



The Macfie Clan Society of Australia

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INTERNATIONAL GATHERING OF THE CLANS

The following notes on The Gathering of the Clans in Edinburgh, May 1977, are from Society Vice-President Sandy McPhee and wife Norah (one of our Historians) from Pennant Hills, N.S.W..

Our departure from Sydney was delayed and therefore we did not arrive in Edinburgh until the Thursday of the first week and so missed the opening parade. However, it appears that the weather was bad and many parades had to be cancelled so that the following account of the MacPhee events at the end of the week and in the next two weeks is probably of more importance anyway.

We arrived in Edinburgh by Air Anglia from Norwich and checked in at the Caledonian Hotel before proceeding to the assembly rooms to be greeted by Keerie MacPhee who was manning the booth, surrounded by our tartan. She had been there all the week, recording the arrival of MacPhees from all over the world and telling them about events arranged for them. We learned of an Evening Gathering, a Luncheon, an assembly in Oban for a few days on Colonsay, where we were to participate in two ceremonies connected with our Clan history. Finally we were invited to a Ceilidh to be held at the Glenfinnan House Hotel on Loch Shiel. It all sounded very exciting and we decided to attend all these events if possible. Others were unable to do so because of pre-arranged tours, but 54 attended the luncheon and 14 in all went to Colonsay. Between 40 and 50 were at the Ceilidh.

That Thursday evening the Clan foregathered in the home of John and Kathleen Macfie - No 17 Heriot Row, formerly the home of R.L. Stevenson, and now listed by the National Trust of Scotland. We met Dr Earle MacPhee and wife Jennie (Vancouver) for the first time, and also Bob and Betty their nephew and niece (British Columbia); Bruce and Nan McPhee (she is Historian for the British Columbia group), and Sylvia McPhee and Jim MacLean from Toronto. Bruce and Betty McPhee from Melbourne were there and Bill and Dorothy Tyrrell of Sydney who had brought some of Dorothy's English McPhee relatives to Scotland with them (from Yorkshire where 30 of the family had assembled to greet them it seems - an English Clan Society maybe??). A very pleasant evening getting to know everyone and we were very grateful to John and Kathleen for letting us use their beautiful home, and meet the Clan.

At the luncheon next day, organized by Allen MacDuffie (USA) there were MacPhees, Macfies and McPhies from Scotland, Yorkshire, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Sweden, South Africa and U.S.A. (New Jersey, Milwaukee and Hawaii). It all went off very well with a piper, speeches from all countries and a hub-hub of talk. Hugh MacPhee, former Director of Gaelic Broadcasting for the BBC addressed us first in Gaelic and then said with some emotion how wonderful it was for the Scots present to see so many MacPhees gathered... "from the ends of the earth to be here to-day". Dr Earle MacPhee and Allen MacDuffie spoke briefly of the significance of the occasion in our efforts for Clan unity and then Allen introduced the members from all the countries who were there to represent hundreds of others who could not attend.

We met Belle McPhee Brew who was accompanied by her son Leith and two other New Zealanders; Louis and Martha MacPhee from Hawaii; Jean Melville, Bessie McPhee and Blanche Barbour from Melbourne, and Janet Hurley with her daughter Ailsa Hale from Sydney. We had met Ulf Macfie Hagmann from Sweden the previous night at Heriot Row and were once again impressed with the way he wears the Kilt - to the manner born! Alex and Pauline Macfie (Edinburgh) who sat at our table have a son David living in Maryborough Qld., and asked us to their home that evening. They have been out here for a visit and are always pleased to talk to Australians. They have a long family tree which we hope to get a copy of

for our files, and we hope also that David will join our Clan Society.

We travelled west to Oban next day through misty rain and prepared to spend a quiet Sunday at the Rowan Tree Hotel (owned by Keerie, of course). However, in the afternoon Keerie arrived and suggested a drive around the local countryside finishing up with afternoon tea at her home. A wonderful idea. From the windows of her sitting room one looks over Loch Etive to the hills beyond. We were joined by the Canadians Sylvia McPhee and Jim MacLean and later Ulf and Earle's party arrived on their way through to Oban.

