



Council of Scottish Clans & Associations

Advancing Scottish Heritage Societies through Service, Education, and Advocacy

COSCA Communications Chairman Annual Report for 2023

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November 27, 2023

Overview

In 2021, the Communications Chairman researched and wrote the COSCA Strategic Planning Committee Report, which was approved by the Board.

In 2022, the Communications Chairman laid the foundation for the vision established in that report by designing and launching a new COSCA website, uploading a database of over 11,000 Scottish surnames linked to over 340 clans and families, creating members-only resources, writing two blogs every month, sharing *Society News* on the website, conducting a survey that attracted responses from 37 clan and family societies, and distributing a monthly e-newsletter, *COSCA Update*. These activities attracted 7,676 users to the COSCA website and generated 744 Facebook followers. The result was 11 new organizational members.

In 2023, the Communication Chairman has researched and uploaded new databases, advanced COSCA's member services to Scottish Heritage Societies, greatly extended the promotion and awareness of COSCA, and created strong relationships with organizations. This attracted 26 new organizational memberships.

Databases

Scottish Heritage Societies and Games Associations. While COSCA claimed to include associations other than clan and family societies, only 11 had joined from 2015 through 2021. Therefore, the Communications Chairman researched the websites and contacts for local Scottish heritage societies and games associations. This resulted in the creation and launching of the Associations database of over 150 organizations in May. The known contacts were added to the COSCA e-mail list. (See: <https://www.cosca.scot/association>.)

Clan and Family Society Facebook Pages. In 2022, the Communications Chairman started researching and including clan and family society Facebook pages in the "Find My Clan" inline service. A listing of over 150 of these pages was offered to members in June. (See: <https://www.cosca.scot/facebook>)

Scholarships and Grants. As an outgrowth of the research on Scottish heritage societies, the Communications Chairman created a database of over 50 organizations that offer scholarships for college and for pursuing cultural activities such as Scottish dancing, fiddling, piping, and athletics. (See <https://www.cosca.scot/scholarships>)

Tax-exempt Scottish Heritage Societies. In order to examine the state of tax-exemption among clan and family societies, the Communications Chairman researched and developed a database of over 150 clan and family societies that have incorporated and received tax-exempt determination from the US Internal Revenue Service (IRS.) (See: <https://www.cosca.scot/clansocieties>).

Scottish Clan and Family Map. The static "Scotland of Old" clan map was very popular in the previous year. Therefore, the Communications Chairman added to its functionality by overlaying a grid pattern and identifying each Scottish name and where it occurred in each grid. Now visitors can find the surname and click on the grid for a larger view of the section of the map. (See: <https://www.cosca.scot/clan-map>)

Member Services

Organizational Members Only. Over a dozen resources were added to the organizational members-only [Members Services](#) section of the website that assist Scottish heritage societies in improving their management, communications, genealogy services, and more. These included:

- [Clan and Family Society Facebook Pages](#)
- [How to Launch or Re-boot Your Scottish Heritage Society](#)
- [The Challenges of a Scottish Heritage Society Board of Directors](#)
- [Listing of Clan and Family Societies with IRS Tax-exemption](#)
- [Podcasting Your Way to Younger Members](#)
- [Best Website Practices](#)
- [Attracting Younger Members through Video](#)
- [CASSOC Symposium: Membership Connections](#)
- [Membership Dues -- and Don'ts](#)
- [Managing Membership](#)

Promotion and Awareness

Blogs. During 2023, 21 blogs were posted. Five blogs were penned by four guest authors:

- Susan Caldwell: [Clan MacAulay Association Honours its Military](#)
- Susan Caldwell: [Clan MacAulay Association Honors 25th Anniversary with Trivia Contest](#)
- Julia Heinig: [House of Gordon USA Revamps Website to Improve Navigation, Readability, and Acquiring Members](#)
- Bill Petrie: [CASSOC Symposium for Growth and Success: Membership Connections](#)
- Keith Murray-Hetherington JP, FSAScot: [Clan Murray Society Coat of Arms](#)

