

Parliament Handbook

Clan MacLeod Parliament 2018

Pre-Parliament trip to Harris and Lewis 18-21 July 2018

Parliament week in Dunvegan 21-28 July 2018

North Room Group Work Week in Dunvegan 14-28 July 2018

“Back to the Land”



Welcome!

Along with other MacLeods, you are about to begin a fascinating adventure in Scotland. You will have an opportunity to explore your heritage, visit places of renowned natural beauty, and greet both old and new friends.

Parliament is an event run by volunteers - by MacLeods for MacLeods. There is a great deal of preparation and many daily chores required to make it run smoothly. We are constantly learning how to do new things, and how to do old things better. Parliament also involves many local businesses and members of the island and rural communities.

What's in this booklet?

This booklet includes general information that will help you get ready for your trip to Scotland, and can be downloaded from the Associated Clan MacLeod Societies' website for Parliament, www.clanmacleodparliament.org. We hope that the information you find here will demystify the various activities at Parliament and help make them more enjoyable.

If you have any questions please email Parliament Organiser Rory McLeod at rmcleod83@gmail.com

1. WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO AT PARLIAMENT

1.1 Why is there a Parliament?

Once upon a time, Dame Flora - our great Chief of the MacLeods - invited Clansfolk from all over the world to gather at Dunvegan for a “Parliament”, to talk about the Clan. At that first Parliament in 1956, the gathering was small and included only a speaker and a few country 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. Parliament is now held every four years in Dunvegan, with interim gatherings in North America and the Pacific.

Parliament is a very busy time for many of us. There are formal activities to engage the larger number of people attending, as well as many ad hoc get-togethers and mini-reunions.

The purpose of this section of the booklet is to tap the knowledge of the Wise Ones and share the origins of some of the events on this year's Parliament programme. It is not a substitute for the many fine books and pamphlets that chronicle the history of the Clan Societies, MacLeod lore, or Parliament itself. And you should never hesitate to ask questions of your fellow Clansfolk!

Remember that once upon a time, we all came to Parliament for the first time. We have all quietly worried how well we would dance at the ceilidh, forgot how to spell Borreraig, got lost on the way to Orbst, or suddenly found ourselves standing shock-still on the main street of Dunvegan, staring in awe at the MacLeod Tables. So if you feel a little overwhelmed, you have joined a fine tradition!

1.2 Who chooses the activities?

While business activities at Parliament are centered on issues brought forward by our National and Regional Councils, much of the “work” at Parliament is dedicated to having fun and meeting fellow MacLeods from all over the world. Activities can be recommended or requested by anyone, but it is up to the Parliament Coordinator – with the support of the ACMS Council and many volunteers – to figure out how to fit it all in. In general, the activities at Parliament in Dunvegan are chosen because they take us to sites of historic significance to the Clan MacLeod, they allow us to enjoy places of natural beauty, or they have been popular events at previous Parliaments. Some Parliaments include an additional excursion to other MacLeod lands, as did our pre-Parliament visits to Lewis and Harris in 2006, and Assynt in 2010.

1.3 An activity sampler

1.3.1 PLACES OF HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE TO THE CLAN MACLEOD

1.3.2 *Borreraig*

The MacCrimmons are the hereditary pipers to the Chiefs of the Clan MacLeod. Many years ago, there was college of piping at Borreraig, where the MacCrimmons and others were trained. It took many years of study and practice to master the pipes. (It still does!) Some stones from the old buildings can still be found, marking the ruin of the original school. In the 1930s, a large stone cairn was erected to commemorate the cultural contributions of the MacCrimmons.

When we visit the cairn at Borreraig, we acknowledge the long relationship between the MacLeods and the MacCrimmons. The trip to Borreraig gives us a wonderful opportunity to enjoy both the spectacular views across Loch Dunvegan as well as to listen to live music in a magnificent location. When it is possible, we invite a MacCrimmon piper to lead this event.

1.3.3 *Harris and Lewis*

The Outer Hebrides were a stronghold for much of the Clan MacLeod for centuries. Our pre-Parliament trip will visit places of historical significance to the Clan and its chiefs, as well as the amazing modern business and arts communities of today.

1.3.4 *Isle of Raasay*

The Macleods of Raasay have their own Chief, John Macleod who resides in Tasmania. Raasay has a fascinating history of its own, in some ways typical of a smaller Scottish island, but has been home to a number of unique industries and individuals. Our day-long Raasay visit is traditionally one of Parliament's most popular activities.

