS

10.1 Clarification of Article 3 of the By-laws Doug Ross

MOTION: (Ian Ross/J. Donaldson Ross) In order to clarify the intent of Sections 9 to 12 of Article 3, I move that the sub-heading "Additional Considerations Re: Membership" be inserted between Section 8 and Section 9. The sub-heading should conclude with a colon in order to conform to the previous sub-headings. If a category for "Associate Membership" is added after Section 8, then I would move that the items of the current Sections 9 to 12 should conform (as described) following such changes. **CARRIED**

10.2 Scottish Studies Foundation

Doug Ross offered to sponsor the Clan Ross Association of Canada as a patron of the Scottish Studies Foundation. A main objective of this Foundation is to raise awareness of Scottish heritage in Canada through various levels of education, including maintaining a Chair of Scottish Studies at the University of Guelph. Secretary Ian commented that the Executive will consider this on behalf of the membership.

10.3 Massed Bands Trip

Wendy Ross provided information on the upcoming Canadian Massed Band trip.

10.4 Reimbursement Proposal

J. Donaldson Ross proposed a motion to reimburse Gillian Blair 50% of her cost of copying the Dr. A. M Ross records. This was withdrawn when President Denis noted that they had been explicit that they wanted to pick up all expenses for their trip.

11 NEXT "PUBLIC" AGM IN 2008

Discussion took place on the possibility of Halifax or Cape Breton. Doug Ross noted that a prerequisite was a strong local organizer. The Executive concurred.

12 ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:20pm.

A ROSS RECIPE

PORRIDGE ...The one and only method.

It is advisable to keep a goblet exclusively for porridge.

Allow for each person one breakfastcupful of water, a handful of oatmeal (about an ounce and a quarter) and a small saltspoonful of salt. Use fresh spring water and be particular about the quality of the oatmeal. Midlothian oats are reputed to be unsurpassed, but the small Highland oats are very sweet. Use steel cut oats, rather than rolled.

Bring water to the boil and as soon as it reaches boiling point add the oatmeal, letting it fall in a steady rain from the left hand and stirring it briskly the while with the right, sunwise, or the right hand turn for luck - and convenience. A porridge-stick, called a spurtle, and in some parts a theevil, or, as in Shetland, a gruel-tree, is used for this purpose.

Be careful to avoid lumps, unless the bairns (children) clamour for them. When the porridge is boiling steadily, draw the mixture to the side of the fire and put a lid on the pot. Let it cook from twenty to thirty minutes according to the quality of the oatmeal, and do not add the salt (which has a tendency to harden the meal and prevent its swelling) until it has cooked for at least ten minutes. On the other hand, never cook porridge without salt.

Ladle straight into COLD porringers or soup-plates and serve with individual bowls of cream, or milk, or buttermilk. Each spoonful of porridge, which should be very hot, is dipped in the cream or milk, which should be quite cold, before being conveyed to the mouth.

Traditionally, porridge is referred to as "them" or "they", not "it" ... and they are eaten standing up.

(Acknowledgement: The Scots Kitchen - Its Lore and Recipes by F. Mariam McNeill)

A very popular Scotsman dies in Glasgow and his old widow wishes to tell all his friends at once so she goes to the newspaper and says "I'd like tae place an obituary fur ma late husband"

The man at the desk says "OK, how much money dae ye have?"

The old woman replies "£5" to which the man says "You won't get many words for that but write something and we'll see if it's ok" so the old woman writes something and hands it over the counter and the man reads "Peter Reid, fae Parkheid, deid"

He feels guilty at the abruptness of the statement and advises the old woman that she could add three more words for the same price. The old woman ponders and then writes a few more words and hands the paper over the counter again. The man then reads "Peter Reid, fae Parkheid deid. Bagpipes for sale."

The Clan Ross Canada Association, Inc.

CEUD MILE FAILTE

A Hundred Thousand Welcomes!

We are so pleased to welcome new members to Clan Ross Canada! We hope you will find new friends and make connections through your association with this organization that you would not otherwise have been able to do.

From all current members, a hearty "Ceud Mile Failte" to the following:

Dot and Milt From Winnipeg, MB
Fred and Eileen Wolanski Rockland, ON
Janet Ross and Shafik Saad Edmonton, AB

Which reminds us...

DUES! DUES! DUES! DUES! DUES! DUES! DUES!

Dear Clansfolk,

Call your horses, call your men,
Call your piper in the glen.
Tell your henchmen to hurry quick;
And run to Barb with that yearly cheque!
She's been looking high and low.
Up to the mountain she did go.
"Where's that postman with the clan dues?"
She mumbles as she wipes her shoes...
Pleases send your dues down from the hill
To cheer Barb up will be the pill!!
Send a rider and send him fast.
I don't know how much longer Barb can last!!!

This is a reminder that dues are in arrears for 2006! They are due on January 1st each year. If you have forgotten, Barb would be very pleased to receive your payment at:

Barb Fletcher, 66 Crestwood Cr., Winnipeg, Manitoba R2J 1H6

If you have any questions, they can be directed to her at, phone: 204-257-7511 or Email: barbf@miic.ca

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***Sons of the Mountains: A History of the Highland regiments in North America during the French and Indian War, 1756-1767***

Ian Macpherson McCulloch

Lieutenant-Colonel Commanding Officer (1993-96) The Black Watch (RHR) of Canada

Three proud Highland regiments fought in North America during the Seven Year's War the 77<sup>th</sup> Foot (Montgomery's Highlanders), the 78<sup>th</sup> Foot (Fraser's Highlanders), and the famous Black Watch, more correctly known at the time as the Royal Highland Regiment. Undoubtedly, the exploits of the 42<sup>nd</sup>, 77<sup>th</sup> and 78<sup>th</sup> Highlanders in some of the most bloody and desperate battles on the North American continent were a critical factor in transforming the overall image of Highlanders from Jacobite rebels to Imperial heroes in the latter half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. But the everyday story of these regiments - how they trained, worked, played, fought and died from their own point of view - has never been seriously told.