The most popular blogs posted in 2023 were:

- [Scottish Clan and Family Map Now Interactive](#) (249 views)
- [Scottish Connections Fund](#) (93 views)
- [Clan and Family Society Coats of Arms](#) (92 views)

Society News. During 2023, the Communications Chairman researched and posted over 65 [Society News](#) items. This was the result of scanning over 120 society Facebook pages and websites every month. The most popular news items were:

- [Clan MacLaren Society has Announced the Passing of its Chief, Donald MacLaren of MacLaren](#) (127 views)
- [Clan Watson Society Announces Project to Find Heirs of the Last Clan Chief](#) (42 views)
- [Donald Angus Cameron of Lochiel Passes Away at Achnacarry](#) (40 views)

COSCA Updates. In the beginning of each month, the Communications Chairman compiled and distributed an e-mail newsletter called "[COSCA Update](#)," as recommended in the 2021 Strategic Planning Report. Each newsletter typically includes two articles that link back to the most recent blogs, information about the resources on the COSCA website, a sampling of the latest [Society News](#), upcoming games and festivals, new and renewing organizational members, and encouragements to join COSCA. As of the end of 2022, the mailing list stood at 260 individuals. However, thanks to the research of clan and family societies and games associations, the Communications Chairman added over 500 deliverable contact e-mail addresses. The last COSCA Update was successfully delivered to over 770 individuals.

Social Media. In 2023, the Communications Chairman wrote and distributed 19 Facebook posts and 15 Instagram posts. The Instagram account now has 143 followers. COSCA Facebook posts have reached over 28,000 people and generated a total of 1,193 followers, up from last year's total of 744. The most popular posts were:

- [Interactive version of the "Scotland of Old" clan map](#) (14,062 views)
- [New database of 150 Scottish heritage societies and games associations](#) (2,573 views)
- [Best Website Practices](#) (1,318 views)
- [Clan and Family Society Coats of Arms](#) (1,284 views)

Website Audience. During 2023, the COSCA website attracted 18,792 users (up from 8,355 in 2022) who engaged in 26,975 sessions (up from 11,013 in 2022). Of these, 3,277 (15%) were acquired from social media (such as Facebook), 2,123 (49%) from organic search (such as Google), and 1,883 (25%) from a direct link (such as the QR code.) The most visited pages were the Surname search page (34,987), Find My Clan (17,645), the Clan Map (7,162), and the COSCA homepage (7,145.)

Relationship and Membership

Increased E-mail List. The Communications Chairman researched the individual e-mail addresses for the contacts of the organizations include in the Clan/Family Societies and Associations. Over 300 contacts were sent an introductory letter. Please see Appendix A below.

Direct Communication: Societies. During 2023, the Communications Chairman personally communicated with individual representatives of 97 Scottish heritage societies. This is up from the previous year of contact with 39 societies. See Appendix B below.

Direct Communications: Topics. The communication with societies covered these broad topics:

• Database Updates	35
• Website Content	25
• Membership	25
• Member Services	21
• Management Advice	14
• MembershipWorks	11

Survey Follow Up. COSCA conducted a membership survey in 2022 and the Communications Chairman requested additional information from 17 societies: Carnegie Clan Society, Clan Baird Society Worldwide, Clan Buchanan Society International, Clan Campbell Society NA, Clan Crawford Association, Clan Hope of Craighall Society, Clan Irwin Association, Clan Keith Society USA, Clan Little Society, Clan Macaulay Association, Clan MacFarlane Worldwide Inc., Clan Maclean Association in the US, Clan MacLellan Worldwide in the US, Clan Maxwell Society, Family of Bruce International, Kennedy Society of North America, and Murray Clan Society of North America,

Direct Communications: Individuals. In addition, the Communications chairman corresponded with 16 individuals who requested information about their clan and 6 individuals requesting access to Member Services. Other individuals requested information about a variety of topics including producing a documentary, donation of music cassette tapes, offer to write a Wikipedia article, finding a bagpiper as a podcast guest, advice on genealogy, and getting radio airplay for music.

