

Clan MacKinnon Society

PHILANTHROPY

MacKinnon Hall, West Lothian, Scotland (2015)

MacKinnon Hall, a Scout lodge located in West Lothian, Scotland, underwent a large renovation in 2015. We were happy to support this project.



Caisteal Maol Access Path Project, Skye, Scotland (2021)

This historic Clan MacKinnon seat on Skye, Scotland was in need of improvements to the hiking path leading up to it, as well as new signage to inform visitors. In mid-July 2021 final approval was received by the [Kyleakin & Kylerhea Community Council \(KKCC\)](#) to begin construction. Heavy machinery and hard work carved a permanent, safe walking trail that is ready for visitors. The work was completed later in the year, and Clan MacKinnon Society is enormously proud to have contributed to this project.

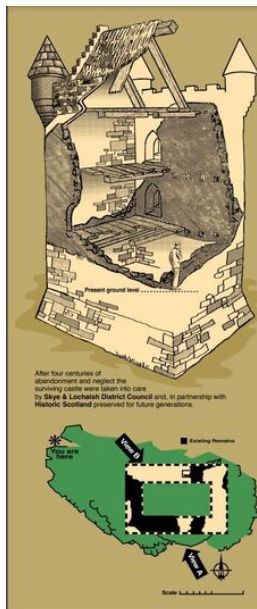




Before



After



Caisteal Mael

The Bare Castle

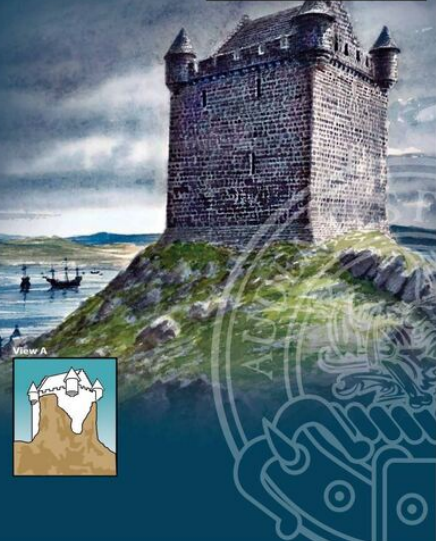
During the later middle ages the castle was known as "Dunakin". As with the place-name Kyleskin, this echoes a vestigial memory of the Norwegian King Haakon, who sailed through the narrows with his fleet in 1295 to defeat at the hands of Alexander III at the Battle of Largs.

Following desertion and gradual collapse, the castle assumed its present name. Tradition relates that the castle was built by a Norwegian princess known as "Sauri Mary", wife of a Macdonald chief. Her income was said to have derived from tolls levied on ships sailing through the narrows. Only ships of her native land were exempt, and to ensure all others paid their dues, a massive stout chain was stretched across the Kyle. At her death her remains were interred beneath a cairn on nearby Seinn na Caillich so that the winds from her native land might pass over her final resting place. The present castle is a simple rectangular tower of three stories, with garret space in a roof projecting above the crenellated wall-head. The basement level containing the kitchen and storage area remains filled with collapsed debris and unexplored. Over the centuries rubble collapse has built up against the outside walls concealing the fact that the visitor now enters at the first floor level.



Here would have stood the doorway into the castle, opening into the main hall with its dining tables and large fireplace to welcome visitors. A well preserved window in the south wall appears to have its counterpart in the wall opposite. Stairs, perhaps in the thickness of the walls, led to the private suite of rooms above, the floor level indicated by a line of post-holes. Here too is evidence of at least one further window below the battlement line. The castle was built as a Macdonald strong hold, its architecture indicating a date for construction sometime in the later 13th or earlier 14th centuries. Historical documentation supports for upon the death of James IV at "Madden Field" in 1513, a meeting of the rebellious chiefs was held at "Dunakin" where it was resolved to raise Sir Donald MacDonald to the dignity of Lord of the Isles. During restoration a recent examination of a post-end recovered from the second floor level independently confirmed the high probability of a date for construction sometime between 1400 and 1513. The last occupant of the castle was Neil, a nephew of the 26th chief of the clan Macdonald. His father, Iain Oib, was killed in the final conflict between the MacLeods and MacDonalds fought at Coire na Creiche in the Cuillin in 1601. Here at the castle under the care of his aunt Jane, the young Neil spent his early years.

New Signage



Mull Museum, Mull, Scotland (2021)

When it was brought to our attention by a current Society member that the **Mull Museum** in Tobermory, Mull, Scotland was in need of funds to help in their ongoing efforts to digitize their genealogy and historical records, the Society's Board of Directors unanimously voted to donate funds so they could acquire a scanner. In 2022, we also donated several Scottish historical books to add to the museum's research materials. These books were written by our former historian, Gerald McKinnon, who passed away in 2021.



Genealogical Association of Nova Scotia, Halifax, NS Canada (2021)

Gerald McKinnon, former Representative of the Chief and Society Historian, passed away in June 2021. His son, Ross McKinnon, made a contract with the Genealogy Society of Nova Scotia (GANS) in Halifax to donate over 350 books and research materials from his late father's library. CMS donated funds to help facilitate and pay for the transport of this important historical collection to GANS. Valeria Greenwood, one of the Society's Genealogy Consultants, donated countless hours helping to catalog the collection at GANS. She is pictured below, seated on the right, next to Ross McKinnon. Also pictured are CMS Board Members David MacKinnon (standing, left) and John MacKinnon (standing second from right, with his wife Cindy.)



