



The TARTAN



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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- Message from the Chief of Clan MacDougall
- Message from the Chief of Clan MacDowall
- Coming out of COVID--
The "New Normal" at Dunollie

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Gaelic Legacy: The MacDowell Artist Colony

by Jennifer Kenway

The influence and impact of Scottish and Irish artists throughout history is an amazing story to tell. One key influencer in that story was American musician and composer Edward MacDowell. In the September 2020 issue of The Tartan, we detailed MacDowell's early days, and his rise to prominence in the world of music.

In his search for musical accomplishment and artistic expression, Edward came to find a kindred spirit in his wife, Marian. It was Marian who would become his most stalwart supporter and loyal confidant. She would often encourage Edward to balance his artistic nature with calm surroundings; nature became a balm to his soul, and allowed him some respite from the often stressful world of a professional musician. Some years into their marriage in 1896, Marian encouraged Edward to purchase an abandoned farm in upstate New Hampshire. Named Hillcrest, the farm became the center of the MacDowell's home life, and eventually, their creative endeavors as well.

Later in life, Edward had suffered several setbacks in his health, which - in addition to personal struggles at Columbia University - set him back severely in terms of his mental attitude and physical stamina.



**Edward and Marian MacDowell -
Photo Courtesy of
MacDowell.org**

The MacDowell Artist Colony (cont)

Eventually, Edward sought solace in his personal cabin retreat at Hillcrest. He was most at peace in the idyllic setting of the woodlands, and the balm to his body and soul was sorely needed. He would live out the remainder of his life on the farm, with Marian and their family.

Marian and Edward had discussed how many artists often had similar struggles to Edward: many were also of a sensitive nature; many struggled to find appropriate spaces in which they could create their art or music freely, and without interruption. An idea was born: open up Hillcrest to other artists, musicians, writers and the like; build more cabins such as Edward's; allow these creative minds to enjoy the peace and tranquility of the woodland, and create their art freely and in peace.

In 1907, Edward and Marian formally began accepting musicians and artists at Hillcrest, offering them a place in one of the Nation's earliest artist's residency programs. Edward was very fond of this concept and was thrilled to see the first artists begin to enjoy what he knew would be such a help to them in their work; sadly, he would die in early 1908, before seeing it come to fullest fruition. It would be Marian who would take up the torch and continue the dream they had planned together.

It became Marian's mission to keep this dream alive. Marian, herself a talented pianist, began to travel the country giving piano recitals of her husband's compositions to raise funds for what was initially called the "Peterborough Experiment", named

after the town local to Hillcrest. Recognizing this "experiment" as a valid and worthwhile effort, many organizations came to its aid, and Marian was soon heading up a very successful program. She would go on to head the organization until her own death in 1956.

For the majority of its existence, the "Peterborough Experiment" would come to be called the MacDowell Artists Colony, named in similar fashion to artist colonies throughout the world. In early 2020, the organization dropped the word "colony", and became known simply as MacDowell. Across the decades, MacDowell lived on beyond the beautiful dream of its founders, becoming a shining light for those city dwelling artists who were beauty starved and begging for a respite for their world-worn souls.

Famous writers, musicians, and painters have made their mark on the world and left a bit of MacDowell within their creations. One such example is that of author Thornton Wilder, who came to MacDowell in 1937. Having studied theatre in Japan and other nations, he was in possession of a big idea and needed somewhere to flesh it out. While in residence at



Photo Credit: MacDowell.org

The MacDowell Artist Colony (cont)

MacDowell, Wilder finished his famous play "Our Town". The local town of Peterborough was a heavy influence on Wilder while he was writing from his MacDowell studio; the famous "Grover's Corners" in his play is a clear reference to Grove Street in Peterborough. Following the play's hit release, the town of Peterborough embraced Wilder, as he had embraced them while at MacDowell. Many businesses named after "Our Town" exist there to this day.

Other artists could tell similar tales of how their time at MacDowell influenced their creations; composer Amy Beach was inspired to compose her "Ode to a Hermit Thrush" from listening to one of the little birds outside her MacDowell studio window. As typically urban artists were captured by the pines and fields and mountains and ponds, their art came to reflect that gentle, moving influence.



L to R: Paul Nordoff, Thornton Wilder, Marian MacDowell, Nikolai Lopatnikoff, Margaret Widdemer. Photo Credit: MacDowell.org

Throughout its over 100 year history, MacDowell has granted over 14,000 Residencies, allowing thousands and thousands of artists to hone their creative talents among the over 450 acres of natural beauty that the woodlands offer. A MacDowell residency gives them the freedom of expression, experimentation, creativity, growth, and community they so desire, in a setting respectful of the nature of their art.