Increased Membership. As a direct result of the new databases, expanding member services, heightened promotion, and ongoing personal communication, 26 organizational members joined in 2023, 12 of which were cultural associations. Please see Appendix C below.

Appendix A: Personal Communications: Scottish Heritage Societies

- Alaskan Scottish Club
- American Clan Gregor Society
- American Scottish Foundation
- Appalachian Highland Celts
- Associated Clan MacLeod Societies
- Carnegie Clan Society, International
- Celtic Heritage Foundation
- Chicago Scots / Illinois St. Andrew Society
- Chief Mother Lode Scots
- Clan Baird Society Worldwide
- Clan Bell North America
- Clan Buchanan Society International
- Clan Campbell Society, North America
- Clan Carmichael USA
- Clan Crawford
- Clan Cunningham International
- Clan Drummond Society in the USA
- Clan Elliot Society, USA
- Clan Fergusson Society of NA
- Clan Fleming Scottish Society
- Clan Forsyth Society USA
- Clan Fraser Society
- Clan Gregor Society of Scotland
- Clan Hope of Craighall Society
- Clan Hunter Scotland
- Clan Irwin Association
- Clan Keith Society USA
- Clan Kincaid Association International
- Clan Little Society, Inc
- Clan Logan Society International
- Clan Macaulay Association
- Clan MacCord Society
- Clan MacCord Society
- Clan MacDuff
- Clan MacEwen Society
- Clan MacFarlane Worldwide Inc
- Clan MacFie International
- Clan Mackay Society of the USA
- Clan MacKinnon Society
- Clan MacKinnon Society
- Clan MacLaren Society of North America
- Clan Maclean Association in the US
- Clan MacLellan Worldwide in the US
- Clan Macneil Association of America
- Clan MacQueen Society
- Clan MacRae Society of North America
- Clan MacThomas Society.
- Clan Maitland Society of NA
- Clan Maxwell Society
- Clan McAlister of America
- Clan Ramsay International

- Clan Rose International
- Clan Ross of the US
- Clan Scott Society
- Clan Skene
- Clan Somerville Family Assn.
- Clan Thom(p)son Society
- Clan Wardlaw Association
- Clan Watson Society
- Clan Watson Society
- Clanranald Trust for Scotland.
- Colorado Scottish Festival
- Dunedin Highland Games
- Edmonstone Clan Society
- Edmonstone Clan Society - US
- Family of Bruce International
- Hawaiian Scottish Festival & Highland
- House of Boyd
- House of Burnett International
- House of Gordon USA
- House of MacAlpine
- Innes Clan Society
- International Association of Clan MacInnes Inc
- International Clan MacFarlane Society
- Joss Joyce Association
- Kalamazoo Scottish Festival Assoc.
- Kennedy Society of North America,
- Middle Tennessee Highland Games and Celtic Festival
- Morgan Sept of the Clan MacKenzie
- Murray Clan Society
- NHSCOT
- Oklahoma Highland Gathering
- Payson Scottish Festival
- Clan Young Society
- RedStone Highland Games & Festival.
- Saint Andrew Society of Hawaii
- SAS COUNCIL.
- Scotland Connecticut Highland Festival Games
- Scots Charitable Society
- Scots of North Georgia
- Scottish Arts
- Scottish Arts,
- Scottish Society of Greater Bloomington
- St Andrews of the Inland Northwest
- St. Andrew's Society of Springfield, MO
- St. Andrews society of the Inland Northwest
- United Scottish Clans of Oklahoma

Appendix B: Introduction Letter to Association Contacts (303)

Sent: Wednesday, May 24, 2023 10:47 AM

Subject: Council of Scottish Clans & Associations (COSCA)

Thank you for all your efforts to advance your Scottish heritage society!

I know the kind of challenges you face. I have volunteered for the Virginia Scottish Games and I produced the first National Tartan Day Scottish Festival to be held on the National Mall in front of the U.S. Capitol. I served as Secretary, Vice President, and President for the St. Andrew's Society of Washington, D.C. I'm currently the President of the Clan Forbes Society.

