



Council of Scottish Clans & Associations

Advancing Scottish Heritage Societies through Service, Education, and Advocacy

Communications Report

December 11, 2022

1. **Domain Name.** The COSCA.scot domain name was successfully renewed on September 26, 2022, and the account was moved to COSCA's credit card.
2. **Website Hosting.** The COSCA website was successfully switched from a Wordpress-based service hosted by Slamdot to a more secure web-management service offered by Wix. The Slamdot account was closed in April 2022.
3. **New COSCA Website.** The new Website created in December 2021. In January through February of this year, the site was updated with suggestions from the COSCA leadership.
4. **Find My Clan.** The original "Find My Clan" database was created as a spreadsheet in 2021. Bob Heston contributed his work starting in February 2022 and by April 2022 the spreadsheet was completely overhauled. The first online version was incorporated into the COSCA website in February 2022 as a series of static surname pages linked to a dynamic database of 344 clan and family names. In July 2022, the surnames were converted to a dynamic database with over 11,000 individual records, each linked to the specific clan or family. In June 2022, the "Find My Clan" online service was shared with clan and family society contacts who were requested to update the information on their respective pages. Edits and suggestions were received by over 30 clan and family representatives. In July 2022, a dynamic database was created for all 135 known chiefs of the name and arms. See Appendix A: Find My Clan.
5. **Member Services.** Over a dozen resources were created and added to the Members Services section of the website that assist Scottish heritage societies in improving their management, communications, genealogy services, and more. This includes a resource library of over 40 historical references including *Rerum Scoticarum Historia* (1582, translated from the Latin in 1827); *Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer of Scotland, 1473 - 1546*; *Ancient Criminal Trials in Scotland, 1488 - 1624*; and Sir Walter Scott's *Tales of a Grandfather: History of Scotland*. See the current Member Services list in Appendix B: Member Services.
6. **Blogs.** During 2022, nine blogs were researched, written and posted from June through November. The most popular blog was [COSCA Promotes Clan Membership](#). See Appendix C: Sample COSCA Blogs.
7. **Society News.** During 2022, 29 Society News items were posted. The most popular were [Seven Clan Gregor Dalmally Stones are Finally Being Recovered](#) and [Clan Watson to Develop Sept Program with Clan Buchanan and Clan Forbes](#). See Appendix D: Sample Society News.

8. **COSCA Updates.** In the beginning of each month from June to December, an e-mail newsletter called “[COSCA Update](#)” (as recommended in the 2021 Strategic Planning Report) was mailed to the e-mail list. As of December 10, 2022, the mailing list stood at 260 individuals.
9. **Social Media.** From June 1, 2022, to December 11, COSCA distributed 18 Facebook posts that have generated a reach of 86,897, 4,908 page visits, and 744 followers. The most popular posts were regarding the “Find My Clan” online service (39,042 reach and 1,844 likes) and clan maps (38,386 reach and 1,618 likes). See Appendix E: Facebook Posts.
10. **Website Audience.** During 2022 as of December 11, COSCA attracted 7,676 users. Of these, 3,277 (43%) were acquired from social media (such as Facebook), 2,123 (28%) from organic search (such as Google), and 1,883 (25%) from a direct link (such as the QR code.) Of these visitors, 5,025 (65%) resided in the United States, 904 (12%) in the United Kingdom, and 759 (10%) in Canada. Of these visitors, 66% used a mobile phone, 7% used a tablet, and 26% used a desktop computer. These visitors returned to the website several times over the year and accounted for 55,593 site visits. Not surprising, the most visited pages were the Surname page (15,204), Find My Clan (8,342), and the COSCA home page (2,720.)
11. **Survey.** In October 2022, the Communications Chairman conducted a survey of current and potential members. The primary objective of this survey was to better understand the current and potential Organizational Members who are clan and family societies in order to develop attractive member services. The secondary objective was to build a stronger relationship with these societies by demonstrating a willingness to listen to them and ask their advice. This was not a scientific analysis for academic review nor a federal government statistical assessment. The survey received a total of 43 responses from individuals representing 38 clan and family societies. The societies represented a total of 18,500 members. The median number of members was 350. The major areas explored included membership recruitment and retention, member services, communications, highland games, public service, leadership and administration, and chiefship. Please see summary in Appendix F: Membership Survey 2022 Summary.
12. **Relationships and Membership Support.** During 2022, the Communications Chairman personally communicated with representatives of 39 clan and family societies that includes those representing the following: Bell, Boyd, Campbell, Carnegie, Carruthers, Crawford, Currie, Davidson, Donald, Drummond, Fleming, Forbes, Forsyth, Galbraith, Henderson, Hope, Irving, Irwin, Keith, Kennedy, Leslie, Little, Logan, MacAlpine, MacAulay, MacDuff, MacFarlane, MacKinnon, MacLachlan, MacTavish, MacThomas, Mercer, Morrison, Oliphant, Skene, Somerville, Stewart, Urquhart, and Watson.