Today, MacDowell Residencies are given solely based on the merit of talent; no formal training or professional documentation is required for an artist who seeks to be accepted into the Residency program. Their work, alone, is sufficient for MacDowell to deem them worthy, and in fact many artists have made a start for themselves in

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MacDowall

The MacDowell Artist Colony (cont)

just this way through the MacDowell program. Applying artists who are accepted are granted a MacDowell Fellowship; about 300 Fellowships are awarded each year to incoming Artists in Residence.

Although Residency lengths have varied in the past, modern Residents reside at MacDowell anywhere from 2 to 8 weeks. Artists granted a Residency are charged no Residency fees; all their expenses on site are covered, from their own personal studio living quarters to three meals a day. Even their travel and other expenses required to get to MacDowell can be reimbursed through special programs for artists who are struggling financially. MacDowell makes concentrated effort on artistic creativity accessible to all artists; financial constraints are not a limitation.

It is interesting to note that although Edward MacDowell was a musician, composer, and painter, MacDowell today accepts emerging and established artists in a wide variety of disciplines. These include: architecture, film / video arts, interdisciplinary arts, literature, music composition, theatre, and visual arts. This scope of creative talent has harvested literally hundreds of awards for MacDowell artists in residence over the years. According to the current tally on their official website, accolades for MacDowell Artists since its inception have included:

- 33 National Book Awards
- 8 National Medal of the Arts
- 111 Rome Prizes
- 9 Academy Awards
- 93 Pulitzer Prizes
- 33 MacArthur Fellowships
- 17 Grammy Awards
- 31 Tony Awards
- 868 Guggenheim Fellowships

The elevation of the arts which began with Edward and Marian MacDowell continues to this day, mirroring that same place of respect given to artists within ancient Gaelic culture. It is a source of pride and accomplishment to any MacDowell to know that this great work for the arts is still gifting the world with beauty, creativity, and artistic expression, and will continue to do so in the future.

Learn more by watching some wonderful videos on the MacDowell foundation of today or visit their website at these links below:

The MacDowell Colony & Thornton Wilder: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j-xef_kRz_0

MacDowell: History, Mission, and Future: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i1MU-BwPHI4>

Message from the Chief of Clan MacDougall

I would like to wish all Clansfolk a VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS.

This has been an extraordinary year for us worldwide as we all have faced the Pandemic. One word that comes to mind within it is the word FAMILY. It is important at all levels. There is the World Family brought together in its effort to conquer a Global Virus. Our own Country Family, our Clan MacDougall Family, and our own Personal Families. Each level of Family has been affected by the restrictions made upon us by the virus, especially with our Clan Events and our meetings with our own family loved ones. Somehow these restrictions make us so much more aware of the joy of these meetings when we CAN have them --- so we look forward to a future in 2021 of healing from this virus at all levels.



At Dunollie, our "family" team have had to adapt to the restrictions and make a change to our way of working. Please do read Gillian Campbell's excellent report on the adaptations and activities which have taken place at Your Clan Centre at Dunollie this past year. We would like to thank you so much for all the Support you give us --- it gives us cheer and encouragement in these times.

We wish you all a Year of healing and progress in 2021.

Morag MacDougall of MacDougall



MacDougall

Message from the Chief of Clan MacDowall

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all the MacDowall and MacDougall clansmen around the world. This past year has been challenging for many; draw strength from your Clan's motto, Vincere Vel Mori which means "Conquer or Die"! A prosperous new year to all the clansmen out there.

J.A. Dougal Macdowall

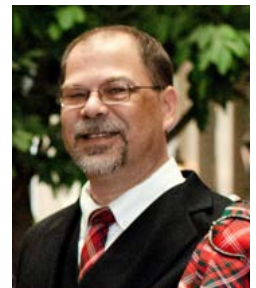
Grandson of Clan Chief Professor Fergus D.H. Macdowall



Clan Chief Professor Fergus D.H. Macdowall with his three Grandsons (from left to right) Elliott R. Macdowall, J.A. Dougal Macdowall, and Garnett L. Macdowall.

President's Report

This past year has been... interesting, to say the least. Now that winter has arrived, we rush onward toward a holiday season that, thanks to the ongoing pandemic, will likely be unlike any other.



Pouring over my texts, as I often do, I slipped down the rabbit-hole of exploring the

"daft days" of the Scottish Middle Ages. This Scots term refers to a period of mirth and amusement lasting the whole twelve days of Christmas and through Hogmanay (New Year) to Uphaliday (Twelfth Night). After the Reformation of 1560, the old feast of Christmas was generally discouraged by the Scottish Church, but the period running up to New Year's Eve, and its aftermath, was always celebrated as a holiday period in Scotland. Novelist Alexander Balfour (1767–1829) offered this description:

"At the period of which we are writing, a custom generally prevailed, which appears now in danger of becoming obsolete — "The Daft Days," as they were appropriately termed, of Yule, New Year, and Handsel Monday, were set apart for the meeting of friends and intimate neighbours, to dine or sup (often both) together, when good cheer, home-brewed, and hearty welcome, promoted the conviviality and rustic mirth of the company."

