

# *The Sgian Dubh*

---

Clan Morrison Society of North America

<https://clanmorrison.net/>

---

Morrison, Morison, Murison, Gilmore, Gilmour, Brieve, MacBrieve, Judge

---

## Morrison follows dream to Lewis

*Discovers 'every stone, ruin, loch' echoes ancient voices*

**By Buddy Morrison**

When preparing my vacations in my younger years, I planned them more to escape work for a bit and to explore what I could with the means that I had. Now, as I am older, I have learned that it is not to escape, but to follow the dreams of going to where my ancestors roamed. For me, this meant Scotland and following the Morrisons all the way to Dùn Eistein, the Outer Hebrides, and the Isle of Lewis.

### **Escaping vs. Connecting**

In my twenties and thirties, I viewed travel as a release valve, a way to take a break from the daily grind to soak up new places and to rest before returning to the office.



**Buddy and the star attraction at the Loch Ness Centre.**

My suitcase was packed with guidebooks, maps, and the thrill of the unknown. Vacations were checklists — landmarks to see, museums to tour, foods to try. And while those trips were memorable, they lacked something I couldn't name at the time: meaning.

Now, with more years behind me, I've discovered that travel can be more than an escape. It can be a pilgrimage. Each trip is no longer just about the destination, but about weaving together the threads of past and present. For me, that meant looking back to the stories I had heard about my Scottish ancestors, the Morrisons, and tracing them to the wild and rugged coasts of Scotland.

### **The Call of the Hebrides**

The Outer Hebrides are unlike anywhere else. From the moment I arrived, I was struck by the sheer beauty — the endless skies, the rolling seas, the winds that seemed to whisper of centuries gone by. Lewis and Harris are not just landscapes; they are living records of history. Every stone, every ruin, every loch seems to echo with the voices of those who came before.

It was here that I felt closest to my heritage. Standing close to Dun Eistein, the stronghold of the Morrisons, I could imagine the lives of my forebears. This tidal rock stack off the coast once might have held a tower and ramparts, serving as both refuge and fortress. Though today its remains are weathered by time and sea, the sense of resilience lingers. I pictured clansmen keeping watch for raiders, families huddled within its walls, and the enduring spirit that carried their lineage forward.

### **Walking in Their Footsteps**

Visiting these ancestral sites was more than sightseeing. It was stepping into the footprints of those whose blood flows in my veins. I thought about how they fished the same waters I gazed upon, how they tilled the rugged soil, how they lived, struggled, and persevered. genealogy records and DNA tests can tell us names and dates, but it is standing on the land that brings those facts to life. The Isle of Lewis became not just a dot on the map but a chapter in my own story. Each place I visited — whether the blackhouses that once sheltered families, the standing stones that predate recorded history, or the white-sand beaches kissed by Atlantic waves — added a page to that narrative.

### **More Than History — A Legacy**

The journey also reminded me that heritage is not simply about the past. It is about carrying something forward. The Morrisons of Dun Eistein endured hardship, conflict, and exile. Some left their homeland for new worlds across the seas, carrying with them only memories and traditions. I am a product of those migrations. Standing in Scotland, I felt both the weight and the gift of that legacy.

It also made me think about what we leave behind. Just as my ancestors left their imprint on the Hebrides, I, too, will leave something for those who follow. It may not be castles or

battlefields, but perhaps it will be stories — written words, photo albums, family history, or stone monument of my own that connects future generations to the past. Maybe this is why I created a small Callanish Stone circle to keep the feelings of Scotland and my ancestors alive at home.

## The Value of Heritage Travel

Traveling to ancestral lands has become more popular in recent years, and for good reason.

It adds layers to a journey that no guidebook can provide. Instead of asking, “What will I see?” the question becomes, “What will I feel?” It turns travel into an act of remembrance and gratitude.

Heritage travel has taught me humility. Walking among ruins, I realized how small I am in the grand sweep of history, yet how vital every link in the chain truly is. Without those who came before, I would not stand where I am today.

## A Journey That Continues

Although my trip took me across the ocean and into Scotland’s rugged north, it was not the end of the journey. If anything, it sparked a new beginning. Each story uncovered, each site visited, each stone touched opened new questions and more profound curiosity.

Back home, I share these stories with my family and genealogy groups. I want others to know that ancestry is more than names and dates in a family tree. It is living history—something we can touch, feel, and even walk upon.

