

The Presentation by the Chief, Sir Lachlan Maclean of Duart and Morvern, at the Clan Congress held on Mull on 22nd June 2012

When my Great Grandfather restored Duart in 1912 he said on the steps of the Castle that he had restored it for his family, the Clan. Therefore, I think that my family have always regarded Duart as more than just being their home, and I hope that you have recognized it more than just being a visit to a Visitor Attraction. For the last 100 years my family have looked after Duart to the best of their ability.

Firstly, Sir Fitzroy spent a significant amount of money on purchasing the ruined Castle from the Guthrie's and secondly for restoring it. Allan Maclean's excellent article in the Souvenir Programme shows some of the trials and tribulations that my family had in the restoration process. It should also be noted that even in those early days there were leak problems at Duart. When Sir Fitzroy died in 1936, my father was only 19 and although I never had the information from my father it must have been very difficult for him inheriting Duart from someone in their 90's when he was a teenager.

However, after the war my parent's returned to Duart and made it our home. Even in those days Maclean's would come and visit but it was a much more difficult journey with the old Lochinvar only sailing once a day from Oban. The late Lola Maclean who visited my parents in the 50's described to me how she had come on a cattle boat on which my father had managed to arrange for her to travel. That was the only way she could get to Mull. My father did much to the Castle that is not as obvious to the eye. He replaced all the lead piping, all the loo's which had started leaking so all that had to be replaced as well as bringing mains electricity to the Castle. By 1990 when he died the family knew that Duart needed much repair and in the early 1990's I did my bit for the Castle. The support of my late wife Mary made all that work possible as between us we felt that we could turn Duart into more of a commercial operation that would hopefully generate funds to continue with repairs of the Castle. The discovery of asbestos, the need for the Castle to be rewired, and the road needing major repairs made the whole operation very expensive. The Castle was more successful and just before Mary died we paid off the last of the money we had borrowed from the bank.

That is the historical story of Duart over the last 100 years but it is so important that we look forward to the next 100 years. In this turbulent world it is hard to agree on anything that might happen but I feel that it is essential that Duart continues to be a place for Maclean's to visit and learn about our large family. So how do we tackle the next 100 years. In 1912 Sir Fitzroy was a few years older than I am now. He wasn't to know that he was to live for another 26 years and I certainly don't think that I will achieve his great age. Let me share with you some of the constant comments that are made by you, or Clans people who come to Duart and all my thinking has really been based on these comments.

1. The fact that Duart is owned and looked after by the family and that when one is at Duart we always try to talk to Maclean's who come to visit the Castle.

2. Little desire for Duart to move into the hands of Historic Scotland, or the National Trust. In the case of the first, it would be a very end to us and in the case of the National Trust I don't have the money to endow the Castle.

With this being your desire it does shut several doors but there are things that you can do now that can help Duart. We have at the moment, a very limited e-commerce site, I intend to re-vamp that over the next 6 months and if you want to purchase Maclean items then could I ask that you look at our e-commerce site to see if there is something different that you could buy. By doing this any profit that is made by the e-commerce shop goes into the repair of the Castle, and we need money to do repairs now.

Much of the work that was done in 1994 has not been successful in sorting out the matter of leaks. Later this summer I am tackling one of the particular problems around the chimneys to see if we can come up with a solution to stop them leaking

So very sadly for us as a family we don't have the funds that are going to be needed to undertake this next phase of repairs and I wanted all of you who are at the Congress today to be aware of the problems that we face and to think if there are ways that you may be able to help.