Appendix A: Find My Clan



Council of Scottish Clans & Associations

Advancing Scottish Heritage Societies through Service, Education, and Advocacy

Member Service



HOME

ABOUT

FIND MY CLAN

NEWS

BLOGS

MEMBER SERVICES

FIND MY CLAN



ARMORIAL BEARINGS OF THE CHIEFS

SEARCH SURNAMES

SCOTTISH CLAN MAP

LIST OF CLANS

How to Find Your Clan and Clan Society

You do not need to have the same surname of of a clan in order to be a part of that clan! Traditionally, a man with the same surname as the chief or a woman who marries such a man are considered members of that specific clan. However, the notion of a clan has evolved in the past few hundred years. Most clan societies, which are the modern-day equivalents of the medieval clans, welcome everyone who has an ancestral link, a birth surname that is a spelling variation of the main clan name, descendants of one of the traditional "septs" or associated families, and anyone who has an interest or spiritual connection to the clan society.



Find My Clan

Aim your cellphone camera at this QR code, click on the link, and search for your surname!



Council of Scottish Clans and Associations
Clans And Scottish Societies of Canada



[Please click here to download this Quick Response \(QR\) Code flyer, print, and display at all your events.](#)

Origins of Clans. "Clan" is the modern spelling of the Gaelic word "clanna" and "clainn" meaning "children" or "family." The first mention of the clans of Scotland was by the Irish missionary Columcille or Saint Columba (521 – 597.) He wrote: "Moirsheiser do Cruitline clainn, Eaindset Albain i seclit raind, Cait, Ce, Cirig, cethach clanii. Fib, Fidach, Fotla, Fortrenn." The English translation is "Seven children of Cruthne divided Alban (Scotland) into seven divisions. Cait, Ce, Cirig, a warlike clan. Fib, Fidach, Fotla, Fortrenn." (Skene, William Forbes, Editor. 1867. *Chronicles of the Picts, Chronicles of the Scots, and Other Early Memorials of Scottish History*. Edinburgh: H.M. Register House.)

Rise and Fall of Clans. These clans existed throughout Scotland and were vital to the survival of their families. Some clans became more powerful than others and those who needed protection were welcomed into the larger clans. However, the need for clans began diminishing in the 15th century with the spread of land-based feudalism. Lowland Scots received grants of good arable land and adapted more quickly to the new order. The Union with Scotland in 1707 further weakened the clans since new opportunities in trade opened up in the cities. In a similar manner, the lowland Scots embraced Protestantism and the newer Presbyterianism

FINDCLAN

Default view

Table

Manage Fields

Sort (1)