*Sons of the Mountains: A History of the Highland regiments in North America during the French & Indian War, 1756-1767*, is a two-volume set published spring 2006 by Purple Mountain Press and the Fort Ticonderoga Museum. It chronicles the Highland regiments' fighting performance and experiences from the time they were raised in the Highlands and stepped ashore in North America, to their disbandment in 1763; or, as in the case of the 42<sup>nd</sup>, reduced in establishment and left on lonely garrison duty in the American wilderness until their recall and return to Ireland in 1767.

Volume One of *Sons of the Mountains* follows all three regiments on their various campaigns in the different theatres of war. As they range from the wilderness of the Ohio Forks to the wind-swept crags of Signal Hill in Newfoundland, and from the waters of the Great Lakes to the torrid swamps and cane fields of the "Sugar Islands", the reader will be exposed to all the major conflicts and actions of the "Great War for Empire" as seen through the eyes of the Highland soldier.

Cluny, the 27th Hereditary Chief of Clan Macpherson, writes from Blairgowrie, Scotland:

*As a direct descendant of a Clansman who was present on the Heights of Carillon and at Fort Ticonderoga in July 1758 I feel that I understand now far better how my forebear and his fellow Highlanders must have felt and lived and fought, and relate much more closely to those "Sons of the Mountains" of long ago. I warmly commend Lt Colonel McCulloch's book to readers across the Atlantic and here in Scotland. He has done a great service to the memory of those who fought and died with these distinguished Regiments.*

Volume Two of *Sons of the Mountains* will appeal to all families of Scottish descent and serious genealogists. It features comprehensive biographical histories of every regimental officer from all the major clans (over 350 entries) who served in North America. For example,

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**Thomas Ross, of Calrossie (c.1723-1759)**

Capt: 23 July 1757, 78<sup>th</sup> Foot.

Son of Thomas Ross, 2<sup>nd</sup> Calrossie, and Isobel Ross of Easterfearn. Commanded one of the three Additional Companies that joined the regiment in April 1758 while in Connecticut; fought at the siege of Louisbourg; a Highland "gentleman volunteer" noted in his journal that on 29 July 1759, "*Capt Ross and Lt Nairn of Colonel Fraser's Regt. fought a duel this morning, very much to the discredit of the former.*" Neither was charged under the Articles of War which prohibited dueling. Ross was killed on 13 September 1759 after the actual battle of Plains of Abraham was over, leading Highland skirmishers down along the St Charles River. Malcolm Fraser noted that Ross "*was mortally wounded in the body, by a cannon ball from the hulks, in the mouth of the St Charles, of which he died in great torment, but with great resolution, in about two hours thereafter.*"

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**BALs;** Malcolm Fraser's MSS; **PRO**, C5/51; Stewart, **Sketches**, II, 20-1.

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Also included in the glossaries are regimental muster rolls and land petitions of discharged Highlanders. Marie Fraser editor of *Canadian Explorer*, newsletter of the **Clan Fraser Society of Canada** writes:

*Besides being compelling Highland history, SOTM is a valuable genealogical resource for all of Scottish heritage. With over 350 officers' biographies, career details and genealogical notes in the annexes, McCulloch has identified the complex ties of kinship, marriage and friendship that bound the most prominent Scottish families of the day together during the Seven Years War between Britain and France fought in North America, known to some as the French & Indian War.*

Lavishly illustrated with artwork by Robert Griffing, Steve Noon, Peter Rindisbacher, Gary Zaboly, Charles Stolz and John Buxton, as well as with contemporary prints, maps and portraits from the collections of the Black Watch Museums of Scotland and Canada, the Fort Ticonderoga Museum, the Fort Ligonier Museum, the William L. Clements Library, the National Army Museum, Chelsea, the David M. Stewart Museum, Montreal, the National Archives of Canada and the Library of Congress, *Sons of the Mountains* is a visual delight.

Without a doubt, *Sons of the Mountains* is the most complete and informative work on the history of early Highland regiments of the British army in North America to date.

To learn more about the author and all his publications as well as this two-volume work, go to <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/scotreg/mcculloch/index.htm> and orders can be placed at Purple Mountain Press website at <http://www.catskill.net/purple/order.htm> or write for details at: **Purple Mountain Press**, Ltd., PO Box 309, Fleischmann's, NY, 12430-0309. Phone: 1-845-254-4062.

## The Celtic Curse

Compiled by Doug Ross from Several Sources

In an email on April 4, 2006, to a Scottish pal from Alabama who has his doctors befuddled over his several "blood disorders", I discussed the possibility of posting this article. I had discovered several stories pertaining to medical research papers about something called the mysterious "Celtic Curse" (among other things). Without becoming excessively hypochondriacal about the matter, it appeared to me that I had developed symptoms of every ailment and disease found in the Highlands. It was at this point that I wondered if my friend would like to trade ailments with me. All joking aside, there are indeed carriers of gene mutations for the "Celtic Curse" . . . and those at highest risk of being carriers invariably have Celtic ancestors. The consequences can be disastrous and unforgiving.

First, let us identify the people who might be afflicted with these mutations . . . i.e. the Celts. In prehistoric times, according to all evidence, these warlike, muscular, red-haired nomads came from the steppes of central Russia after separation from their even more ancient hominid origins. By 500 BC they were living in northeastern France, southwestern Germany, and Bohemia. The Celts, who were also called Gauls, continued to migrate in all directions. Only on the fringe of Europe (Brittany, Norway, the Isle of Man, Wales, Ireland and the Scottish Highlands) did the Celts manage to keep their distinctive traits and languages. Traces of Celtic culture still survive in folklore there and in the Breton, Manx, Welsh, Erse, and Gaelic languages.

The "Celtic Gene Mutation" may also be called the "Viking Gene", but modern medical scientists identify the problem as hereditary haemochromatosis, also known as "iron overload disease". The excess iron is deposited in the liver, the pancreas, the heart and the pituitary gland, causing a number of symptoms. These include a bronzed skin pigmentation, diabetes, liver enlargement, arthritis, heart failure and Dupuytren's contracture. Researchers already know that the number of cases increased with latitude.