1.3.5 *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 been expanded in 1985 by Dunvegan residents to include the Sports Hall, parking, public toilets, and other facilities.

Within the present Village Hall, there is a room dedicated to the memory of Dame Flora. After she passed away in 1976, the ACMS paid to have this room, built, furnished, and decorated. Make sure you visit this lovely memorial.

1.3.6 *Orbost*

Orbost is traditionally "MacLeod territory," and is a great example of contemporary, mixed-use businesses in rural Scotland. Part of the area includes the Orbost Estate, land owned by the local government and leased to private citizens. There are several MacLeod-themed projects underway, including the construction of a

“Emigration Wall” using stones brought back to Skye by the descendents of Scottish emigrants scattered overseas. This project was preceded by the planting of the MacLeod Woodlands, an area filled with trees donated by MacLeods from all over the world.

1.3.7 St. Kilda

St. Kilda is a haunting and remote island archipelago nearly 40 miles northwest of other islands in the Outer Hebrides. It has been inhabited by human beings for over 2,000 but is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site for both its cultural and natural qualities. Today it is owned by Scottish Natural Heritage, but for many years it belonged to the Chief of the MacLeods. St. Kilda has a strong presence in MacLeod history and lore.

1.3.8 Climbing MacLeod's Tables

“Just do it” – experience the distinctive Skye terrain and memorable views.

1.3.9 Waternish, Trotternish, Duirinish, Uiginish, Minginish...

In Norse, “nish” or “ness” means headland. The “nishes” of Skye form the spreading wings of the island. Each has a slightly different character.

1.3.10 Coral Beaches

The Coral Beaches are famous for their special “sand”, which is not really sand at all. Rather, it is made of tiny bits of crushed coral, thousands of miles away from tropical waters. Legend says that if you can count 12 little pink cowrie shells on the beaches, it means you will return to Skye within a year. (But please leave them on the beach for the next shell seeker!)

1.3.11 POPULAR CELEBRATIONS AT PARLIAMENT

Because of the increasing number of people at Parliament, organised activities are included each evening, but they should not get in the way of spending time with friends.

1.3.12 Silent Auction

The Silent Auction – to which anyone is most welcome to make a donation – is our major fundraiser at Parliament. The money raised is used to get the next Parliament (2022!) off the ground. The articles available are typically Clan-themed goods, and can range from homemade crafts to a great find at a local salvage store. **Please remember to bring your donations with you!**

1.3.13 Whisky tasting

Don't think of a whisky tasting as just another excuse to enjoy a fine drink with friends. The art of whisky making is rigorous and exacting – and whisky itself is truly an art form. Within the body of a single malt you will find not only gorgeous flavours and colours, but also qualities of history, geology, politics, and commerce – the spirit of a nation.

If you have never participated in a whisky tasting before, our Parliament event is very welcoming to newcomers. And if you are a collector or a connoisseur, there is always something a little different to try, or a wonderful opportunity to help introduce another member of the Clan to this fascinating and enjoyable aspect of Scottish culture. You don't need to attend the Whisky tasting to enjoy whisky though, there will be numerous opportunities throughout the week to sample some yourself.

1.3.14 Evening ceilidhs

"Ceilidh" (pronounced "KAY-lee") is a Gaelic word that means "visit" or house party. Ceilidhs are informal musical events popular throughout Scotland - and the rest of the world. At Parliament, 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.

1.3.15 North Room Group or "NRG"

A Young Peoples 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 called the "North Room Group" - or "NRG", and now sometimes "Energy". Beginning in the 1990s, the NRG gathers during the week before Parliament and takes on a project for the Castle estate, community organizations, or for Parliament itself.

1.3.16 MacLeod Mhor, Bheag, Sùrdail, Ealanta, and the Nellies

These names refer to the various themed youth activities for young MacLeods. Some are Gaelic words: "mor" or "mhor" (large), "bheag" (small), "sùrdail" (strong), and "ealanta" (artistic). The "Nellies" are the youngest of the Clan, and received their name from a distinguished Clan member -- nicknamed "Nellie" -- who referred to the other children in her age group as her "Nellie Club".

