



Dedicated to Preserving the History of Glengarry

Guest Speaker: Sine McKenna "The Presence of the Gaelic language in Canada from the mid 1700's to the Present Day"

Sine McKenna has been teaching and performing Scots Gaelic songs for over 20 years. Although born and raised in Montreal, she was immersed in the culture of the Scottish and Irish Gael from a young age. She first began her Gaelic language studies at St. Francis Xavier University, and later, on the Isle of Skye.

Since that time, Sine has performed at concerts, clubs and ceilidhs in Scotland and Canada and has appeared on the BBC, Channel 4 (Scotland), the CBC and Radio Canada. Sine was lead vocalist with the Montreal based Celtic group Phenigma, who made their first CD in 1995. She later went on to establish three Glengarry based musical groups: Nigheanan Glengarry, who performed throughout Quebec, Ontario and Scotland, as well as Celtic Works and Anam Cara.

She has been awarded gold medals for excellence in traditional song, at the Toronto Gaelic Mod, the premier Gaelic festival in North America. She is also winner of the prestigious Quebec Thistle Council Award, for the teaching of Scots Gaelic language and song.

Next Meeting

- Date: April 12, 8PM**
- Speaker: Ms. Sine McKenna**
"The Presence of the Gaelic language in Canada from the mid 1700's to the Present Day"
- Place: The Church on the Hill, Alexandria**

Since 1991, Sine has been running Celtic Heritage programmes in elementary schools in Glengarry county, following in the footsteps of her parents, Kenneth and Anne. She has been an instructor at the University of Ottawa since 2002 where she teaches Scots Gaelic language and culture. She has also been performing and teaching at the Fergus Highland Games since 2007.

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Sine was on the executive of The Canadian Celtic Congress and cofounder of the first Gaelic medium playgroup on the Isle of Skye. She has just recently completed a booklet of Gaelic language learning songs for children and is presently working on a CD called The Gaelic Voice in Canada.

Sine has recently opened a business which specializes in organizing and leading Gaelic cultural tours to the Highlands and Islands of Scotland.

Sine is going to tell the story of the presence of the Gaelic language in Canada from the mid 1700's to the present day, through words, poetry, and song. She will highlight its presence in Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Glengarry county, as well as bringing to light the lesser known story of the Gaels

At the Crossroads

To celebrate its 50 years in operation, the Glengarry Pioneer Museum, with the support of the Glengarry Historical Society, has produced a beauty of a book – the story in 52 full-colour pages, filled with photographs of early days around Dunvegan, of the Museum as it developed over the years, and of the many people who have been active in its development.

The book entitled 'At the Crossroads', gives a brief history of the early settlement of the area, the beginnings of the Glengarry Historical Society and the Museum, with descriptions and photos of the buildings and artifacts in the collection.

People are, of course, the Museum's most important asset, and they are featured throughout the 52 pages. There are many photos of these special people –

- *the founders who had the vision in the early 60s,
- *the Curators who nurtured the Museum over the next 50 years,
- *the local people who have been honoured as Distinguished Pioneers for their service to Glengarry's culture and heritage,
- *the scores of volunteers who clean and paint, restore, repair and rebuild, accession artifacts, greet visitors and generally keep our local history alive and
- *the many hundreds of visitors who flock to the Fall Festival, the Wood Fair, the Art Fayre, the Reenactments and the other popular events each summer.

The cover art is a beautiful painting by local artist John Sims, after a photograph of the Dunvegan crossroads around the turn of the 20th century. Edited by Bonnie Laing, designed by James Joyce, project-managed by Susan Joiner and built on the photos and articles contributed by many volunteers, the book Crossroads is a wonderful keepsake, commemorating 50 years of keeping history alive at the Glengarry Pioneer Museum.

At the Crossroads sells for \$20 and is on sale at the following local merchants:

- Glengarry Fine Cheese, Lancaster
- R&L Books, Main St., Alexandria
- Fassifern General Store
- Home Hardware, Maxville
- Celtic Treasures, Maxville

Copies will also be available for purchase at the Historical Society meeting on April 12.

Many thanks go to the Glengarry Historical Society for providing a grant to support the publication of 'At the Crossroads'.



Hugh P. MacMillan signs copies of the 50th anniversary book. He is one of the original founders of the Glengarry Historical Society and Glengarry Pioneer Museum which was incorporated and opened in 1962

Volunteer Opportunities

If you are interested in volunteering with the Glengarry Historical Society or with one of its Museums, contact us for information on available opportunities. We are always looking for dedicated individuals who wish to join in local heritage work, events and programming.

Pioneer Dinner & Ball was a Huge Success!

The Glengarry Pioneer Museum's Dinner and Ball was held on Saturday February 25th in the Glengarry Sports Palace, Alexandria. The event kicked off the Museum's 50th anniversary year with a sold out crowd of 230 people who came decked out in pioneer, Scottish and formal attire. It was a sight for the eyes to see women in dresses from the 1860s, men with top hats and bowlers and of course an array of tartan in classic Glengarry style. The event also served to launch a beautiful commemorative book called "At the Crossroads: 50 years of the Glengarry Pioneer Museum". These books will be sold throughout the 2012 season and will soon be available through the museum website.