The symptoms usually show up between 40 and 60 years of age but can rarely occur during the teens (and shorten life considerably in either case). For these individuals, taking iron tablets without a doctor's advice can be dangerous. Even iron-enriched cereals or bread can be devastating in active cases. In this biological equivalent of rusting, toxic levels of iron accumulate in the vital body organs causing: chronic fatigue, diabetes, early menopause, impotence, infertility, arthritis/joint replacement, heart disease, hypothyroidism, liver cirrhosis (with or without a history of alcohol consumption), liver cancer, or premature death. With early detection and appropriate treatment, **all of these problems can be completely avoided**. Blood Tests can identify serum iron/ferritin, total iron binding capacity, and DNA testing by PCR. [Standard treatment is by the act of giving blood or, as medieval as it may sound, by employing leeches for bloodletting, which forces the body to use up the iron that it has stored in the various organs of the body.]

A quick review of the literature shows other conditions related to haemochromatosis, such as multiple sclerosis, osteoporosis, cystic fibrosis (CF), some breast cancer genes, seborrheic dermatitis and melanoma are all associated with Celts. We should never forget our Celtic past, and how its inheritance continues to affect us to this day. "The blood is strong." Perhaps this is one Highland icon or characteristic which is unwelcome when compared to many more favourable ones, but knowledge is power.

Scotland's five medical schools are joining forces in a ?4.4m project examining genetic diseases. This ground-breaking Genetic Health Initiative is being funded by the Scottish Executive. In December of

2004, Dr. Blair Smith of Aberdeen University stated, "It's the next exciting step following the mapping of the Human Genome and will put Scotland at the forefront of medical research."

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POSTSCRIPT: Both my friend's final email and my response were dated Tuesday, April 4, 2006. This article was posted on the Clan Ross - Canada website on Saturday, April 8, the same day that my young pal died at 9:00 AM aged 62. His brother said that he was the youngest of his parent's children. He was at their home on Friday, and his Mother reported that he was "being his jovial self". My friend is survived by his wife, three sons and 6 grandchildren (including triplets).

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## Recognizing Symptoms of a Stroke

Sometimes symptoms of a stroke are difficult to identify.

Unfortunately, this lack of awareness can spell disaster. The stroke victim may suffer brain damage when people nearby fail to recognize the symptoms of a stroke. Now doctors say a bystander can recognize a stroke by asking three simple questions:

\*Ask the individual to SMILE.

\*Ask him or her to RAISE BOTH ARMS.

\*Ask the person to SPEAK A SIMPLE SENTENCE.

If he or she has trouble with any of these tasks, call 9-1-1 immediately and describe the symptoms to the dispatcher.

After discovering that a group of non-medical volunteers could identify facial weakness, arm weakness and speech problems, researchers are suggesting the general public can learn the three questions. They presented their conclusions at the American Stroke Association's annual meeting last February. Widespread use of this test could result in prompt diagnosis and treatment of the stroke and prevent brain damage.

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## **The Scottish Saltire & St. Andrew's Day**

**TO THE MEMORY OF ST. ANDREW AND SCOTLAND YET!**

(Old Scottish toast)

Every November 30<sup>th</sup> Scots around the world celebrate St. Andrew's Day. Saint Andrew is the patron saint of Scotland and the white diagonal Cross of St. Andrew on an azure blue ground is the flag of Scotland. Today it is incorporated with the crosses of St. George and St. Patrick in the Union Jack.

Many legends surround St. Andrew. It is said that he was one of Jesus' disciples, the brother of Simon Peter, and he lived and worked as a fisherman in Galilee. Following Christ's crucifixion, St. Andrew preached Christianity throughout Asia Minor and Greece where he was eventually crucified on a cross in the form of an X. While other versions of this story indicate he was crucified on an olive tree, this one explains the origin of the Scottish Saltire.

Following his crucifixion, St. Andrew's bones were entombed. Three hundred years later Emperor Constantine moved them to his new capital Constantinople (now Istanbul in Turkey). According to legend a Greek Monk named St. Rule (or St. Regulus) was warned in a dream that St. Andrew's remains were to be moved. He was directed by an angel to take as many of the remains as he could to the "ends of the earth" for safekeeping. St. Rule dutifully removed a tooth, an arm bone, a kneecap and some fingers from St. Andrew's tomb and transported these as far away as he could. At that time Scotland was close to the extremities of the known world and it was here that St. Rule was shipwrecked with his precious cargo.

St. Rule is said to have come ashore at a Pict settlement on the East Coast of Scotland and this later became St. Andrews. Thus the association of St. Andrew with Scotland was said to have begun.

Perhaps more likely than the tale of St. Rule's journey is that Acca, the Bishop of Hexham, a renowned collector of relics, brought the remains of St. Andrew to St. Andrews in 733. There certainly seems to have been a religious centre at St. Andrews at that time, either founded by St. Rule in the 6th century or by a Pict King, Ungus, who reigned from 731 - 761.



Whichever tale is true, the relics were placed in a specially constructed chapel. This chapel was replaced by the Cathedral of St. Andrews in 1160, and St. Andrews became the religious capital of Scotland and a great centre for medieval pilgrims who came to view the relics.

There are other legends of how St. Andrew and his remains became associated with Scotland, but there is little evidence for any of these, including the legend of St. Rule. The names still exist in Scotland today, including St. Rules Tower, which remains among the ruins of St. Andrews Cathedral.

It is not known what happened to the relics of St. Andrew that were stored in St. Andrews Cathedral, although it is most likely that these were destroyed during the Scottish Reformation. The Protestant cause won out over Roman Catholicism during the Reformation. The Saints, relics, decoration of churches, etc., were expunged during the process of converting the Roman Catholic churches of Scotland to the harsh simplicity of Knox's brand of Calvinism.

A plaque for visitors to see now marks the place where these relics were kept within the Cathedral at St. Andrews.

The larger part of St. Andrew's remains were stolen from Constantinople in 1210 and are now to be found in Amalfi in Southern Italy. In 1879 the Archbishop of Amalfi sent a small piece of the Saint's shoulder blade to the re-established Roman Catholic community in Scotland.