Monday (9th) we boarded the ship "Columba" for Colonsay about seven in the evening with Earle and Jennie, Ulf, Allen, Bob and Betty, Louis and Martha, and Mrs Frances McPhee Fitzsimmons from Milwaukee, a very charming retired lady, travelling on her own. We met a few locals who were returning to the island, including a delightful old character, Neil Durroch, who was quite thrilled to meet Earle again. It was dark when the ship berthed and a piper was there to welcome us, then into the hotel VW Combi and up to meet Peggy Clark who welcomed us with tea and sandwiches in front of a lovely fire.

Tuesday, May 10th, 1977. I've written this in full because this date will go down in the history of the Clan. In the afternoon we all went to the Mhic-a-Phi Standing Stone where a short ceremony was held to re-dedicate it to the memory of our last Chief, Malcolm, who, together with three others, was killed on or near the spot in 1623. We have to thank Charles Macphee (Melbourne), Ulf and a Colonsay man, Hugh McDougall, for the repair and re-erection of the Stone.

Wednesday 11th we were due to attend another ceremony at Oronsay Priory. Tides being what they were at that time of the month, it was decided to go by boat across to Oronsay. So, Ulf and Allen organized Bill Lawson and his lobster boat with Big Peter McAllister along as extra pilot. Well, off we went at about 11:30 in bright sunshine, ten of us all told, with Bill and Big Peter. We'd proceeded about three quarters of the way when it started to rain! (It later became a storm and a chappie on the island came within an ace of being struck by lightning!) And cold! Oh brother! Eventually, being frozen stiff and soaked to the skin we decided to abandon the trip and after an hour fighting back up the coast to Scalasaig, we arrived with relief at the hotel.

The hotel staff were magnificent. Hot baths were organized for the old members (fortunately Jennie had not come with us. She already had a cold and was threatened with bronchial trouble.) Earle retired for a rest and the rest of us warmed up with hot coffee, soup, sandwiches and whisky! Peggy ordered a large fire to be lit in the lobby and our wet clothes were then hung up to dry. You've never seen so many wet kilts hanging on the chandeliers!! In the bar we recounted to the islanders the events of the day and thanked Bill and Peter for delivering us from Hebridean Seas. With a short break for dinner, it was a pretty late evening!! - With a lot of laughter as the whisky thawed us out.

Also at the hotel were a group of scientists who were surveying and documenting the stones and monuments on the islands. Allen, Bob, Earle and Ulf, who are very knowledgeable on those things, had a wonderful time talking to them on island history, and of course, we listened and learned a lot.

Thursday, May 12th. I guess I'd better give the date in full too, because Allen insisted on his little ceremony at Oronsay Priory and Ulf decided that we'd had enough of the sea for one week and arranged for two Land Rovers to take us at low tide, about 7:00 PM. Meanwhile Norah and I borrowed a car from one of the maids at the hotel (and she protested when we offered to pay her) and went exploring the island, calling in about mid-day to visit an old couple, Mary and Neil Martin, who live in an old but picturesque cottage by one of the lovely bays. Friends of ours who know Colonsay had asked us to call. Mary is 90 and her brother Neil is 88 but their hospitality - "A wee doch an' dorris" (and not so wee at that) left us with a distinct glow as we drove down to the wharf to farewell the Americans, and Earle and his party, who had to leave Colonsay a day earlier than us. Coming off the ship were late-comers Sylvia and Jim accompanied by Belle Brew of N.Z.. After a quick lunch and a tour around the island in Jessie's car, they all decided that they would come to Oronsay that evening to reinforce the party for Allen's ceremony.

So off we started, Sylvia, Jim, Norah and myself in the back of the red Post Office Land Rover with Angus "The Post" McFadyen and his wife Ella. Behind us came Allen, Belle and Ulf driven by Bill Lawson in another Land Rover. And so we set off across the Strand, delivering mail to two isolated farmhouses on the way, and knowing that we had only an hour before the water again covered the

Strand, (and Oransay was a cold, windy spot to be isolated for the night!! Heavens knows how those monks of old managed to stay there for years.) Once at the Priory we were able to see the beautifully preserved grave-slabs and Celtic crosses said to be the finest in Scotland, except perhaps for those on Iona. These made the journey worth while, especially the stone which bears the galley and the claymore amid delicate tracery of leaves, which is the original of the MacDuffee/Macfie/MacPhee/McPhie anorial crests.

