

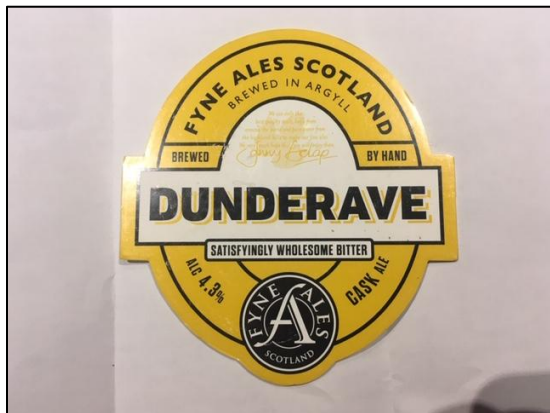
## SCOTLAND TOUR 2019

By Duncan (Mickey) McNaughton

On July 04, 2019, thirty-one (or soon to be) members of Clan MacNaughton, gathered at The Principal Hotel on George St. in Edinburgh. Some had arrived a day or two previously, but most flew or trained in on that day. Sheenco Travel had prearranged various pickup timeslots at the airport, and most went smoothly. My wife and I had completed a seven-day pre-trip of Northern England, returning our car hire to the airport. Even though our transfer driver was given the incorrect car rental agency, he did find us and whisked us to the hotel in luxury.

That evening we were all transferred by coach to the Prestonfield House for "A Taste of Scotland Show", which consisted of typical music, antics and of course Scottish fare and libation.

Day one and the morning of July 05, after a hearty Scottish breakfast, we were off on our guided coach tour passing by Loch Lomond to Inveraray and a Loch Fyne Brewery tasting tour.



At some point in time they had created a Dunderave Cask Ale, and although not available that day, there was a bar coaster on the wall, which the barman readily donated to me.

Loch Fyne Brewery - Dunderave Cask Ale - coaster.

Following some free time in Inveraray, with opportunity to explore the Gaol, the historic Inveraray Bell Tower and find some lunch.

**G. McNaughton & Son van parked in Inveraray.**

Nearby was spotted a G. McNaughton & Son, contractor van so obviously, we still do have a presence in the town.





**Piper greeting our group at Dunderave Castle.**

The next stop and highlight of our day, was at Dunderave Castle. As we departed our coach for a short walk up the laneway, the sound of a piper overcame us, and we were welcomed by Stephen and Sandra Joffe at the entrance to their home. The hospitality extended to us was far beyond expectations. We gathered in the Red Banner Room, with a blazing fire in the hearth and had some photo opportunities. As part of the group was touring about the

manor with Dr. Joffe, the rest were graciously entertained by Sandra in the pantry, with sweets and Scotch. The Joffes were extremely kind in opening their abode to us and the small tokens of appreciation that we presented from Washington State and Canada, could in no way repay their generosity.

**Dr. Stephen & Sandra Joffe.**



Our day ended at The Moorings in Fort William, alongside Neptune's Staircase, on the Caledonian Canal. A casual evening stroll along the canal to Loch Linnhe and back to the locks, was a fine touch on a great first day.



**Caledonia Canal Centre & the Locks.**



Day two Found us travelling north past Loch Ness and to the Loch Ness Exhibition centre, where our Scottish Heritage pass allowed us free entry. Then we backtracked a short distance to Urquhart Castle for a self-guided walk in the ruins following viewing a film on its history. A return to Drumnadrochit for lunch and an afternoon Jacobite Cruise through Loch Ness with a view of the hillsides and Urquhart Castle from the water.



