

## **Extracts from Chief Donald's address to Clan MacLeod SA, Aug 28 2011**

### ***What is the role of the Chiefs?***

Clan Chiefs no longer raise fighting forces and lead them into battle. Nor do they have powers they once held over their clansmen. Whilst Chiefs, who are also Lairds, continue to enjoy the association with their ancestral lands, they are often burdened with the heavy responsibilities of keeping their estates solvent. Today, Clan chiefs largely have more of a ceremonial role, providing leadership and support through clan societies.

Chiefs are also the keepers of the symbols of clans that include coats of arms, tartans, heraldic banners and most importantly the spirit of the clans that embodies some of the great tales and deeds from the past.

### ***What is the role of Clan societies?***

Clan societies have been established to provide a forum for clansmen and women to join together to learn and enjoy aspects of clan history and stories, family links and shared culture in the arts, music, literature and shared customs.

Most clans have an internationally based society structure that links societies in countries all over the world. Societies at the local level provide opportunities for fellowship, sharing of history and culture, and establishing links with their origins. International gatherings of clans provide for such opportunities on a larger scale and enhance the bonds between societies across countries and around world, with the purpose of engendering good relations and achieving something that keeps societies relevant.

In the case of Clan MacLeod, Dame Flora MacLeod, 28<sup>th</sup> Chief worked tirelessly encouraging the establishment of clan societies

Clan societies need to devise strategies that will encourage member participation and to provide opportunities for the admission of new members.

The internet has provided an excellent communications tool for clansfolk, and sharing information about members, family links, stories, and events. The web site of the Clan MacLeod Society of South Australia is an excellent example. The internet is a vital tool for the sustainability of societies into the future.

A few years ago in the course of a Clan MacLeod Parliament on Skye, I visited the Seallum Visitor Centre at Northton on the Isle of Harris. It is run as a museum and centre for clan research by Bill Lawson and his wife Chris. They are both acknowledged and keen researchers and authors. The centre has records of over 20,000 records of emigrants from the Hebrides during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This and other like sites in Scotland would be an excellent starting point for clansfolk seeking their origins.

### ***And what are the opportunities for Clan Society members?***

Membership is the engine room of clan societies. Without adequate member numbers, societies will wither and the international structures will lose relevance. I think it is most important for Clan society members to continue participating in society activities and to encourage new members.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge and thank the South Australian Clan Macleod Society for having Heather and I as their guests for Macleod Week this year. We have very much enjoyed good fellowship and hospitality with friends past and new here in Adelaide over the past few days.

*I birn quihil I se*  
*Donald MacLeod*