	T Name	A1	T Gaelic	T Motto	C	C	T B	T L	T M	T S	T Septs	T Chief	T...	T Tara...
1														
2	Abercrombie		Obar Chrombach	Petit Alta (He see...			none	Abercro...	none	none	Abarcrombie, Abarcumb...			Abercrombie C...
3	Abernethy		n/a	Salus Per Christu...				Aberneth...			Abernathie, Abernathy, A...			Fraser Clan tart...
4	Adair		n/a	Loyal Au Mort (L...				Lowlands			Adair, Odeir, Edsair, Edga...			Maxwell Clan ta...
5	Adam		n/a	Crux Mhi Grata ...				Lowlands		Blair Ada...	Adam, Adamson, Mac Ada...			Adam Clan tarta...
6	Agnew		n/a	Consilio non imp...				Wigtow...		Lochnaw...	Agnew, Agnelli, Agnex, Alg...	Sir Crispin Agnew of Lochraw Bt.		Agnew Clan Tara...
7	Aikenhead		n/a	Rupto Rore Nati (...)				Lowlands		Aikenhe...	Aikenhead, Aikenhead, Ak...			
8	Ainslie		n/a	Gude In Need						Dolphins...	Ainslie, Ainsley, Aynbsley, ...			Ainslie Clan tar...
9	Alton		n/a	Decerptae Dabu...				Lowlands		Ayton, B...	Alton, Atton, Ayton, Ayton...			Alton Clan tartan
10	Allardice		n/a	In The Defence O...				Lowlands		Allardyc...	Alardyce, Alderdice, Alder...	Richard Christopher Barclay Allardice of Allardice		Graham Clan ta...
11	Anderson		Mac Ghille Aindraís	Stand sure			Oak Tree	Badenoch			Aderson, Adersone, Ande...			Anderson Mod...
12	Anstruther		n/a	Perissem ni perit...							Andstroyer, Ansteruthy, ...	Toby Anstruther of that ilk		
13	Arbuthnot		n/a	Laus Deo (Prais...							Arbuthnot, Arbuthnott	The Rt. Hon The Viscount of Arbuthnott K.T.		Arbuthnot Anci...
14	Armstrong		Mac Ghillelàidir	Invictus Maneo (...)				Liddesdale		Gilnocki...	Armstrong, Armstrong, ...			Armstrong Mo...
15	Arnott		n/a	Speratum Et Co...						Arnott, P...	Annett, Annetts, Arnald, A...			
16	Arthur		Artair	Fide et Opera (B...			Fir Club ...	Angyl, C...			Arthur, Cart, Carter, Cartie...	John MacArthur of that ilk		MacArthur 184...
17	Auchenleck		n/a	Pretiosum Quid ...						Affleck ...	Auchenleck, Auchinleck, A...			Lindsay Clan ta...
18	Baillie		n/a	Quid Clarus Astr...							Baile, Bailey, Baile, Bailive...			Baillie Clan tartan
19	Bain		n/a	Et Marte Et Arte (...)				Tulloch ...			Bain			Bain Tartan
20	Baird		Mac a'bhaird	Dominus Fecit (T...				Auchme...			Baard, Baird, Bard, Barde, ...	Commander, Richard Holman Baird of Rickarton, Ury and L...		Baird Clan tartan
21	Balfour		n/a	Forward (Forward				Lowlands		Burleigh ...	Balford, Balforde, Balfour, ...			Balfour Clan tar...
22	Bannantyne		n/a	Nec Cito Nec Tar...				Lowlands			Ballanden, Ballantine, Ball...			Campbell Clan ...
23	Bannerman		Mac a' Bhraataich	Pro Patria (For m...							Bannerman, Bannaman, B...	Sir David Bannerman of Elsieck Bt.		Forbes Clan tar...

Surname

Default view

Table

Manage Fields

Sorts (2)