**Alasdair Northrop.**



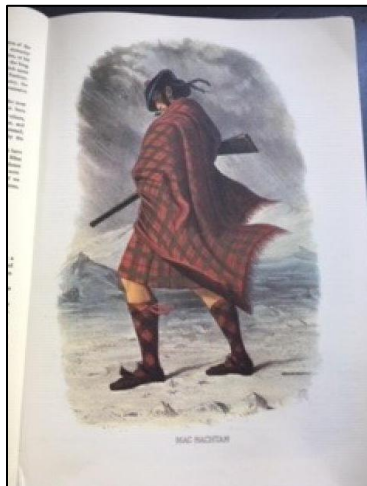
**Heilan Coos.**

Throughout daily travel on the coach, our marvelous guide Alasdair Northrop kept us informed; relating both historical and geographical facts, while tossing in some Scottish humour to entertain us. At other times, tour members mingled and discovered more details about each other and of clan affiliation. Both our coach driver Bob and Alasdair were approachable and readily altered the itinerary to meet our "At the Moment " requests. One of these diversions was to visit some Heilan Coos which are a particular breed of cattle in Scotland. Long horned, with lengthy woolly wavy coats these mammoth look alike are usually gentle approachable beasts.

Arrival at Tulloch Castle near Dingwall was to be accommodation for the next two nights. Following our evening meal, a Ghost Tour of the interior rooms was provided to us as darkness settled over the castle. It was reported the next morning that there had possibly occurred some supernatural activity during the night. Then again, Scotch has a way of invigorating the imagination.

**Tulloch Castle's special accommodations for Mary McNaughton where the black sign on the door says "Dungeon".**





**Mac Nachtan photo and history in Museum.**

A free afternoon to explore Inverness was the agenda for the next day. Several of us found the Black Isle Bar on Church St. With craft beer, organic pizza and a rooftop terrace, it was difficult to leave; however, the call to further shopping wrestled us from its grasp. A return to Tulloch Castle,

home of the Davidson Clan, completed the day's adventure and we soon found out how closely connected this world can be. My wife Tricia discovered that she has a friend, whose extended family lives near Dingwall. The friend had recently had a birthday party there and reminded us not to overlook the museum. "MUSEUM"? We acquired the key to the ground floor turret room and gazed at historic articles and photos of the Davidson Clan. Imagine that while leafing through some journals, cousin Carol found mention of and a print of Mac Nachtan affiliated with the Davidsons. As an aside, upon returning to Canada, Mike Gould found that a business associate named Davidson, had originated from the Davidson family at Tulloch Castle. Really a small world.

July 08, we departed Tulloch Castle for Pitlochry, and while part of the group toured the Edradour Distillery the remainder spent time exploring the town and shops.

#### **Macnaughtons of Pitlochry.**

Pitlochry is a very picturesque town that is home to the

Macnaughtons store established when the Macnaughton Woolen Mills were located here. Though no longer owned by a Macnaughton, the retail offerings of Scottish attire are substantial.







Also, not to be missed in Pitlochry was lunch at McKay's Bar & Restaurant, where an authentic meal of Scottish fish and chips was available.

**Scotland Tour 2019 luxury passenger coach.**



**Sign in the windshield says: "The McNaughton Clan".**



**Alicia & Joshua Laycoe holding court in Sterling Castle.**

As time allowed, we forged onward to Sterling Castle and a self-guided tour. Again, our Scottish Heritage Pass allowed free entry to view the magnificence of the structure. Our lodging was the nearby Stirling Highland Hotel, converted from a 19th century school, complete with an observatory. The area provided a venue for a late-night stroll about the streets and laneways. Dinner that evening and breakfast in the morning were served in

the Scholars Restaurant; how apropos for a repurposed school.

**Iain McNaughton at Burns Cottage.**

A photo op at Robbie Burns cottage began our day as we headed through Ayr to Culzean Castle overlooking the Firth of Clyde.





Here we found secret servant staircases; designed so that they were not seen by the genteel people; and discovered spacious rooms with interesting histories.

#### **Culzean Castle in Ayrshire.**

President Eisenhower spent exclusive hideaway time with his family at Culzean, from 1945 - 1969. A separate six-bedroom suite hotel in an upper floor of the castle was his retreat.



