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The Editor expresses his sincere thanks to all those who contributed to this issue and to the MacRae Tour Group for their financial support for the color pages.

— Larry McRae

Sgurr Uaran

November 2015

Special Edition: 2015 MacRae Tour of Scotland

The President's Letter

Greetings to my fellow MacRaes!

Welcome to a special color edition of Sgurr Uaran featuring our 2015 Clan MacRae Gathering Tour of Scotland! We have many pictures and feature stories from events on the trip, so please grab a cup of coffee or tea and set aside a few moments to come away with us to Scotland!

Coming up this month is a very important yet sad anniversary for Scotland and especially Clan MacRae. November 13, 2015, is the 300th anniversary of the Battle of Sheriffmuir and the 100th anniversary of the unveiling of our Clan MacRae monument there. This is why Clan MacRae of Scotland had their Gathering this year and also why Judy and I hosted another tour of Scotland to bring many of our fellow MacRaes to commemorate this event. Members of Clan MacRae from all over the world met at both the Monument and the Gathering Stone on the battlefield to lay wreaths of remembrance. Historians consider the battle a stalemate, but for Clan MacRae, it was a devastating loss of their men who fought valiantly against the British dragoons.

On another note, I would like to remind my fellow MacRaes about the Clan MacRae DNA project. With Christmas fast approaching, please consider giving a MacRae family member or yourself a Family Tree DNA test kit. Alice Fairhurst (USA) and Martin MacRae Halligan (Scotland) have done a wonderful job of compiling and analyzing MacRae DNA test results to help our membership understand more of their MacRae ancestry. The more MacRaes who test their DNA, the more clarity it brings to our MacRae family lines.

2 To order your test, go to www.familytreedna.com/group-join.aspx?Group=McRae

We also want to invite you to the Grandfather Mountain Highland Games in 2016. The games will be held July 7-10th at MacRae Meadow on Grandfather Mountain near Linville, North Carolina. Judy and I will be there and would love to have a large contingent of MacRaes with us. (Tickets and information at gmhg.org.) If you cannot make it to North Carolina next year, make sure to visit your local Scottish events and if there is not a Clan MacRae booth, start one! Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions or need help with any of the above. As your President, I am here to help our society grow!

— Bruce W. McRae

13 Before the Tour Began

14 *Iain Macdonald, our intrepid Blue-badge tour guide sent the following appreciation:*

15 **T**he Macraes are coming (again!)

“Hello Iain, the Macraes of the former colonies in North America are returning to Scotland in 2015.” Those were the words spoken by Judy Macrae to me in 2014. I calmed my beating heart and considered what I had just heard: where are we going this year? Eilean Donan, definitely,

Plockton, probably, Edinburgh and Arthur's Seat, definitely, Sheriffmuir, another definite but where else?

As Judy and Bruce wanted new and old members to see places that they had not previously visited, ideas were discussed until we had a vague idea of suitable sites. This was just the beginning. Not too many castles, reasonable to good accommodation (which proved much more difficult this time) good transport with good drivers, and plenty of Macrae events. There is no point in visitors coming so far to Scotland without experiencing the Clan fellowship and seeing the Country of their forefathers.



For 2015, hotel accommodation proved difficult but, after several phone calls and emails, we eventually succeeded. The itinerary was finalised, the costings calculated (have you any idea of the amount of work Judy

puts into this part?) and all the bits and pieces were pulled together.

The day arrived and I met the group at Glasgow Airport. It was a joy to see so many friends again, possibly we all looked just a little bit older but probably not any wiser and it was a delight to see so many “first timers.” The old hands had a good idea of what was happening and the new people had a certain sense of wonder about this tour. What was Scotland like? did they have electricity? why is everyone not wearing kilts and shouting “Sgurr Uaran”? why do they talk funny? This part is not quite true but there was a certain hint of wonder and expectation in their eyes.

Once again Judy did a wonderful job of organising this event and never a cross word did we have. I would just like to pass on my thanks to all who travelled to Scotland, and I hope that your memories will stay with you for a very long time.

Hast Ye Back.

— Iain Macdonald

PS: Macdonald, Chief of Clanranald and others were killed at Sheriffmuir.

Margo McRae Ashcraft and husband Tony were part of the “first timer” contingent, and they met Scotland with new and wonder-filled eyes. Margo sent the following:

WELCOME TO SCOTLAND

Seanchaidhs, or oral historians, were at the heart of Gaelic culture, composing and safeguarding stories, songs and traditions. My grandfather was the Seanchaidh in our family. He was born in 1883 and heard the tales from his father who heard them from ...and back it went. But when they were repeated to me as a teenager, I found them remote and unintelligible—filled with strange names, events, and relationships.