What began as a vacation turned into a pilgrimage. In the past, I traveled to escape. Now, I travel to connect. Standing on the Isle of Lewis, overlooking the Atlantic where my ancestors once gazed, I felt something I had never experienced in all my years of travel: belonging.

It is not just about where we go—it is about why we go. For me, Scotland was not simply a destination; it was a homecoming.



Buddy at the closed Dun Eistein bridge

---

*Buddy Morrison writes a regular column on genealogy for the Sgian Dubh. He can be reached at [SouthernShoresGenealogy@gmail.com](mailto:SouthernShoresGenealogy@gmail.com)*

# From the Chairman

**By Michael S. Morrison,**  
*Chairman, Clan Morrison Society of North America*

As 2025 draws to a close I would like to thank all of the Clan Morrison Society members reading this 3rd quarter newsletter. I'd also like to wish everyone a happy upcoming holiday season.

You will undoubtedly be aware that the Society has been in talks with the Galson Estate in Scotland about rebuilding the Dun Eistein bridge. Recently it was brought to our attention that the bridge was in dire need of repairs. Over the last year the society has had communication and meetings with the estate owners. Galson Estate manages the land that abuts Dun Eistean. In 2000 the Society in conjunction with the Galson Estate and with the support from financial sponsors built the bridge to span the deep ravine that divides the northern tip of the Isle of Lewis from the seastack of Dun Eistein. The bridge allowed people easy access to the ancestral fortress and archeological site. Until that time the only way onto Dun Eistein was to climb down and back up the opposing cliff. I have it on good authority that our late Chief Ru, in his youth made the climb. Perhaps there are more that have as well.

At the time the bridge was built an agreement was made with the estate that subsequent maintenance would be responsible by the estate. After all, the society and its sponsors spent roughly \$50,000 to build the bridge, and a few thousand dollars were set aside in a bank in a reserve account. Somewhere along the way, a few key figures that would have been responsible for arranging the continuing maintenance of the bridge passed away, without leaving instructions on how to address the bridge's needs.

In the most recent sit down with the estate representative, it was discussed that while the Society would help fund the bridge repairs it was heavily implied that we were not pleased that the bridge was allowed to deteriorate into its current state. The Society feels that since we already paid for a bridge once before and with the standing agreement that the estate maintain it that they bear the majority of this responsibility the second time around. We also discussed that the estate and surrounding community, being those that benefit from the bridge directly, need to be spearheading efforts at fundraising. It would look better if the estate and those local to the area approach the Scottish government for funding as opposed to a society based in the United States.

At the time of our first meeting contract estimates were approximately \$100,000 for repairs. This more than doubles the society funds of \$45,000. This number represents the entirety of our savings since the 1960s. We need to be very responsible for the continued success of the Society to ensure how we spend any of that amount. In early October, I was contacted by family members of some of the individuals who were part of the initial project and a few other interested parties. The bridge restoration is far from guaranteed and the chance of a demolition is high. However, there is hope. You can take active steps to ensure that the next generation has access to this valuable historic site by volunteering, donating and raising awareness. (A recording of the Society's annual general meeting is here: <https://shorturl.at/ubB6u>)

# Out and about

*Morrison, Gilmores on the town and in the country*



Photo by Michael Morrison

**Lost by a whisker:** Society member Peter Morrison of Alexandria, VA (left) valiantly stepped forward to represent Clan Morrison when he heard the call for the first mustache competition at the Virginia Scottish Games over the Labor Day weekend. He lost to the gentleman in the center of the photograph, whose mustache appears as long as his shoulders are wide. But Morrisons don't give up. They decided that Peter won the Snidley Whiplash Look-a-Like contest. (We made that up. Snidley, at right, was the villain from the Rocky and Bullwinkle cartoons.) James, Tom, Peter and Michael Morrison (l-r below) show they could have won for the hairiest clan.



# Kings of the mountain



**Michael Morrison, chairman of the Clan Morrison Society of North America, and Andrew Morrison, the Viscount Dunrossil and a Clan Morrison chieftain. (third and fourth from left). They gathered with kilted friends at the Stone Mountain Highland Games near Atlanta, GA, in October.**

## Sword play for the chief

Chairman Michael Morrison, in a long-standing tradition at the Stone Mountain games, poses with the fabled MacLeod bastard sword, after secretly raiding the tent of the rival clan to claim the prize in the name of Morrison Clan Chief Alasdair Morrison.

