



Clan MacDougall Gathering 2024

Programme Outline

Tuesday 30th July

Welcome to Dunollie – Gathering Opening Ceremony

9am, Gathering Marquee, Dunollie Museum, Castle & Grounds.

Join your fellow clan folk and gathering attendees in Dunollie's marquee and collect your welcome pack as well as any clan gathering merchandise you ordered. This will be an opportunity meet and greet everyone and be introduced to the week's activities and our team. There will be a piper present and some stalls to explore. Refreshments will be provided.

Admission: Free for Gathering Registration Ticketholders

Guided Tour of Dunollie (outdoors)

10.30am, 11.30am & 2pm, starting by the post box, Dunollie Museum, Castle & Grounds.

Follow one of our Tour Guides and immerse yourself in Dunollie's history, from the Iron age, to Somerled and the birth of the Clan MacDougall, throughout the Jacobite uprisings and until the present day. The tour starts near Dunollie's Reception Booth and will take you around the outside of the 1745 House and up to the Castle, lasting around 45min-1hr. Our Tour Guides are some of the best people to ask any questions you might have about Dunollie, Lorn and the Clan MacDougall.

Please note, the path up to the Castle is steep and not wheelchair, or stroller accessible. The group will move up the hill slowly, there is a handrail and walking sticks can be provided to help participants. However, the second part of the tour may not be accessible to people with mobility issues. Everyone is welcome to join the first half of the tour and to stop at to stop before the end if needed.

Admission: Free for Gathering Registration Ticketholders

Scottish Gaelic Taster Sessions – Led by Duncan MacNeil

11.30am, Gathering Marquee, Dunollie Museum, Castle & Grounds.

Join our resident Gaelic Tutor, Duncan MacNeil, to learn some traditional Gaelic words and phrases. During the workshop you will also discover more about Gaelic culture throughout history and its place in modern Scotland, as well as hearing performances from local Gaelic musicians and artists.

The taster session will last about an hour, with tea, coffee and shortbread included. All levels of ability are welcome, from complete beginners to fluent Gaelic speakers. This activity will take place sitting down and will be accessible to wheelchair users.

Admission: £10

Oban Walking Tour

1pm, meeting point tbc. either Oban Train Station or Dunollie Museum, Castle & Grounds

Discover Oban and its many stories with an expert guide. Learn about the entrepreneurial businessmen who developed the town from its humble Stone Age cave dwelling origins. Follow in the footsteps of Queen Victoria, Boswell and Johnson, Sir Walter Scott, Robert Louis Stevenson and other prominent Victorians. Promenade along the Esplanade and enjoy tales of Celtic monks, ancient Celtic giants and Irish myths and legends. Take the steep but rewarding walk up to McCaig's Tower to enjoy the stunning views out over Oban Bay.

This activity requires participants to be comfortable walking for over an hour and is not wheelchair accessible. Please bring comfortable active footwear and waterproofs.

Admission: £12

Dunollie's Rent Book – A talk by Jennifer Shaw and Jamie MacGregor

2.30pm, Gathering Marquee, Dunollie Museum, Castle & Grounds.

Jennifer Shaw, Dunollie's lead archive volunteer, presents a fascinating insight in to the recently discovered Dunollie rent book, dating to the mid-17th century. The Rent Book opens up a whole new insight into the economic relationship between the MacDougall Clan Chiefs and their tenants preceding the Jacobite era in Scotland, which we would not have been able to access, if not for its miraculous rediscovery and Jennifer's skill and dedication put towards its transcription.

Following Jennifer's presentation, there will be an opportunity for those interested to step into the 1745 House Museum's reading room and see the Rent Book.

Admission: £10

Garden Tour of Dunollie – By Maurice Wilkins

2pm & 3.30pm, Dunollie Museum, Castle & Grounds.

Discover Dunollie's Historic Woodland Grounds and Shrubbery with Maurice Wilkins, botanical expert and retired Head Gardener of Arduaine Gardens. Dunollie is home to hundreds of different plant species, some native to the west coast of Scotland and some brought back by MacDougall Chiefs from across the world over the course of the last centuries. There is no better guide to Dunollie's grounds than Maurice, who has been one of our most dedicated volunteers, studying our gardens and helping us think about its future over the last two years. This activity will last 45min-1hour and involve standing and walking, although it will take place entirely on wheelchair accessible paths.