My grandfather died at age 86. He had made multiple trips to Eilean Donan and was still telling his stories. By then the images had been planted and in the end, the storytelling had captivated me. Ultimately it was those stories that led to me to join the Clan MacRae Gathering of 2015. It felt like time to discover Scotland for myself.

Now that we have returned people ask, “how was your trip?” I have struggled with a response. My husband and I travel a fair amount, and I can usually come up with a report on the weather, interesting sights, noteworthy experiences...but the Clan MacRae Gathering? How to explain the experience to anyone other than a MacRae? My fallback reply has been “it was beyond anything I imagined.” There were highlights of course, so here is a very personal Top Five list:

#5 The History. Before the trip I read all I could find on Scotland’s past, and hoped to have at least a beginner’s understanding of events. But the history was staggering: long, R-rated for brutality, punctuated with castles, battlegrounds, bravery, and overwhelming sorrow. But being exposed to actual locations and deeper explanations, often enhanced with family anecdotes, was like looking through an out of focus lens that was suddenly adjusted. The detail was further sharpened by the emotional impact of connection. This happened to my family! This is real.

#4 The Scenery. I was not prepared for the stunning beauty. When sharing my pictures of places like Kintail and Glen Coe that no photo could capture, I have tended to preface them with, “this will give you some idea...” You just had to be there.

#3 The Scottish People. They were funny, warm, welcoming, proud, strong, emotional, and just delightful. They also gave me a new vocabulary that I like to throw around: green wellies, tablet, wee dram, heery coos, cullen skink, haggis, slaight mhor, full Scottish breakfast, and a favorite, “this is us.” (Thanks, Iain.)

#2 The Stories. We heard storytellers everywhere—from guides to locals to clan members—all sharing their knowledge with us. Like the Seanchaidhs of old, they passed on the tales and traditions of Scotland and Clan MacRae. Between the adventures of the tour and the camaraderie of fellow travelers, I returned with plenty of stories of my own.

#1 Clan MacRae. The feeling of connection was overwhelming. We laughed together, cried together, learned

together, and lived together for 14 days. You are in my thoughts daily. I look forward to meeting again.

The stories that led me to Scotland now have settings, characters and plots. There are beginnings and endings. Blanks have been filled, and details added. I will never know if everything my grandfather said was true. But now I have my own experience with Scotland and Kintail. It is true, and I am forever changed because Scotland welcomed me. Like McRaes before me, I have had quite a journey. My hope is that they would be as proud of me as I am of them now.

Tony and Margo at the ceilidh in Dornie Hall, seated with David Ross McRae.



Touring Scotland with the MacRaes

by Larry McRae

The weather was terrible: rain fell, wind blew, and the temperature rarely got to 60°. The strangest day was Saturday at Eilean Donan, when sunshine alternated with drenching rain showers throughout the day. Locals allowed as how it was the worst summer in decades. So, we've got that behind, and we'll say no more about it. And on the days it really mattered – the worship service at Clachan Duich and the Tattoo, for example – the weather was fine.

Two receptions and a ceilidh with fellow MacRaes, a couple of battlefields (I visited Flodden Field after the tour), smoked salmon, cullen skink, single malt whisky, genuine haggis, good dark Scottish ale, twilight over Loch Carron, Flora MacDonald's grave and Harris tweed – it was a full two weeks, with some old friends and repeated experiences as well as some new friends and new adventures. We can only mention some highlights.

On the first day of the tour, we got a bus-window view of Glasgow and a new perspective on Iain MacDonald, our inimitable Blue-badge tour guide. Iain is a native of Glasgow and a former police officer of that city; his comments as we drove about revealed his deep affection for and pride in his home town. The highlight of that day was the "House for an Art Lover." It isn't well known, and Judy had found the place almost by accident. Charles Rennie Mackintosh, the most famous Scottish architect and designer of the 20th century, designed it as a competition entry. With some elements designed by his wife, Margaret MacDonald, and with no client over his shoulder, Mackintosh could let his imagination run free, and the result is alternately striking, surprising, engaging

and intimate. Never built in Mackintosh's lifetime, its construction was begun in the 1990's by a foundation created to preserve Mackintosh's heritage. In this brief space, we can only say: "If you're going anywhere near Glasgow, go see the Rennie Mackintosh house." Our visit fittingly concluded with high tea in an airy upstairs dining room with a view over Glasgow.