We still curl up with mirth when we think of the rare sight we must have presented in the freezing cold standing around the Great Celtic Cross with Angus the Post and Bill Lawson obligingly taking photographs of us - I'm sure they wondered if we had taken leave of our senses. For Allen's ceremony national flags were unfurled and Allen made a moving speech from the base of the Cross which is in memory of Prior Malcolm MacDuffie. To off-set the cold Allen produced a bottle of whisky which we drank out of paper cups and felt that the old Priors would not have disapproved!! Back across the Strand with minutes to spare. On the journey home Angus told us stories of the old settlements on the island and pointed out the sites of previous villages, now deserted and covered with heather and bracken, and old roads overgrown and disused. It was an eerie feeling and brought us once again to realise how tough our ancestors were to have lived so exposed to the Atlantic winds, and weather.

At the hotel that night Angus, Ella and Bill joined us in the lounge for drinks and Angus discovered kindred souls amongst the historians, and once again we all talked until far into the night. A further day exploring the island, the gardens of Colonsay House (nobody was at home!), and then the boat came in and with many of our island friends to see us off we returned to Oban and the next stage of our MacPhee pilgrimage.

Glenfinnan House is a beautiful mansion, once owned by the MacDonalds, now a hotel tastefully run by Charles and Isobell MacFarlane. Here we met up again with all the Canadians, Duncan and his family and many Scottish clansmen and women. We stayed the weekend at the hotel and the Ceilidh was held on the Saturday night. About 40 to 45 attended and it was an evening long to be remembered. By the way, Dr Bruce and Rosslyn McPhee from Brisbane turned up with their children and joined us.

Mairi McAskill organised the Ceilidh and her husband, Dr John McAskill, is quite a piper. Charlie MacFarlane played the fiddle (Irish jigs, Scottish Reels etc) and various young people danced for us. We all contributed an act, and again short speeches were made. This is where we all felt a sense of oneness. The Scottish highland people were aware of it too and even an onlooker from the adjacent lounge said to Norah that he felt that a Clan had been born that night.

Following this evening we were invited to MacPhee homes, and one family, a Mrs Marion MacPhee who was sure that I was the image of her family and of her late husband, later presented Norah and me with an heirloom Gaelic bible once owned by their grandfather. They showed us a rose bush in their garden which was the Jacobite Rose. Bonnie Prince Charlie wore one and from that day cuttings of that bush have been handed down to "Jacobite" families and the rose flourishes on. We were highly honoured to be offered a cutting as it meant that they accepted us as a Lochaber family, and one of them. We were introduced to local historians and spent many interesting hours discussing family history. We think we have discovered Donald McPhee's mother and father (my ancestor), helped by some evidence which we got in Sydney before leaving.

We finished up in Edinburgh again and had a few hours sifting through the documents at New Register House, but as the Queen was due to come the N.R. House was to be closed for 4 days, so we decided it was time to set off south by hire car and see the Border country on our way back to England and eventually Australia. It was a wonderful holiday.

I received an account of the Edinburgh and Colonsay/Oransay doings from Allen MacDuffie and a host of letters from Earle, Ulf, Sandy and Norah and a number of other Australians who visited Scotland at that time. I regret that space does not permit further reproductions of these interesting reports. Too, I have a number of attendance lists for the various functions, but rather than endeavour to mention everyone by name, they are summarized by countries on the following page, and our own members are listed.

Colonsay House stands on 170 acres. The main part of the House was built between 1720 and 1780, and later additions have been carefully designed to follow the 18th century style. It is built of pink washed rendered stone under a slate roof and consists of 5 reception rooms, 6 principal bedrooms, 12 secondary bedrooms, 10 bathrooms and an integral flat. The five farms, with acreages in brackets are - Garvard (and Balarunin Mhor) (1384), Machrins (and Ardkenish) (1968), Scalasaig (586), Balarunin dubh (454), and Kiloran & Balnahard (3731). There are ten registered crofts of approximately 1400 acres total.

