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THE DOWNUNDER

Newsbulletin of the Macfie Clan Society of
Australia

Issue 96
December 2003

From your President Judging by comments the last issue of "Downunder" was well received as I explained various terms used when referring to matters Scottish such as Clan etc and so below I have further explained some other terms.

Who is the Lord Lyon ?

The Court of the Lord Lyon is the official body charged with protecting and recording the heraldic tradition of Scotland and dates back several centuries and it is known Robert the Bruce in 1318 or thereabouts appointed a Lord Lyon.

Today the Lord Lyon King of Arms is the Rt. Hon Robin Orr Blair, LVO WS.

His responsibilities are threefold:

- To exercise the Royal Perogative and grant coats of arms,
- To operate a judicial function as a court to ensure arms are used lawfully, and
- To oversee state ceremonies such as the opening of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

Thus the major part of the work of the Lord Lyon is handling applications for arms.

Anyone wishing to have a Scottish coat of arms must have a connection with Scotland through an ancestor or ownership of property.

The Lord Lyon may grant arms to any "virtuous and well deserving person" with Scottish connections and he has the final word on what form these arms take.

Under the system if an applicant's name resembles that of another armigerous person (ie a person with arms such as Sandy McPhie of Townsville or Sandy McPhee of Hunter Valley) the Lord Lyon first looks at designs granted to these people in determining an appropriate design for the applicant so reflecting the importance of the clan system of identification with a particular family.

All correspondence should
be sent to:

The President, Macfie Clan
Society of Australia

4 Figtree Court

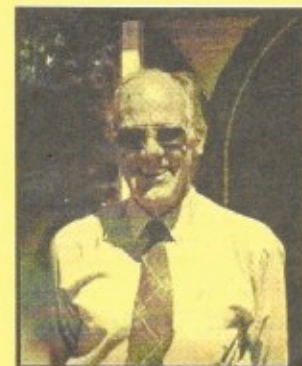
North Adelaide SA 5006

Telephone and Fax

(08) 8239 0038

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bmmcphce@betta.net.au



Macfie Clan Society of Australia is
a Member Society of Clan Macfie.

The Macfie Clan Commander,

A.C. (Sandy) McPhie

76 Linderman Avenue

Healey QLD 4814

Australia

Telephone/Fax: (07) 4779 6328

Email: macfie@austarnet.com.au

Macfie web address:
<http://www.orishanet.com/clanmacfie/Macfie>



What is a Clan Commissioner?

A Chief or in our case Ceann-Cath (Clan Commander) Sandy McPhee appoints Clan Commissioners to represent him at functions around the world which he cannot attend or to deal with local matters.

Sandy has 6 Commissioners, one in each of Scotland, Australia, NZ, Sweden, Canada, and USA.

Whilst Commissioners need not be armigerous, Sandy prefers that they are, and in fact 5 of his 6 Commissioners are.

Chiefs and Chieftains

A Chief is head of a Clan where as a Chieftain is head of a significant family within the Clan but usually in an area other than where the Chief resides.

Can Clan Macfie have a Chief ?

Yes we can provided that the person partitioning to be appointed can prove beyond doubt to the Lord Lyon to be descended from our last Chief, Malcolm who died on Colonsay in 1623. The Lord Lyon would examine such an partition very closely indeed.

Bye for now

So as the year ends on behalf of our Executive I wish you all a merry Christmas and a safe and healthy New Year.

In the meantime let's all take good care of each other,

New Members

A very warm welcome to our new members;

Robert McCaffrey	ACT
Damien Brooke	SA
Catlin Brooke	SA
Bailey Brooke	SA
Lachlan Brooke	SA
Mark Uebergang	SA
Chelsea Uebergang	SA

A Note: Louise Brooke and Anthea Uebergang are the daughters of Treasurer Ian and Barbara McPhee and have been members for years and Ian and Barbara have decided to do a little tidying up on the membership front for their family.



New Email Address

Clan Commissioner Sandy, and Norah McPhee have a new email address

sandymcpee@rockingm.com.au

Error

The July edition of Downunder provided a list of recognised Macfie Surnames.

