



# Maple Leaf MacGregors

A newsletter by, for and about Canadian Gregors, their heritage and their kin.



Wayne MacGregor Parker, Chair of Canadian Chapter, and his sister Holly Land at the Fergus Highland Games in 2012

## Name the Newsletter

Maple Leaf MacGregors is the working title of what we hope will become a twice-yearly newsletter of interest to all members of the Canada Chapter and their friends and relatives.

It was suggested by our Chair, Wayne, and I rather like it personally, but it's not carved in stone.

We'd love to hear your thoughts about it, and any suggestions you may have about a permanent name for the publication.

Please contact me at [awboyles@hotmail.com](mailto:awboyles@hotmail.com) with any ideas and I'll pass them on to the Chapter Council for consideration.

Andrew Wilhelm-Boyles, Ed.

## Greetings from the Chair....

Hello fellow Clan Gregor Society Canada Chapter Members.

I trust this finds you well and in good spirits early in another New Year. May 2013 be blessed with global improvements in goodwill, safety, sanity, stewardship and economic prosperity.

We live in a time that is blessed in so many ways when compared with the privations of our Gregor forebears. And yet, an honest review of our modern society, along with a good understanding of our past can often leave one wondering what have we learned in the years in between.

## “NONE IS OLDER THAN CLAN GREGOR”

Greetings to our Canadian kin! Springtime is always a good time to share a few tales, so I'd like to tell you about a few of the "hunts" CGS researchers are on right now. As you've probably guessed, joining Clan Gregor is very much about "Who am I, and where did I come



from?" This past July, Richard McGregor and I brought a team of archaeologists to Stronmilchan, the traditional homesite in Glenorchy for the MacGregor chiefs from at least 1300 AD.

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**From the Chair** *(Continued from page 1)*

Better yet, where are we going? What are we doing with the freedom, liberty and citizenship that eluded many MacGregors for so many years? Our ancestors were immigrants who left Scotland bound for opportunity in the New World. I wonder, do we honour the legacy they left us? Are we willing to do the same for others? Here in Canada, we enjoy some of the very best of what our world has to offer in both natural and human resources. Will we be remembered as wise stewards of this priceless legacy?

Welcome to our first Chapter newsletter. We are a far flung group and it is my hope this communication will help to keep us stitched together with information and news. In these pages we can reach out and share ideas and things

of interest for all Gregors in Canada. In every sense, this is your Chapter and your newsletter, so please send along contributions for future issues. Tell us your story, share the news of family, or provide dates for Highland Games or Scottish events in your community.

Many thanks to Judy Hoensbroek and Keith MacGregor for their contributions to this newsletter, and to Andrew Wilhelm-Boyles for his willingness to serve as Editor. And a hearty thank you to each and every one of you for your willingness to join up and help form this Canadian Chapter.

Ceidh mille failte. (A hundred-thousand welcomes!)

*Wayne MacGregor Parker*

**NONE IS OLDER**

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Interestingly, these chiefs (Glenorchy/Glenstrae) appear to represent the core MacGregor group in our DNA project at Family Tree DNA, and Sir Malcolm's DNA sits dead center in that group! In fact, the DNA says that 53% of us descend from one individual – Ian Cam, who lived at that site 600 years ago. In my first article (CGS newsletter #75) I described "digging" (digitally) about ten structures on that site, where previous government documents had indicated maybe one or two. That lit the fire! (see attached field composite, and tell me what you see). Next summer I hope to raise funds to do "invasive" archaeology, i.e. sink test trenches where we

think we may find organic material (well, moat, hearths) and try for carbon dates on the results.

Why the effort in this direction? There are scanty records on our glens, taking us back to about 1250 AD at best, and probably no other way to get dates for occupation here. I personally do not believe that Gregor of the Golden Bridles (ca 1300-1360 AD) is the namesake of our clan – Peter and I argue about that all the time - but that we are somehow connected to Gregor ("Giric" in Gaelic), who reigns as "King over the Picts" or alternatively "King of Alba", ca 878 -889 AD. So this search is really aimed at the 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> century origins of the clan. That in turn makes the story a lot bigger – now

we encounter Vikings, Saxons, and Picts (who may be earlier kin!). Let's also not forget that medieval treasure, the Book of the Dean of Lismore, or some of the oral traditions passed down about us – things like "MacGregor was the first to raise smoke in these glens", "None is older than Clan Gregor" and "MacDonald is the heather, MacGregor is the rock". These are more than mere platitudes.

I offer all this in the hope that some of you will become researchers too, at least in your own way. What was presented as history in previous centuries, particularly the 19<sup>th</sup>, has proven to be uninformed at best, and wrong in many instances.

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**NONE IS OLDER***Continued from page 2*

People like Richard McGregor, Peter Lawrie, Neil McGregor of Australia, Martin McGregor at Glasgow University, and myself have undertaken to investigate that history; to re-write the story of Clan Gregor for future generations. It is an incredible story, a bloody tale of struggle and survival that goes back into the Dark Ages and enters into the modern consciousness during what Black Duncan Campbell called 'The MacGregor Wars' (makes the Hatfields and McCoys look pretty tame).

Clan Gregor is THE underdog clan in Scotland. The survivor clan. The clan who wouldn't roll over and die despite the genocide carried out against us. Don't take that title lightly.

There's a reason why the crowd cheered for us in 2009 on the march up the Royal Mile (reversing our march in 1822 when we escorted the king down the Mile!). If you don't believe me, ask Wayne Parker – he was in the march!

Again, I hope our Canadian members, new and old, will take advantage of our historic, genealogic and DNA Project resources, our excellent newsletter and our on-going preservation projects in Scotland. We are delighted that a new Chapter has joined our worldwide family in kinship (yes, even on Facebook, duh...).

