



Clan MacLeod
World Gathering
and Parliament



Cruinneachadh
na Cruinne agus
Pàrlamaid Chlann
MhicLeòid

Souvenir Programme and Handbook

Clan MacLeod Gathering and Parliament 2026

Dunvegan 1st – 7th August 2026

Fàilte / Welcome!

Along with other MacLeods, you are about to have a great adventure in Scotland where you can explore your heritage, greet friends both old and new, and experience the beauty of the Isle of Skye and the lands of your forefathers.

The event is organised by the Council members of the Associated Clan MacLeod Societies (ACMS) and run by MacLeods for MacLeods. Everyone who helps is a volunteer. There is much preparation and many daily chores required to make it run smoothly. The event also involves many local businesses and community organisations. If you think something needs to be done, then please think about asking if you can help, rather than just asking for it to be done! Assistance is always welcome. Please be understanding if things do not always go according to plan. Everyone will be doing their best.

2026 cùm greim air
cliù do shinnsearan

Hold Fast to the Honour of Your Ancestors

This Handbook

This handbook contains information that will assist your preparations for the Gathering and Parliament. It can be downloaded from the Associated Clan MacLeod Societies' website for the Gathering and Parliament here:

<https://www.clanmacleod.org/parliament/parliament-2026/parliament-handbook/>

The intent is that the information here will explain the various activities and help you gain more enjoyment from them. If you have any questions, please email Parliament Organiser Kevin Tolmie at parliament@clanmacleod.org.

Why is there a Parliament as well as a Gathering?

Many years ago our great Chief of the MacLeods, Dame Flora, invited Clansfolk from all over the world to gather at Dunvegan for a 'Parliament', to talk about the future of the Clan. At that first meeting in 1956, the gathering was small and included only a speaker and very few delegates. The early Parliaments were held once every three years. Later, attendance at Parliament grew to include hundreds of people, and Clan Societies were established representing several more countries. The period between Parliaments was extended to four years, with interim gatherings in North America and the Pacific.

This year to reflect the greater social aspect of the event we have changed the name to 'Gathering and Parliament'. So you could say it is our 20th Parliament but our first official Gathering. At this Gathering we expect to welcome nearly 300 people from all over the world. Most of what happens is sociable and above all fun but there is still business to be done.

The 'Parliament' element consists of three 'business' meetings on Monday, Tuesday and Friday where all members of our worldwide Societies are invited to attend to find out what ACMS does.

This handbook attempts to gather the knowledge of the Elders of the Clan and explain the origins of some of the events in the programme. There are many fine books and pamphlets that chronicle the history of the Clan, its lore and contemporary information, with links to these available from our Clan MacLeod [website](#). Do not hesitate to ask questions of your fellow Clansfolk!

Remember that everyone had a first time. We have all had concerns about how well we would dance at the ceilidh, forgot how to spell Borreraig, got lost on the way to Orbost, or suddenly found ourselves standing still looking with awe at the Castle or MacLeod Tables. So, if you feel a little overwhelmed, you are not the first!

Activities

After each Gathering and Parliament, attendees are asked to say what they enjoyed or did not enjoy. These responses form the basis of the planning by the next G&P Coordinator who then works to make those wishes come to pass for the next Gathering. The Open Meetings of Parliament which take place through the week are where issues brought forward by our ACMS Council, National and Regional Councils and members are discussed. All participants are encouraged to attend these Open Meetings.

WiFi

ACMS has hired a satellite link to provide connection to the internet during the week. We expect to be able to livestream activities and meetings. Login information will be available when you check in at the registration desk to collect your badge and information about the Gathering.

Name badges

Remember to wear your name badge at all times. Although you may be well-known at home or within your national Clan Society, there are many people around the world who have not had the pleasure of meeting you yet.

Parliament dress code

Most activities require functional rather than fancy clothing. The village setting is informal, and the outdoor activities are best enjoyed with casual clothing. Ladies may wear skirts or slacks/ trousers as they prefer. Kilts and tartan are encouraged at any time, dressed up or dressed down. Dressing up a bit for the ceilidhs is also encouraged, but what you wear doesn't matter very much as long as you are willing to get up and dance! The main thing is that everyone feels comfortable.