	T Surname	A1	T Clan	A1	Link	Surname (Surna...	Surnames-A	Surnames-B	Surnames-C	Surnames-E	Surnames-F
1	Abarcumblie		Abercrombie		https://www.cosca.scot/findclan/abarcumblie	/surnames/abarcumblie	/surnames-a/	/surnames-b/	/surnames-c/	/surnames-e/	/surnames-f/
2	Abarcumby		Abercrombie		https://www.cosca.scot/findclan/abarcumby	/surnames/abarcumby	/surnames-a/	/surnames-b/	/surnames-c/	/surnames-e/	/surnames-f/
3	Abercrombey		Abercrombie		https://www.cosca.scot/findclan/abercrombey	/surnames/abercrombey	/surnames-a/	/surnames-b/	/surnames-c/	/surnames-e/	/surnames-f/
4	Abercrombie		Abercrombie		https://www.cosca.scot/findclan/abercrombie	/surnames/abercrombie	/surnames-a/	/surnames-b/	/surnames-c/	/surnames-e/	/surnames-f/
5	Abercrombiel		Abercrombie		https://www.cosca.scot/findclan/abercrombiel	/surnames/abercrombiel	/surnames-a/	/surnames-b/	/surnames-c/	/surnames-e/	/surnames-f/
6	Abercromby		Abercrombie		https://www.cosca.scot/findclan/abercromby	/surnames/abercromby	/surnames-a/	/surnames-b/	/surnames-c/	/surnames-e/	/surnames-f/
7	Abercrommye		Abercrombie		https://www.cosca.scot/findclan/abercrommye	/surnames/abercrommye	/surnames-a/	/surnames-b/	/surnames-c/	/surnames-e/	/surnames-f/
8	Aberdalgoe		Abercrombie		https://www.cosca.scot/findclan/aberdalgie	/surnames/aberdalgie	/surnames-a/	/surnames-b/	/surnames-c/	/surnames-e/	/surnames-f/
9	Aberdalgoey		Abercrombie		https://www.cosca.scot/findclan/aberdalgie	/surnames/aberdalgie	/surnames-a/	/surnames-b/	/surnames-c/	/surnames-e/	/surnames-f/
10	Aberdalgoey		Abercrombie		https://www.cosca.scot/findclan/aberdalgie	/surnames/aberdalgie	/surnames-a/	/surnames-b/	/surnames-c/	/surnames-e/	/surnames-f/
11	Abircromy		Abercrombie		https://www.cosca.scot/findclan/abircromy	/surnames/abircromy	/surnames-a/	/surnames-b/	/surnames-c/	/surnames-e/	/surnames-f/
12	Abircromby		Abercrombie		https://www.cosca.scot/findclan/abircromby	/surnames/abircromby	/surnames-a/	/surnames-b/	/surnames-c/	/surnames-e/	/surnames-f/
13	Abircromme		Abercrombie		https://www.cosca.scot/findclan/abircromme	/surnames/abircromme	/surnames-a/	/surnames-b/	/surnames-c/	/surnames-e/	/surnames-f/
14	Abircromye		Abercrombie		https://www.cosca.scot/findclan/abircromye	/surnames/abircromye	/surnames-a/	/surnames-b/	/surnames-c/	/surnames-e/	/surnames-f/
15	Abircrumbye		Abercrombie		https://www.cosca.scot/findclan/abircrumbye	/surnames/abircrumbye	/surnames-a/	/surnames-b/	/surnames-c/	/surnames-e/	/surnames-f/
16	Abircrumbye		Abercrombie		https://www.cosca.scot/findclan/abircrumbye	/surnames/abircrumbye	/surnames-a/	/surnames-b/	/surnames-c/	/surnames-e/	/surnames-f/
17	Abircrummy		Abercrombie		https://www.cosca.scot/findclan/abircrummy	/surnames/abircrummy	/surnames-a/	/surnames-b/	/surnames-c/	/surnames-e/	/surnames-f/
18	Abircrumy		Abercrombie		https://www.cosca.scot/findclan/abircrumy	/surnames/abircrumy	/surnames-a/	/surnames-b/	/surnames-c/	/surnames-e/	/surnames-f/
19	Abernathie		Abernethy		https://www.cosca.scot/findclan/abernathie	/surnames/abernathie	/surnames-a/	/surnames-b/	/surnames-c/	/surnames-e/	/surnames-f/
20	Abernathy		Abernethy		https://www.cosca.scot/findclan/abernathy	/surnames/abernathy	/surnames-a/	/surnames-b/	/surnames-c/	/surnames-e/	/surnames-f/
21	Abernethy		Abernethy		https://www.cosca.scot/findclan/abernethy	/surnames/abernethy	/surnames-a/	/surnames-b/	/surnames-c/	/surnames-e/	/surnames-f/
22	Abernetti		Abernethy		https://www.cosca.scot/findclan/aberneti	/surnames/aberneti	/surnames-a/	/surnames-b/	/surnames-c/	/surnames-e/	/surnames-f/
23	Abernettie		Abernethy		https://www.cosca.scot/findclan/abernetie	/surnames/abernetie	/surnames-a/	/surnames-b/	/surnames-c/	/surnames-e/	/surnames-f/

Appendix B: Member Services



Council of Scottish Clans & Associations
Advancing Scottish Heritage Societies through Service, Education, and Advocacy

Member Services
Log In

HOMEABOUTFIND MY CLANNEWSBLOGSMEMBER SERVICES

MEMBER SERVICES

The Council of Scottish Clans & Associations (Council) provides many services to assist its member Scottish Heritage Societies in growing and achieving their missions. Most of these services are available only to Delegates and Alternates of current Member Societies in the Members-Only section of the Council website.