St. Martin's Church, Kent, England (2022)

This parish churchyard in Acrise is the final resting place for 33rd Clan MacKinnon Chief William Alexander Mackinnon and his son 34th Chief (also named) William Alexander Mackinnon. We donated £100 in appreciation for the care and conservation provided to the graves by local volunteer Mark Sheppard, and to offset any future expenses the church may incur in caring for these graves.



St. Brendan Cemetery, Borge (Barra), Outer Hebrides, Scotland (2022)

This remote cemetery is one of the island's important heritage sites containing the remains of the first church built by missionaries, a number of war graves, and the remains of over 60 MacKinnons. Maintaining the cemetery is a marathon task requiring considerable manual labor by volunteers. The Society donated £350 to the Borge Cemetery Organization to support ongoing upkeep and grass mowing efforts.



Culloden Battlefield, Culloden, Scotland (2022)

The Society sent a financial contribution to the National Trust for Scotland to aid in their "Conserve Culloden" campaign against aggressive development in areas surrounding Culloden Battlefield. NTS hopes to prevent the sale of nearby lands for residential and commercial development in order to preserve the quiet dignity of this historic site that many consider "holy ground."



John Muir Trust, Skye, Scotland (2022)

The Society donated \$1200 to the [John Muir Trust](#) to support their work on the Isle of Skye, in areas that were traditionally held by Clan MacKinnon.

These lands comprise 12,000 hectares of rugged coastline, woodland, peatland, and mountains including Blà Bheinn (“Blaven”). This includes two Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) that give the highest level of protection under European law. Surveys have identified more than 300 archaeological sites, including some of the best-documented ancient settlements on the west coast of Scotland. CMS’ donation specifically supports efforts to maintain hiking paths, woodland regeneration, and coastline cleanup.



Sleat and Strath Amateur Football Club, Skye, Scotland (2023)

The Society sent a donation to the SSAFC, who play on MacKinnon Field in Broadford, Skye, to help them maintain their football pitch. They do a considerable amount of fundraising each summer to pay for the upkeep of their pitch, and CMS was happy to help them out.



Genealogical Association of Nova Scotia, Halifax, NS Canada (2023)

We donated \$1200 to help GANS acquire locking bookcases to house the many volumes of the Gerald McKinnon collection they had received in 2021.

MacKinnon Members of St. Andrew's Society of Detroit (2023)

A recently restored historic portrait of Robert Burns hangs in the Kilgour Scottish Center in Troy, MI. The restoration was supported by the MacKinnon members of the St. Andrew's Society. CMS donated \$200 toward the creation of a plaque to acknowledge the restoration.

Skye History Video Project - Steve Mills (2023)

Society member Steve Mills has undertaken an ambitious project to create a video about the history of MacKinnons on Skye. He is funding the project himself, and CMS contributed \$500 to support this project.

“Conversation Tables”, Belgium/Netherlands/Luxembourg (2024)

CMS member Marc Andre Frere organized English literacy instruction opportunities for Clan MacKinnon Society members within Benelux. The Society donated \$700 to these efforts.

MacKinnon Association of France (2024)

CMS member Robert Amyot has undertaken numerous projects to promote MacKinnon heritage through media communication over the years. The Society donated \$700 to support these efforts.

MacKinnon History in Canada - Ewen Booth (2024)

The Society awarded \$700 to support Ewen’s ambitious project to create a bilingual video documenting and sharing the history of MacKinnons in Canada.

Skye and Lochalsh Archive Centre (2024)

As part of the Highland Archive Service, the Skye and Lochalsh Archive Center collects, conserves and makes accessible records which reflect the history and diversity of the Scottish Highlands and its inhabitants for the benefit of present and future generations. They aim to make the collections in our care as widely accessible as possible at four Archive Centres, through modern digital channels and through an active community engagement programme, enhancing opportunities in culture, learning, leisure, health and wellbeing. The archives held at these centres are the records of official bodies, businesses, societies and individuals and are a unique record of our Highland past, dating from the 14th century to the present day.

In lieu of accepting an honorarium for speaking at our 2024 Edinburgh Gathering, Drambuie brand ambassador Freddie May and historian Andy Fairgreave made a donation of £400 to the Archive Centre on behalf of Clan MacKinnon Society, and their donation was matched by their employer, the distiller William Grant and Sons, Inc.

South Skye Community Campus (2025)

Clan MacKinnon Society has pledged support for the developing South Skye Community Campus in the village of Broadford. Organizers are raising money to enhance community spaces adjacent to the Broadford Primary School which will serve everyone in the surrounding communities. New and improved facilities will include a full sized all-weather astroturf football (soccer) pitch, a newly constructed Games Hall, as well as enhancements to the Village Hall which is routinely booked by community groups. They expect this to have a great impact on the cultural and sporting life of the area. We contributed \$925 in 2025, and will continue to offer support until the construction is complete.

Cape Fear Scottish Immigrant Memorial Cairn (2025)

The ancestors of many Scots, including MacKinnons, arrived at the mouth of the Cape Fear River in North Carolina in America's early years. The Cape Fear Scottish Immigrant Memorial Fund seeks to honor these Scottish Immigrants with a permanent monument at the place where they first set foot on this continent. A memorial Cairn has been constructed at the Brunswick Town Fort Anderson State Historic Site. This is the first step in their attempt to educate the public about the importance of early Scots in the Carolinas and beyond. Clan MacKinnon has made a donation of \$1000 to the Memorial Fund, and a 12"x12" paver will be engraved and placed to acknowledge our contribution.