The Farmers' Three Daughters, by Alexander Balfour, 1822.

President's Report (cont)

Peter Pan author J M Barrie (1860-1937) expressed a darker view of the custom, describing it as:
“the black week of glum debauch that ushered in the year”.

Auld Licht Idylls, by J M Barrie, 1888.

This whole period of the daft days is still the primary period of national celebration in Scotland, though Hogmanay has become the main winter festival. The rest of the Daft Days are remembered but less often observed. Poet Robert Fergusson (1750–1774) captures all this in his wonderful Scots poem, “The Daft Days”. As he advises, take your fill of food and drink and enjoy the conversation, dance and music... but celebrate responsibly, so you don't fall prey to the notorious City Guard mentioned in his poem!

Have a lovely holiday season! Blessings for a wonderful 2021!

Kyle Jones
President, CMSNA

Coming Out of Covid – The “New Normal” At Dunollie

The last six months have been an incredibly challenging time for everyone during the coronavirus pandemic. It is still quite strange to think that at the end of July last year we welcomed MacDougalls from all over the world to the International MacDougall Clan Gathering. The 2020 season at Dunollie could not have been more different.

With a nationwide lockdown imposed across the UK at the beginning of April, the site was still until the team returned later in July. Dunollie was now faced with one of its biggest challenges to date – how do we still share this amazing heritage with visitors from all over the world while keeping everyone safe? As restrictions began to ease across the country in late July, the first priority was to work on welcoming visitors back to the site. With tight guidelines and safety measures implemented for businesses including capped numbers for activities, the team at Dunollie worked together to identify activities that would be realistically achievable in what was most likely going to be the “new normal”. Firstly, we introduced access to the museum and



**Gillian
Campbell**



MacDougall

The “New Normal” At Dunollie (cont)

our brand-new Women of Dunollie exhibition, followed not long after by our very popular Guided Tours. With such a great response in the first couple of weeks, we were able to add more timeslots to our programme and begin to introduce other elements such as site hire. Then, as quickly as restrictions eased, they tightened again. Areas of Scotland faced going back into local lockdowns, the capped numbers for activities were reduced again and limited to 2 households maximum meeting in and outdoors. The changes put pressure on the way Dunollie was able to deliver activities, and it was now the time to go back to the drawing board to look at other ideas to explore. One great strength of the team we have at Dunollie is resilience. We have a very collaborative way of working – everyone has the opportunity to put forward ideas and how we can make these happen. With Covid-19 looking like it might be sticking around for a little while longer, our main focus now is, “if our audience is unable to come to us at Dunollie, how can we bring the Dunollie experience to them?”



Our Dunollie guide Flora with bed hangings

Thanks to a small grant from Museums Galleries Scotland, our first step towards this was commissioning a short Dunollie Castle Film. The 40-minute documentary style piece will tell the incredible story of the castle throughout the ages, the clan who once resided there and its historical significance to the Oban & Lorn region. The team has been working with the talented videographer Mikey McManus (MMC Media) on the production of the film. Mikey joined us onsite at Dunollie last week for filming, and we hope to have the final edit ready for mid-November.

Another way in which we hope to share the amazing heritage of Dunollie Castle is through our Kindred of Lorn project. To coincide with recent completion of Phase III works, we had introduced a community project to produce a creative piece inspired by the history of the ruin – a historical paper, drawing, poem, painting, sculpture, etc. The main aim behind the project is to produce an interesting exhibition with contributions in many different mediums, from a worldwide audience of all ages which can be available to view both onsite and online. With a great response to our initial call for interest, we have decided to extend applications over the winter months.



Black Duncan 20th Chief, played by Robin

The “New Normal” At Dunollie (cont)

There is one small advantage of being unable to at this moment run activities onsite at Dunollie, and that is to turn our attention to a relatively unexplored area for the team – going digital. With our focus switched from onsite to online, we have the perfect opportunity to begin to upscale our digital content so members of the Clan MacDougall across the world are able to join in on new upcoming projects.

We are currently in the process of writing a digital plan which will span over the next 3 years and aim to trial some of these new online activities over the next 6 months. This will include items such as

a “Highland Revival” talk via Zoom with the wonderful Catherine Gillies, a behind the scenes exclusive look at our stunning “Women of Dunollie” Exhibition, an “Object of the Week” feature to show off more of our collections as well as activity packs for families and children which can be downloaded and completed in the comfort of your own home.