Two important names were missed, MacVee and MacVie. Apologies to for this oversight.

The photograph above is of the Macfie Standing Stone on Colonsay

The plaque CARRAGH MHIC A PHI can be seen at the base of the stone. The Standing Stone is now fenced off to protect to protect the area.

Thanks to Jan Harper for the photograph



Macfie Traveller's Club

The response to the suggestion of having a Macfie Traveller's club has been positive but very slow. We have received a few expressions of interest from members offering to be host for accommodation and tour guide but we need to get more support and interest before the launching of the concept.

The Traveller's club concept could be very useful and economical way of having a break and meeting other clan Society members with similar interests.

The July 2003 edition of the 'Downunder' has full details of the proposal but a summary is below.

The Macfie Clan Society has a great opportunity to coordinate a service for all its members to enjoy holidays and meet other members. There is a degree of security as members of the Traveller's Club must be members of the Macfie Clan Society of Australia. It allows for Society members to mix around Australia and potentially internationally. The hospitality can range from:

- **Tour Guide.** This can include transfers to/from the airport/train/bus, arranging accommodation, providing leaflets on arrival of 'things to see and do', being tour guide for sites and sight seeing, meeting for dinner.
- **Accommodation.** This may include the above plus having accommodation available. This may be a room, granny flat, caravan.
- **House Swapping.** Two people/families arrange to swap houses for a defined length of time with/without a car.

RULES:

1. Must be financial member of the Macfie Clan Society of Australia.
2. Travellers wishing to access the Traveller's Club services in Australia are required to pay \$20.00
3. Host members (Tour Guide, Accommodation) do not pay
4. Number of days stay will be at the discretion of the host.
5. Damage deposits may be required for Home Swap and Accommodation people
6. Hosts are not required to be tour guide and travellers will have to respect the hosts daily routines.
7. Normal respect and appropriate behaviour is expected.
8. If a host(s) does not answer a request, then the traveller must respect this.
9. Anyone abusing the system will be denied future access to the Traveller's Club services.
10. A host will be expected to provide linen, kitchen facilities, bathroom facilities.
11. Meals will be negotiated between the host and traveller.

The Macfie Clan Society will not accept any liability for any damage or illegal actions by participants..

On the Move

Clan Commander Sandy, and Helen McPhie are on the move again.!

The new address details are:

76 Linderman Avenue
Heatley
Queensland 4814
Australia

Tel/Fax 07 4779 6328
Email: macfie@austarnet.com.au

Sick List

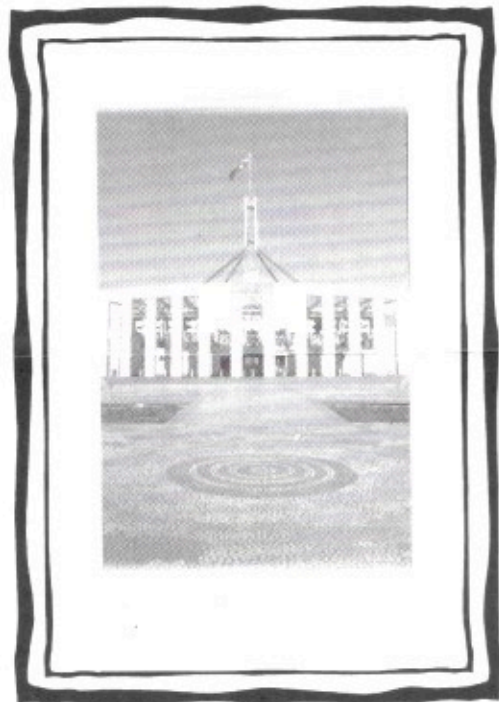
Sandy and Helen McPhie have been on the move in more ways that one.

Since moving into their new home both Sandy and Helen have not been well. Sandy has had a sort stay in hospital and Helen is also not feeling too well.

We sincerely wish both a quick recovery and all the best for Christmas and healthy New Year.



The Biennial General Meeting of the Clan Macfie Society of Australia will be held on the weekend of the 29/30 May 2004 in Canberra ACT.