In Dundee Jimi the Piper joined us at the welcome dinner. He is an engaging man who told his dinner companions about his son's chemical engineering studies at the University of Edinburgh, about his work as a sound engineer, about a friendly encounter with the Seattle Police during a busking gig in America, and about having his kilt pleats riffled by airport security searching for contraband. After dinner Jimi treated us to several pipe tunes, recalling for us all the halls of our ancestors.

From Dundee, we visited Braemar Castle, a quirky hunting lodge built by the 4th Earl of Mar. It was in the nearby village of Braemar that the 6th Earl proclaimed James VIII King of Scotland and set in train the events that led to the fell Battle of Sheriffmuir a few months later. Today the castle is in the hands of a local charitable trust, and the Queen usually attends the nearby Braemar Highland Games. We enjoyed a guided tour by the knowledgeable and personable Ms. Laura McMeekin of the castle's staff. The journey back to Dundee is through the Grampian Mountains, rough and naked country with not even sheep in the northern part. As we neared Dundee, however, the altitude fell and we were soon back amongst verdant fields and farms – another spectacular road trip in Scotland.

Before the commemoration at the Sheriffmuir Battlefield, the tour visited the Sheriffmuir Inn, an ancient business and structure, for lunch. We were offered a very

Scottish menu of everything from cullen skink to fish and chips to venison, all accompanied by those delightful brown ales. After lunch, we laid a wreath at the MacRae monument and marched down to the Gathering Stone. There Eduardo MacRae, the Argentine in our group, talked about the battle and his ancestor's survival and flight, while Jimi was present to pipe, and a very large group of MacRaes reflected on their ancestors and the strange paths that had led them to the ends of the earth and led us back here again. In the evening, Scotland's MacRaes laid on a reception in Dunblane, the town nearest Sheriffmuir. It was a soft and pleasant evening, and much of the tartan-clad crowd spilled out into the garden of the Old Churches House.

Sunday in Kintail was a high point of the trip.

The Canadians had arranged to place a plaque honoring Lt. Col. John McCrae alongside the WWI memorial on the west wall of the castle. A number of clan members assembled, from Scotland and all corners of the globe. Commander Jim gave a brief talk, as did Owen MacRae, President of the Clan MacRae Society of Canada. Col. Stuart MacRae, U.S. Army, read the poem "In Flanders Fields" and then R.W. Lillard's poem, "America Answers." A large and imposing man, the colonel is every inch a soldier, and it was a moving moment. Owen unveiled the plaque, there was a moment of photo opportunities and then we all drove on the ten miles or so along the shores of Loch Duich to Clachan Duich with its ruined church and statue of a Great War soldier standing

(Continued on page 15)

The 1715 Battle of Sheriffmuir

by Judy MacRae

One of the most significant events in Clan MacRae history is the Battle of Sheriffmuir, in the 1715 Jacobite uprising. Many events led to this uprising, but there were two that really rankled the Scots. The first was the 1707 Act of Union whereby 400 years of Scottish independence were "undone" as England and Scotland united. The second event was the ascension of George I to the British throne as the first monarch of the House of Hanover. George was German, Protestant and supposedly could not even speak English. It is said that there were over 50 closer relatives to Queen Anne who had died, but all Catholics were banned from ascension to the throne by the 1701 Act of Settlement law.

So in September of 1715, John Erskine, Earl of Mar raised the Jacobite standard at Braemar starting the uprising against George I. Their goal was to depose George and replace him with James Francis Edward Stuart. Jacobite, derived from Jacobus - Latin for James - was the term given to those who continued to support the Stuart dynasty as the true heirs to the throne, a dynasty that began with King Robert II of the first Stewart King of Scotland in 1371, a title derived from their position as Stewards to the Kingdom.

It was on a bitterly cold day then in November of 1715 that an indecisive battle was fought at Sheriffmuir between the Jacobites under the Earl of Mar and George I's forces under John Campbell, Duke of Argyll. Mar commanded one of the largest Highland armies ever raised numbering around 12,000 men opposing around 4,500 government troops. The opposing armies assaulted each other, with the right wing of each army overwhelming the left wing of the other. Unfortunately, the MacRaes were on the Jacobites' left wing. They fought valiantly for many hours against Argyle's heavy cavalry dragoons. They were pushed back to the Allan Water where

they were cut down almost to a man. There is an old saying that there were 58 new widows in Kintail that day.