WhatsApp Community

If you haven't already joined click this link:

<https://chat.whatsapp.com/JVWvV33mmx96tNsvckQGS0>

Chat, exchange ideas and ask questions; get the latest news.

Programme

Here is the programme but this may change so check the WhatsApp Community Group, [website](#) or notice boards in the Village Hall for updates.

Clan MacLeod Gathering & Parliament 2026

Programme for the Clan MacLeod Gathering and Parliament 1 st – 7 th August 2026							
Times Guide	Saturday 1 st Aug	Sunday 2 nd Aug	Monday 3 rd Aug	Tuesday 4 th Aug	Wednesday 5 th Aug	Thursday 6 th Aug	Friday 7 th Aug
09:00-10:00		War memorial ceremony: 10:00-10:30	Ceilidh practice Gaelic practice	Ceilidh practice Gaelic practice	Raasay Day Coaches to Sconser for Raasay ferry Coaches leave Dunvegan at 8:00 and 9:00	Ceilidh practice Gaelic practice	Ceilidh practice Gaelic practice
10:00-11:00		Church from 10:30 followed by parade: 11:30	Refreshments by Canada from: 9:30-10:30	Refreshments by USA from 9:30-10:30	Raasay mini-bus tour, fast boat ride or history talk.	Refreshments by Pacific from: 9:30-10:30	Refreshments by Europe from: 9:30-10:30
11:00-12:00 (Except where stated)			Parliament 11:00-12:00	Parliament 10:00-12:00		Craft fair	Parliament 10:00-12:00
12:00-14:00		Opening from 12:30	Lunch by community	Lunch by community	Lunch by community	Lunch by community	Lunch by community
14:00-16:00	Registration from 14:00	Welcome Lunch 14:00 – 15:30	Art Workshop: Karen Davies or Croft visit	14:00: 'Heraldry in Chief' by Ross MacEwan 15:00: 'The DNA of Leod's ancestors and descendants' by Mark MacLeod or Croft Visit	Raasay mini-bus tour, fast boat rides, tug-o-war, history talk Raasay Heritage Centre Opening	Craft Fair or Croft Visit	Rededication of the Emigrants wall MacLeods tables climb or Coral Beach hike.
16:00-17:00		Meryl and Stanley McLeod Memorial Lecture: Hoid Fast			Return ferry		
17:00-18:00							
18:00-19:00						Sword experience *	
19:00-20:00	Cheese/Wine Reception CMSE 19:00 – 21:00	Community Reception CMSS 19:00 – 21:00				Barbeque	
20:00-21:00			Ceilidh	Silent auction Remember to bring your unwanted 'MacLeodery' as a contribution!	Whisky tasting	Group photo	Clan Ball Presentation of Bill and Ceesebe McLeod Memorial Award
21:00-23:00							

*Alternatively, join the Norman MacLeod Memorial Swim from 18:00 Thursday - remember to bring your costume!

Event information

Silent Auction Tuesday 8pm-9pm

The Silent Auction is a major fundraiser for ACMS at the Gathering. The articles available are typically Clan-themed and can range from homemade crafts to a great find at a local second-hand shop. Please remember to bring your donations with you!

Evening Ceilidh Monday 8pm-11pm

‘Ceilidh’ (pronounced ‘kay-lee’) is a Gaelic word that means ‘visit’ or house party. These are informal musical events popular throughout Scotland - and the rest of the world! Clan members are warmly invited to share their talents and perform traditional and reinterpreted works.

Often, we have a new song or story composed just for MacLeods.

The evening will also be filled with live music and dancing and if you would like to wear any tartan you own this is an ideal opportunity. The Friday ceilidh which is also called the ‘Ball’ is your chance to perform. If you have a party-piece please do tell the Coordinator. This may be something performed on your own or with others. Perhaps a sennachie will tell a traditional story? Maybe you have a song to sing or tune to play?

It is common for a group to practice a Gaelic song through the week to perform on the night!

Barbeque - ‘Bratwurst and Bier on the Pier’

What has now become one of the most popular events is the barbecue hosted by CMS Germany at the old pier outside the Laundry Cottage directly below Dunvegan Castle. There will obviously be a German flavour to this Thursday evening event - Bratwurst rather than burgers and Bier rather than Beer. And of course, the most important thing ... great company! This is where our ‘Team’ photo will be taken. We will be joined by Castle workers and also this year by Adrian Paul for the Sword Experience display.