Admission: £10

Wednesday 31st July

Photography session – with Aly Robinson

8am, 9am, 10am, 4pm, 5pm, 6pm, at Dunollie Museum, Castle & Grounds.

Meet Aly Robinson for a photoshoot at the castle to commemorate your visit. Aly is an incredibly talented photographer with years of experience in both Scotland and America. She will talk you through the whole session, making sure you are comfortable and suggesting different poses to make the most of the exceptional setting. The shoot will last around 30 minutes.

You are welcome to book your photoshoot as an individual, couple, family, or as a group of friends. Please note that if you would like more than 5 people to participate, you may be asked to book more than one timeslot. If you would like to use another part of Dunollie as your backdrop, that can be arranged too.

Admission: £120

Tour of Isle of Lismore (full day)

8.45am, departure from Oban Calmac Ferry Terminal.

Spend a day on the Isle of Lismore, a hidden gem of the Hebrides and the pearl of the MacDougall crown. Tickets will include return ferry to Lismore, transport around the island, lunch and refreshments throughout the day, as well as your choice of two of the activities below:

- Guided walk with Dr. Bob Hay to the Castle Coeffin Ruin, a 15th century MacDougall stronghold with Norse roots. Level: Steep descents, wear sturdy footwear.
- Guided walk with Douglas Breingan of Paisley Museum to the Lismore Parish Church, formerly St. Moluag's Cathedral, built in the 15th century by the Clan MacDougall, and Medieval graveslab display. Short Service in Scottish and Gaelic by Rev. Dougald Cameron. Level: Flat surfaces, 10-minute walk. Limited seats in Land Rover available for those who are not able to walk.
- Visit of the Museum, Gaelic Library, and gift shop. Drop-in genealogy service, historic reenactment at the Cottars Cottage, and meet some of the island's locals at the museum desk.
- Shepherding demonstration with local shepherd Arthur and his collie dogs at Port a Charon's abandoned 18th century Weaver's Village. Level. Medium. Sturdy footwear required. Limited seats in 4x4 Rover available for those who are not able to walk on grassy terrain.

- Talk Dy Dr Bob Hay and Douglas Breingan in the Museum room –learn more about recent archaeological excavations and fascinating discoveries in and around St Moluag’s Cathedral, the Glebe, and old Graveyard. Find out how we can all help to secure the future of the Church.

Admission: £89

Guided Tour of Dunollie (outdoors)

10.30am, 11.30am & 2pm, starting by the post box, Dunollie Museum, Castle & Grounds.

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Admission: Free for all Gathering Registration Ticketholders

Historic Kilbride Visit

10.30pm & 12.30pm, minibus transport provided from Dunollie Museum, Castle & Grounds

Historic Kilbride has been a part of the MacDougall story for centuries. Here lie Clan Chiefs, Jacobite warriors, storied soldiers, sailors and men of the cloth. Here lie too, MacDougall women folk; dauntless Mary of Sleat, Hope MacDougall – whose efforts to conserve the Clan’s heritage are seen to this day at Dunollie and Jean MacDougall, whose collated work “Highland Postbag” brings MacDougall history to life.

Participants will be welcomed with a complimentary tea or coffee and a showing of a short film, “Kilbride: A past too rich to have no future”. Members of the Kilbride Team will also be on hand for any questions you may have.

About Kilbride Kirk: Located 3 miles South of Oban in Lerags, Kilbride Kirk has played an important part in Scotland’s history and is connected to figures such as Robert The Bruce, Alexander II and the Clan MacDougall. There are some 319 known graves at Kilbride, dating as far back as the 13th century to the present day. This important site is now cared for by the charity “Friends of Kilbride”, who have recently completed the renovation and preservation of the ruined Kirk and Session House. A warm welcome awaits!

Admission: £36

Garden Tour of Dunollie – By Maurice Wilkins

2pm & 3.30pm, Dunollie Museum, Castle & Grounds.

Discover Dunollie's Historic Woodland Grounds and Shrubbery with Maurice Wilkins, botanical expert and retired Head Gardener of Arduaine Gardens. Dunollie is home to hundreds of different plant species, some native to the west coast of Scotland and some brought back by MacDougall Chiefs from across the world over the course of the last centuries. There is no better guide to Dunollie's grounds than Maurice, who has been one of our most dedicated volunteers, studying our gardens and helping us think about its future over the last two years. This activity will last 45min-1hour and involve standing and walking, although it will take place entirely on wheelchair accessible paths.