In 1969, Gordon Gray, leader of the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland was in Rome to be appointed the first Scottish Cardinal since the Reformation. Pope Paul VI gave him further relics of St. Andrew with the words "Saint Peter gives you his brother". These are now displayed in a reliquary in St. Mary's Roman Catholic Cathedral in Edinburgh.

Information used with permission from "Gateway to Scotland"

URL: <http://www.geo.ed.ac.uk/home/scotland/scotland.html>

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URL: <http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk.gov/libraries/historysphere/standrew>

## **UP IN THE MORNING EARLY**                      **by Robbie Burns**

Up in the morning's no for me, Up in the morning early!  
When a' the hills are covered wi' snaw.  
I'm sure it's winter fairly!  
Cauld blaws the wind frae east to west,  
The drift is driving sairly (sorely)  
Sae loud and shrill's I hear the blast-  
I'm sure it's winter fairly!  
The birds sit chittering in the thorn,  
A' day they fare but sparely,  
And lang's the night frae e'en to morn-  
I'm sure it's winter fairly.

## A ROSS RECIPE

### HAGGIS ... Lady Logan's Receipt, 1856

*This is perhaps the most traditional of all foods eaten in Scotland ... at Hogmanay (New Year's Eve), at Burns Dinners or as a regular meal. It is really a large round sausage, the skin being the paunch or stomach bag of a sheep. Haggis probably derives from the French "hachis", to chop.*

*The finest haggis of all is made with deer's liver instead of sheep's liver. On formal occasions it is customary to serve it to the skirl of the pipes, after having recited Burns' "Address to a Haggis". It is best to take a small dram (glass) of neat whisky between mouthfuls.*

|                                                        |                                                                     |
|--------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>1 cleaned sheep or lamb's stomach bag</i>           | <i>the heart and lights (lungs) of the sheep, boiled and minced</i> |
| <i>2 lb. dry oatmeal</i>                               | <i>1 large chopped onion</i>                                        |
| <i>1 lb. chopped mutton suet</i>                       | <i>½ tsp. each: cayenne pepper, Jamaica pepper, salt and pepper</i> |
| <i>1 lb. Lamb's or deer's liver, boiled and minced</i> | <i>1 pt. (2 cups) stock</i>                                         |

*Toast the oatmeal slowly until it is crisp, then mix all ingredients (except the stomach bag) together, and add the stock. Fill the stomach bag to just over half full, press out the air and sew up securely. Have ready a large pot of boiling water, prick the haggis all over with a large needle so that it does not burst, and boil slowly for 4 to 5 hours.*

*Serve with mashed neeps (turnips) and tatties (potatoes)*

*Serves about 12*

*(Acknowledgement: A Taste of Scotland by Theodora FitzGibbon)*

**"There are no mistakes, no coincidences. All events are blessings given to us to learn from."**

-- Elizabeth Kubler-Ross

**"You don't have to be a fantastic hero to do certain things - to compete. You can be just an ordinary chap, sufficiently motivated to reach challenging goals."**

-- Edmund Hillary

## ***Clan Ross Canada, National Gathering 2006***

**Coordinator Andrew Ross Thibodeau**

"Cosmic". That's the word used by Steven Duff, author and guest speaker, to describe our Clan Ross National Gathering. As the Coordinator of this incredible weekend, I have to agree. Everything that is great has to have a beginning, and the inspiration behind our special 2006 Gathering was Steven Duff and his book on Dr. Alexander Milton Ross. His efforts to make us aware of this great Canadian compelled me to create a weekend to honour this man and his contributions to the Underground Railroad.

### **The Inspiration - Dr. Alexander Milton Ross**

When I volunteered myself and my home town of London in late 2004 as the site of our gathering, I thought that London would be the focus of our tours. It was at the same time that Steven Duff, author of *Hunter of Dreams, A Story of the Underground Railroad*, contacted our Clan. The subject of his book was Dr. Alexander Milton Ross, born in Belleville, Ontario in 1832 of Scottish immigrants. Steven wanted us to be aware of his contributions to bringing slaves to freedom in Canada. The National Board of Clan Ross was inspired by Steven and our research on Dr. Ross proved that he was an unknown hero who needed to be recognized. We thus decided that our next National Project would be to honour Dr. Ross, and the project would take place in Ontario.

It all came to me when I was on the phone with our National Board. "Wait a minute," I said, "the Underground Railroad's key historical sites are only an hour drive from London! A tour of those sites could be the focus of the weekend! We could unveil a tribute to Dr. Ross at a place where the descendents of freed slaves still live to this day!" With that, the focus of the weekend changed, and I again thank Steven for taking us in such a unique and inspiring direction.

Steven agreed enthusiastically to be our guest speaker for the weekend. He enjoyed sharing the story of Dr. Ross and he felt that a room full of Rosses would be the perfect audience. It was during one of our email correspondences that the next huge bit of inspiration hit me. "Steven", I asked, "do you know of any of Dr. Ross's living descendants?" "Yes, that is funny you should mention that," he replied. "I received a phone call in 2004 from a woman in Virginia who had read my book. She was friends with one of Dr. Ross's three great great granddaughters, now living in England!" While Steven had not spoken with them, he had mailed them a copy of his book and had received a warm thank you letter in return.

### **Talking with Dr. Ross' Great Great Granddaughters**

Steven shared with me their address, and in June 2005 (only a few days after the birth of my daughter Torry), I called Janet Montague Jones in England. We had a wonderful conversation and she was just thrilled that we were going to honour her ancestor with a weekend tribute. Janet was further impressed by my official offer to her and her sisters to be our guests of honour! She could make no promises at first but she looked forward to getting the package on the weekend so she could take it to her sisters and children.

It was then that one of those magical moments of life happen, that remind us that we are all connected and miracles do happen. You see, we named my daughter Torry after my wife's grandfather's middle name, Thomas Torry Hunter. Thomas was killed as a member of the British army defending Singapore in World War Two. My father-in-law Tom was one at the time and he never knew his father when he was growing up in Scotland. (My in-laws came to Canada in 1972 and my wife was born here in 1976.) When you go to St. Giles Cathedral, the High Kirk of Scotland in downtown Edinburgh, there is a series of plaques to the war dead and my wife's grandfather is honoured there.