What a great idea to attend the Biennial General Meeting and take in some of the highlights of Canberra at the same time. Canberra attractions include:

New Parliament House, One of Australia's most popular attractions, opened in 1998.

Old Parliament House, This was the seat of government from 1927 to 1988.

National Portrait Gallery, Presenting exhibitions on historical and contemporary issues.

Australian War Memorial, Opened in 1941 it houses collections of photos, pictures, films, war relics and exhibitions

Tidbinilla Nature Reserve, 45 Km west of Canberra with many walking tracks and wildlife.

National Gallery of Australia, Offers the best collection on traditional aboriginal art.

Questacon, A hands on science museum with over 200 exhibits including an earth quake experience .

Christmas in Scotland

Although Christmas and its customs were in disfavor for only a short time in England (during the reign of Cromwell), Scotland ignored the holiday far longer. Bear in mind that "Christmas" is "Christ's Mass" and mass was banned in Scotland. There are records of charges being brought against people for keeping "Yule" as it was called in Scotland. Amazingly, this dour, joy-crushing attitude lasted for 400 years. It has only been in recent years that the Scots observed December 25 as a special day at all. Until the 1960s, Christmas Day was a normal working day for most people in Scotland. So if there is a specifically "Scottish" aspect to Christmas it is that it was not celebrated

Christmas Eve in some parts of Scotland is called *Sowans Nicht* from "sowans" - a dish made from oat husks and fine meal steeped in water. And branches of a rowan tree were burnt on Christmas Eve to signify that any bad feeling between friends or relatives had been put aside for Yuletide.

According to legend, it's bad luck to let the fire go out on Christmas Eve, since that is the time when the elves are abroad and only a good, roaring fire will keep them from slipping down the chimney to perform all types of mischief. On Christmas Day, it is not unusual to have a bonfire and dance to the sound of bagpipes before settling down to a hearty dinner of turkey with all the trimmings. The presents under the Christmas tree were placed there by Father Christmas just as he does in neighbouring England.

Many seasonal traditions in Scotland involve fire. In Burghead, a tar-barrel is set on fire and volunteers take turns carrying it on their head before it is smashed to bits. In the Shetland Islands, a 30-ft. replica of a Viking longboat is carried in a parade before being torched and in Comrie, large torches are paraded through the streets before being tossed into the river.

The Scots celebrate Christmas rather somberly and reserve their merriment for New Year's Eve which is called *Hogmanay*. This word may derive from a kind of oat cake that was traditionally given to children on New Year's Eve. In Edinburgh, millions fill the streets as fireworks explode in the skies over the city.

The first person to set foot in a residence in a New Year is thought to profoundly affect the fortunes of the inhabitants. Generally strangers are thought to bring good luck. Depending on the area, it may be better to have a dark-haired or fair-haired stranger set foot in the house.

**15th INTERNATIONAL GATHERING
AND 9th PARLIAMENT OF CLAN MACFIE
INVERNESS, SCOTLAND, 6th TO 14th SEPTEMBER 2005**

The Fifteenth International Gathering of Clan Macfie and Ninth Clan Parliament will be held in Inverness, Scotland, and on Colonsay from the 6th to 14th September 2005. The Gathering and Parliament will be mainly centred at the Thistle Hotel situated on the outskirts of Inverness City Centre, approximately 15 minutes walk from the City and close to both Inverness Airport and Train Station, from 6th to 11th September. It will be followed by a Clan visit to our ancestral homeland, the islands of Colonsay and Oronsay on 11th to 14th September.

Tentative programme for the Gathering is:

Tue 6 Sep	pm	Registration and Clan Commander's Reception
Wed 7 Sep	am	Clan Parliament Opening and First Session
	pm	Clan Visit, Evening Clan Ceilidh
Thu 8 Sep	am	Clan Parliament Second Session
	pm	Clan Visit, Evening free
Fri 9 Sep		Day trip to John O'Groats etc. Evening Clan Dinner, Thistle Hotel
Sat 10 Sep	am	Clan Parliament Third Session and Closure
	pm	free, Evening Farewell Dinner
Sun 11 Sep	am	Travel to Oban for afternoon ferry to Colonsay
Mon 12 Sep		Clan activities on Colonsay
Tue 13 Sep		Clan activities on Colonsay
Wed 14 Sep		Ferry to Oban

Note: Travel to and from Colonsay will be subject to the CalMac ferry schedule in 2005.