Clearinghouse: The Council conducts surveys on a regular basis. The topics planned include use of websites, membership policies and software, relations with clan chiefs, clan tours, coordinating conveners at games and festivals, involvement in genealogy and DNA research, efforts in disseminating clan history, use of social media, engaging younger members, use of online services, and more. The results of these surveys will be used to create a database of "best practices" and to develop training workshops for the COSCA Academy.

- [2022 Clan Society Survey on Genealogists](#) (*members only*)
- [2018 Survey of Clan Society Websites](#) (*members only*)

Management: The Council assists societies in managing their nonprofit organizations by providing a database of sample legal documents such as bylaws and official minutes, assists societies in maintaining their state corporate status, offers tools advice for accounting, and provides training in IRS nonprofit requirements.

- [The Challenges of a Scottish Heritage Society Board of Directors](#) (*members only*)
- [Advancing Your Society through Strategic Planning](#) (*members only*)
- [Policy and Procedure Manual](#) (*members only*)
- [Conducting Surveys](#) (*members only*)
- [Survey of Clan Society IRS Filings](#) (*members only*)

Communications: The Council offers training to assist member Societies to promote themselves through social media, provides examples from other Societies, develops content for their own communications, and promotes the individual Societies through national partnerships.

- [Attracting Younger Members through Video](#) (*members only*)
- [Building Society Membership through Social Media](#) (*public*)
- [Building Relationships and Memberships Using Google Analytics](#) (*members only*)

Membership Development: The Council directs potential members to the individual Societies through online services and in person events, provides training for acquiring and retaining members, provides examples of membership policies and membership software, and develops national and international partnerships to package attractive member benefits.

Games & Festivals: The Council facilitates regular communication with Society conveners and event planners, offers examples of effective guides and materials, maintains a database of games and festivals, secures discounts for banners and print materials, and works with festival planners to promote the societies when no conveners are available (such as through advertisements and COSCA tents with society promotional materials.)

- [Schedule of 2022 Games and Festivals](#) (*public*)
- [Clan Convener Guide](#) (*members only*)

Clan Tours: The Council provides "best practices" for organizing and promoting tours, keeps an ongoing calendar of planned clan tours to Scotland, encourages collaboration between clan societies to reduce costs, provides referrals for tour services and venues, networks with Scottish cultural organizations on behalf of the Societies, and provides information and advice for securing tourism grants.

- [Scotland Travel Tips](#), by Janet Robertson, Thistle Dubh Enterprises

Genealogy and DNA Analysis: The Council networks among the societies for "best practices" for offering genealogy research services, maintains a database of all societies that provide family surname Y-DNA groups with FamilyTreeDNA, and negotiates for discounts for services providing genealogy and DNA research.

- [2022 Clan Society Survey on Genealogists](#) (*members only*)
- [Heraldry Society of Scotland](#), by Donald Draper Campbell, 2022 (*public*)
- [Scottish Armory and Heraldry: A General Overview](#), by Donald Draper Campbell, April 2021 (*public*)
- [List of Y-DNA Surname Groups](#) (*members only*)

Clan Research and History: The Council maintains a library of non-copyrighted historical documents that clans can use to research information about their heritage and ancestors, provides training on using historical documents to generate original content for their websites and social media, subscribes to historical services (such as the UK newspaper archives) that societies can search, and negotiates discounts with online archives on behalf of members.

- [Historical Research Library](#) (*members only*)

Technical Support: The Council provides assessments and recommendations for current websites, conducts Google Analytic evaluations of specific websites, provides mentoring, and develops new websites for an additional fee.

- COSCA-hosted Zoom Meetings: COSCA will use its Zoom account to assist its members in conducting on-line gatherings and meetings (*members only*)
- Free Website Evaluation and Recommendations by [Bart Forbes](#) (*members only*)

Sponsorships: The Council networks with national and international organizations to connect appropriate funders with specific society products and services.