As I was just wrapping up my conversation with Janet, I asked "have you ever been to Canada before?" "Yes," she replied, "we had to live in Victoria during World War Two." The word "had" caught my attention. "You had to? What do you mean?" I asked. "My father was a business man in Singapore and we had to escape to get away from the invading Japanese army" she replied. Janet noticed my stunned silence. I remember it clearly, standing in my bedroom, on my cordless phone; I looked at myself in the mirror, and let my jaw drop. "Are you still there Andrew?" she asked. I slowly replied, the power of the moment hitting me like a brick. "My wife's

grandfather died in the defense of Singapore. My new baby, Torry, is named after him!" Janet took a moment for a powerful silence, and she replied, "Tell your father-in-law that his dad died defending me and my family. While my mom and sisters got out a little earlier, my father was literally on the last boat that escaped Singapore before it fell." WOW, what a revelation! I had just talked with someone who had personally benefited from the sacrifice of my wife's grandfather!

I was so excited when I got off the phone with Janet. I just knew that having her and members of her family would be a fantastic addition to our weekend. While it is wonderful to explore history with a guide, it is something else to experience history with a person with a family connection! As we corresponded with Janet and her sister Gillian Blair over the year, I discovered that her family was very knowledgeable on the accomplishments of Dr. Ross, and treasured several items from his past. One is a copy of his book and the other is a scrapbook of newspaper articles detailing his exploits. During the weekend, Gillian would show me a copy of his book and she gave us a CD ROM copy of some of the more interesting articles from her scrapbook.

By early this year, we confirmed that Janet, her sister Gillian Blair and her husband Patrick would be joining us. The third sister, Elizabeth, was in weak health. In April, she passed away and I sent our condolences to Gillian, Janet and their families on behalf of Clan Ross. The three of them were going to use our weekend as a starting point for a Canadian adventure. After our gathering, Gillian and Patrick would head north to Owen Sound, the birthplace of Gillian and Janet's mother. Janet was going east to Kingston and then PEI to visit friends.

### **Our Belleville Guests**

Videographer Doug Knutson and his wife Carolyn of Belleville were another special addition to our weekend. Doug has lived in Belleville all his life and is a huge fan of Dr. Ross. Doug wants to do a documentary on Dr. Ross and wanted to participate in our gathering in order to film some very special footage. When he came to the gathering, he brought with him some interesting insights, pictures and maps. Doug shared this with us on the Friday night and Saturday. This included pictures of where he thinks Dr. Ross's home was located (but no longer there), maps of Belleville from the late 1800s, and letters of greeting from the Mayor of Belleville and Chair of their local Historical Society. The leadership of Belleville were thrilled that we were honouring one of their favourite sons!

### **The Arrival of our Honoured Guests**

Our England guests arrived Thursday night at the Ramada Inn. President Denis, his wife, Clan Treasurer Barb, my wife, baby and I were able to greet them. We had a wonderful dinner as we welcomed them to Canada. On Friday I borrowed my in-laws' large mini van and took Denis, Barb, Clan Secretary Ian Ross & wife Jacquie, and our three England guests on a short tour of London. We first visited the downtown area to see our new hockey arena and explore the market. Then we drove through the beautiful tree lined streets of the "Old South" neighbourhoods. Lunch was in my backyard where my wife served up a wonderful meal while our guests enjoyed the great weather of a 25 degree day. In the afternoon we continued our London tour. We visited Canada's most stunning post-secondary campus, the University of Western Ontario. As one of Canada's original four universities (U of T, Queens and McGill are the others), UWO has continued to erect buildings following the gothic traditions of rough hewn stone that give the campus an old world, castle-like appearance. Complemented by the parks, trees, and its location on the Thames River, I was proud to show off my alma mater.

### **Friday Night, the Ceilidh starts the Gathering**

Dinner time Friday saw a gathering of about 16 Rosses in the Ramada restaurant. Our Scottish Ceilidh evening at the Ramada started attracting guests by 7pm. From Washington State, Victoria, BC to Winnipeg, Halifax and all over Ontario, 36 people joined us for a fantastic kick off to the weekend. As the MC and host, I enjoyed welcoming our guests from across our great country. Rosses are friendly! Seriously! I found everyone really easy to talk to and very complimentary about the activities. I was happy to have my parents join us. My mother's grandmother is a Ross, thus my connection! It is also my middle name, which was my grandfather's first name, honouring his mother's maiden name. While my Scottish connection is minimal (my great great grandfather came from Scotland), I am a perfect example of how Clan Ross and other associations are as much about honouring history, meeting new people and having fun as they are about celebrating Scotland.

As MC, I opened the evening remarking how my parents probably never thought how much mileage I would get out of my middle name. For me, my interest in Scottish history began when my parents returned from a Scotland tour in 1991 with a Clan Ross booklet and tartan tie. My Scottish connections exploded when I met and married a wonderful woman Lizz Hunter. Her parents and siblings were born in Scotland. My father-in-law is the Clan Hunter Association of Canada President while his wife is the Secretary. In 1997 I attended a world-wide Hunter gathering at the Clan's castle located in West Kilbride, on the coast south of Glasgow. By 1998 I was regularly attending the Fergus Scottish Festival (Canada's largest, just north of Guelph, Ontario) and in 2000 I joined my in-laws and wife in attending the Montreal and Maxville Scottish Festivals. It was in Montreal that year that I met Wendy Ross, our Ontario Commissioner, joined Clan Ross, and that leads us six years later to my role as Clan VP and host of this weekend!

President Denis Fletcher followed my opening by bringing greetings to all and an especially warm welcome to our guests of honour, Gillian, Janet, and Patrick.

### **Friday Night Entertainment**

Next, "The Gaels" Scottish folk group took the stage. "The Gaels" feature my in-laws, the Hunter family. Tom played guitar, his wife Christine sang, daughter Lizz (my wife) was on the fiddle, daughter Lynn played piano, and son Paul played bass. Tom & Christine have been singing in folk groups since their days in Scotland in the 1960s, while the family has performed since the late 1980s. I want to quote Ian Ross, who emailed me this compliment on their ten song performance across two sets. "Jacquie and I were just listening to the Gaels CD we purchased. Your in-laws certainly are talented musicians and were a highlight of the Friday Ceilidh ... because they are entertainers. So often I have found that amateur/semi-pro folk entertainers are too deadly serious and can bore an audience to tears. Not so with The Gaels. They have a great mix of serious and silly, and a nice style. I was able to give a personal "thank you" to most of them ... but please pass on my comments."