Accommodation Bookings: Bookings for both Inverness and on Colonsay are to be made direct by the members concerned. The Clan co-ordinators in Scotland will not be involved in any way although assistance will be forthcoming if needed.

Thistle Hotel - Tel: 01463 252503 Fax: 01463 711145
Email: reservations.Inverness@thistle.co.uk
Website: www.thistlehotels.co.uk

Thistle have offered the following rate for accommodation in 2005:

Per Half Twin/Double Room (inclusive of Dinner, Bed & Breakfast) @ £51.00 per person. Single supplement £20 per room per night.

Colonsay Accommodation details etc., can be found on the Colonsay Homepage at <http://www.colonsay.org.uk>

Other Bookings etc. Details of arrangements for other bookings etc., and payment of deposit money will be notified in due course. It will assist the Clan Co-ordinators in Scotland, Iain and Fiona McFie, if members notify them of their intention to attend. They may be contacted at: Address: Coulintyre, Kincaig, Kingussie. PH211LX Scotland or by email: iain@mcfie.org.uk.

Clan Macfie Secretariat
76 Lindeman Avenue
Heatley. Q. 4814
Australia

Phone/Fax 61 7 4779 6328
Email: macfie@austarnet.com.au

October 2003

THE ISLANDS OF COLONSAY AND ORONSAY
(Talk by Jan Harper to Victorian clan member in August, 2003)

I plan to talk about the Islands of Colonsay and Oronsay, two islands linked together at low tide. These islands in the Southern Hebrides, off the western coast of Scotland, are, as we know, the place where the Macfies originated.

I visited the Islands for only three days, so that while I was able to appreciate their physical aspect, most of this is based on reading and talking to others with Island connections.



The photograph shows some hardy folk, probably Macfies, crossing the Strand between Colonsay and Oronsay in the 1880's

An advertisement introduces each of six aspects of the Islands.

The first advertisement introduces Colonsay and Oronsay. In 1880 Sir John MacNeill, Laird of Colonsay at the time, advertised to rent Oronsay House. His advertisement read:

A run to this island will be the happiest recollection in a man's terrestrial career; for there is the purest atmosphere and the mildest climate in the

west of Scotland. Its scenery is beautiful and varied: its grand gigantic cliffs, in front of which the sea-gulls, cormorants, and eider duck, float and scream continually in countless thousands: its pure yellow sandy beaches, some a mile wide, on which the never-ceasing Atlantic swell tumbles in and expends itself in white foam; its endless and extensive caves, are sights that should be seen.

Mrs Murray of Glasgow answered the advertisement and subsequently spent seven summers on the Islands. She wrote:

Good news this is for a brain weary and jaded with the whirl of life as we live it now-a-days (that's 1880), and tired of continental touring, with its endless climbing of hotel stairs, its long railway journeys, tedious table d'hotels, and restless haste to cram as much sightseeing as possible into a holiday of three or four weeks.

Fervid as the language was (Mrs Murray continues) we were not disappointed in the reality. For although in wet, bad weather - and there is always too much of that - nothing can be more sullen and sad than the aspect of our isle, where not a single tree has been able to resist the biting wind, or the nibbling of sheep and goats, yet, on the other hand, weather permitting, nothing can be more exhilarating than the delicious atmosphere, bracing, yet soft, or more inspiring than the glorious views on all hands.

This brings me to my own experience. Over the three days my husband and I spent there, the Islands were a rapturous delight. We were liberated from motorised transport, as we walked or cycled to various parts of the islands. Sun shone down on rich swathes of green with grazing highland sheep, sand of pristine whiteness and lily-filled lochs. A mile-wide band of tidal mud-flats which separates the two islands allowed us pedestrian access for a period of two or three hours at low tide to cross between them. The 22 rocky peaks and sparse crofts punctuated the landscape. Behind and beneath this lay prehistoric ruins - standing stones, chapels, cloisters and tombstones. Perhaps my greatest pleasure was climbing to the top of the Fort of the Macfie Women, where the children of the ancient Macfie chiefs had traditionally been born. And the boundaries of all this were made finite by an endless sea. These combined to create an atmosphere of utter peacefulness and tranquillity.