2. TRAVEL TIPS

2.1.1 ACCOMMODATION

It is your responsibility to make your own accommodation arrangements at the establishment of your choice in the Dunvegan area. Please note that spots in and near the village fill up quickly in a Parliament year. If you need help, we recommend that you use Visit Scotland online at www.visitscotland.com. VisitScotland also operates information centres ("iCentres") throughout the country, where you can get assistance accessing tourist attractions, travel connections, and accommodation. The Skye iCentre can be found in [Portree](#).

2.1.2 DRIVING IN SCOTLAND, AND AROUND SKYE

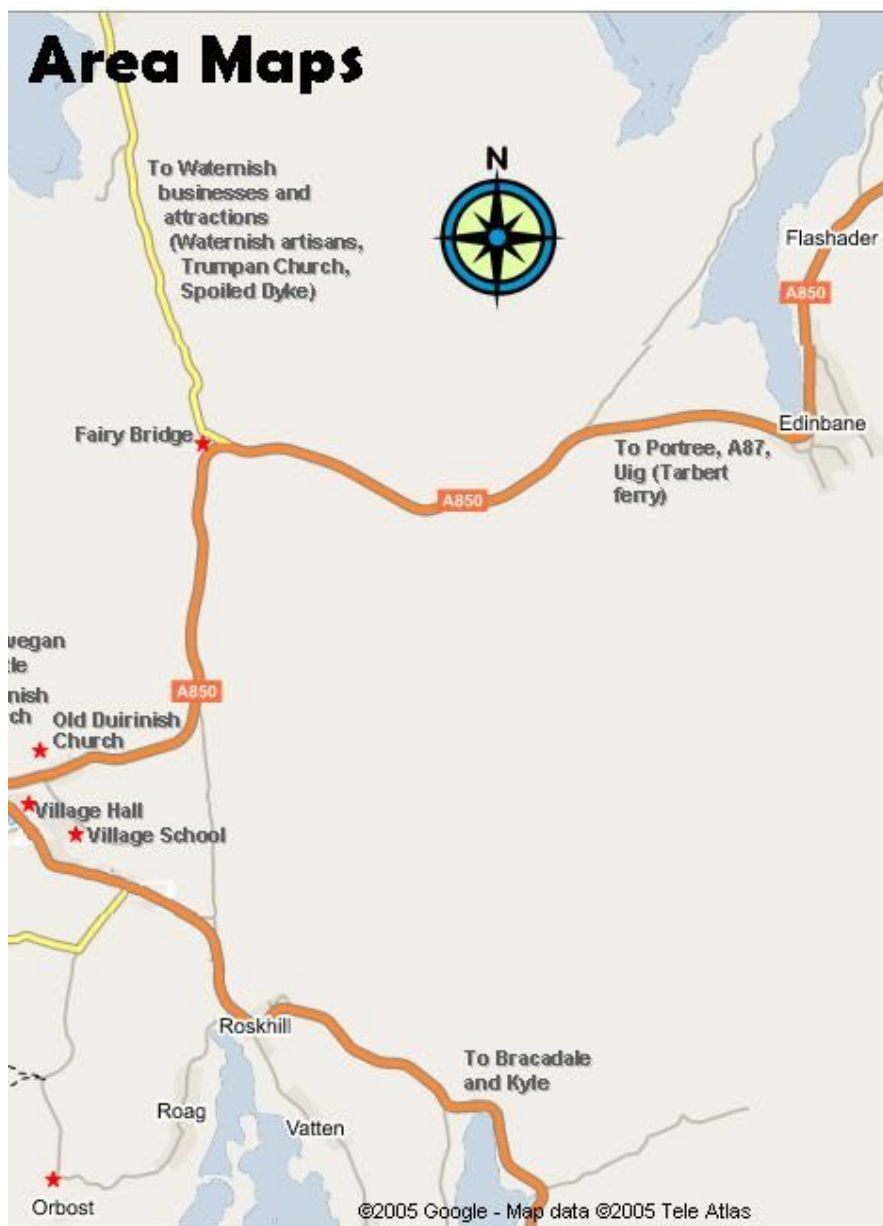
Many of the roads on Skye are “single track” roads, which are only wide enough for a single vehicle to travel. On these single track roads there are frequent “passing places”, extra sections of wider road that allow one vehicle to pause while the other vehicle goes by. The person who first encounters 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). A nod of the head and a wave between the drivers of the passing vehicles is customary. It is also customary for a driver facing downhill to wait for a driver coming uphill. Also remember that you should only pass bicycles at passing places if it is safe to do so.