Well, Ian Ross is to be complimented too! He arranged a piper, a haggis from Winnipeg, and performed the best "Toast to a Haggis" I have ever witnessed! So dramatic, so expressive, and hilarious! Even better, the Haggis was tasty! We then surprised Patrick Blair with 3 birthday cakes. Gillian had shared with me that it was his 75th birthday that night! My wife made them the night before and we sneaked them into the room. Yes, we feasted on crackers, cheese, fruit, cake ...and haggis!

Steven Duff, author and speaker, then shared with us part one of his two part look at his book on Dr. Alexander Milton Ross. Steven is a retired high school music teacher who spent his career in the Toronto school board. He has two daughters and now lives in Parry Sound with his wife Debra. "Hunter of Dreams: A Story of the Underground Railroad" was Steven's fourth book. (To order, go the publisher's website, [www.trafford.com](http://www.trafford.com)) He shared the very interesting story behind his inspiration on writing a book on Dr. Ross. In the mid 1980s he was teaching summer school history to senior students who wanted to get an advanced credit. An independent study presentation by two young ladies discussed the Underground Railroad. They briefly mentioned Dr. Ross's role in helping slaves escape to Canada, and Steven found himself wanting to learn more about this little known Canadian hero. Thus began a 17 year process of research and writing that finally cumulated in the book's release in 2002. As quoted in the book's introduction, Steven sees himself "not as a professional historian but rather an enthusiast who sees history as an all-encompassing form of theatre." He is an excellent story teller, witty, and offered powerful insights that left the entire room wanting to hear more. My brother-in-law commented to me, "Wow, I really enjoyed listening to Steven. I remember learning a little about Dr. Ross in high school history, but now I appreciate his efforts so much more."

### **Saturday, The Underground Railroad Bus Tour**

Our Saturday bus tour of the Underground Railroad could not have asked for better weather: sunny, 25 degrees, low humidity. I was so happy that our English guests did not have to endure the southern Ontario humidity and smog that happened so frequently in 2005. 47 people joined us for the tour. 42 on the bus, Londoners Doug & Helen Ross drove themselves (they only registered 4 days earlier), my in-laws, wife and baby followed in their van. We were off on time by 8:50 am with Lloyd our driver piloting a modified school bus from Elgie Bus Lines. It featured good seats, air conditioning and a bathroom at a great price. Lloyd later commented to me that he had

a fantastic day with us and he appreciated the great food and good company we provided him. I appreciated that every stop and every meal provided us two "free spots" to cover our driver and guest speaker Steven.

### **Uncle Tom's Cabin, Dresden**

Uncle Tom's cabin was our first stop, located about 75 minutes west of London in the small Kent county town of Dresden. . [www.uncletomscabin.org](http://www.uncletomscabin.org)

This world famous site commemorates the life of Reverend Josiah Henson and his contributions to the Underground Railroad. Josiah Henson's name became synonymous with the central character "Uncle Tom" in Harriet Beecher Stowe's famous novel Uncle Tom's Cabin. The novel sold 300,000 copies within the first year and helped to raise awareness to the brutality of slavery. Abraham Lincoln credited the book as being a catalyst of the Civil War. It was Henson's life experiences that inspired Ms. Stowe's creation of the character Uncle Tom in her 1852 outcry against slavery.

Born in Maryland, Josiah Henson worked as a slave for forty-one years. In 1830, he and his family escaped to Upper Canada (Ontario) via the Underground Railroad. In 1841, he moved his family to Dresden and helped to establish the Dawn Settlement. The settlement was established to provide a refuge and a new beginning for former slaves.

### **Uncle Tom's Tour**

Steven Cook, the director, greeted us and passed on to Laura, our tour guide. We opened by watching a moving video that recreated the journeys of those that took the Underground Railroad to freedom. I enjoyed how the video was "narrated" by Josiah Henson, featuring excellent actors and costumes that took you back to the 1800s. His life and his contributions to help others were truly staggering, and this man is so deserving of the provincial and federal plaques of honour located on the site. Our guide then discussed how slaves escaped to freedom, doing a question and answer with various artifacts, and we learned how they navigated themselves northward. Powerful images, such as "follow the north star to freedom" reminded us that such simple directions were critical to thousands escaping. We had some laughs when Laura asked another guide to get into a crate for "shipping", just as many blacks were shipped in such small containers. She demonstrated how an escaping slave would be nailed shut into a crate and given a wood bore in order to cut holes for breathing. The other guide, an exchange student from Quebec, was eager to get out of the crate!

Our tour continued into the newly created display hall on the incredible life of Josiah Henson. We then toured the grounds of the site which included Henson's home, a church from the mid-1800s, and the graves of Josiah and all of his descendents. We were surprised to see a Toronto Maple Leafs flag flying on one of the graves. One of his great great grandchildren had just been buried two weeks earlier and apparently he was a big hockey fan ... a Toronto Maple Leafs flag was placed on the grave site.

### **Gillian Shares A Poem written to Dr. A.M. Ross**

The tour concluded in the church. Gillian had confided in me earlier that she wanted to share some special poetry given to Dr. Ross for his birthday. For me, it was one of the highlights of the weekend. The opportunity to listen to Dr. Ross's descendent, standing in a church on the most sacred site of the Underground Railroad, Uncle Tom's cabin, sharing the following poem.

*"Inscribed to Dr. Alexander Milton Ross, on the anniversary of his 47<sup>th</sup> birthday, in remembrance of his labors during the American Anti-Slavery struggle, by John Greenleaf Whittier.*

*Dr. A. M. Ross*

*For his steadfast strength and courage,  
In a dark and evil time,  
When the Golden Rule was treason,  
And to feed the hungry, crime;*

*For the poor slave's hope and refuge,  
When the hound was on his track,  
And saint and sinner, state and church,  
Joined hands to send him back.*

*Blessings upon him! - What he did  
For each sad, suffering one,  
Chained, hunted, scourged and bleeding,  
Unto our Lord was done.*

*Written in 1879 by John G. Whittier, Secretary of the Convention 1833, which formed the American Anti-Slavery Society.*

Wow. It was powerful & magical words that Gillian had proudly known and cherished for many years.