Oransay is separated from Colonsay by a Strand which only dries out at low tide to allow pedestrian and vehicular passage. A number of reefs and islets extend around the shore of Oransay and the Grey Atlantic Seals have successfully colonised them as breeding grounds. The Priory of St Columba gave the Island a reputation for sanctity second only to Iona, it flourished up to the Dissolution, but its early origin is not well documented. The existing ruins are extensive and include a church and cloisters and residential buildings. The single farm of 1343 acres is known as Oransay Farm.

Land tenure, farming practices and estate management differ considerably to those in Australia. Despite the large acreages involved, and the productive farms, the islands return little income to the Strathconas and I understand that this is the reason they wish to sell. The Price? Quite high by our standards, and out of all proportion to the poor income....I haven't an exact figure though.

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

A number of members have yet to pay their 1977 subscriptions of \$3. Accounts are attached for the unfinancial ones - please attend to them at your earliest convenience.

ELECTION OF SOCIETY OFFICE BEARERS FOR 1978 - 1979 TERM OF OFFICE

In the next Newsbulletin nominations will be sought for the election of the following Society Office Bearers :-

President
Vice-President
State Vice-Presidents
Treasurer

Nominations are to be in writing stating the nominated office and carrying the signatures of the nominee, proposer and seconder; all of whom must be financial members of the Society.

The election of State Vice-Presidents is conducted by the Society Secretary, but is confined strictly to members of the State concerned. The State Vice-President positions are not unduly onerous. They require the incumbent to act as Society spokesman in their own State, to attend to Society Executive business as required, and to organize, or encourage the organizing, of the occasional Society get together for dinners, social functions, or what have-yous.

The difficulties of people finding time, being able to conjure up some general enthusiasm etc are known - But we do have problems in those areas and need some assistance. To this end Sandy and Norah McPhee will be at home at 47 Bellary Street, Pennant Hills (Sydney 84-2257) any Saturday or Sunday in September, and Helen and I will be at home at 8 Floreat Court, Glen Waverley (Melbourne 232-6640) any Saturday afternoon or Sunday morning after the first week end in September, if anyone would like to drop in have a yarn and take a look at Society affairs. - Sandy is Society Vice-President, Norah one of our two Historians, and Helen is Society Secretary, if you haven't got us sorted out.

GENERAL NOTES

* Newsbulletin Contributions or requests from members will always be welcome. We do not have the capacity for extensive articles or reproduction of photos at present - personal interest items on members' doings are what we want really.

* Melbourne Party Night on 22nd July was a dancing, piping, enjoyable success. Our special guests, The Balmoral Weavers, a demonstration dancing group from the Royal Scottish Country Dancing Association, provided excellent entertainment and tried with much alround merriment to lead our less nimble footed members through Strip the Willow and several other numbers. No wonder the Scots are so

good at Rugby - hardest night's training I've had in a long time. Many thanks to Weaver Loader Judith Anders, Pipers Donald MacPhie (V76-159), Jim MacPhoe (V76-170), Iain MacPhoe (V76-171) and a young friend of Iain's, and to Rosalie Taylor (V76-231) for another polished dancing exhibition. Of the fifty six attenders it was pleasing to see over half were now members and their guests.

- * Conratulations to Neil McPhoe (V74-017) of Ivanhoe V. on his MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours.....to Edward S. McPhoe (V75-132) of North Balwyn V. whose name I noticed on the Anzac Veteran's List last 25th April.....and to Ian Macphoe (V74-022) who was amongst the Queen's Jubilee Medal recipients.
- * Travelling? Donald and Margaret-Ann McPhie would be pleased to hear from you if you're through Bombay at all. Donald is Chieftain of the Caledonian Society of Bombay and can be contacted at Cadbury House, Bhulabhai Desai Road, Bombay 400 026 Phone 36-4950.....closer to home Bob (Q77-353) and Anno-Marie (Q77-354) McPhoe of 161 Ibis Street, Longreach, Q. would be happy to see any Society member travelling through. But watch out if you're indulging in that old Scottish pastime of Paddy Dodging - Bob is a police sergeant in charge of the Stock Investigation Branch.
- * New Members continue to join. Current membership is 349. A list of members who joined the Society after 28 March 1977 follows.
- * Family Coincidences Noted in the press some weeks ago were photographs of Federal Productivity Minister Ian Macphoe (V74-022) handing over the 1000th Ikara torpedo system. Ian's father, Charles (V74-012), supervised installation of the first Ikara control system on HMAS Stuart in 1963 when he was a Navy Department electrical engineer.
- * 1978 Australian Pipe Band Championships & Festival of Tartans will be held on Easter Sunday, 26th March, at Warwick Farm Racecourse in Sydney.