Contrast this with another scenario. My sister yielded to my persuasion to visit the following year. She and her husband arrived in the pouring rain and vicious wind. For three days they were only able to venture outside with water running down their necks and into their shoes and the wind whistling past their ears. They missed the tides and were unable to cross the Strand to Oronsay, with its remains of monks and buried lords. They left with the impression of Mrs Murray's 'sullen and sad aspect'.

Colonsay and Oronsay are 32 kilometers from mainland Scotland, with Jura and Islay between. And to the west there is sea all the way to Canada. Ireland is visible from Oronsay on a clear day. It is thought that St Columba, after leaving Ireland, landed on Orinda and was about to establish his religious community there, but found he could still see Ireland. Having foresworn even the sight of Ireland, he decided to travel on to the nearby island of Iona to establish the first church in Scotland there instead.

Colonsay measures 13 kilometers long and 5 kilometers wide and Oronsay measures four by two kilometers. Almost every small feature has a name - every beach, field, cliff or cave. There are 100 people permanently on Colonsay now, and nearly 1,600 place names, mostly Gaelic. There are three small villages and 17 farms or crofts.

Airstrips and protected yacht anchorages are for the wealthy of the 20th century. For them the islands of Colonsay and Oronsay are accessible. For the crofters and fisherfolk, who have continued to inhabit the islands for the last 600 years, they are probably as remote as any of the Western Isles of Scotland, as well as being the least known.

In the mid-19th century it could take a week to travel to Colonsay from the mainland, via Jura, while one waited for the weather. Mrs Murray wrote of "the raging sea, the rough Highland ferry-boat, and the long and tedious waiting for the steamer on her return". Until 1965, there was no pier, and passengers and goods had to be transferred to the island in small boats. (This, of course, meant that there were almost no cars.) Following the Second World War, steamers ran three times a week and took all day from Glasgow, travelling up the Clyde River. But they often passed by Colonsay because the weather was unfit to land. With a new pier in situ, a direct service of two-and-a-half hours from Oban commenced in 1973. This included a roll-on-roll-off car service, which has made the island much more accessible. But the service still runs only three days a week and adverse weather can still interrupt it. Visitors are advised to make an allowance for an enforced extension of their stay, in case the wind and waves conspire to leave the ferry stranded. And of course there are no day-trippers.

MacBrayne's have run the steamers for the last 50 years, leading to a saying in the Western Isles:

The earth belongs unto the Lord, and all that it contains,
Except the West of Scotland's piers and they are all MacBrayne's.

Colonsay is remote, but generally not bleak. The climate, as much as you can generalise, is mild, wet and windy. It is the sunniest area in Scotland, but it rains on 50% of days. The average annual rainfall is 53 inches, half that across on the mainland. In winter it is rarely less than three degrees, with little or no snow.

The dominating feature of the weather is the wind, which it has been said varies from strong to unrelenting. This wind has dominated island life for the stone-age people and modern folk alike. Good weather can change without warning, and such changes are a legend for those experienced in navigating the surrounding sea.

In *Kidnapped*, Robert Louis Stevenson described the scene as the ship sailed south from Mull past Colonsay:

Altogether it was no such ill night to keep the seas in; and I had begun to wonder what it was that sat so heavily upon the captain, when the brig rising suddenly on the top of a high swell, he pointed and cried to us to look. Away on the lee bow, a thing like a fountain rose out of the moonlit sea, and immediately after we heard a sound of roaring. "What do ye call that?" asked the captain, gloomily. "The sea breaking on a reef," said Alan. "And now ye ken where it is; and what better would ye have?" "Ay" said Hoseason, "If it were the only one." And sure enough, just as he spoke there came a second fountain farther to the south.

And in John Buchan's *Mr. Standfast*, Richard Hannay was on board a ship, chasing a spy.

