



The Mackay Banner



Issue 4

A Publication of
Clan Mackay Society, USA

December 2016

Do you have any interesting Clan Mackay news items? If so, send them to scottishlassjaime@gmail.com and we will include them in a future issue.



Our previous Banner editor, Charles McKay has loved doing the Banner, but has become extremely busy with so much on his plate. He has asked me (Jaime Chambers) to take over. My goal is to provide you with a Banner that is full of Clan Mackay USA news, as

well as topics of interest. I hope you enjoy this issue of the Banner and encourage you to send any information and/or photos to me at: scottishlassjaime@gmail.com.

now one of the few remaining places of any size in mainland Scotland that you can only access by single track road. The road south was completed in 1893, and from the following year there was a daily coach connecting Durness with the railway station at Lairg, some sixty miles to the south east. The name Durness could be from the Norse Dryaness meaning Deer Cape or Deer point and has

Durness, Scotland



Durness, Scotland is the Most North Westerly Village On Mainland Britain and is the centre of the ancient lands of Clan MacKay and the most north westerly community in mainland Britain. It is an ideal place to explore the solitude of the highlands, to watch the varied wildlife and birds, or enjoy a spot of fishing or golf. Being on the “corner” of Scotland, Durness makes an ideal base for touring the rest of the north – west highlands, a vast area of outstanding natural beauty.

Durness marks the point at which the main coast road from Thurso via Tongue turns left and heads south towards Scourie and Kylesku. Durness is

been referred to as an oasis in a barren land, the last resort or the last outpost. It stands slightly proud from the sea with sandy beaches and rocky coves.

This village provides 2 grocery shops, a campsite overlooking Sango Bay and sandy beaches at Balnakeil, Sango, Sangobeg and Ceannabinne and a popular nine hole golf course. Durness is a remote and scattered crofting township in northwest Sutherland, lies to the northwest of Loch Eriboll and 13 miles (21 km) northeast of Laxford Bridge. A crofting village spread out along the coast, Durness is basically a string of hamlets. The area offers unlimited sea trout fishing opportunities for the visitor as well as a walking network for all abilities.

Clan Mackay Society, USA

ELECTED AND APPOINTED VOTING OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

Doug McCoy, Lawrenceville, GA

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

Charles E. McKay, Plano, TX

NATIONAL VICE PRESIDENT

Dr. Donald McGee, Naples, FL

TREASURER

Charles Epperson, Hurst, TX

SECRETARY

Andrea Cable, Shelton, CT

REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENTS

North East Region: Madelynne Cable, Shelton, CT

South East Region: Ellen Morgan, Interlachen, FL

Mid West Region: Ann McDonough, Pickerington, OH

Rocky Mountain Region: Jamey White, Denver, CO

Central Region: John Wells, Garland, TX

Western Region: Jeff Goodwin, Folsom, CA

Mid Atlantic Region: David B. McKay, Leesburg, VA

APPOINTED NON-VOTING OFFICERS

Membership Chair: Charles McKay, Plano, TX

Editor of Mackay Banner: Jaime Chambers, Thousand Oaks, CA

Scholarship Chair: Leslie Deitrich, Yukon, OK

Web Master: John Grogan, Flowery Branch, GA

Seanachaidh & Genealogist: Ken Bain, Fresno, CA

Chaplain: Mark W. Polson, Tulsa, OK

Upcoming January Election Info

I had previously notified you that we will be holding elections for the offices of President and National Treasurer in January of 2017. I requested nominations to submit to the nominating committee. To date, we have the following nominations:

Charles Epperson - National Treasurer

Charles has served as National Treasurer for the past two years. He is a Lifetime member of Clan Mackay Society USA and has done an outstanding job, increasing the awareness of Clan Mackay and being a wonderful steward of our funds.

John Grogan - President

John currently serves as our Media Editor and volunteers his time to support our website and Facebook page. Thanks to John's efforts, we now have over one thousand followers on Facebook. John is a Lifetime member of Clan Mackay Society USA and has literally been in the clan his entire life, growing up in the shadow of Grandfather Mountain in North Carolina.