Climbing MacLeod’s Tables

Experience the distinctive Skye terrain and memorable views. MacLeods traditionally tackle the nearer and slightly lower Healabhal Mhor on Friday afternoon although the super-fit can do Healabhal Bheag too. Note that Mhor is big and Bheag is small in Gaelic but for these hills it does not refer to height but to mass. You need a reasonable degree of fitness and should have appropriate footwear for the climb. Not advised in poor weather conditions.

Welcome lunch – Sunday in Dunvegan Hall following the opening ceremony. This will be a selection of hot and cold food supplied by The Old Schoolhouse Restaurant – always a delicious selection.

Raasay Day – Wednesday. See the separate information leaflet. There are many activities on the day including Chief John's Opening of the new Heritage Centre. If you have booked onto one of the coaches on Raasay Day, your ticket and ferry tickets will be in your Welcome Pack at the registration desk.

Saturday evening cheese & wine reception in Dunvegan Hall from 7pm-9pm, hosted by CMS England with a selection of fine Scottish cheeses.

Mervyl and Stanley McLeod Memorial Lecture: 'Hold Fast to the Reputation of Your Ancestors' by Domhnall Uilleam Stiùbhart, Associate Professor at the Gaelic College, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig.

Sunday evening reception in Dunvegan Hall from 7pm-9pm, hosted by CMS Scotland – meet local people over a glass of Scottish wine and an oatcake.

Art Workshop – Monday 2pm-4pm: local artist Karen Davies invites budding artists to reimagine the Fairy Flag.

Croft visits – Monday, Tuesday and Thursday. Visit a working croft and meet the animals followed by tea and scones.

'Heraldry In Chief' – Tuesday 2pm-3pm: Secretary of the Association of Highland Clans and Societies, Ross McEwan explains how the historic art and science of heraldry relates to Scottish Chiefs.

DNA lecture – Tuesday 3pm-4pm: returning by popular demand, Mark MacLeod delivers an update on Clan MacLeod DNA developments.

The Sword Experience – Thursday 6pm-7pm before the barbeque. Actor Adrian Paul of Highlander fame, with supporting cast, will demonstrate swordsmanship techniques.

Craft Fair – Thursday 11am-4pm Dunvegan Hall: local makers. See flyer in your welcome pack.

Rededication of the Emigrants wall – Friday 2pm-4pm: following repairs, a small ceremony at the wall of Emigrants' stones that honours the MacLeod diaspora.

Skye Guide - if you haven't been to Skye before (or even if you have) there is an excellent Skye Guide here:

<https://www.clanmacleod.org/parliament/parliament-2026/skye-guide/>

The Clan MacLeod DNA project

As you will learn if you attend Mark MacLeod's DNA workshop on the Tuesday afternoon, the DNA project has made great progress in recent years. We need more people to take DNA tests if we want to discover more. From these new tests, more MacLeods will learn about their ancestors and Clan MacLeod will learn more of its history. If this is of interest please contact Mark on mark_k_macleod@yahoo.com for details of how to get involved and possibly book a consultation during Gathering and Parliament week.

Dunvegan Village Hall

Once upon a time, events were centred on a large marquee in the grounds of Dunvegan Castle. These days for many reasons it is more practical to base events in and near the Village Hall. Events are held here unless otherwise noted. A



detailed daily programme is posted on the Notice Boards in the Hall, but if you are not sure what is happening, please do ask. There will be plenty of folk who will know and you can also email parliament@clanmacleod.org. A full programme has been organised but you are not expected to attend everything! Take time to explore for yourself and socialise as and when you want to. Nothing should get in the way of spending time with friends. The Village Hall will be open each evening for socialising and the bar will be open each night until 23:00 (11pm). Please note that Dunvegan does not have a 'Pub' at the moment, though most restaurants do have alcohol licences for drinking with meals.

The Norman Magnus Hall and Dame Flora Lounge

When Norman Magnus was Chief, he had the original Village Hall erected in 1904 and gave it to the community. It was subsequently expanded in 1985 by Dunvegan residents to include the Sports Hall. Parliament meetings and some other activities take place in the Norman Magnus Hall. Other events which require more space are in the adjacent Sports Hall.