We left Colonsay about six in the evening with the sky behind us banking for a storm, and the hills of Jura to starboard and angry purple. Colonsay was too low an island to be any kind of breakwater against a western gale, so the weather was bad from the start. Our course was north by east, and when we had passed the butt-end of the island we nosed about in a trough of big seas, shipping tons of water and rolling like a buffalo.

And anyone wanting to navigate the western coast of the islands must be brave indeed. Intricate passages, hungry reefs and sunken shelves of rock stretch far out into the Atlantic, and there is not a sign of a natural harbor. The upside of this is the grand scenery along this coast, with a series of great black cliffs, terraced, with caverns, caves and promontories.

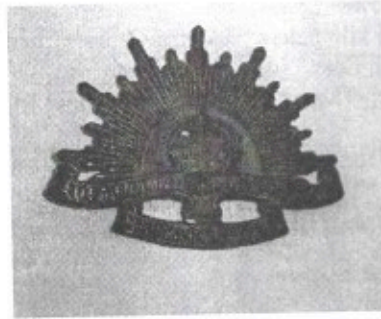
Jan Harper enjoying life on Colonsay.



Many thanks to Jan Harper for submitting this very interesting article, other parts of Jan's presentation will be included in further editions.

WORLD WAR I

No. 1207, Corporal William Wallace Phee, 34th Battalion, A.I.F.
K.I.A. 11.6.1917



William Wallace Phee was known to everyone as **BILL** and was the second child born to Henry and Janet Phee at Plean in County Stirling in Scotland in 1890. He was educated in Scotland before coming to Australia with his family in 1888.

For four years Bill worked as a coalminer at the Bellbird Colliery, near Cessnock. On 25th January 1916 Bill enlisted in the AIF (just days after his older brother Henry Gault Phee had enlisted also) at West Maitland into the 34th Battalion and was assigned to 'D' Company. He and his brother went into camp at Rutherford and they left Sydney on the same ship. They completed training at Salisbury, but tragically both were later killed in action within a few weeks of each other, near Ypres, Belgium.

Corporal Phee had survived the Somme battlefields and the 'outpost' battles of early 1917 when his battalion took part in the famous attack on the German line on the high ground of Messines.

At Messines, 19 ten tonne explosive mines had been secretly placed in tunnels 30 feet below the German trenches prior to the attack. As the attacking troops moved up to the 'jumping off tape' during the dark wet night of June 6th, 1917, picking their way among the shell holes and mud, a rain of German mustard shells fell on them. Many of the assembling soldiers were affected by the gas in the wet muddy conditions, but virtually all were on the jumping off tape at 3.10am.

Nineteen huge explosions blasted the German trenches and machine gun posts as the mines were detonated at exactly 3.10am. Hundreds of tons of earth were blasted into the air as the German defences were destroyed, generating a cloud of blinding dust which screened the advancing Anzacs from any surviving German defenders. The devastated trenches were all captured by dawn.

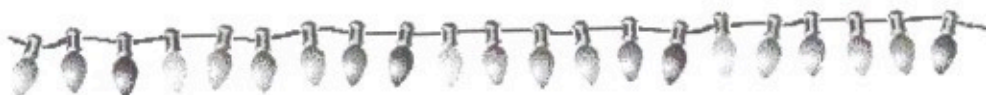
German counter attacks and artillery fire pounded the Anzac positions on Messines Ridge over the next five days, but the Messines' attack plan had been fulfilled with a swift completeness far beyond that of any major achievement of the British Army in France until that day.

Private William Wallace Phee was one of the casualties of the Messines victory, killed in action on June 11th, 1917.

Reference:

C.E.W. Bean, *History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918, Vol. IV.*
A.I.F. Records, obtained by Trevor Phee

Thanks to Clyde Symthe for collecting and formatting the information on the Macfie Clan people who served in the Australian Services





Scone RSL Pipes and Drums Band

In 1990 the pipe band was formed in the upper Hunter Valley at Scone which is some 170 kms north west of Newcastle and was named the Scone RSL Pipes and Drums. The Band decided to adopt our Macfie Tartan for their kilts and asked Ceann Cath (Clan Commander) Sandy McPhee for permission, which was duly given. They take pride in representing our Clan and are a great advertisement for us at many Highland events.