Outside of the villages, the roads are not well lit at night. It is important to take extra care when driving after dark. In general, it's a good idea to remind yourself to watch for unexpected behavior by others – especially fellow tourists -- either on foot or in cars. And remember to drive on the left.

We encourage all Parliamentarians to utilize coach travel options provided by Clan MacLeod where possible or car share with others.



[Maps]



2.2 Ferry use during Parliament

The cost of scheduled ferry tickets for the trip to Raasay is included in your Dunvegan registration. You will receive the tickets when you get your badge in Dunvegan. We advise that everyone visiting should travel as foot passengers to avoid congestion on the Island.

If you are driving yourself to Skye, note that the big bridge at Kyle of Lochalsh is now toll free. However, as a scenic alternative you can take the ferry from Glenelg to Skye. The Glenelg ferry is an old-fashioned, hand turned ferry owned by the community, and it was recently featured in the major motion picture “Made of Honor.” More information is available at www.skyeferry.co.uk/.

3. ETIQUETTE AND CULTURAL GUIDE

3.1 All about you

3.1.1 Name tags

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.

3.1.2 Parliament “dress code”

Most Parliament activities require functional and not glamorous clothing. The village setting is informal, and the outdoor activities are best enjoyed with casual clothing. Ladies may wear skirts or slacks 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.

3.2 Getting around

3.2.1 *Transportation to and from events - please use the buses*

Buses or coaches are provided for transportation to and from major Parliament events. It is in fact possible to attend Parliament without renting a car. There are many serious and practical reasons for this: Skye's narrow roads cannot accommodate the dozens of private automobiles that may be carrying only one or two people; we would like to reduce pollution and consumption of fuel resources; parking is always limited; and an excess of private cars can impair the movement of fire and medical emergency vehicles. So please, plan to use our buses whenever possible.

3.3 Softening our footprint on local businesses

While you will find that local establishments welcome our business, it is helpful to remember that this is already a hectic time of year for our hosts, and Parliament sometimes introduces additional complications. We can distinguish ourselves by being just a little bit more aware and considerate of the effort that the local Scottish communities make to accommodate the invasion of MacLeods!

Please note that there are a number of local businesses that have contributed to our events. Please patronise these businesses whenever possible – either in 2018, or perhaps on a future visit of your own to Scotland - details will be provided in your welcome packs.

3.3.1 *Dinner for two... or twelve?*

Dinner reservations are strongly recommended during Parliament week. 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 down to the number of folks for whom you made the reservation and with whom you originally arrived. You may be tempted to ask other friends 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 Parliament week it can create a real burden for kitchen and wait staff. We want to remain on good terms with our local friends.

3.4 Weather

Usually, dress for “cool summer” weather is appropriate in Scotland at this time of year. Waterproof (or easily dried) comfortable shoes and outerwear that will also stand up to the wind are good to have.

The predicted temperature during Parliament is about 55-60°F or 12-16°C, but we did have a genuine heat wave during Parliament 2006 and 2014!

Be happily prepared for long summer evenings and fantastic sunsets.

3.5 Local flora and fauna

3.5.1 *Plants*

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 are knowledgeable about their genus and any possible treatment with pesticides.

3.5.2 *On four legs*

Sheep rule. Skye is a rural community with a strong agricultural component. There are many areas where the sheep roam without benefit of fences. This means that our woolly friends may be travelling on, crossing, or even napping on the pavement. You may encounter sheep day or night, so be mindful of their presence. They generally will scatter to get out of your way. Pheasants, while delicious, can also behave erratically or without regard to their own safety when approached on the road. Anything can happen.

However, there is an especially colourful group of cattle whom you may encounter wandering the Duirinish peninsula, the “Glendale Coo”. They barely acknowledge the presence of the road surface or the small cars of Britain, over which a few of them tower. Proceed very slowly and steadily when you encounter these gentle domestic beasts, and they will eventually – albeit begrudgingly – get out of the way.

Also, there is an abundant deer population throughout Scotland, especially in areas where road warnings are posted. These animals have become bolder during the course of recent harsh winters, and have moved closer to the human population. Beware of deer crossing the roads, especially at twilight as that is the time when they move to new feeding areas.

Any incident involving injury to an animal should be reported to the local police.

3.5.3 *Midges (the only truly dangerous animal on Skye)*

Welcome to the real top of the food chain!