The Oaks Inn of Wallaceburg catered an amazing lunch for us of roast beef, chicken, huge potatoes, veggies and dessert squares. It was a perfect setting, eating outside with all of this great history surrounding us. We returned to the theatre for Steven Duff's presentation on the exploits of Dr. Alexander Ross. He shared how Dr. Ross was once captured in the Deep South and placed on trial for helping slaves escape. (Read Steven's book to learn the true story of how he managed to free himself!). Another interesting story was Dr. Ross intercepting a Confederate spy in the Montreal area who used an ingenious method to hide documents from customs inspectors. The woman had letters and maps sewn into her petticoat! Steven ended his program with the following powerful statement. "In the conclusion of my book, I noted how Dr. Ross received letters of appreciation from many great people during his life time, including Lincoln, Victor Hugo and the Italian General Garibaldi. Another person who wrote him was John Greenleaf Whittier, a founder of the American Anti-Slavery Society. I note in my book that his letter included 10 lines of poetry. I always had wanted to know what that poetry was, but could never find it in my research. Today, thanks to Gillian, I finally got to hear those beautiful words. Thank you!"

### **R&M Classic Cars Exhibit, Chatham**

We departed Uncle Tom's around 1:30 pm and drove about a half an hour south through the incredibly flat landscape of Chatham Kent county. This area is similar to sections of the prairies, where it is so flat, standing on a pop can lets you see another 20 km. This is the area my dad grew up in. Since his family of nine kids never traveled, it wasn't until he moved at age 12 that he saw his first hill!

R&M Classic Cars, just south of Chatham, was our second stop. [www.rmccars.com](http://www.rmccars.com). This restoration shop and museum features an ever-changing display of 100 historical automobiles from the last century. The exhibit offers a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to see some of the world's rarest and greatest automobiles up close. In my planning, I added this stop as a change of pace from the powerful images we were to experience at the two Underground Railroad sites. It was also perfectly located, involved the right amount of time for a tour, and I knew that some people on our tour were really into cars. This stop was a pleasant surprise to many who were not big on looking at cars. Several ladies commented to me, "I enjoyed that stop more than I expected!" We had phenomenal tour guides who explained the stories behind many of the cars, bringing to life their unique history, incredible beauty of design, and stunning prices! R&M Cars is the WORLD's best car restoration site. While they specialize in the vehicles of the 1930s and '40s (the Classic Era, as it's called), they do work on any age of car. I think everyone saw several vehicles that appealed to them and made them say out loud. Wow! They had several cars that were one of a kind design that were worth into the millions! For example, they had a Rolls Royce from 1914 that still operated!

One story that stuck with me was of a 1936 Mercedes. It was one of two built. The owner lived in Berlin, and with invasion of the Russians in 1945, he drove it into his basement, sealed it behind a brick wall, and kept it out of view until 1995! 50 years! When he finally felt it was time to show it, he sold it very quickly for 2 Million dollars! The new owner took it to R&M to be restored (the car was in great shape, but wires and seats had rotted while

underground). Last year this car won best in show at the world's largest classic car show and is now valued at 4 million dollars. I think the car was at R&M for storage because the owner may be soon selling it.

### **Buxton National Historic Site, North Buxton**

Our final stop around 3:45 PM was the Buxton National Historic Site, set in the village of North Buxton located southwest of Chatham. [www.buxtonmuseum.com](http://www.buxtonmuseum.com)

The site is a memorial to the Elgin Settlement, which was a haven for fugitive slaves. The tour guides are descendents of fugitive slaves and are a wealth of information and stirring personal stories. It is one of Canada's few remaining Black Canadian settlements in existence since the pre-civil war era. Similar to Uncle Tom's cabin, our tour began with a fantastic video on the Underground Railroad. Shannon Prince, the Curator, and Spencer Alexander, Assistant Curator, were fascinating to sit and listen to. Spencer shared with us how five generations ago, his ancestors were slaves. Fast forward to his grandfather who was a respected teacher and principal who taught at the small Buxton school for decades. About 30 years ago Spencer's grandfather won an award as the best teacher in Ontario. From slave to respected teacher in two generations ... incredible. At the same time, as Shannon and Spencer shared with us, there was always the underlying message of promoting peace, understanding and cooperation between people of all races.

Speaking with Gillian from England, we both remarked how a powerful moment was holding on to authentic leg shackles from the time of the slave trade. We noted how small the openings were for the ankles and just how painful it would have been to wear them for weeks! It is one thing to read about history, but to touch it was very powerful.

Buxton had an excellent display and museum that we toured, and then we continued to the school house. It has stood there since 1861 when it was built by the escaped slaves! We had some great laughs as Shannon assumed the role of teacher and made us all take our seats, boys on one side, and girls on another! We practiced how to sit properly, stand at attention, and even took a dictation with our own chalk and personal easel. Teacher Shannon appeared unhappy with the attitude of Janet from England. Shannon drew a circle on the chalkboard and made Janet put her nose into it, to the laughs of the rest of us. Janet was a good sport and went along with it. Afterwards we took an excellent group shot of everyone on the steps of the school house. Another great picture was of our England guests and Shannon and Spencer standing on those same steps.

The tour concluded in the town's church where Spencer continued his story telling. He asked if we felt like singing. And we did. Thankfully Shirley Ross from Kincardine stepped up to play piano. Spencer led us in a powerful rendition of "How Great Thou Art", a wonderful way to end our tour.

