

Welcome Clanfolk and friends.

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The Clan Buries its Chief

For those who came in late, we grieved as we were parted from our Chief John MacLeod of MacLeod 29th Chief. I include this photo from Ruth MacLeod of WA, which is of the family following the casket on horse drawn wagon. It is a moving image in many ways; the simple aspect, and humble tone, which allow the grief to be revealed in the unified body of mourners. There is love, respect and dignity here.



The funeral service was held 24 Feb 2007 in Dunvegan at the Duirinish Free Church of Scotland , with a burial afterwards at the ruined church at Kilmuir. More than 400 mourners came from all over the world to pay their respects to the clan chief. They spoke of their genuine love for MacLeod, a man with a plethora of contradictions but who also possessed empathetic humanity. When the time came for the earth to be poured on the coffin the minister, a Free Church man, gave the benediction in both Gaelic and in English, to celebrate this complex and magnificent man who had given his all for 30 years to define an identity for his clan, himself, his community and the castle that he loved.

FUNERAL

Dear All,

Here is a brief description of the events of Saturday, 24th February for those who were unable to be in Dunvegan. The April edition of the Magazine will contain a fuller report.

People were able to pay there respects to the late Chief on Friday afternoon in the Castle. The casket was then moved to the Duirinish Free Church of Scotland on Saturday morning where family and clansfolk assembled for the service.

Amongst others of the family present were Ulrika, Hugh, Stephan and Elena with their own immediate families; Patrick Adam Wolridge Gordon, John's nephew; and Rosemary Wolridge Gordon, John's sister-in-law. Malcolm and his brother Francis represented Chiefs Donald of the Lewes and John of Raasay. Members of Clan Societies included Ruth (Australia), Carolyn (Canada), Malcolm (England), Rose (France), Dagmar (Germany), Rebecca (New Zealand), Nancy (member for the day of Republic of South Africa), Ruari (Scotland) and Bill C (USA). There were of course many other members and clansfolk present, too numerous to mention individually. ACMS was represented by Malcolm and Dorna. Former ACMS Presidents Alex and Angus attended together with Stella, former ACMS Secretary.



The service began with Psalm 103 verses 11-17, a prayer by The Reverend Caniel Sladek of the Free Church and a reading by The Reverend Rory Macleod from John 11 verses 18-29. The Rev Murdo MacLeod, with whom John had corresponded and discussed issues and events over the years, read in Gaelic from John 14 verses 15-31 and Patrick Adam gave quite the best eulogy it's been my privilege to hear. There followed an evocative singing in Gaelic of Psalm 103 verses 3-5 and a heartfelt and moving address by The Reverend Murdo. The service concluded with Psalm 23 and the blessing by The Reverend Rory.

John had left clear written instructions about the funeral amongst which were that no motorized vehicles should be used except by those unable to walk and that he should be carried to Kilmuir by those who might attend on the day to the accompaniment of pipes.

Observing the distance from the Free Church to the Church at Kilmuir the family had applied some creative interpretation to these wishes. Teams of six pall bearers were positioned some 30 yards apart on the road from the church towards the village, beginning with the family, then estate staff, an ACMS/Clan Societies team of all of the above named, and other folk, who began the measured journey towards Kilmuir. After about a quarter of a mile the casket was placed on a horse-drawn carriage and conveyed to Kilmuir where pall bearers again carried the casket to the Church for the committal service. This included Stephan singing one of John's well liked works of Schubert in a rich baritone that was so very similar to John's, and of course pipes.

We then made our way to the Castle where there was a tremendous spread of refreshments. I gave Hugh a folder containing the huge number of messages of condolence and support that had been sent via me and from the website. Chief Hugh thanked everyone, said he would try to fill his father's shoes despite them being a size smaller than his feet, and felt that we would all understand that it would take time for that to happen, asking us to give him that time. Right at the very end John Davidson Kelly played a lament to the late Chief and a salute to Chief Hugh at which point the flag over the Castle was lowered from half-mast and hoisted to full staff.