It seems odd to be drawn to such a tragic event, but it's hard to avoid a sense of awe and reverence when considering men willing to fight to the death for a cause. For those of us who were on the tour, we know it is not an easy trek to even get to Sheriffmuir from the Kintail region. And we know from historical references that the MacRaes were poorly clothed and poorly supplied, but what they had in abundance was a will to fight for what they believed was right and the courage to die. Most of us do not even have a clue about the horrors of war, and I believe the reality of Sheriffmuir was worse than any battle scene in *Braveheart*. The MacRae warriors at Sheriffmuir were outnumbered and savagely attacked by the British dragoons and each time their lines were broken, the MacRaes rallied again – up to ten times that day.

The MacRae clan crest badge has an arm grasping a sword with the word *Fortitudine*, Latin for "with fortitude." The dictionary definition of fortitude is "mental and emotional strength in facing difficulty, adversity, danger, or temptation courageously." The MacRae warriors at Sheriffmuir displayed all of this and so much more. These warriors did not surrender, but continued to rally again and again and surge forward as they fought superior forces unto their very deaths.

November 13, 1715, was a shattering day for Clan MacRae, but we honor the strength of character and the integrity of these MacRae warriors. In a day and age where loyalty and courage are hard to find, remember Sheriffmuir and the fallen MacRaes. As you put on your MacRae tartan and as you pin on your clan crest badge, remember their courage and shout "Sgurr Uaran," the war cry of Clan MacRae. It's in your blood to have fortitude – to have mental and emotional strength in facing difficulty, adversity, danger, or temptation courageously. So, rise up MacRaes into the true identity of your warrior blood! *Sgurr Uaran!*



Find many more photos on our Facebook Page.



Top left, Braemar Castle; below left, the Music Room at the House for an Art Lover. Below: in a geologist's paradise, folded metamorphic rock on the Butt of Lewis.



At left, Jimi the Piper leads Clan MacRae up Arthur's Seat.





At left, our genial and genius coach driver, Stewart Campbell. At right, Eduardo MacRae addresses the group at the Gathering Stone. Clockwise Below: Jim McCrea lays a flower on the MacRae Monument at Sheriffmuir; Marigold MacRae Jarvis ascends Arthur's seat with Dave MacRae; Sheila and Doug Schmidt with Judy McCrae at Stirling Castle.



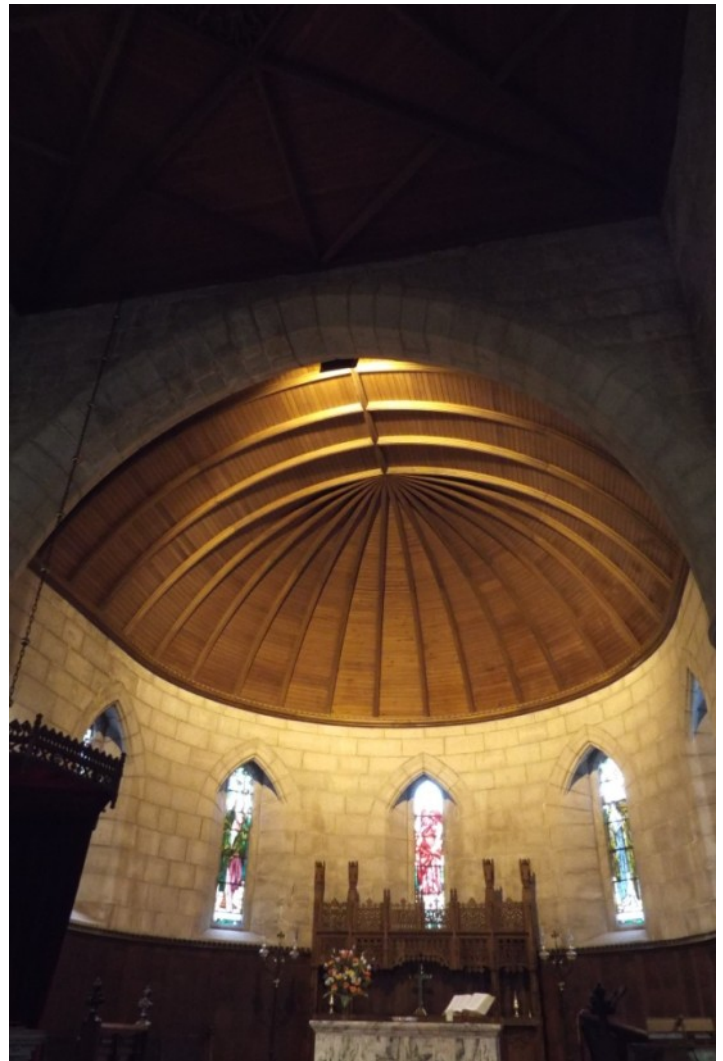
Below, David McRae III and David McRae Jr. at the pinnacle of Arthur's Seat.