I have enjoyed serving as your President these past two years and look forward to being your Immediate Past President, to assist my successor. I wish you all a very happy Holiday Season and look forward to a Happy and successful New Year.

Doug McCoy, President



How many Scotsmen does it take to change a light bulb?...Och! it's no that dark!

Clan Mackay Society, USA

2016 AGM Update

Appointment of New Chaplain

Many of you are aware that our longtime Chaplain, the Reverend Donald Bain passed away after years of spiritual service to Clan Mackay Society USA. I am pleased to announce that the Reverend Mark W. Polson of the Central Region as agreed to assume the position of spiritual guide for Clan Mackay Society USA. He is available to assist any member that may be in need of guidance or comfort. Mark will continue with his duties as Central Region Commissioner.

AGM Recap

We just completed our Annual General Meeting for 2016. It was held at the 55th Scottish Gathering and Highland Games in Salado, Texas on November 12, 2016. Several folks were in attendance for the meeting, either in person or via teleconference.

Our National Treasurer, Charles Epperson gave his report. An abbreviated Treasurers' report is as follows.

As of 10/31/2015 we have the following balances in our accounts:

- \$7,175.64 – Checking Operating Account
- \$5,401.61 – Saving Scholarship Account
- \$8,562.22 – 12 Month CD
- \$8,369.58 – 18 Month CD
- \$29,509.05 – Total

We decided at the meeting, that we needed to begin to replenish supplies for our Commissioners across the country, by improving the clan tents at the various Highland Games. If you are in need of signs, banners or other paraphernalia to improve the presence of Clan Mackay at festivals, *please submit a request*, including the cost, to our National Treasurer, Charles Epperson.

We further concluded that we need to improve the awareness of our scholarship program for members. This will be communicated through our website and Facebook page. Leslie Dietrich was elected as our new Scholarship Chair, along with her duties as Central Region Commissioner. It was decided that our annual scholarship amount would

be increased to a maximum of \$500 from \$200.

Madelynne Cable, our North East Regional Vice President, will be working with John Grogan, our Media Editor, to improve our media program and format to insure we are getting the word out about Clan Mackay and to improve membership. In addition, Charles McKay, Immediate Past President, will chair a committee to conduct a survey of members and past members to attempt to find out why renewals are not as vigorous as in times past.

We will be providing updated membership lists to each of the Regional Vice Presidents, to assist with clan participation in the various Highland Games and membership growth and renewal.

2017 Annual General Meeting

The executive committee of Clan Mackay Society, USA is pleased to announce that the 2017 Annual General Meeting will be held at the Longs Peak Scottish-Irish Festival in Estes Park, Colorado. The Festival dates are September 7-10, 2017. The AGM will be held on Saturday evening, September 9, 2017.

We would like to see as many Society members at Estes Park as possible. More information coming soon.



1st Quarter Events

Let's Go To The Games

The following is a listing of many of the games and gatherings that will be occurring in the first quarter of 2017. Please review it and if there are any games in your area, pack up and go support. If I've missed your local games, please let me know! And if, while at the games, you discover that there is not a Clan Mackay tent, contact you local commissioner and volunteer to host a tent next year!

Date	Highland Game	Web Address
Jan 14-15	Central Florida Highland Games: Winter Springs, FL	www.flascot.com
Feb 4	Sarasota HG & Celtic Festival: Sarasota, FL	www.sarasotahighlandgames.com
Feb 18-19	Queen Mary Scotsfest: Long Beach, CA	http://www.queenmary.com/events
Feb 25	Northeast Florida Scottish Festival: Green Cove Spring, FL	www.neflgames.com
Mar 4-5	53rd Phoenix Scottish Games	www.arizonascots.com
Mar 4	SE Florida Scottish Festival & Games	www.sassf.org/events/festival/festival
Mar 11	Celtic Festival, Moorhead, MN	www.fargoparks.com/events/celtic-festival.html
Mar 11-12	Midland Scottish-Irish Faire: Midland, TX	www.chspb.org
Mar 11-12	Scottish Heritage Day Encampment, Darien, GA	http://www.gastateparks.org/info/153733?c=13025577
Mar 18	SE Alabama Highland Games: Dothan, AL	www.wiregrasshighlandgames.com/
Mar 25	Myrtle Beach Highland Games: Myrtle Beach, SC	www.myrtlebeachhighlandgames.com/

Introducing our Chaplain, Rev. Mark Polson



Slàinte!