Within the present Village Hall, there is a room dedicated to the memory of Dame Flora. After her death in 1976, the ACMS paid to have this room built, furnished, and decorated as her memorial. This room serves as the administrative headquarters for the Gathering and Parliament.

Transport

Clansfolk will get the most out of the Gathering if they have their own transport. We have a mini-bus to transport the Young MacLeods, support the Children's Activities and to take folk to booked events away from Dunvegan. It may be available to assist people with an occasional transport request so there is no harm in asking if it is understood that the answer might be "sorry, no" or at least "not right now". Contact parliament@clanmacleod.org

Driving

On two lane (dual track) roads - remember to drive on the left! Also beware of potholes – especially in the rain where that puddle may be deep! Many of the roads on Skye are 'single track' which are only wide enough for one vehicle to pass. On these roads there are frequent signed 'passing places', extra sections of wider road that allow one vehicle to pause while the other vehicle goes by. The person who first encounters the passing place closest to the point where the cars would otherwise meet is generally the one to wait. If the passing place is not on your side of the road, stop opposite it (don't cross the road to the passing place). It is courtesy for a driver facing downhill to wait for a driver coming uphill. An acknowledgement by a wave is customary. Please also pause at a passing place to allow a vehicle to overtake if its driver clearly wants to. This is especially important if it is clearly a working vehicle. Also remember that you should only pass bicycles at passing places where it is safe to do so. Be a courteous driver! Outside of the villages, the roads are not well lit at night so take care when driving after dark – there may also be animals on the road. In general, it's a good idea to be mindful that many other drivers are fellow tourists, also unfamiliar with the roads - so expect the unexpected!

Ferries

If you have booked onto one of the coaches on Raasay Day, your ferry tickets are included. If you are travelling independently you must book your own tickets. This is easily done online - even at the port. General advice is to avoid taking cars unless you plan to explore the island more widely. All MacLeod activities are within a mile (1.5km) of the pier.

If you are driving yourself to Skye there is a toll-free bridge at Kyle of Lochalsh. A great scenic alternative is the small toll ferry from Glenelg to Skye, the last manual turntable ferry in operation in the world. It is community owned, and it was featured in the film 'Made of Honor'.

Note this route will add considerable time to your journey.

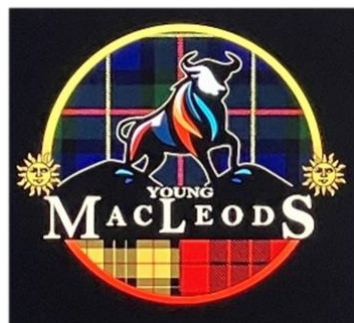
More information is available at www.skyeferry.co.uk.

Children's Activities

Activities for children will be facilitated in the Hall with possible excursions if the weather is fair. An initial get-together will be held in the Hall on Monday during Morning Tea/Coffee (09:30-10:30). Children must be accompanied by a parent. There is no preset programme. Activities for the week will be decided by parents and children when they meet. Join G & P WhatsApp group or Contact Emma Halford-Forbes at parliament@clanmacleod.org

Young MacLeods (formerly 'NRG')

A Young People's Clan Parliament was introduced at the fourth Clan MacLeod Parliament in 1965. Eighteen young MacLeods representing six countries met in the North Room of the Castle and subsequently became known as the 'North Room Group' - or 'NRG', or even 'Energy'. Since the 1970s, these groups have gathered during the week before Parliament to undertake a project for the Castle, Estate, Community organisations, or for the Gathering & Parliament itself.



This year an Activity Week just before the Gathering & Parliament is being run by Robin McLeod Ingram and other members of Council. Twelve Young MacLeods (YMs) will spend two weeks at Glendale near Dunvegan with accommodation and mini-bus transport provided by ACMS. The YM team will also be helping the Gathering & Parliament run efficiently.

The twelve YMs will mostly work in two groups of six. One group to support the Castle and Estate and the other to support the Community. YMs will interchange so the work can be varied. Most days will be organised on a work morning and leisure afternoon basis. The exceptions being Tuesday which will be work all day and Wednesday which will be all day leisure. The work is all environmental. For the Estate, the task is working with Estate workers to eradicate invasive rhododendron around the Estate Office. Community projects include vegetation control at Orbst House, Duirinish Manse, the Dunvegan Playpark, the Two Churches Walk, and possibly also roadside verges in the village.