The Band is seeking support to purchase new equipment and would appreciate any contributions that may be offered.

Anyone wishing to support the Band can contact Sandy and Norah McPhee at 49 Rodney Road Mt Vincent NSW.

Email: sandymcphree@rockingm.com.au

Some Terminologies of Tartan

MODERN Denotes colour shades produced by chemical dyes after the 1860's

ANCIENT: A term used to describe colours which simulate natural dyes, shades in use prior to the eighteenth century

OLD: A term used to describe a pattern historically older than the Sett in modern use.

SETT The pattern of a Tartan, once expressed as a description of the width of the colour stripes in fractions of an inch. It is now accepted to record the Sett by counting the number of threads in each colour stripe.

GROUND The dominant colour field upon which other colour stripes appear to be superimposed. Although this is usually a solid broad area, due to the perception of colour by the human eye. The Ground may not be the largest amount of colour in the pattern,





McPhee Clan looks back 150 Years. (Toowoomba Chronical, 18/10/2003)

In November 1853, Angus and Christina McPhee and their infant daughter arrived in Morten Bay aboard the SS Caroline.

To mark the 150th anniversary of this event, the descendants of Angus and Christina (nee McTavish) and their children- Hannah (nee McPhee) and James Cody, Alexander (Sandy) and Martha (nee Bradley), John (Jack) and Sarah (nee Edwards), Angus (Mac) and Bella (nee Wheeler), Christina (nee McPhee) and Samuel Bradley, Catherine, Colin and Mary (nee Strang), and Donald and Maryann (nee Edwards) are invited to attend a family reunion in Bell on December 6.

For further information contact Enid Ronnfeldt at 4663 9743 or Dorothy McPhee on 4663 1238.

Note from Sandy McPhie (Clan Commander). The family of Ted McPhee (Q77-326) (deceased) and Dorothy McPhee (Q77-327) of Bell Queensland have been long term members and supporters of the Clan Society.

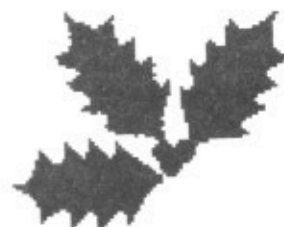
Victorian Gathering of McPhee's

The Macfie Clan Society gathering in Victoria went off extremely well. The gathering was held at Jack and Bernie McPhee's place on the 23 August 2003. All the members attending wore a touch of tartan and all contributed to the lavish spread.

David McPhee made his own delicious Scottish shortbread and Maggie Mulherin made a very tasty haggis.

Jan Harper kindly presented a most interesting research paper on Colonsay and history of the Macfie background.

A great time was had by all and plans are already on the board for the next gathering.



Great Scot!! Where's That—Smoo Cave (Sutherland)

A deep creek some two miles east of Durness afforded shelter for small craft and that could be beached there, at the head is entrance to a cave in the limestone, some 50 feet high and 100 feet in breath.

It was made famous by Sir Walter Scott's visit in 1814. More recently it has been made more accessible to tourists by military engineers who have built a stepped path down the steep descent to the first of the loch's within the cave.

This loch is fed by a stream which tumbles in a waterfall through a hole in the roof, a low arch divides the first stretch of water from the second, each about 30 meters of length. The roof is made up of stalactites and stalagmites projecting from all angles. (Article copied from 'Raising the Standard', with thanks to Bob McPhee, QLD VP)



**Article from the Scottish Banner
August 2003-09-28,
(www.scottishbanner.com)**

Fascinating Fact about the Scottish Tartan

The Word Tartan was most likely not used in the Highlands as the Gaelic is 'Breacan', derived from Breac meaning chequered.

Words such as brycan, breach, breacan, refer to chequered garments. Those references appear to be common,, not only to Caledonians and the Irish, but also to the Ancient Britons and the Celts of Europe. (Aeneld-Book 8) Viril mentioned , 'that their cloaks are stripped and shining'.