Admission: £10

Clann Dubhghaill: thoughts on the MacDougalls in the later Middle Ages – A talk Dr Martin MacGregor

2.30pm, Gathering Marquee, Dunollie Museum, Castle & Grounds.

Dr Martin MacGregor is a senior lecturer in Scottish History at the University of Glasgow, specialising in the history of the Highlands or Gaelic-speaking Scotland between 1300 and 1900. His PhD was on *Clann Griogair* or the MacGregors in the later Middle Ages (roughly the 14th to 16th centuries), and he maintains a strong research interest in clans and clan society.

Dr Macgregor's talk will the nature of clanship in the later Middle Ages by using Clan MacDougall as a case study: Clans are one of the iconic markers of Scottish identity, yet surprisingly little academic research has been done on either clan society, or on the history of individual clans, in the later Middle Ages. This talk will offer some thoughts on the rise, fall and survival of *Clann Dubhghaill* or the MacDougalls in this era. It will make discuss some important surviving documents, pay attention to the MacDougalls as patrons of Gaelic culture, and draw comparisons with other clans.

Admission: £10

Oban Distillery Tour

3.30pm, Oban Distillery.

Visit and experience one of Oban's most iconic buildings (after Dunollie Castle of course), and learn about the history of the town, and the whisky making process. Your visit will include a complete tour of the Distillery with an expert Guide, as well as the opportunity to try three different drams of Oban Whisky.

Admission: £45

Ceilidh Dance Lesson – with Marlynn Turbitt

4pm, Gathering Marquee, Dunollie Museum, Castle & Grounds.

Join Marlynn Turbitt in Dunollie for an informal and fun dance lesson to help you prepare for the ceilidh dance on Saturday evening. If you're new to ceilidh dancing, or would like a chance to practice and be reminded of a few of the dances, this is the perfect opportunity.

This activity will last about an hour, all levels of ability are welcome.

Admission: £10

Thursday 1st August

Tour of Isle of Lismore (full day)

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About Kilbride Kirk: Located 3 miles South of Oban in Lerags, Kilbride Kirk has played an important part in Scotland’s history and is connected to figures such as Robert The Bruce, Alexander II and the Clan MacDougall. There are some 319 known graves at Kilbride, dating as far back as the 13th century to the present day. This important site is now cared for by the charity “Friends of Kilbride”, who have recently completed the renovation and preservation of the ruined Kirk and Session House. A warm welcome awaits!

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The taster session will last about an hour, with tea, coffee and shortbread included. All levels of ability are welcome, from complete beginners to fluent Gaelic speakers. This activity will take place sitting down and will be accessible to wheelchair users.

Admission £10

Finding Dugald: The first ancestor of the Clan MacDougall – A talk by Catherine Gillies

2.30pm, Gathering Marquee, Dunollie Museum, Castle & Grounds.

Join Catherine Gillies, a museum curator who has been involved with Dunollie and its collections for more than 25 years. Catherine's talk will explore the legacy of Somerled and how his son Dugald came to found the Clan in North Argyll. This presentation is based on new discoveries which she has made during our current Clan history project, which will soon result in a new book focusing on Dunollie and its relationship to the Clan MacDougall.

Admission: £10

Garden Tour of Dunollie – By Maurice Wilkins

2pm & 3.30pm, Dunollie Museum, Castle & Grounds.

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Photography session – with Aly Robinson

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You are welcome to book your photoshoot as an individual, couple, family, or as a group of friends. Please note that if you would like more than 5 people to participate, you may be asked to book more than one timeslot. If you would like to use another part of Dunollie as your backdrop, that can be arranged too.

Admission: £120

An Evening at Dunollie

6.30pm, Dunollie Museum, Castle & Grounds.

Spend the evening in Dunollie Museum, Castle and Grounds. Enjoy the peaceful nature and breath-taking views from the Castle after most of the day's visitors have left. Sample some of the Kettle Garden Café's exclusive dinner options as well as a selection of desserts, snacks, cocktails and traditional Scottish drinks prepared for the occasion. You will be joined there by there by fantastic local band – The Antics- who will be providing musical entertainment throughout the night.

This activity is accessible to all. Please note that food and drinks are not included in the ticket price and will need to be purchased separately during the evening.