Group Discounts: The Council networks with national and international organizations to secure group discounts for society services and member benefits.

Advocacy: The Council advocates on behalf of the societies to secure clan travel funding from the Scottish government and to improve relationships between the clan societies and their respective clan chiefs.

Appendix C: Sample COSCA Blogs

BLOGS

All Posts



The Challenges of a Scottish Heritage Society Board of Directors

As all-volunteer organizations (AVOs), Scottish heritage societies live or die by their officers and boards of directors. All boards have...



Attracting Younger Members through Video

Members born during the "baby boom" (1946 to 1964) generally have the time and patience to use desktop computers to download and print...



COSCA Promotes Clan Membership

One of the major reasons that COSCA has updated and expanded its website is to promote the individual Scottish clan and family societies...



Clan Museums and Heritage Centers

With the normalization of travel after the COVID-19 outbreak, more people are planning their Scotland heritage tours. One major...



Building Relationships Using Google Analytics

Increasing the membership of your society starts with building relationships with potential members. While societies have traditionally...



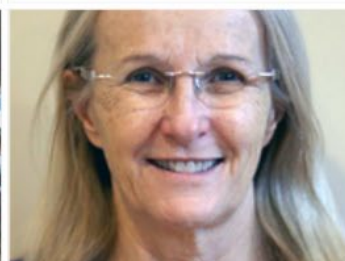
Scotland Travel Tips

If your Society is planning a trip to Scotland, get the guidance of an expert! Janet Robertson of Thistle Dubh Enterprises has managed...



COSCA Clan Convener Guide

Highland Gatherings and Games are traditional events that members of a clan use to renew their family bonds and compare feats of prowess...



Synopsis of Results from Survey of Clan Genealogists

By Barbara J. Ball, PhD, QG Genealogist, Clan Cunningham International Owner, Copestone Resources, LLC Doctoral student, The University...

See Appendix D: Sample Society News

SOCIETY NEWS

Nov 21, 2022

McLeod Clan Seat Dunvegan Castle & Gardens is Scotland's RHS 2022 Partner Garden Winner

Significant investment, time and collective hard work over the decades have been recognized by the Royal Horticultural Society.



Nov 20, 2022

Clan Macpherson Museum Host Zoom Lecture

Author Ewen S.L. MacPherson Introduces His New Book 'The Clan Macpherson: Trials, Triumphs & Treasures'



Nov 17, 2022

Learned Kindred of Currie Hosts 24th Pipes of Christmas Fundraiser

Ticket orders and Donations Are Now Being Accepted for this New York and New Jersey Event That Raises funds for Cultural Outreach and Scholarship Fund.



Nov 1, 2022

Clan Watson to Develop Sept Program with Clan Buchanan and Clan Forbes

Shane Watson of Clan Watson has agreed to help Clan Buchanan to expand their offering on the septs by using the Watsons as a template.



Appendix E: Facebook Posts.

Council of Scottish Clans & Associations				This year: Jan 1, 2022 – Dec 11, 2022		
All content				Ads, Posts and Stories		Export
Recent content	Type	Reach	Likes and reactio...	Sticker taps		
 As all-volunteer organizations (AV... Mon Nov 21, 11:46am	Post	Boost post	168	3	--	
 Members born during the "baby b... Wed Oct 26, 12:16pm	Post	Boost post	347	5	--	
 Last call for your response to the C... Mon Oct 17, 3:40pm	Post	Boost post	950	7	--	
 COSCA has updated and expanded... Sun Oct 9, 8:03am	Post	Boost post	39,042	1,844	--	
 With the normalization of travel aft... Fri Sep 30, 1:15pm	Post	Boost post	3,948	95	--	
 Many different maps claim to indic... Mon Sep 19, 11:01am	Post	Boost post	38,386	1,618	--	
 A Surname Project studies the diffe... Wed Sep 7, 12:21pm	Post	Boost post	555	10	--	
 Increasing the membership of your... Tue Sep 6, 2:07pm	Post	Boost post	424	4	--	
 If your Society is planning a trip to ... Sun Sep 4, 1:12pm	Post	Boost post	392	2	--	
 The chiefship of a clan or family is r... Sun Jul 31, 9:25am	Post	Boost post	1,806	83	--	
 Change is difficult. You may know t... Sun Jul 31, 8:47am	Post	Boost post	335	3	--	
 Highland Gatherings and Games ar... Thu Jun 30, 12:57pm	Post	Boost post	323	4	--	
 Last December 2021, Clan Cunning... Thu Jun 30, 12:55pm	Post	Boost post	302	3	--	
 A "Find My Clan" database has bee... Wed Jun 1, 10:26am	Post	Boost post	11,811	217	--	
 With the newly revamped website, ... Wed Jun 1, 10:24am	Post	Boost post	305	3	--	
 Dr. J. Ruairidh Morrison, Chief of Cl... Wed Jun 1, 10:22am	Post	Boost post	252	5	--	
 Now more than ever, Scottish Herit... Wed Jun 1, 10:20am	Post	Boost post	223	1	--	
 Clan Forbes Society has published ... Wed Jun 1, 10:18am	Post	Boost post	210	4	--	