That's why I'd like to introduce you to the Council of Scottish Clans and Associations (COSCA), especially if you've never heard of this nonprofit trade association for Scottish heritage societies.

COSCA is dedicated to assisting organizations such as yours to survive and thrive in these challenging times. COSCA accomplishes this by serving as a clearinghouse of information and providing advice through the website located at [COSCA.scot](https://www.cosca.scot). For example, COSCA offers a "[Find My Clan](#)" online service that links people directly to the websites of clan and family societies. COSCA also maintains the largest listing of Scottish "[Games & Festivals](#)" in the U.S.

Some of our members include the Scottish Society of Wilmington; St Andrew's Society of Washington, D.C.; Kalamazoo Scottish Festival Association; St. Andrew's Society of Colorado; Scottish-American Women's Society of Washington, D.C.; and Scottish Games Association of Delaware.

I am so confident that you will benefit from these services that I will be adding you to the e-mail list for the free month newsletter. You can see the back issues here: <https://www.cosca.scot/updates>. You will receive the next issue next month – unless you inform me that you would prefer not to receive it. You can also inform me of others from your organization that you believe will benefit from the newsletter.

I would also like you assist me in updating your listing in the **COSCA database of Scottish heritage societies** listed here: <https://www.cosca.scot/association>. I'm particularly interested in whether you offer scholarships or grants. That will be the next database I will be creating.

Please let me know if you have any questions or if I can assist you in any way.

Grace Me Guide

- Bart



Barry Robert (Bart) Forbes

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www.COSCA.scot

www.facebook.com/ScottishSocieties/

www.instagram.com/ScottishSocieties/



President, Clan Forbes Society, Inc.

www.Clan-Forbes.org

www.facebook.com/ClanForbesSociety

[Clan Forbes YouTube Channel](#)



Appendix C: New Organizational Members in 2023

Account Name	Join Date
Appalachian Highland Celts	22-Jul-23
Associated Clan MacLeod Societies	14-Jan-23
Celtic Heritage Foundation	12-Oct-23
CelticFest Mississippi	24-May-23
Clan Elliot Society USA	19-Mar-23
Clan Fraser Society of North America	7-May-23
Clan Henderson	4-Jan-23
Clan MacCord Society	30-Jan-23
Clan MacEwen	2-Jul-23
Clan MacIntyre Association	23-Jan-23
Clan MacKenzie Society in the US	9-May-23
Clan McAlister of America	13-Jul-23
Clan Rose International	22-Jan-23
Clan Wood	16-Jul-23
Clanranald Trust	10-Jul-23
Edmonstone Clan Society	25-Feb-23
Flathead Celtic Festival	12-Jul-23
House of Gordon USA	25-Sep-23
Joss/Joyce Family Association	7-Mar-23
Kalamazoo Scottish Festival Assoc.	2-Jan-23
Kalamazoo Valley Scottish Society	27-Aug-23
National Capital Tartan Day Committee, Inc. (NCTDC)	11-Aug-23
Scottish Society of Greater Bloomington	23-Feb-23
SGAD/Fair Hill Scottish Games	11-Mar-23
St Andrews Society of Inland Northwest	11-Jul-23
The St. Andrews Society of Tampa Bay	12-Jul-23

New Organizational Members in 2022

Account Name	Join Date
Clan Little Society, Inc.	3-Jan-22
Clan Anderson Society	6-Jan-22
The Clan Watson Society	27-Feb-22
Scottish Society of Wilmington	4-Mar-22
Oliphant Clan and Family Association of North America	22-Mar-22
Murray Clan Society of North America	26-Apr-22
Clan Fleming Scottish Society	17-May-22
Clan Somerville Family Association	2-Jun-22
The Clan Logan Society International	30-Jun-22
Clan MacNicol Society, Inc.	29-Oct-22
Clan Dunbar	16-Nov-22