

## The Clan Gunn 18<sup>th</sup> International Gathering 2015 – Orkney & Caithness

**The 2015 Clan Gunn Gathering will be based in Orkney and Caithness.**

**To assist those who wish to be ‘on-site’ for most of the evening events we have block booked some hotel rooms in at the Ayre Hotel in Orkney and Mackay’s Hotel and the Norseman Hotel in Wick, Caithness. There are many other hotels, guesthouses and “Bed and Breakfast’s” in both venues and we suggest you use ‘tripadvisor’ on the internet as a good indicator of value and quality, before booking. We would also ask you to choose accommodation within easy walking distance of the above mentioned hotels as the coaches will be leaving from them for the trips.**

### **Day 1 Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> July**

Registration will take place in the foyer of the Ayre Hotel, Kirkwall, Orkney from 5.00pm onwards. We have block booked the afternoon ferry from John O’Groats over to Burwick where we will be met by coaches for the 45 minute drive through some of the southern Orkney islands to Kirkwall, the capital. There are alternative means of transport including direct flights from Aberdeen, Inverness, Glasgow and Edinburgh to Kirkwall.

In the evening there will be a buffet supper at the Ayre Hotel followed by an illustrated talk on the Orkney Islands and their relevance to Clan Gunn.

### **Day 2 Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> July**

The Clan will meet for a morning church service at St Magnus Cathedral in the heart of Kirkwall at. St Magnus is the only cathedral in the Orkney Isles and is known as the ‘Light in the North’. It was founded in 1137 by the Viking, Earl Rognvald, in honour of his uncle, St Magnus, both of whom Clan Gunn claim descent from.

Lunch is not organised and the Clan will be free to explore the many eating establishments that Kirkwall has to offer.

In the afternoon there will be a choice of tours:

1. Coach tour of the Mainland: The trip will include visits to Skara Brae, the magnificent prehistoric village which is wonderfully preserved and dates back to 2000 BC and to the Stromness Museum which includes an excellent exhibition about the clearances in Orkney.
2. A tour of the Highland Park Whisky Distillery: One of the most popular malt whiskies available, followed by a tour of the newly opened and highly acclaimed Fossil and Heritage Centre in Burray.

The coaches will return to Kirkwall for a quick turnaround before an Orkney Evening. This will include a buffet supper, stories and poems about Orkney and some traditional Orkney dancing. Don't worry, there will be a "caller" so you will know what to do but remember to bring your dancing shoes.

### **Day 3 Monday 20<sup>th</sup> July**

Today there will be a full day trip to the Island of Hoy, which will include taking in the dramatic scenery of Rackwick Bay, the Scapa Flow visitor centre, the Martello Towers and a traditional Orkney lunch at Hoy Kirk.

The evening is Free.

### **Day 4 Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> July**

Coaches will leave from the Ayre Hotel after breakfast for the return ferry trip to Caithness. We will be met by coaches at John O' Groats which will take the Clan to the Castle Arms at Mey for a light lunch followed by a trip to Caithness Horizons in Thurso.

There will be another chance for Clan members who are joining the Gathering at this stage to register at the Mackays Hotel from 4.00pm onwards.

There will be a buffet supper at Mackay's Hotel followed by an illustrated talk titled " An introduction to Caithness".

### **Day 5 Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> July**

This will be a long but highly rewarding day. An all day trip to the East Coast including the Clan Gunn Heritage Centre, Time Span and Dunrobin Castle, Golspie.

On our way back to Wick we will attend an informal drinks reception hosted by the Commander, Iain Gunn of Banniskirk, at Swiney House, followed by a ceilidh in Clyth Hall.

### **Day 6 Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> July**

This will be another all day bus trip to the North Coast but there will be a 10.00am start from outside of Mackay's Hotel to give you a bit of a lie in! The trip will take in Bettyhill, Farr Museum and Tongue Gardens and will provide a great opportunity to see some spectacular scenery (weather permitting).

A picnic lunch will be provided and the coaches should return to Wick by 5pm with the evening left free for your own entertainment.

### **Day 7 Friday 24<sup>th</sup> July**

There will be a ½ day bus trip to Girnego Castle, St Tears with a picnic lunch at Staxigoe bay. Coaches should return to Wick early afternoon to allow some free time before the Gala Dinner Dance in the evening.

This is the first year that the Clan Gunn & Clan Sinclair have celebrated an international Gathering together and we are hosting a Gala Dinner Dance in the Wick Assembly Rooms. We have booked one of the best ceilidh dance bands in the area and there will be many local Gunns and Sinclairs joining us for an eventful evening. The event has been subsidised by the Scottish Clan Fund, which has greatly helped to reduce the cost of the event.

### **Day 8 Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> July**

Coaches will leave Mackay's Hotel at 10am for the Ross Institute at Halkirk for the Clan Gunn Society AGM at 11am.

Following this, members of the clan will be invited to march behind the pipe band to the Halkirk Games field for the formal opening of the Games. The afternoon will be spent watching the highland games which for those who haven't been before, showcases everything from the traditional heavyweight events (tossing the caber etc.) to Scottish dancing, bagpiping, clay pigeon shooting as well as some recognised athletic events. A light lunch will be provided on the games field in the Women's Institute (WI) tent and there will be full hospitality provided in the Gunn tent.

In the evening, as we near the end of another Gathering, there will be a Formal Four course Dinner at Mackays Hotel,.

### **Day 9 Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> July**

Coaches will leave Mackay's Hotel at 9.30am for the closing service held in Kildonan Kirk, Kildonan Strath near Helmsdale, and the official closing of the 2015 Gathering. Coaches will return to Wick afterwards arriving at around 1.30pm.

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