The Glengarry Sports Palace was decorated beautifully with heritage in mind. Images from the collection were enlarged and put on the walls, mannequins of 19th century clothing stood tall and place cards at each seat told a different historical story. There was a delicious filet mignon dinner followed by live entertainment from Ashley MacLeod and Paddy Kelly as well as Trevor Stanton with his band of "Three Men and a lovely lady". Julia Danskin did a fine job leading an impressive group of Scottish country dancers and helped initiate this by offering lessons leading up to the event (Of course, her famous lessons will also be available starting March 1st to anyone who may be interested to learn this fun cultural tradition that is also a great workout!).

With an impressive list of 21 sponsors, the busy organizers were able to hold a silent auction and raffle of prizes ranging from Glengarry cheeses and maple syrup to Senators tickets and a two-night stay at the Chateau Frontenac in Quebec City. A huge thank-you must go to these sponsors and the key organizers: Flip Flockton, Barb Glen, Blair Williams, Lindsey Howes and Bonnie Laing. As well, thanks to all of the other volunteers who helped with setup, takedown and everything in-between. Congratulations to the museum on 50 successful years!

Jennifer Black



Museum's executive committee: Karen Davison-Wood, Kent MacSweyn, Terry Sweitzer, Linda Fraser, Garry Smith, Jim Mullin and Curator, Jennifer Black.



Glengarry-Prescott-Russell M.P. – Pierre Lemieux – helps organizer, Lindsey Howes draw raffle tickets at the Pioneer Dinner and Ball.



At least 30 people took to the dance floor during a period of Scottish Country Dancing lead by Maxville's Julia Danskin.

Photos by Jennifer Black and James Joyce.

Come join in the celebrations of the Pioneer Museum's 50th anniversary – come to the AGM -- bring a potluck dish Friday April 20, 2012, 6 pm at the DRA in Dunvegan and enjoy the evening's program and the good company.

Minutes of the February 2, 2012 Meeting and Pot Luck Supper of GHS

Social interaction and partaking in an appetizing assortment is the order of the first part of the evening at the Church on the Hill.

President, Allan Macdonell, calls on the membership to turn to a consideration of the agenda of the GHS affairs. Secretary, Richard Bleile, is called upon to present the minutes of the last meeting (November 2011) and pronounce a motion of acceptance. Blair Williams seconds the motion. Passed.

President Macdonell points to the major item of business to be contained in the motion that vice president Robin Flockton is about to present. Robin Flockton makes the following motion: "In accordance with the GHS By-laws, 12(a), it is proposed that the Annual Meeting of the Glengarry Historical Society be moved from the month of February to the month of May." Garry Smith seconds. Unanimous approval.

Gordon Ferguson takes a few moments to update on the further information which has been revealed relative to his dissertation of last November.

Robin Flockton informs the membership on the developments on the 50th Anniversary archives project. Mr. Flockton, along with Karen Davison Wood, Tom Glen, and David Anderson have begun work in the proper organization of the archival material held by the GHS in a space made available at the "Priest's Mill" in Alexandria. The aim is to hook up with Library and Archives Canada.

Flip Flockton reminds all of the Gala Ball on February 25th.

Gay Hamilton has a brief moment to tell about the happenings at the Nor'Westers & Loyalist Museum. An exhibit on the subject of the women in the fur trade is being planned and there is an idea of exploring the introduction of the Ayrshire Breed in Glengarry.

Allan Macdonell extends words of appreciation for the people who have made the arrangements for the the evening's activities: the meal and table set-up.

Karen Davison Wood adjourns the meeting.

Richard Bleile (recording secretary)

Become a Member

Membership in the Historical Society means you are an integral part in preserving local history. You are invited to each of the regular meetings, which usually feature an interesting guest speaker or presentation. You will receive the Newsletter (several per year), and advance notice of Historical Society events. Membership in the Glengarry Historical Society is \$20 (\$25, Family) annually, or \$200 Lifetime membership. The Glengarry Historical Society is an affiliate of the Ontario Historical Society.

Glengarry commemorative sword in "War of 1812" exhibit



Courtesy of Parks Canada

In 1816, 'one hundred' guineas were paid by the Legislature of Upper Canada to make a Presentation Sword, as well as scabbard & sling for Francis Battersby, "having taken into consideration the meritorious services of the Glengarry Regiment of Fencible Light Infantry..., and being deficiious of showing the high value at which we estimate the services of Lieut. Colonel Battersby" (commanding officer from 1812 to the end of the war). This set was crafted by Hamlett's of Leicester Square and it came to Canada in 1971 as an acquisition of the National Historic Sites Service, Ottawa. The blade is exquisitely engraved. The sword has been loaned by Parks Canada to be a special feature of the Major Exhibit, 2012-2015 — Foundations and Fire: Early Parliament and the War of 1812 Experience at York. The exhibit is curated by Beth Ann Mendes and is on display at the Parliament Interpretive Centre recently opened by the Ontario Heritage Trust (265 Front St., E., Toronto). The centre sits on the actual site of Upper Canada's first 'dedicated' Parliament buildings. The exhibit chronicles the burning of these buildings by American troops during the 1813 ransacking of York where British troops, including members of the Glengarry Fencibles, were outnumbered by a large margin.

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