Sunrise over Loch Carron at Plockton, the Jewel in the Crown of Scotland's Ministry of Quaint and Scenic Villages; Col. Stuart McRae reads "In Flanders Fields," while Owen MacRae and Commander Jim McRae listen; Rev. David Kellas delivers the sermon at Clachan Duich; the tour group at Eilean Donan Castle.





Above left: Rehearsal for Evensong in the Glasgow Cathedral. Beneath the sanctuary is found the grave of St. Kentigern (or St. Mungo), the founder of Glasgow or "The Dear Green Place." Above: The interior of Crathie Kirk, parish church for Balmoral Castle. Below: the gang on the coach. At left is the stained glass image of St. Margaret in her chapel at Edinburgh Castle. Opposite page: a garden arcade at Balmoral Castle with Laura McRae, her father David, Larry McRae and Roz McRae; Roz's husband Dave was behind the camera.





Above: A flower bed at the House for an Art Lover;
below Jim and Mary McCrea at the ceilidh.



Jimi
McRae
graced
the group
with pipe
tunes at
the wel-
come
dinner in
Dundee.





Across the road from Eilean Donan Castle, the village of Dornie meanders along the banks of Loch Long.

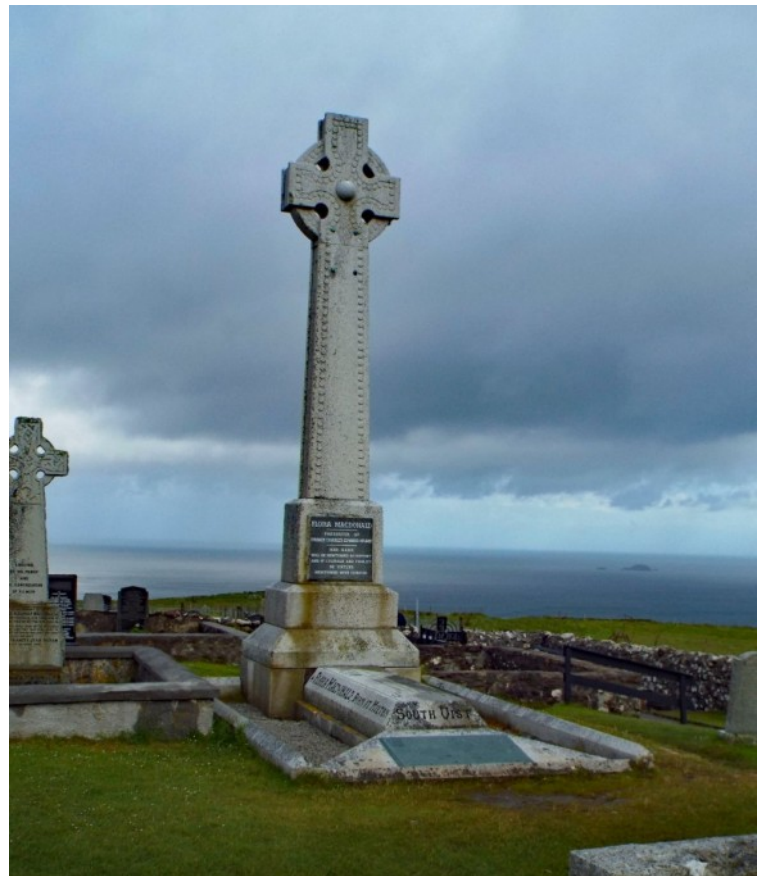
Dinner at World's End, left to right are Deby Adrian, Rebecca Ferrell, Barbara Peters and her father David Peters and Mike Golec, Rebecca's husband.

At bottom, Flora MacDonald's grave on Skye; just below a token left on the grave reads, "Greetings from Prague."

At left below, a lady of the Queen's Chamber, engaged in needlework at Stirling Castle.



Opposite page: Owen MacRae and Bruce MacRae at the Gathering Stone; the remains of a plate of langoustine; a loom at the Gearrannan Blackhouse village; the iconic Jacobite Monument at Glenfinnan on Loch Shiel.





At left: In legend, a newly-wed couple who spent their wedding night on this islet in Loch Lomond would have a long and contented marriage.