Also in keeping with tradition, he returned the sword after the photo was taken, claiming a ransom of a few shots of whisky and homemade moonshine. Celebrating the prize with Michael is his wife Sarah and daughters Soirse (left) and Freya. The MacLeods never noticed the sword was missing. He explained that the Morrisons and MacLeods have a tradition of stealing from each other and returning the spoils in a good-natured contest.



# Scottish Cooking with Kay



*The late Kay Shaw Nelson, whose ancestors included Morrisons and MacLeods, spent her career traveling the world for the CIA, gathering intelligence and collecting recipes, especially Scottish dishes. Her book, “The Art of Scottish-American Cooking,” includes everything from appetizers to aperitifs. She borrowed recipes from well-known chefs to obscure backwoods diners from Texas to Quebec. Mrs. Nelson, a Washington DC resident when she died in 2019, opens her book with a recipe for Scotch eggs from food critic Craig Claiborne.*

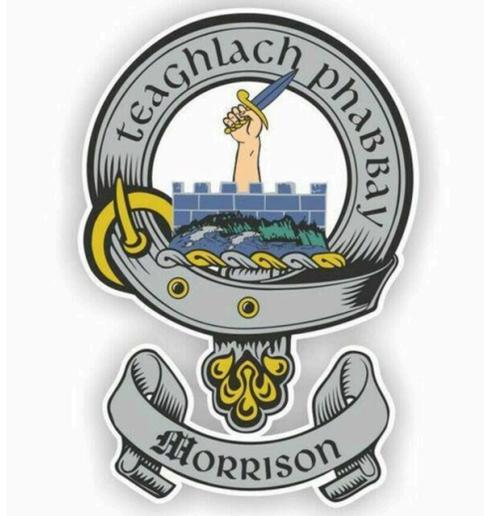
**Ingredients:** Six peeled hard-boiled eggs, all-purpose flour, one pound of pork sausage, two tablespoons of minced onions, two tablespoons of chopped fresh parsley, two beaten eggs, one cup of fine dry breadcrumbs, and enough cooking oil for deep frying.

**Preparation:** Roll each egg in flour to coat lightly and set aside. In a large bowl, combine the sausage, onions and parsley, and season with salt and pepper. Divide the mixture into six equal portions and flatten into thin rounds. Place one floured egg in the center of each round and cover completely, patting it well. Dip each coated egg into the beaten eggs and coat evenly with breadcrumbs. Place the eggs on a plate, cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for up to 12 hours.

**Cooking:** Heat three inches of oil to 325 degrees in a deep-fat fryer or heavy sauce pan. Cautiously dip the eggs one at a time into the hot oil until crisp and golden for about seven minutes. Use a slotted spoon to transfer each egg to drain on paper towels. Serve hot or at room temperature, plain or with mustard.







## CMSNA Executive Leadership

**The Chief of Clan Morrison:** R. Alasdair Morrison of Ruchi

**Chairman:**

Michael S. Morrison

**Vice Chairman:**

Vacant

**Treasurer:**

(Michael S. Morrison, acting)

**Membership:**

William Broome

**Secretary:**

Vacant

**Historian:**

Edmund Potter, PhD

**Chaplain:**

Vacant

**Newsletter Editor:**

James Morrison

**Scholarship Director:**

Robert S. Morrison

**Past Chieftain:**

Anne M. Morrison

**Webmaster:**

William Broome

**Past Chairmen:** Anne Morrison, Chris Gillmore, Arthur Morrison, Edwin F. Holcombe Jr., Jim Morrison, Gerald B. Morrison, Jeffrey Moore, David H. Blain, David R. Gilmour

**Members at Large:** William Broome, Arthur Morrison

**Chairman's Advisory Committee:** Edwin Holcombe Jr., Jim Morrison, Robert Morrison, David R. Gilmour, Chris Gillmore, Jennifer Wolcott



**Editor's note:** At the Sgian Dubh, I am always looking for contributions to the newsletter from Society members. Please email us photos of yourselves and friends at festivals, along with the names of the people in the pictures. Don't just think of standing in a lineup. Think of showing off interesting tent displays, raising a toast to the Clan at your games, marching in the clan parades. I am planning a new feature for the next edition. Called Tent Talk, the column will deal with Morrison displays at Scottish festivals. If you have any ideas you would like to share, please pass them on. For example, we all appear to have our John Wayne cardboard cutout. If you don't have one for your tent, you can probably get it on Amazon. <https://shorturl.at/U8UaE> Send your ideas and photos to [jamesellismorrison@gmail.com](mailto:jamesellismorrison@gmail.com)

– James Morrison