### **Evening at Buxton**

The Buxton church Ladies Auxiliary offers tourist groups of 30 or more the opportunity to enjoy a soul food dinner and gospel concert. Cleata Morris, Carol Birse, and their team of cooks and servers had a wonderful meal of African-Canadian food waiting for us at 6pm. Set in the church hall, we feasted on a special baked chicken, the best macaroni and cheese I have ever eaten, collard greens, corn bread and homemade apple pie. Everyone was thrilled by the taste and quantity of food! As I type this, my mouth waters as I recall how great the food tasted. It was also great to see people sitting and chatting with their new friends from all across our great country! For example, Lizz, Torry and I sat chatting with Tom & Jo Ann from Burlington and Doug and Helen from London.

The day concluded with a gospel concert back in the church. Some of entertainment came from three young men in their late teens that sang and played piano. The church choir then shared traditional black spirituals and gospel music with us, including asking Reverend John Bannerman to join them. A highlight was the last song when all of us got up to sing "this little light of mine. I'm going to let it shine." The Rosses and friends belted out a wonderful version that had all of us clapping and smiling and enjoying each other's company. A perfect ending!



## Reflections on the Gathering

I felt, as did many others on the tour, that today's experience was life changing in helping us appreciate what "freedom" means. We had all heard of the Underground Railroad, read about the Civil War, and knew about slavery and the cotton industry. However to truly experience it at these world famous sites was so moving. The powerful videos, the amazing photograph and document displays, the wonderful tour guides, the stunning artifacts and simply sitting in a school house built by freed slaves combined for an experience difficult to describe.

Here are how some of our participants described the day:

Steve Cook, Site Manager for Uncle Tom's cabin, wrote: *"Kudos right back to you on arranging such a wonderful event. I think it was an eye opener for all involved. I enjoyed meeting the Great Great Granddaughters and Mr. Duff-his book, incidentally, is doing well in our gift shop! Thank you again for the disc and printed materials on Ross' work - it's a valued addition to our research library."*

Steven Duff, author and our guest speaker, wrote *"Bravo, multiple hosannas, congratulations, felicitations, hip-hip-hooray, etc., etc. The weekend was one of the best of my entire life and, aside from being monster fun; I thought was a masterpiece of organization. Having organized many mega-events in my teaching career, I have a particularly keen sense of organization, and if you feel swollen and bloated with triumph, well, you're entitled! Somewhere along the way, I used the word "cosmic". It certainly was cosmic for me, meeting Gillian and Janet (and Patrick, who is a really cool dude). And I had a truly cosmic moment on my own, standing on the porch of Uncle Tom's Cabin. It was so cosmic I had to share it with my wife, so there I was, saturated in history, and yakking away on my cell phone."*

Gillian Blair, Dr. Ross's great great granddaughter wrote: *"Yes what an adventure it was to be with all the Rosses and visiting those historical sites. Thank you very much for giving Janet, Patrick and me this opportunity. Also Patrick thanks you for celebrating his birthday too! It is hard to put down my thoughts but certainly having the opportunity to read that lovely poem to my great great grandfather was a wonderful moment. You greatly honoured us throughout the trip but it was not us but our ancestor who really should be honoured. At one time I just wanted to thank him and bent over to kiss him or rather his photo at Buxton. Seeing those instruments of torture in the Museum, the box slaves were transported in and learning about the different symbols on the quilts were all meaningful moments for me. Just standing alone in the little Church and meeting Josiah Henson and his wife in their home suddenly and sitting in the classroom will be memories I will not forget quickly I hope. But the kind people of Chatham and Buxton will also be in my thoughts talking with them and knowing that they too were grateful for their ancestors' courage and endurance and then to end it all with praise and thanksgiving to God in their lovely Church. Andy, it was a very special day for me so thank you for all the hours of preparation you put in and your committee - please can you thank all concerned for us and also for these beautiful engraved glasses. We really will treasure them. What a pleasure it was for me to meet Steven Duff at last and I wanted to thank him for making Dr. Ross more known to Canadians through his book. Canada is a very welcoming country to all who seek refuge."*

National Secretary Ian Ross remarked *"A highlight of the Sunday evening dinner at The Outback Steakhouse was when the waitress came to the table to hand out all the individual bills. "This first one is for Ross", she said, which produced gales of laughter."*

Janet Montague Jones, Dr. Ross's great great granddaughter wrote, *"We enjoyed the weekend enormously. I have never been to such a gathering, nor have I been treated as an honoured guest, and presented with such a lovely gift. I shall treasure my two engraved glasses for ever. Please thank the membership of Clan Ross for their generosity and kindness."*

My aunt Jill, whose grandmother was a Ross, wrote a card to me, *"I am so glad that I went on the bus tour. It's nice to know that one of our relations was 'one of the good guys!'"*

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Our Newsletter (and lots more!) in Cyberspace  
- National Secretary Ian Ross

For the growing number of Clan Ross members who are finding all sorts of useful, fun, interesting, trashy or just plain deplorable information on the internet, here's something to add to your Favourites list under the useful/interesting category:

[www.electricscotland.com/familytree/newsletters/index.htm](http://www.electricscotland.com/familytree/newsletters/index.htm)

Clicking onto this web page will give you a listing of all sorts of newsletters published by Scottish associations and clan groups. Click on any of them and you can instantly read back issues. It's a wealth of useful information and trivia. Proudly occupying a place on this list, for the whole world to see, are the last four issues of our very own Clan Ross – Canada newsletter. They join ranks with many others, mostly from the USA, but some from Canada, Scotland and Australia. Most are quite serious (in intent, if not always in tone!), but at least one ... Clan MacBubba of South Carolina, "the land of haggis and grits" ... is pure entertainment.

This is a section of the much larger Electric Scotland website, run by Alastair McIntyre. You can find just about anything you could ever want to know about Scotland and all things Scottish through this remarkable website. Alastair is to be commended for adding a section archiving Scottish association newsletters.

And just how did our newsletter join this elite group? Through the good offices of our devoted Webmaster, Doug Ross of Willowdale, who faithfully scans each issue and forwards it on to Alastair.

For about two decades our newsletter has also been forwarded to the archives of the Scottish Studies Foundation at the University of Guelph. This will be a great source of information (and hopefully amusement) to future scholars peering back into Canada's past. However, it has had ... for obvious reasons ... very limited access by the public. The new electronic archives on Electric Scotland's website change all that, thanks to Alastair and Doug.