Appendix F: Membership Survey 2022 Summary

MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Of these clan and family societies, virtually all (93%) require payment of annual dues for membership. Over a third (37%) require genealogy certification that may require information about an ancestor from a specific area in Scotland (12%) or documented lineage from a clan or family chief (7%.) Other societies require only an interest in the clan and in Scottish heritage

Two-thirds (63%) of the societies maintain their membership records using a generic spreadsheet or database program (e.g., MS Excel or MS Access) and 16% use an online service such as MembershipWorks. Other methods include Wix, accounting software, MailChimp, and paper only.

Most (85%) societies accept membership online. Over a third (38%) of the societies report that most of their current members are acquired at in-person events such as highland games and almost half (45%) report that most of their members are acquired online. Virtually all (91%) accept members from outside the United States, a majority (72%) offer a higher level of premium or life members, and a third (33%) offer a free level of membership. Of those that knew their renewal rates, most (86%) have experienced a renewal rate of over 60%. Six societies did not know their renewal rates. Over a third (68%) report that their members have increased over the past five years.

Thirteen societies report that their primary strengths are in their membership due to their “relational ties,” broad acceptance of membership, the ability to cross international lines, a sense of closeness and family, and a “good core community.” On the other hand, sixteen societies relate that their primary weaknesses are in the membership area such as the failure to get member participation, generally inability to gain new members, attrition and low renewal rate, lack of marketing, and low presence at highland games. Five societies specifically mentioned their inability to attract younger members. One society mentioned the interesting observation that “North American genealogy efforts out-weigh building pride of ‘Scottishness’ for too many members.”

MEMBER SERVICES

Of the societies that responded to the survey, about two-thirds (64%) provide a members-only section of website and over a third (39%) offer a members-only (private group) Facebook page. About three-quarters of the societies (73%) have designated an official clan genealogist and three-quarters (74%) offer free genealogy research. Over two-thirds (68%) have a DNA project with FamilyTreeDNA or other service. Less than half (42%) has sponsored a clan tour or gathering in Scotland in the past five years.

Twelve societies noted that their strengths were in their genealogy and DNA activities that include supporting of their DNA project, ability to gather members' lineage, sharing genealogy and family line information to members, and helping members with genealogical information. Seven societies mentioned that their strengths in the area of member services include publishing family histories, conducting history research, providing items of family interest, and publishing articles on clan history with document support.

COMMUNICATIONS

Fewer than a third (32%) of the societies mail a printed newsletter at least every quarter and over a half (52%) sent a newsletter via e-mail at least every two months. Virtually all (97%) societies have a website but only half (50%) update the site monthly. Most (86%) societies have a public Facebook page and most of those (74%) post information monthly. A little less than two-thirds (61%) have hosted an online meeting (such as through Zoom) in past year.

Fourteen societies have noted that their communications efforts are a strength due to their magazine or quarterly newsletter (five societies), website, Facebook page, and Zoom meetings. Seven societies have

reported that communications are weakness for such reasons as dropping its website, a static website, “lack of technical savvy by members,” lack of “members-only” pages, and outdated and inactive online sites.

