

SKYE NEWS From Ian MacLeod Western Australia

Aerial surveys of Viking shipyard on Skye *Schematic view of a longship*



In an amazing set of coincidences one of your WA President's colleagues has discovered a 12th century Viking shipbuilding site just adjacent to Loch Brittle (Loch na h-Airde on Rubh an Dunain) on the Isle of Skye.

Aerial surveys are being carried out over Skye to help archaeologists investigate other sites and they are using a six bladed remote controlled model helicopter, a "hexacopter", to carry the cameras to the correct height for controlled photographic recording of the sites in 3 dimensions. There are boat building timbers from the 1100's, a stone built quay and canal with a gate system to keep the loch depth constant.

The evidence demonstrates that the loch was the focus for activity for many centuries, from the times of the Vikings to that of the MacLeod Clan and MacAskills who were the coastwatchers and galley commanders of MacLeod. The loch and canal would likely have been used for protecting boats during winters and also for their construction and maintenance. This site is unique and a first discovered on Skye.



DUNVEGAN CASTLE

Highlights from Chief Hugh's Letter in Clan Magazine April 2011

I begin a summary with this eloquent comment from President Ian of WA.

The Chief's news in the present magazine is inspirational as the fortunes of the Clan MacLeod begin to turn around. We owe a huge debt to Chief Hugh and thanks go to him for his unstinting energy and commitment to the castle, to the MacLeod Estates and to the wonderful gardens.

Under his guidance it is clear there is a great future ahead for his delicately balanced segment of an island economy in the Hebrides.

Behind the scaffolding and shroud, the first phase of Castle restoration, that is making it proof in every sense, particularly the roof, is ahead of schedule and on budget.

Castle windows also are being overhauled.

Plans for the services upgrade will go ahead in 2013/14, followed by interior redecoration and new visitor areas, to maintain its major tourist role.

Current improvements include the ticket office, Castle shop, MacLeod's Table cafe and Edwardian Flower exhibit. The shop refit includes a restock of souvenirs and in particular, replicas of castle treasures.

A new Executive Director Janet Clarke has been appointed to the Castle team, while Hugh continues as Estate Director overseeing restoration, large scale projects and new ones like the website.



-Sir Walter Scott

"Fill me the mighty cup!" he said,
"Erst own'd by the royal Somerled:
Fill it, till on the studded brim
In burning gold and bubbles swim,
And every gem of varried shine
Glow doubly bright in rosy wine!"