



MULL THE VENUE FOR CLAN MACLEAN GATHERING

THE INTERNATIONAL Clan MacLean Gathering on Mull saw 700 members of the clan descend on the island for the five-day event culminating in the main gathering.

Thanks to good weather throughout, everything went according to plan, said organiser and chairman of the gathering Colonel Donald MacLean.

'Fortunately for us the challenge of arranging accommodation on Mull for 700 clansmen and clanswomen was met effortlessly by Maureen Dehany and her staff at the tourist information centre in Craignure,' he said.

'The reception centre in the Aros Hall, which ran during the week, worked particularly well and our thanks go to Janet MacDonald, Liz MacDougall and the ladies in the tearoom and of course Rob Gillies, the caretaker who worked tirelessly for us throughout.'

Visits to Iona, Staffa and Treshnish, the Ross of Mull, Drimnin on Morvern and Torloisk were made and a cairn was unveiled at Kilninian Church in memory of Brigadier General Allan Maclean of Torloisk, who 'saved Canada for the Empire' in 1775.

A marquee in the King George V Park hosted two successful events; the ceilidh on the Friday evening, which had a full house of more than 600, featuring fear-an-tigh Iain MacKinnon, Tobermory, Mull Fiddlers under the baton of Fiona Jappy, Mull Gaelic Choir and various soloists; and the dance on the Saturday evening after the main gathering at Duart Castle, with Calum MacLean and his Band.

The main gathering took place on the Saturday in the grounds of Duart Castle, where the various clan members gathered to meet, swap stories and family histories and enjoy the day's entertainment.

Although there were MacLeans from all over the world, including New Zealand, Australia, Canada and America and closer to home, three generations of one family from Mexico had also made the pilgrimage.

Alan McLane Alejos had come to the UK along with his wife, Evith and 14-month-old daughter Keira, sisters Samantha and Sherry and parents Antonio and Leticia. He explained that in the course of family history research, he had discovered that his great-grandfather was a MacLean from Scotland but they had not yet been able to establish from which part of Scotland.

He had gone out to Mexico in the late 19th century to work as an engineer in the silver mines of Central Mexico. It is the second time Alan has been to the gathering as he came when he lived in the UK five years ago but this time he brought his whole family.

The family had been to Oban, Iona, Edinburgh, Glasgow and London while in the UK and had tried to find Loch Buie Castle, as they adopted the tartan, while on Mull.

Those at the main gathering were entertained by Mull and Iona Pipe Band, Oban and Mull School of Dance, Tobermory Junior Gaelic Choir, the Historic Saltire Renactment Society and various craft stalls.

Food was provided at stalls by Marine Harvest, which was offering barbecued salmon in return for donations to the Mull and Iona Swimming Pool Appeal – raising £306 and \$17 in the process – and Mull and Iona Community Trust that was selling Mull-reared beef and venison burgers from the community butchers.

The day ended with the short march up the drive and a speech from Chief of the Clan MacLean, Sir Lachlan MacLean of Duart Castle.

He used an antique brass megaphone to battle the increasing winds and a diminishing voice to be heard by his clan, telling them that the castle was as much their heritage as his. 'Thank you for coming because without you we wouldn't have a gathering,' he told them.

Colonel Donald MacLean also expressed his thanks to the people of Mull for helping to make the 2007 gathering the best one yet.

The next gathering on Mull will be in 2012.