All in all a memorable occasion and a great send off.

Best wishes, Malcolm.

President, Associated Clan MacLeod Societies.



The following item was our OBITUARY submission to Ruari Halford Macleod, President, ACMS Scotland as part of Australian collected thoughts to be read at a Clan MacLeod Scotland Dinner.

As a Chief exploring the new purpose and meaning and relevance with a Clan, Chief John was gentle and deferred to the strengths of the Clan Societies and Clanfolk in defining what a world wide clan is. Through the "Chief's Letter" he frequently gave insight to his vision and interpretation of the expression of the Clan. This formed a realisation at Christchurch, when once having identified the similarities of Maori and Highlander traditions, he then found a modern heart warming relevance and application in the modern era, through words of The New Zealand National Anthem and title for the Clan Gathering "In the Bonds of Love We Meet".

I quote excerpts from Chief John's Letter, April 2004. Here he interestingly moves seamlessly along a dawning idea, a theme:- from a community, to marriage, to the Clan, and the world, embracing them all alike in his life, and perhaps with some hope, he in their lives.

Chief John....

".....The New Zealand MacLeods set a kind of bench mark. it became a simple, profound and sincere expression of family, yet international feeling. I have been reflecting on "bonds" and its significance in that line "In the bonds of love we meet".

Quite so, and for me recently married- and with a similar injunction expressed in the marriage vows, the fact that "the love in which we meet" is the opposite of "free", (it) becomes an exhilarating, rather than constricting, thought. It becomes the essence of family feeling, producing a reality of hard work and service to others, a bond of love, inclusive rather than exclusive, and which results eventually in an international feeling, like that, which so satisfyingly informed the Christchurch World Gathering.....The sense of a family prepared to think inclusively can be a vital, if unseen, power in a world, which increasingly appears to want to be exclusive....but an international body of Clan MacLeod, who can meet in the bonds of love, are being true to their genetic history and I hope therefore might in a small way become a powerful civilizing force in the dangerous world, in which we live today."

With this mind set, Chief John was a lovable, affable, accessible man with a heart for everything, befitting a man with a world view but knew where he lived and liked it.

They are my thoughts anyway. –Alex

LONDON MEMORIAL SERVICE

Ulrika arranged a most moving memorial service in celebration of John's life last Saturday in the Swedish Church, London, in which they had been married three years previously.

The organ prelude was Bach's Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring, which was followed by the Bidding by the Very Reverend Lennart Sjöström, Dean of the Swedish Church, and the hymn "The Lord's my shepherd". The bible reading was then followed by music, addresses, tributes and readings that would have given John a great deal of pleasure: Schubert's Allegretto in C Minor, Impromptu in F minor played by Willem Brons, piano; a magical and heartfelt address by Ulrika; Im Abendrot D.799 (Carl Gottlieb Lappe) sung beautifully by Stephan and accompanied by Willem Brons; a tribute by Charles Ian Wolridge Gordon; Mit Fried und Freud (Martin Luther) a capella without accompaniment; and the poem "Farewell my Friends" read by Elena.

Prayers were followed by the hymn "Thine be the Glory"; the Blessing; a Swedish hymn "Härlig är jorden" (Beautiful Saviour); and the organ Prelude and Fugue in G minor by JS Bach.

There was a reception in the Swedish Hall afterwards, A beautifully arranged occasion. ;-,Malcolm. (ACMS Pres.)

John MacLeod of MacLeod is survived by his third wife, Ulrika, sons Hugh and Stephan, and daughter Elena.

SKYE MEMORIAL SERVICE

The memorial service for the late Chief John MacLeod of MacLeod will take place on the 16th June 2007 at Dunvegan parish church

- 11.00am Service at St Mary's Church, Dunvegan
- 12.30pm Kilmuir to unveil the headstone
- 7.30pm Buffet dinner to be served in the castle