Midges are tiny, aggressive biting insects that seem to be unbothered by most forms of bug repellent. If you are prone to allergic reactions to insect bites, then bring along your antihistamine medication. Over-the-counter products that seem to work as repellents include:

- Avon’s “Skin So Soft” and its retail clones (from the USA and Canada),
- Rid (from Australia), and
- “Bite Free” (and its companion after-bite medication, “Bite Soother”),
natural and effective Scottish-made products for dealing with the midges.
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4. “HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS”, CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS!

As anyone would observe from watching our events at Parliament, nearly one in three people who attend have volunteered their time in some capacity, to make it all run smoothly. The smallest efforts, such as staffing the information point for an hour, or giving someone a ride back to their B&B, can make a big difference in a fellow MacLeod’s day. Contact the Parliament Coordinator, Rory McLeod if you would like a special

assignment.

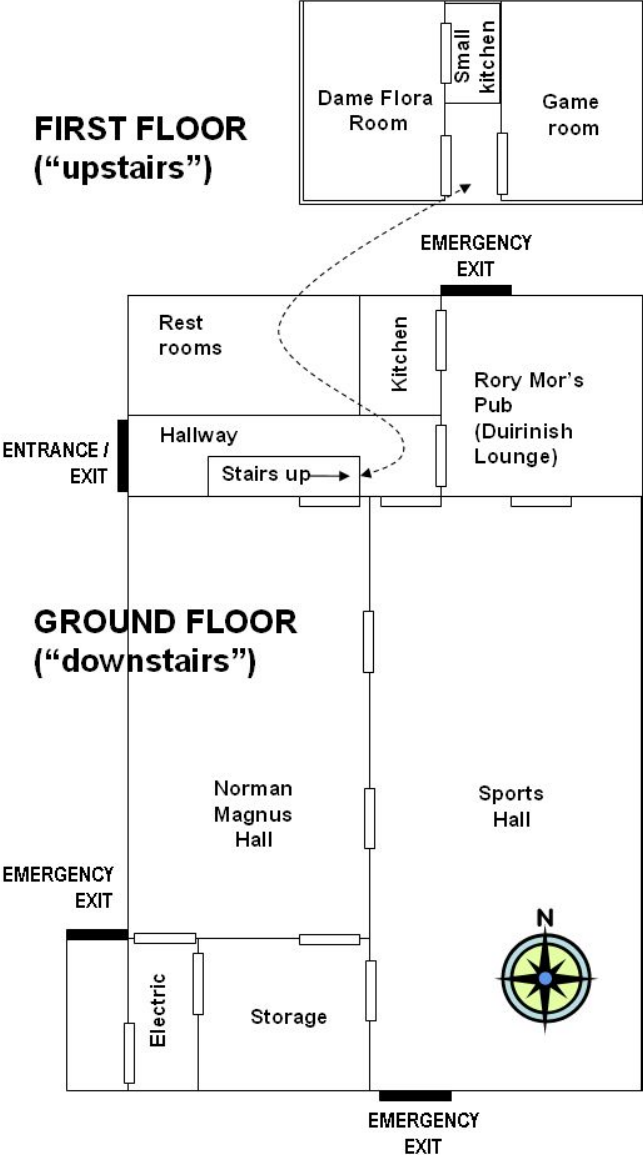
In 2018, there are activities that can help generate excitement before your trip, and add to the fun, just have a look at the programme. You can also:

- locate memorable items for the silent auction,
- let your National Society know that you are coming, and volunteer to help with your National Morning Tea, staffing the bar in the evening or other activities that may have been planned,
- rehearse your “ceilidh idol” performance, or
- simply share Parliament information and your enthusiasm with family and Clansfolk.



5. GENERAL INFORMATION IN DUNVEGAN

5.1 Floor plan of the Dunvegan Community Hall



5.2 Some more information

- There are “big” banks in Somerled Square in Portree: Halifax Bank of Scotland, RBS and Clydesdale Bank. Both banks have 24 hour ATM machines. There is a [mobile Bank of Scotland](#) unit that will be in Dunvegan during the week and also [RBS](#).
- All event reservations or cancellations must be made at Parliament registration or else through the Information Point.
- A lost and found will be maintained at the Information Point in the Village Hall. Articles left unclaimed after Saturday 26 July will be recycled or else donated to charity.