Other important elements that will be included within the Digital Plan will be to strengthen our Worldwide Clan communications and engagement with members and most importantly beginning to digitise our collections and archive so people may eventually have access to the stories of these ancient items from anywhere in the world. The digital arm of Dunollie is an area we have only just touched the surface of. However, we hope to grow it substantially over the next few years while onsite activities and international travel could remain uncertain for some time yet. We do not yet know how our 2021 season will look, but we are positive about all the new opportunities that await.

We would like to extend a special thank you to all from the Clan MacDougall Society of North America for your continued support. Together we will overcome this and continue to come back stronger. We can't wait until we are able to welcome you all back to Dunollie. If you would like to keep up to date with any of our upcoming winter projects visit www.dunollie.org or sign up to our mailing list via our website.

Gillian Campbell
Marketing & Promotions Manager
MacDougall of Dunollie Preservation Trust



Narrator Campbell Cameron and film crew in October



MacDougall

Book Review

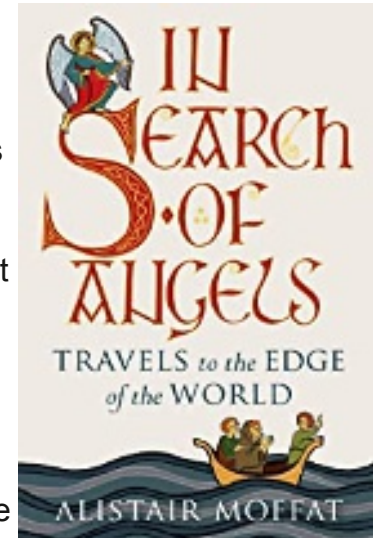
In Search of Angels: Travels to the Edge of the World, 298 pages, Birlinn Ltd. 2020

Sometimes I read a well written book that is so different or so interesting that I want to share it. *In Search of Angels Travels to the Edge of the World* is such a book. Once you open it up, this compelling book is hard to set down. The author, Alistair Moffat, is a popular Scots writer who finds almost forgotten places and events and writes their story in easily understood language. He takes you with him on his journey to view and understand the past as it was lived before it was lost in time; you will be glad he does.

Imagine a time over 1500 years ago when the Romans had recently abandoned Britain and young Christianity was succeeding more in cities than in the countryside. Its adherents were still building its earthly structure while awaiting the end of the world. However, a movement was beginning to draw religious seekers away from towns and cities into the deserts of the middle east; this was the age of ascetics and saints. Moffat takes us through their evolution from their ascetic beginnings as solitary desert hermits seeking isolated places where they might find angels and knowledge and salvation. Soon their reputations for sanctity and religious knowledge drew unwanted visitors to them, causing their sites to evolve into little monasteries. From such desolate places thoughts, ideas, and monastic rules spread from the hot sandy deserts of the middle east to be carried by men who travelled as far as the forests of France and wet wooded Ireland in their quests for seclusion. Those ideas from the eastern Church took deep root in Ireland. Monasteries of little wattle huts thrived there at the edge of the known world as the dark ages dimmed.

Having traced the path to Ireland, Moffat then follows these Irish saints as they sail away in their little curraghs to seek salvation in isolated places; sometimes alone or in small crews of up to a dozen others like the disciples. Their curraghs, lightly built of willow frames sheathed with tanned cow hides, bobbed like corks in stormy seas. However, many of them found landing places isolated enough to become their new *diseart* "hermitage"; a Gaelic word derived from "desert". Their landing places would someday become parts of the Hebrides, Faroe Islands, Shetlands, Orkneys, Scotland, Iceland, and in the case of the well-travelled Saint Brendan who visited most of these places probably North America as well. Some remained solitary where they came ashore but others travelled widely among the Gaelic and Pictish people to bring them the words of Christianity in their own language; and the people long remembered them for this. We are fortunate that Moffat understands their Gaelic and explains the full meaning of their original words to us. Some of those words became meaningful Gaelic place names.

Some accomplishments of these men may seem fictional but they left real evidence and



Book Review (cont)

Moffat takes you along broken trails to places saints went. He seeks to find what they found on rocky islands and isolated peninsulas, or in fertile landscapes and special places which still emanate otherworldliness. You may not yet know of Brendan, Moluag, Columba, or Maelrubha but In Search of Angels Travels to the Edge of the World will introduce you to them. These are the kind of men our ancestors knew long ago; these are men we will long remember after reading their stories. Reading this book is a gift which you should give to yourself.

Scott MacDougald
Editor



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Non Profit Status

We are registered as a charitable, non-profit organization under US IRS Regulation 501(c)3. Donations may be tax deductible in the US.

Membership Eligibility

Membership is open to all who support Clan MacDougall or Clan MacDowall.

Remuneration

No Society Officer receives monetary compensation or other benefits for their services.

Submissions

Persons wishing to submit articles or photos of interest to The Tartan newsletter may contact the Editor at:
editor@macdougall.org

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