I am honored and humbled to have been appointed as your Clan Chaplain. I am a Provisional Elder in the United Methodist Church and have recently been appointed to the First United Methodist Church of Idabel, Oklahoma. I have been competing in the Scottish Highland games for the last 3 years and am also serving as Co-Commissioner for Oklahoma. I will do my best to make myself available for prayer and spiritual counsel through phone and email.

Rev. Mark W. Polson, Clan Chaplain

Hogmany is Coming!

For most of the world December 31 is New Year's Eve, but in Scotland it's something much more important: Hogmanay! It's the biggest day in the festive calendar, and it's like nothing else on Earth.

Why is it such a big deal?

Because until very recently, Scots didn't do Christmas. The Reformation effectively banned Christmas for 400 years, and Christmas Day didn't even become a public holiday in Scotland until 1958. So while the rest of the world celebrated Christmas, Scots toiled. Their family get-togethers happened at Hog-



manay instead.

How do Scots celebrate Hogmanay?

Besides concerts, street parties, fireworks and more earth-bound fire spectaculars, as well as consumption of one of Scotland's most famous products, Scotch whisky, a number of very ancient traditions associated with Hogmanay in Scotland can still be found in smaller communities and private celebrations:

1. Redding the House Like the annual spring cleaning in some communities, or the ritual cleaning of the kitchen for Passover, families traditionally do a major cleanup to ready the house for the New Year. Sweeping out the fireplace was very important and there was a skill in reading the ashes, the way some people read tea leaves.

2. First Footing After the stroke of midnight, neighbors visit each other, bearing traditional symbolic gifts such as shortbread or black bun, a kind of fruit cake. The visitor, in turn, is offered a small whisky. The first person to enter a house in the New Year, the *first foot*, could bring luck for the New Year. The luckiest was a tall, dark and handsome man. The unluckiest a red head and the unluckiest of all a red-headed woman.

3. Bonfires and Fire Festivals Scotland's fire festivals may have pagan or Viking origins. The use of fire to purify and drive away evil spirits is an ancient idea. Fire is at the center of Hogmanay celebrations in Stonehaven, Comrie and Biggar and has recently become an element in Edinburgh's celebration.

4. The Singing of Auld Lang Syne All over the world, people



sing Robert Burns' version of this traditional Scottish air. How it became *the* New Year's song is something of a mystery.

5. The Saining of the House This is a very old rural tradition that involved blessing the house and livestock with holy water from a local stream. Although it had nearly died out, in recent years it has experienced a revival. After the blessing with water, the woman of the house was supposed to go from room to room with a smoldering juniper branch, filling the house with purifying smoke.

Are there any weird traditions around Hogmanay?

- In Stonehaven near Aberdeen the locals make balls of chicken wire, paper and rags, set them on fire and swing them around.
- In South Queensferry, the 'Loony Dook' sees hungover Scots hurling themselves into the icy sea to raise money for charity.
- And in Kirkwall, the 'Ba Game' is an enormous game of street football that can last anything from four minutes to five hours and feature as many as 350 players.



How can I celebrate Hogmanay properly?

There's no right way or wrong way to celebrate Hogmanay, but if you want to do what many Scots do you'll have a nice meal with family and/or friends, plenty to drink – including whisky, of course – to toast the new year, and a steak pie for dinner the following day when you finally emerge from your bed.

Don't forget a bottle of Irn Bru, too – Scots swear by it as a hangover cure.