HIGHLAND GAMES

Of the societies that responded to this survey, about two-thirds (67%) have conveners that participate in at least ten highland games per year while virtually none (9%) participate in more than 50 games. Nine societies have listed their strengths as being their involvement in highland games, providing “tent grants,” and friendliness at events. Six societies noted that their participation in highland games was a weakness due to limited social events, having only a few active hosts, limited ability to attract conveners, and a general lack of volunteers.

PUBLIC SERVICE

About a third (31%) of the societies surveyed have devoted themselves to public service through an affiliated charity. Either through this foundation or through the society itself, about two-thirds (63%) offer cultural grants to other institutions, about two-thirds (65%) offer cultural scholarships for individuals (such as for Scottish dancing), and a little under a third (30%) offer college scholarships. Most (84%) societies accept donations online for these public services.

Eight societies note that their philanthropic activities are a strength that includes college scholarships, preservation funds, clan bagpipe band, and projects in Scotland and Northern Ireland. One society mentioned a weakness in the lack of offering more scholarships or grants to members of the group for cultural activities like Scottish Dancing.

LEADERSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION

Six of the responding society reported that administration and leadership were strengths by specifically mentioning communication among the officers, a new headquarters in Scotland with individual country affiliates, promoting inclusion in all society positions and activities, an engaged and active leadership, and monthly “virtual” meetings of the Board of Directors.

Nine societies noted that administration and leadership were weaknesses in the areas of recruiting volunteers, finding and developing leaders, noting that the Society leadership is a tight knit “closed” group, only a few folks are “holding up the fort,” finding members to work to keep our society moving forward and to find truly active board members, and the problem of board members not being active or motivated.

One interesting comment was that a weakness is “support from Clan leaders in Scotland, who by and large care less about the clan <and about the> hundreds of Highland clan celebrations annually in not only America but Australia.”

CHIEFSHIP

Slightly under three-quarters (71%) of the societies recognize a Chief of the Name and Arms of a specific surname to be its Clan Chief. Of those that recognize a Chief, 71% communicate with the Chief at least every two months and 57% report that the Chief is very active in Society activities.

One society mentions that strength is that its Clan Chief will attend events in USA if all expenses are paid and another society mentions that its members have a strong sense of close relationship with the Chief. One society notes that a weakness is that it does not yet have a named chief and hopes “that our commander will be named.”

SOCIETY RECOMMENDATIONS

Several societies offered suggestions and comments for COSCA, most of which were in the areas of member services and marketing.

Member Services:

- Host virtual sharing sessions for experience sharing on various topics (ex. recruiting members, engaging members, member retention programs, etc.)
- Communicate better with your membership.
- Advice on methods to entice younger people to join and become active volunteers would benefit most members.
- Provide vendor lists for web site hosting and design
- Any ideas on boosting social media, adding hashtags?
- Perhaps run advertising on behalf of specific clans, or supply promotional materials to events that clans can't attend, at extra cost
- Need to provide benefits that would justify annual dues that are not being collected at this time.
- Need to raise funds to support charitable activities.

Marketing

- Teaching the newcomers more about your organization
- Continue outreach and host events at highland games
- We're trying to promote our membership in COSCA in our tent displays.
- I was approached by a COSCA rep at Grandfather Mountain this past July asking about my contact info so they could tell me about all of the great plans that were being put in place. I haven't heard a word.
- We never hear of anything that COSCA is doing.

Societies also offered advice in the areas of advocacy, for example: "You need to challenge all Scottish clan Chief and leaders in Scotland to get more involved in Scots who left Scotland over the centuries but still celebrate their heritage" and "who need a chief if they don't care and get more involved?"

COSCA also received some very positive comments, especially about the new communications efforts and member services:

- We're happy with our association with COSCA.
- Keep up the good work! You are doing an excellent job!
- I like the way you are trying to find ways to serve and support your member clans. Keep doing this.
- The convener's guide was excellent
- COSCA gives us valuable guidance that we can fall back upon. Thank You!
- Your QR code program is fabulous.
- we deeply appreciate your new efforts
- Appreciate your organization
- I have seen a GREAT improvement of communication over the past year. Keep it up. Doing a wonderful job.

One interesting comment that needs more research: "we belong to CASSOC and they are LIGHT YEARS ahead of you."