With Best Wishes

Alex McPhie, President

V77-323 Donald McPhoe	11a Nolan St	Bendigo	VIC 3550
V77-324 Dorothy McPhoe	11a Nolan St	Bendigo	VIC 3550
Q77-325 Julie Ann Fee	c/- Winton State School	Winton	QLD 4735
Q77-326 Edward McPhoe	'Colonsay' Crawshaw St	Bell	QLD 4408
Q77-327 Dorothy Joan McPhoe	'Colonsay' Crawshaw St	Bell	QLD 4408
Q77-328 Keith Alexander McPhoe	15 Watker St	The Gap	Alice Springs NT 5750
Q77-329 Marion Jean McPhoe	1/328 South St	Toowoomba	QLD 4350
Q77-330 John Edward McPhoe	18 Arthur St	Toowoomba	QLD 4350
V77-331 Grace Elaine Rewell	15 Carnegie Ave	East Kew	VIC 3102
S77-332 Robert Wilkian McPhie	53 Railway Terrace	West Snowtown	SA 5520
V77-333 Ian Robert McPhoe	Carroll Rd Box 379	Shepparton	VIC 3630
N77-334 Keith McPhie	Donald Rd	Armidale	NSW 2350
V77-335 Carmel McPhoe	414 Drummond St South	Ballarat	VIC 3350
S77-336 Malcolm McPhoe	55 Crown Tee	Royal Park	SA 5014
S77-337 Judith Mary McPhoe	55 Crown Tee	Royal Park	SA 5014
V77-338 Clare Patterson	25 Ray St	Pascoe Vale	VIC 3044
N77-339 Geoffrey John McPhoe	70 Moons Ave	Lugarno	NSW 2210
N77-340 Ruth Elaine McPhoe	70 Moons Ave	Lugarno	NSW 2210
Q77-341 Pamela Marie Phie	27 Fitzgibbon St	North Ipswich	QLD 4305
*N77-342 Hanish Bruce Macfie	5 Scott Place	St Ives	NSW 2705
*N77-343 John Hugh Macfie	5 Scott Place	St Ives	NSW 2705
V77-344 Stan McPhoe	7 Birdwood Ave	Warrnambool	VIC 3280
W77-345 Donald McPhie	45 Carrick St	Woodlands	WA 6018
W77-346 Margaret McPhie	45 Carrick St	Woodlands	WA 6018
*W77-347 Gaye McPhie	45 Carrick St	Woodlands	WA 6018
*W77-348 Cassie McPhie	45 Carrick St	Woodlands	WA 6018
Z77-349 Lorraine Kukutai	71 Mark Ave	Paparangi Wellington	NZ
*Q77-350 Roger Scott McPhoe	47 Union St	Clayfield	QLD 4011
N77-351 John Allan McPhoe	7 Chauvel Close	East Wahroonga	NSW 2076
N77-352 Ross McPhoe	21 Malory Ave	West Pymble	NSW 2630
Q77-353 Robert James Duncan McPhoe	161 Ibis St	Longreach	QLD 4730
Q77-354 Anno-Marie McPhoe	161 Ibis St	Longreach	QLD 4730
N77-355 R. Alan McPhie	Cottage Creek	Coona	NSW 2630
Q77-356 Noel Grant McPhie	41 Wilson St	Maryborough	QLD 4650
V77-357 Sgt Glen McPhoe A315725	Base Squadron	RALF Point Cook	VIC 3029
T77-358 Elizabeth MacPhie	17 Ronald Place	Launceston	TAS 7250
V77-359 Bruce MacPhie	30 Grinwade St	Frankston	VIC 3199
V77-360 Ian McPhoe	12 Bolton Ave	Hampton	VIC 3188
V77-361 Bruce Alexander McPhoe	33 Saxonwood Dr	East Doncaster	VIC 3109

Plus six more I will have to leave for next Newsbulletin - my apologies.