It is believed that originally those chequered garments were not to show which tribe 'or clans the wearers belonged to, but were in fact distinctive emblems of rank or position. It was laid out as follows:
Servants were entitled to one colour
Rent paying Farmers - two colours
Officers - three colours
Chieftains - five colours
Druids or Poets - six colours
While the King, Ard,-Righ (,or Chief) had the right to seven

In a letter written in the late eleventh century, Turgot - the Bishop of St Andrews, writing in Latin to King Malcolm Ceann-Mor, mentions the wearing of "diversis coloribus vestes."

The earliest reference in Scottish literature to a tartan seems to be in the Chartularies of the Episcopal See of Aberdeen, where the Statutes or Canons of the Scottish Church, in 1242 and 1249, and later in 1256 direct that 'All Ecclesiastics be suitably apparelled; avoiding red, green, or striped clothing, and that their garments not be shorter than the middle of the leg".

When The Minister Was Superior To The King

It is interesting to note that amongst other comments,. MacGregor; writing on the early Scotie church - speaking of the cleric's robe, said

'It was usually striped or chequered with eight - colours to indicate that while officiating, the Minister was, superior to the King. Further that during the Eucharist celebration, the sacred vessels were covered with two veils - one pure white linen and the other ', siric brec', [chequered silk].

The reformed. Kirk also decided to 'banish tartans from their Divine Service- prohibiting the Ministers or Readers wearing bright colours' saying: Their habit be of grave colour, black, russet, sad gray, sad brown, or searges.' The clergy had a special, quiet sett of tartan devoted to their use - styled 'breacan nan cleireach" - the sett being plain blue or black and white.

What about the actual garb?

Tartan was part of the everyday garb of the Highlander of many centuries and although worn in other parts of Scotland, it was in the Highlands that it's use continued and developed until it became recognised as a symbol of Clan kinship.

Highland garb resolved into three main forms:

1. The Breacan-felie, ie the belted-plaid, This was a combination of kilt and plaid made of twelve ells of tartan. It was pleated and the bottom half fastened around the body with a belt, while the other half was fixed to the shoulder by a brooch- great care being taken to ensure the sett or pattern was displayed properly.
2. The second form of Highland garb was Feileadh-beag or little kilt. This was made of six ells of single tartan-pleated and sewn, it was fixed around the waist by a belt- half a yard being unpleated at each end, the ends crossing each other in the front. The feileadh- beag look very much like the kilt as we know it today. It is worth noting that this little kilt had developed at least by the early 17th century and described by J Aston, Valet to Charles the First, who was in Scotland in 1639, as 'A pleated skirt of rich brocade, worn along with a suit of plate armour.
3. The third form of Highland garb was the 'triubhas'. These were always made of tartan. They were cut cross-ways and worn tight to the skin and often elaborately laced down the seam, sometimes finished with gold braid. It required considerable skill -to make trews as they had to be cut in such a way, to make the patterns meet at the seams. In general, Trews were worn by Chiefs and Gentlemen on horseback and by Highlanders travelling in the Lowlands.

Thanks to the Scottish Banner for this article





Adelaide McPhee Gathering

On July 6 a gathering of a McPhee family occurred in Adelaide at the home of Brain (son of Dalton) and Kristen McPhee at Golden Grove.

The occasion was a visit to Adelaide from Sydney by Pam Tidmarsh (nee McPhee) with husband Bill daughter Rebecca and her partner Matt, and granddaughter Tasascia.

Pam is the only daughter and seventh child of the late Lachlan and Elise McPhee. Her five surviving brothers in order of age, Dalton (70), Colin (68), Ian (66), **William (64)** and Ronald (62) all live in Adelaide.

The first born of the family, Malcolm passed away five years ago.

Just on 40 people attended but due to various reasons 31 were missing. It was great to see cousins and partners who had not seen one another for many years, present with their children. All in all this family of McPhees is very well entrenched in Adelaide.

If only we could get them all to join the Macfie Clan Society



The photograph above shows (L to R)

Ian & Barbara, Colin & Wendy, Ron & Kaye, Pam & Bill, Valda, Geraldine & Dalton

Absent; Bill & Judy

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL

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