**We'll be coming, we'll be coming,
We'll be coming down the braes
When you hear the sound of the Wild MacRaes,
We'll be coming down the braes!**

Eduardo MacRae with Jimi and company made a lively entry and an heroic toast at the ceilidh.



Jimi pipes on Cnoc a Clachan; the standing stones of Calanish; fireworks end the Tattoo; Eddie MacRae addressed the haggis at the farewell banquet; Logan Opals with the statue of Greyfriars Bobby.





Donald and Stella Broughton were among the first-timers on the tour. Donald contributed the following observations.

A Scottish Man in Ullapool

We were all waiting for Iain to call us to the ferry from Ullapool to Stornoway. Strong winds, stinging rain and weariness combined to make our foursome head for shelter and sustenance. We finally found a “tea house” and blustered our way in to a five-table cozy serving place squeezed in amongst shelves and racks of “tourist delights.”

Some young people left just as we sat and so we were the only customers save for an elderly man and his (perhaps) daughter. He was comfortably dressed and groomed but sat slouched in his chair looking sad and, I guessed, in some pain. His companion was trying to stir him into conversation. He paid no attention to us.

We were soon served our tea and coffee and sweets. As I was talking to Ken, my brother, my eyes wandered to some shelves behind him where there was a display of three sextants. My excitement level went up 100 points as I saw a coveted addition to my collection of antique measuring devices. The only question was which one to buy. The shopkeeper was quite excited to be selling one of these pieces, and so there was lively conversation among all present except the elderly man.

Presently, the co-owner of the shop came out of the back room holding a large brass instrument and asked if I knew what it was. It was a surveyor’s transit with all the fixtures of the tribach and in mint condition. Ken, who is an engineer, and I were really excited as we examined it. Suddenly another voice broke through, and the elderly man said, “I know what that is. I used it!”

In an instant this man, formerly supine in his tea house chair, came alive. The clerk took the instrument to him, and he held it close and told us about his days as a surveyor along this section of the coast of Scotland. I suppose we would have learned a lot from this man had our deadline not loomed. As we left the shop, he was still talking about one of his jobs. The Tour gave us many gifts, but this cameo of the life of a Scottish man was a side benefit that I will not forget.

Travels with Jimi and Friends

by Margo Ashcraft

Thousands of travelers tour Scotland each year. Many come to honor and learn about their personal clan history. The Clan MacRae Gathering Tour was such an opportunity, but with a special addition no other clan has: Jimi the Piper. Jimi played such a role in my first clan experience that I cannot imagine the event without him. He welcomed, guided, informed, and entertained us. He also confirmed that bagpipe music makes me cry. It was Jimi’s piping during the march to Arthur’s Seat, the memorial service at Sheriffmuir, our visit to Eilean Donan Castle, and the service at Clachan Duich that made those events come to life. They remain in my mind the foremost images of our trip.

One of my favorite days on the tour featured Jimi and began in Glenelg. In a sense it was a turning point, and that became evident when we switched to a smaller bus due to the reduced maneuvering space in the village. We had arrived in Kintail after a week of visiting large public attractions. They provided a panorama of Scottish history, but now we were seeing a close-up in MacRae country.

We started at the Community Hall and walked to the War Memorial on the Loch where Jimi spoke. The weather was wet and appropriately somber. Next we shuttled in groups and joined Jimi at the Glenelg Brochs. These 2000-year-old Iron Age structures are unique to Scotland. They are double walled strongholds built by the Picts, and Jimi gave an interesting presentation on that culture including its possible connection with MacRae lineage.

The sun had reappeared by now and the view down the valley was sparkling. We returned to the Community Hall where volunteers were preparing a lunch, and bravely trying to accommodate our large numbers. To fill the time while we waited, two local residents were enlisted to speak to us. The pastor had just been passing by when he saw the crowd, and Jean McRae MacRae was helping with the lunch. They each cheerfully ad-libbed by recounting MacRae stories. It was a lovely example of village hospitality.

Our next stop was Eilean Donan, the clan’s beautiful ancestral castle. Again, Jimi piped and led us across the bridge where a wreath laying ceremony in memory of John McCrae was held the next morning. The castle is iconic for Scotland as well as the MacRaes, and the time spent there was emotional and fulfilling; a peak experience that I will never forget.

