



DUNVEGAN CASTLE – HOME OF THE MACLEOD CLAN



Dunvegan Castle is a castle a mile and a half to the north of Dunvegan on the Isle of Skye, situated off the West coast of Scotland. It is the seat of the MacLeod of MacLeod, chief of the Clan Macleod. Dunvegan Castle is the oldest continuously inhabited castle in Scotland and has been the stronghold of the chiefs of the clan for 800 years.

In the 13th century, a curtain wall was built round the hill around a former Norse fort which was only accessible through a sea gate. In the 14th century, a castle was constructed within the curtain wall by Malcolm Macleod in about 1350.

It is at once the greatest and most renowned among Hebridean strongholds, and the only one which has been continuously owned and (with the exception of the eighty years after the Potato Famine of the last century) occupied by the same Macleod family, during a period now reaching back over a span of very nearly 8 centuries. Architecturally it is a structure of high importance, containing work of at least ten building periods. Its history, and that of the famous Clan whose Chiefs have ruled from their castled Rock during all these many generations, is rich with drama and packed with colourful interest.

Within Dunvegan's stately halls are priceless heirlooms, some of which have descended in the hands of the Chiefs of MacLeod since medieval times.

The picturesque quality of the building itself is matched by its glorious surroundings. "Ane starke strengthe biggit upon ane craig", so it is described by a writer of 1549; and so it still remains. Rising sheer from the almost perpendicular edges of the rock, its massive grey towers and hoary battlements stand forth against an unrivalled background



of sky and mountain and islet-spangled sea. On the landward side, the castle - no longer surrounded by the bare wine-dark moorland, as when Dr Johnson visited it in 1773 - is now sheltered by extensive and thriving plantations, through which re-echoes the ceaseless murmur that 'torrent's roaring might' celebrated by Sir Walter Scott in the Lord of the Isles. Around those waterfalls are the gardens of the castle, whose beauty and range of plant life have already attracted the interest of serious gardeners from all over the world.



MacLeod (R. R. McIan) 1845