More than anything, I hope you'll read the books and scan the maps and learn the names and stories. Put things on a

timeline that you can keep adding to. Don't hesitate to Google anything you find – names, battles, documents – even Wikipedia gives a barebones idea of where to go next. Or ask us - there's a large list of recommended sources available from CGS that can keep you out of the muck and mistakes of the past. If it's Rob Roy you want, begin with William H. Murray's *Rob Roy MacGregor: His Life and Times* and not Sir Walter Scott, for example.

And hey...I'll buy some beers for the first one who can tell me what our warcry means... now that's speaking Canadian, eh?

Yours aye,  
Keith MacGregor\* (page 4)  
kmac1@optonline.net

**IMPORTANT DATES FOR ALL MacGREGORS**

**February 7<sup>th</sup> 1603** – The Battle of Glen Fruin sees the Gregors overwhelm a much larger Clan Colquhoun in a bloody route that enrages the court of King James VI at Stirling.

**March 7<sup>th</sup> 1671** – Robert Roy MacGregor was baptized second son to Lieutenant Colonel Donald Glas, and Margaret Campbell MacGregor of Glengyle at the head of Loch Katrine. His actual birthdate is unknown, but probably was in late February. Highland custom held that newborns had to be baptized within 14-21 days of birth.

**April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1603** – By Act of Privy Council and Parliament, the use of the names Gregor and MacGregor was banned, setting the stage for 141 years of Proscription. Later, after betrayal and nine months in the Tollbooth in Edinburgh, our Chief, Alasdair, was hung in retribution at the Mercat Cross on January 20<sup>th</sup>, 1604 along with five other MacGregors.

**April 6<sup>th</sup>** - Now known as Tartan Day, this day is celebrated because it is the anniversary (693<sup>rd</sup>. this year) of the Arbroath Declaration, signed in 1320, declaring Scottish freedom and independence from England. It remains today as a moving and inspiring summary of the human spirit and nationalistic passion. In 1776 its stirring message inspired the American Declaration of Independence.

**August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2013** – Mark your calendars and plan to attend the Canadian Chapter Annual General Meeting at the Fergus Highland Games in Fergus, Ontario.

**Looking for Highland Games in your area?**

There are a great number of Highland Games all over Canada every summer. To get the latest dates and information go to this address on the web: [http://web.ripnet.com/~nimmos/highland\\_games.html#Ontario](http://web.ripnet.com/~nimmos/highland_games.html#Ontario) and drop down to Canadian Bagpipe Links – Highland Games and Festivals in Canada for a comprehensive listing. Please let Wayne know if you are interested in manning a Gregor tent at a Highland Games in your area.



**"Gregorach to the Core"**

© by Judy Heynsbroek

Descendants of Gregor by 900 A.D.  
King Alpin of Scotland's Royal legacy  
From Scone to the Braes of Balquhiddier they came  
To prosper in pride of their ancestral name.

The MacGregors were not the largest of Clans  
But that never stood in their way  
For the strength and the might of each Gregor man  
Together won battles on many a day.

When One made an oath He honored his word  
For Fairness and Justice he stood  
He held onto his land by "Fire & Sword"  
For dealings his word spoken was good.

By the 18<sup>th</sup> Century changes would come  
Much Highlander land would be lost  
Clansmen now Tenants on Overlord land  
MacGregors had suffered and paid a high cost.

Our famed rogue Rob Roy now rested in peace  
He smiled down from his heavenly place  
And granted a new course-to own not to lease  
To those who would choose, of his Royal Race.

A distant voice was calling clear  
A new life waited for those who would hear  
MacGregors left Highland homes one by one  
On ships bound for America they would come

They fought at first for Britain  
On this distant Western shore  
Then found new hope and freedom  
In this land their hearts restored.

Home is now America for these Clan Gregor kin  
New legends made as Voyageurs and Farmers once again  
In Canada and the U.S. we've prospered by the score  
But in our hearts we'll always be  
Gregorach to the Core!!

**From member Al Hoherty to any members interested in genealogy:** I belong to the Durham Chapter of the Ontario Genealogy Society (OGS), and I also belong to the Scottish SIG (Special Interest Group) of the OGS as well. Our Durham Chapter is the one holding this year's annual OGS Conference at Durham College in Oshawa, and the Scottish SIG is planning an early morning breakfast meeting on Sunday, June 2<sup>nd</sup>. If any other members of the Canadian Clan Gregor Chapter are interested, please check the website at: <http://www.ogs.on.ca/conference2013/home/>.

**Gathering 2014, Special Reminder**

Scotland has asked us to remind you that anyone interested in attending the grand international MacGregor Gathering in July 2014 please report in to the Secretary at [society@clangregor.org](mailto:society@clangregor.org) just as soon as possible to reserve your accommodations. **Final confirmation and a down payment are due May 1st, 2013. (Deadline has been extended).**

**This is very important!**

I can tell you from firsthand experience that this is a trip and occasion not to miss. My wife and I went and had the trip of a lifetime meeting Gregors from 11 countries, and sharing our history and heritage in the dramatic countryside of our forebears. Highlights included being guests of Sir Malcolm and Lady MacGregor, visiting ancestral sites at Dalmally and Stronmilchan, and spending time with many of the Council and Chapter members from Scotland and abroad. **Come, Join us. You won't regret it!**



**Ian McGregor and Annie MacGregor Stadden at the 2012 Highland Games in Fergus, Ontario**

\*Keith MacGregor, from Connecticut, sits on CGS Council as Overseas Representative and has been instrumental in mentoring the development of the Canadian Chapter. He has a passion for uncovering true MacGregor history and serves as Chapter Historian for this and several other chapters.