The day ended in my favorite town in Scotland—Plockton. After dinner we walked to a nearby pub. Jimi was playing there and MacRaes cheered and danced and savored the moments of our clan being together again in Kintail. When it was over we walked along the water-

front in the late evening summer light, enjoying the silhouettes and still reflections of mountains, palm trees, and boats. I thought of ancestors saying goodbye here and realized that it would still be hard to say goodbye in 2015. It reminded me of a saying:

*Cousins are connected heart to heart,
Time and distance cannot break them apart.*

The scenery and history we had seen was impressive. But it was the people we met who made Scotland more than a travel poster. Besides Jimi, there was Iain our guide and Stewart and Jim our drivers, Commander

Jim of the Scotland Clan with his eloquent remarks, the residents of Dornie, Glenelg and Plockton who made us feel welcome, and the many others we met and spoke with around the country. We came to learn about ourselves and learned about you. And it turns out—you are the true treasures of Scotland. We will remember your smiles, gentle humor, pride in your country, and your gracious welcome to “cousins” from around the world. Like previous MacRaes, we found it hard to leave. But now we understand that time and distance cannot keep us apart.

2015 Clan MacRae Tour of Scotland, Day 9

by Janet McCrea Dieman

Our coach carries us back 5,000 years toward the mystery of the standing stones. Callanish, one of Scotland's 1,200 megalith sites, is not as well known as Stonehenge, but it holds as many secrets and guards them well. I walk slowly toward my stone sisters. The cold, wind-driven rain slows my approach. Each deliberate step takes me back a hundred years.

I come to the circle to take my place and listen. I see the stones. Some tall; some small. Each placed in a particular spot for a particular reason. Each firmly holding its place of duty and honor. The ravages of Nature are unable to alter its placement. I stand patiently. And wait and listen. I wonder why the stones are here and what purpose they served. I think about the people who put them here. And sought guidance from them. I marvel at the insight to conceive such a place and the ingenuity to build it. I feel their connection to a time I do not know and cannot understand.

My stone sisters reveal nothing to me directly. But they open my mind to the time that came before and created the time that is now.

We drive on. Suddenly it's 2,000 years ago. I imagine I'm living in a raw, windswept land accented by frigid temperatures, pelting rain. Life is harsh, unforgiving. I cannot rest against invasion. I struggle. I live one more day. Ten-thousand-year-old glacier gifts litter the landscape. I use these rocks to build a fortress. My fortress is round with only one entrance. I can defend this place. My fortress is double walled. I am protected against the wind in this place. My fortress is strong. I can survive here. My children and grandchildren will survive here, too. We are safe. The rigors of life forced me to build this Broch at Carloway. You are the result of my work.

The road leads us on to our final stop. It's a mere 250 years ago. We visit Gearnannan Blackhouse Village. But this black house is modernized to mask the hardships endured by those forced from their land during the Clearances, forced to live on barren land with no

work but that of survival.

There is another Black House called the Black House of Arnol. It is an apt description of earlier times.

Here we see a house with windows. There are no windows in the Black House of Arnol. It is dark from



lack of light.

Here we see a house with a fireplace. The Black House of Arnol has only a small peat fire. There is no chimney. Smoke from the peat fire coats the inside of our lungs and the inside of the house, with soot. The insides are black from layers of soot. We feel forlorn, forsaken, and forgotten. Despair robs us of hope. We are cold from lack of hope, lack of food, and lack of heat.

Here we see a house with floor, wall and ceiling finishes. The Black House of Arnol has an earthen floor with thatch walls and ceiling. The animals that live at the far end of the house add only a small measure of heat.

The house we see here shows us life in the present with little resemblance to past adversity. The Black House of Arnol tells the story of struggle by hundreds of people for hundreds of years.

The Clearances. The Black House. A dark time in Scottish history. Today we have had a glimpse of our past. And grasped the meaning of our clan's very motto: *fortitude.*

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(Continued from page 4)

silently above on the knoll of Cnoch a Clachan. Jimi piped from the cnoch as we gathered among the grave-stones to listen to a lively and appropriate sermon by the Rev. David Kellas from nearby Glenelg. Reverend Kellas talked about the history of the clan and the depopulation of Kintail in the nineteenth century, symbolized by the presence in the land of feral goats, their keepers gone to Australia or Canada or the other ends of the earth. As we dispersed after the sermon, Miranda VanLynden handed each of us a sprig of fragrant Scottish heather.

A long afternoon's drive brought us Ullapool to meet the Caledonian MacBride ferry to Stornoway. Stornoway was a port of emigration from the the Highlands and Islands, and in the past a center of the fishing industry. Today it seems to depend on tourism and Harris tweed – indeed, one of the more popular stops was to a small shop jammed to overflowing with tweed, sport coats, ladies' dresses, handbags and on and on.