Admission: £18

Friday 2nd August

Photography session – with Aly Robinson

8am, 9am, 10am, 4pm, 5pm, 6pm, at Dunollie Museum, Castle & Grounds.

Meet Aly Robinson for a photoshoot at the castle to commemorate your visit. Aly is an incredibly talented photographer with years of experience in both Scotland and America. She will talk you through the whole session, making sure you are comfortable and suggesting different poses to make the most of the exceptional setting. The shoot will last around 30 minutes.

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Admission: £120

Isle of Kerrera Walking Tour (half day)

10am, Ferry departing from Gallanach Slipway, South of Oban.

Embark on a walking tour of Kerrera - Oban's nearest inhabited island and a key to the power of the Clan MacDougall. This activity will start at Gallanach Ferry terminal, a couple miles south of Oban (accessible by car, taxi or bus), where you will embark on a small boat for a 5-10-minute crossing to the Kerrera. There, you will follow your guide towards the south of the beautiful island, where you will have a chance to enjoy some lunch and refreshments at the lovely cottage tearoom, as well as a chance to explore Gylen Castle, before heading back to the ferry. Beyond Kerrera's fascinating history, this walking tour will also give you a chance to experience the idyllic Scottish countryside, with sheep, goats, rabbits and different birds in the first blooms of heather.

This activity requires participants to be able to walk for 3-5 hours. Please bring appropriate walking gear (especially sturdy, comfortable shoes), waterproofs and your own bottle of water. It is possible to purchase water from the tearoom of course, but it may take 2 hours to reach.

Admission: £28

Guided Tour of Dunollie (outdoors)

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Admission: £36

Castles & Wildlife Boat Tour - with Coastal Connections

9.30am, 11.45am, 2pm, 4.15pm, Departure from slipway across from the Oban War & Peace Museum, Oban.

Join local brothers Cameron and Struan and explore the local area by the sea, as most people would have before the 19th century. Embark on a sightseeing journey and tick-off all your favourite MacDougall castles from Dunollie, to Dunstaffnage, to Castle Stalker and Gylen. The “Wildlife and Castles” extended boat tour leaves from Oban Bay.

The route takes in sights of Dunollie Castle Ruin, Dunstaffnage Castle, Castle Stalker and Gylen Castle on the Island of Kerrera. This will allow plenty of opportunity to spot bird life such as Guillemots, Gannets, Terns and on a lucky day... a Sea Eagle! You will also be spot the impressive Lismore Lighthouse, an operational fish farm and seal colony.

Please dress warmly and in waterproof clothing as you will be on the boat for the duration of the activity.

Admission: £60

Piping Recital & Discussion – with Jamie MacGregor

12.30pm, Gathering Marquee, Dunollie Museum, Castle & Grounds.

Join Jamie MacGregor, Dunollie’s Heritage Engagement Officer, for an interactive performance. Jamie has been playing the bagpipes for over 15 years and has a wealth of knowledge about this fascinating instrument. Listen to him perform a varied repertoire of your favourite piping tunes and learn about the history of the bagpipes in Scotland and in Dunollie. Take a closer look at the bagpipes, handle its different parts, and get a proper understanding of how they actually work and how best to care for them. There will be ample opportunity to ask him any questions you might have throughout the session.

Admission: £10

Oban Distillery Tour

1pm, Oban Distillery.

Visit and experience one of Oban’s most iconic buildings (after Dunollie Castle of course), and learn about the history of the town, and the whisky making process. Your visit will include a complete tour of the Distillery with an expert Guide, as well as the opportunity to try three different drams of Oban Whisky.

Admission: £45

Garden Tour of Dunollie – By Maurice Wilkins

2pm & 3.30pm, Dunollie Museum, Castle & Grounds.

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This activity will last 45min-1hour and involve standing and walking, although it will take place entirely on wheelchair accessible paths.

Admission: £10

Castles of Argyll: Stories in stone – A Talk by Roddy Regan

2.30pm, Gathering Marquee, Dunollie Museum, Castle & Grounds.

Roddy has been a professional archaeologist for 37 years and has lived and worked in Argyll for 20 of those. He has a special interest in historical records and is perhaps happiest when they combine on a site. Over the last few years Roddy has been compiling historical chronicles for the MacDougalls and the MacDonalds, after having worked at both Dunollie and Dunyvaig castles which he will be discussing in his talk.