#### **Threaves Gardens.**

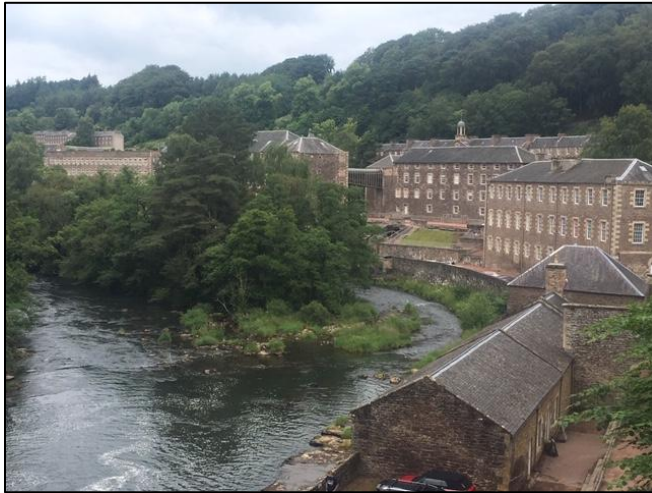


Withdrawing from the castle, our coach delivered us to Threaves Gardens near Castle Douglas. The gardens, even on a misty Scottish day; read as light rain; were magical to behold.

Hetland Hotel was our final stop and overnight accommodation. A completely updated hotel, we were amazed by the luxurious rooms. I mused that the shower in our suite was designed for a clan gathering. Sadly, we were unable to pursue that thought, as hot water was in short supply that evening. Next time??

On the final day, the coach took us to Gretna Green, the somewhat infamous site of underage marriages. In close proximity to England, where the legal age of marriage was 21, many youthful lovers and often those wishing to wed underage brides could do so legally here where the age restriction was only 16. It was the local blacksmith who performed the service, hence they became known as "Anvil Weddings".





**Village of New Lanark.**

From there we headed to the historic village of New Lanark. Robert Owen created a town and industry with the welfare of employees foremost in his plan. An interactive mobile through the original factory exemplifies life and work in Scotland in 1820.

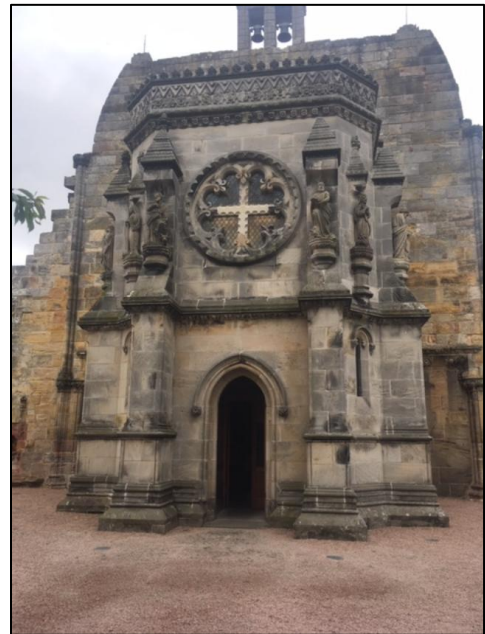
Rosslyn Chapel, Edinburgh was the final site on our tour. In the same family since founded in 1446, it is a remarkable medieval structure. Under conservation by the Rosslyn Chapel Trust, it was the location of filming of some of the DaVinci Code.



**Rosslyn Chapel.**

**Wooden sculpture of lovers entwined at Melville Castle.**

Melville Castle was our opulent overnight conclusion to this remarkable tour. Described as "History in the Making", this landmark, a scant distance outside Edinburgh, might as well be hundreds of miles from that bustling city, given its pastoral surroundings. It is isolated, serene and hospitable. We were greeted by the owner upon arrival, making us feel like family. Rooms were spacious, the "Last Supper" well served and the goodbyes quite emotional.



## **NEW family, NEW friends and a closer Clan bond!**

July 11, with various departures, we all sadly bid farewell to one another. Some were heading home, others onward to further adventures and some extending Scotland for another day.

All in all, I garnered from fellow travelers, that this had been a superb visit or revisit to our roots and to our heritage.