Lewis and Harris brought some new ideas: piles of drying peat, the Calanish Standing Stones and more insights into Iain MacDonald. He had come, so he told us, to Harris as a boy to visit his grandparents. In his telling, it was a miserable time for a boy, with little to do and stern Calvinist grandparents to make matters worse. At some point, he swore never to return, but eventually he, like all mature people, reconciled with his childhood, and some part of the character formed by his ancestors' hard life on Lewis lingers today in his own character.

Clachan Duich

David Ross McRae joined our tour from Australia. He offers these observations about Sunday's events.

On August 2nd, we had a moving memorial service for John McCrae at the Eilean Donan war memorial. Owen remembered his countryman, and a plaque was commemorated in his honour. It was goose bumps for me when he said "the children of Kintail have been called to return home" and he spoke lovingly of Robert MacRae, the former President of Clan MacRae Canada, who had planned their tour.

After a group photo in front of Eilean Donan castle, we drove to Clachan Duich, and congregated at the ancient burial ground of the MacRaes. The Reverend David Kellas led us in a worship service there. The reading from Genesis was to remind us about the story of Joseph and the family reunion he had, where all was forgiven. Then we sang "Amazing Grace" and "Praise my soul, the King of Heaven" with the moving words "ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven."

The reading from Luke 15 (1-10) tells us that the shepherd looks for the one who is lost, even though he has the 99 with him. Hope he finds me!

From Harris we crossed to Skye, with our first stop at the Kilmuir Graveyard, where rest the remains of Flora MacDonald, whose heroism helped preserve the life of Bonnie Prince Charlie as he fled in the aftermath of the Battle of Culloden. Her original headstone was chipped away by souvenir hunters, but today a large Celtic cross marks her grave, standing very tall in a desolate and wind-swept landscape. A plaque bears the opinion of Samuel Johnson: "[Flora MacDonald is] a name that will be mentioned in history, and if courage and fidelity are virtues, mentioned with honour."

After driving down the length of Skye and a ferry crossing to Malaig, we came to Neptune's Ladder outside Fort William and to the quaint and charming Moorings Hotel. Neptune's Ladder is a series of locks, part of the great Scottish engineer Thomas Telford's Caledonian Canal that runs along the Great Glen to connect the North Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. A trail alongside is a footpath over the same route, and there was that evening a splendid view of the mist-shrouded Ben Nevis.

At this point, we had to say "goodbye" to Stewart Campbell, who was driving the coach. Stewart is a pleasant and friendly man and extremely capable driver. He had come out of semi-retirement to drive the MacRaes once again, and we parted with gratitude and affection and an indelible memory of his deft handling of the coach on a hairpin turn above Malaig.

Since Friday was the Tattoo, the farewell dinner was on Thursday. After dinner, Shirley McGrath from Australia, who has operatic training, delivered a stunning *a capella* performance of "Danny Boy," then roped Iain MacDonald into a duet of "Loch Lomond," and we all joined into a couple of verses of "Auld Lang Syne."

By Friday morning, downtown Edinburgh was jammed with people, and the Fringe had spilled out onto sidewalk performances of all sorts by people from all over Europe. Strolling, I paused for a while to watch a magician from Poland do his thing, but there were musicians and mimes and heaven knows what. From a beginning literally on the fringe, the Fringe has come to dominate the Edinburgh Festival, with hundreds of performances in dozens of venues. But we only had tickets for the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo, which dates from 1950 and is one of the older components of the Edinburgh Festival. So on Friday evening, we hiked up to Edinburgh Castle, where bleacher seats had been erected on the Castle's esplanade with seating for around 9,000 people. Over the years, the Tattoo has evolved away from a strictly military display, so although we were treated to massed pipe bands, a U.S. Air Force drill team, a Swiss drum corps and the Citadel's pipe band from Charleston, SC, we also had the spectacle of a Chinese dragon dance and a Bollywood troupe presenting the romance between an Indian lass and a kilt-clad Scotsman. Great fun, and it all concluded with a superb fireworks display over the Castle.



Clockwise from above: Chinese dancers form a dragon at the Edinburgh Military Tattoo; a ticket scalper on the Royal Mile; the worship service at Clachan Duich; hardier members of the tour face into a gale force wind at MacLeod's Stane, above Traigh Iar Beach on the Isle of Harris; Judy and Bruce McRae on "Boot Hill" in front of the chapel at Scone Palace; the sign explains that the mound was formed by nobles dumping boots full of dirt from their lands to show allegiance to a new king.

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