Admission: £10

Ceilidh Dance Lesson – with Marlynn Turbitt

4pm, Gathering Marquee, Dunollie Museum, Castle & Grounds.

Join Marlynn Turbitt in Dunollie for an informal and fun dance lesson to help you prepare for the ceilidh dance on Saturday evening. If you're new to ceilidh dancing, or would like a chance to practice and be reminded of a few of the dances, this is the perfect opportunity.

This activity will last about an hour, all levels of ability are welcome.

Admission: £10

Saturday 3rd August

Living History Day (full day)

Activities start at 10am, Dunollie Museum, Castle & Grounds.

Travel back in time for the day and experience Dunollie's history like never before. Explore a selection of fantastic local stalls in the Gathering Marquee, meet the Erskines Regiment and take part in a selection of heritage crafts throughout the day.

Admission: Free for Gathering Registration Ticketholders

Genealogy Sessions – with Caroline Boswell

18x15min consultations between 10am and 3.45pm, Dunollie Museum, Castle & Grounds.

Book a 15-minute consultation with Caroline Boswell, professional Genealogist and Trustee of Friends of Kildriddle to discuss your family ancestry. In 15 minutes, Caroline may not have time to undertake in-depth research and therefore it is possible that no groundbreaking discovery will happen for you *during* the session. Instead, she aims to discuss with you what you know and show

you different tools which exist for you to continue your own research, guiding you towards the right databases, records and archives to get the answers you seek.

Everyone is welcome to book a consultation, but if you are here as a family, a single consultation might suffice for all of you. If in doubt, please email us to ask. This activity is suitable for anyone with an interest in researching their genealogy and doesn't need to be related to the clan MacDougall at all.

Admission: £7.50

Oban Distillery Tour

11am, Oban Distillery.

Visit and experience one of Oban's most iconic buildings (after Dunollie Castle of course), and learn about the history of the town, and the whisky making process. Your visit will include a complete tour of the Distillery with an expert Guide, as well as the opportunity to try three different drams of Oban Whisky.

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Admission: £10

Genetic Roots and Branch of the Clan MacDougall - Could you be a blood descendant of Dougall MacSomhairle, King of the Hebrides? – A Talk by Edward Sweeney (born MacDougall)

2.30pm, Gathering Marquee, Dunollie Museum, Castle & Grounds.

Meet Edward Sweeney and find out more about his groundbreaking research into the Y-chromosome DNA of the modern-day descendants of Somerled. Edward will begin by introducing himself and explaining how and why he first started what is now known as the MacDougall DNA Project. He will discuss what this research entails and what can be learned from Y-Chromosome DNA testing, what is already known about the Y-DNA patterns associated with paternal descendants of Somerled and Dougall and what the future of this project might hold. There will be time for questions and further information about the project and its resources will be available to all participants.

Admission: £10

Ceilidh Dinner & Dance

6pm, Argyllshire Gathering Halls, Oban.

Join your fellow clan members and Clan Chief for a final evening of celebrations! Enjoy a traditional Scottish dinner (with three courses), have a dram of whisky and get ready to dance at the clan's biggest ceilidh of the year.

If you are new to ceilidh dancing, fear not, each dance will be explained briefly as it starts and the most important is to have a good time. There are two dancing lessons scheduled to take place in Dunollie in the days before hand which might be useful to you.

Anyone who isn't able or doesn't wish to join in is welcome to sit back and enjoy the live music.

Admission: £120 for adults, £80 for children

Sunday 4th August

Clan Farewell March

10am, Centre of Oban.

End the Gathering on a high note by taking part in a march through Oban with your fellow clan folk and accompanied by a pipe band.

The full activity is a march so it does require being able to walk however, participants are welcome to join for sections of the march rather than its entirety should that be more suited to them.

Admission: Free for Registration Ticket Holders

Clarsach Performance & Workshop – The Argyll Branch of the Clarsach Society

12pm, Gathering Marquee, Dunollie Museum, Castle & Grounds.

Discover the Clarsach, one of Scotland's oldest and most cherished musical instruments which important Clan Chiefs would have had in their halls long before the bagpipes became popular. A group of local players will be providing a short talk on the musical history of Clarsach and harps at Dunollie, accompanied by tunes associated with this ancestral Clan seat and surrounding areas. There will be an opportunity to try your own hand at the Clarsach and ask any questions you might have.

Admission: £10