Local businesses

Local establishments welcome our business but it is helpful to remember that this is already a hectic time of year for them and our presence increases this by quite a degree. We can make a good impression by being aware and considerate of the effort that the local people make to accommodate the invasion of MacLeods!

Many local businesses have contributed to our events. Please patronise these businesses whenever possible, either this year or perhaps on a future visit of your own to Scotland. This year you have a direct opportunity to support local businesses at our Feill-reic or 'Sale Fair' on Thursday.

Details will be provided in your welcome packs.

Dinner reservations are strongly recommended during Gathering and Parliament week. Sadly we were not able to arrange dinners at The Tables Restaurant this year but there are many eating places for you to choose from in the village and nearby. But remember there are many people also wishing to dine out. Please be prompt so your restaurant can be of service to as many of your fellow Clansfolk as possible.

Also, please keep the size of your party to the number of people for whom you made the reservation and with whom you originally arrived. You may be tempted to ask others to join you as they later enter the restaurant, but this can create a service nightmare for establishments with limited seating and smaller kitchens. In a less busy time, this might be less of a problem, but during this week it can create a real burden for kitchen and wait staff.

We want to remain on good terms with our local friends.

Weather

Usually, the mode of dress in Scotland is for what would be thought by most to be a 'cool summer'. But guessing what conditions will be like in an increasingly volatile climate is not easy. We do recommend layering so that you can easily remove or add a garment as temperature changes.

Always have a wind and water-resistant outer layer with you and most important is sturdy water-resistant footwear. The only thing that is predictable about Scottish weather is unpredictability. During the first week of August, you can expect daytime highs on the Isle of Skye to typically range between 15°C and 19°C (59°F to 66°F) but we have had Parliament heat waves in 2006 and 2014!. Overnight temperatures are much cooler, generally hovering around 10°C to 12°C (50°F to 53°F).

Light

Be aware that we are at 56 degrees north so in summer the sun rises early and the evenings are long and often accompanied by beautiful sunsets. It can be difficult getting the children to bed when it is still bright and lovely outside!

Flora

In general, there are no dangerous plants to avoid on Skye, although anyone who has been roughed up by a bunch of prickly thistles might disagree.

Do not consume wild berries or other plants unless you know that they are edible and be wary of possible treatment with pesticides.

Livestock and Deer

Skye is crofting country. Crofts are small farms generally rearing sheep and cattle. The sheep and even the cattle roam unconstrained by fences.

This means that they may be wandering on, crossing, or even lying down on the pavement or road. Be mindful of their presence. Move past them slowly. They will eventually and begrudgingly get out of the way.

There is a large deer population. Look for the warning signs. They are less likely to be encountered in summer except in the twilight when they seek new areas to graze. These animals will seriously damage your car so do try not to hit one. Any incident involving injury to an animal should be reported to the police (dial 101).

The midge - the fiercest creature in Skye

Midges are tiny, aggressive biting insects that seem immune to most forms of insect/bug repellent so far invented. If you are prone to allergic reactions to insect bites, then bring your appropriate medication. 'Smidge' is the popular local repellent – available from many local retailers. If all else fails use a midge net!



Gaelic

Although Gaelic is having a revival and many people have knowledge of the language, it is sadly absent from everyday speech. This is due to many incomers who do not speak Gaelic and the politeness of locals who do but expect that you do not. There is also a common misconception that it is a particularly difficult language to learn.

You will see most evidence of the language in signs which are often bilingual. You will have the chance to learn a little bit of Gaelic during the Gathering. Have a try! Remember this is the language of your ancestors!

Calling volunteers!

As anyone would observe from watching our events at the Gathering and Parliament, many people who attend have volunteered their time in some capacity, to make it all run smoothly. The smallest act of help can make a world of difference to a fellow MacLeod's day. It may just be willing to give someone a lift back to their B&B. Contact Coordinator, Kevin Tolmie if you would like an assignment.

Gathering & Parliament 2030

Looking ahead to the next planned Gathering & Parliament in 2030, ACMS does not yet have a nominated Coordinator. If you can offer any time to be part of the organising team, please notify your National Society President and the ACMS President will be pleased to talk to you.

