



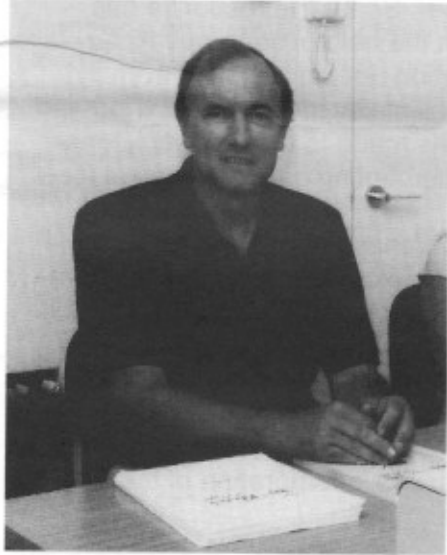
THE DOWNUNDER

News bulletin of the
Macfie Clan Society of Australia

Issue 106
March 2007

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President's Report



Welcome to all members, especially those new members who have joined the Society in the past few months. I have a feeling this is going to be a productive and positive year for our organisation. In this issue you will continue to see a variety of interesting articles, not only about our heritage but about the Society itself.

Every two years The Clan Macfie Society of Australia has a meeting, The Biennial General Meeting (BGM), where office bearers are elected and various reports are presented to members. Rather than wait 2 years, I will be endeavouring to submit an annual report for members in a simple format so you can see how your Society is progressing. The following is an update on the Society for the year ending 31/12/2006.

1. Membership: The number of members in the Society at the end of 2006 was boosted by the 'Christmas Gift Offer' which appeared in the 2006 November issue of *The Downunder*. This was an idea I am happy to say has been successful. I am very pleased to report that 15 new members were joined up as a result of that special offer. Their subscriptions have been paid in advance for 2 years by existing Society members. My hearty thanks to those members who participated in that pre Christmas offer. One of the best ways our Society can attract new members is for those already in the Society to encourage other members of their own family to join.

As at the 31st December 2006 our Society had the following number of members:

| | | | |
|----------------|------------|---|-------------|
| ACT | 14 | = | 4.1% |
| NSW | 102 | = | 30.2% |
| NT | 0 | = | 0 |
| QLD | 66 | = | 19.5% |
| SA | 23 | = | 6.8% |
| TAS | 6 | = | 1.8% |
| VIC | 99 | = | 29.3% |
| WA | 18 | = | 5.3% |
| Overseas | <u>10</u> | = | <u>3.0%</u> |
| | <u>338</u> | | 100% |
| Single members | 271 | = | 80.2% |
| Family members | 65 | = | 19.2% |
| Life members | <u>2</u> | = | <u>.6%</u> |
| | <u>338</u> | | 100% |

President's Report continued

It has not been possible for me to make membership comparisons on a state by state basis with previous years. Hopefully it will be something that can be done on a regular basis in the future. Our Society has a wonderfully loyal membership base and fabulous retention rate for existing members - **36%** of our members joined about 30 years ago in the 1970s. The downside to that little statistical snippet is that our membership is aging significantly. An aging and or declining membership is something many societies face and something our executive must be constantly trying to address.

2. Finances: Thanks to the good governance of past presidents and their respective committees, the Society has an adequate level of available funds. Rather than continuing to invest all those funds in bank term deposits etc, the executive will be endeavouring to invest a significant portion in the Society itself.

3. Subscriptions: Annual subscription renewals went out in early December. So far the response has been good, but a significant number of members are still to respond. With the help of secretary Rosemary Szente, a new renewal form was designed with the number of donation options reduced from five to two: one being for the Clan Society and the other for the Clan. This will simplify the treasurer's job and give the executive more flexibility in dealing with the allocation of donations made to the Society. Donations form an important part of our annual income and are crucial in supplementing our low renewal fees.

4. Inventory/expenditure: One thing our funds can be put towards is the purchase of material to promote the Society and service our own membership. Currently with the odd minor exception, we have no literature, no posters, no banners, no stickers, no maps, no books and not one piece of clan tartan. The Society desperately needs some of those things not only for its own members, but to present the Society to the public at large. Unless there is investment, innovation, growth, and renewal in any organisation, it will eventually start to wither.

In addition, funds will probably be put towards Society promotion, the possible incorporation of the Society as a legal entity and a membership drive. That's the plan at this stage.

5. Executive Committee: There are still two vacancies on the committee of our Society - State Vice President of Victoria and State Vice President of Western Australia. We definitely need someone in each of those states to put their hand up for those positions.

Any executive member in your state, be it Vice President or otherwise, is there to represent the Society and assist Society members. All members should feel free to avail themselves of those executives who are only too willing to help in whatever way they can. Any enquires or suggestions can always be put to your state representative.

Ian McPhee



BUNDANOON IS BRIGADOON

- 30th Annual Highland Gathering
- **SATURDAY 28 APR 2007**
- Bundanoon, Southern Highlands, NSW
- **Visit the Macfie Clan Tent**

MEMBERS IN PROFILE

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| ACT member: | Gwen Hubert (AO1-962) |
| Migrant ancestors: | Archibald McPhie, & wife Janet Gentles |
| Occupation: | Ploughman, goldminer & grazier in Australia |
| Home in Scotland: | Isle of Islay and Alloa, Clackmannanshire |
| Emigrant ship: | Departed Plymouth, on the <i>Walter Morrice</i> |
| Arrived Australia: | Botany Bay, NSW February 1849 |
| Pioneer ancestors: | Marion McPhie and Charles Williamson |



Member's story in brief: Gwen Hubert (nee Wellsmore) was born in 1932 in Cooma, NSW, and educated at a bush school at Paupong, the Correspondence School at Jindabyne, and at Cooma Brigidine Convent Boarding School, reaching Intermediate Certificate level. After spending 2 years 6 months on the farm with her family, Gwen left home to train as a nurse in Goulburn, which occupied 4 years. On returning home, Gwen worked in private nursing before marrying. After 5 years Gwen returned to nursing, finally training as a midwife, became a widow, then married a migrant, Josef Hubert.

Gwen has lived in Canberra since 1962, except for a brief time in Queanbeyan. Her family has always had a keen interest in local history, which stimulated her interest in the subject. She has pursued family and local history for some years and has accumulated an extensive library on the subject, using the books as well as the internet to write her own version of aspects of the past times. Other interests are travel, horses, photography, Christianity, music and gardening.

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| NSW member: | Bill McPhee (N06-1042) |
| Migrant ancestors: | John McPhee & wife Sarah McPherson |
| Occupation: | Shepherd |
| Home in Scotland: | Glenelg |
| Emigrant ship: | Departed Skye on the <i>William Nichol</i> |
| Arrived Australia: | Port Jackson, NSW, October 1837 |
| Pioneer ancestors: | John McPhee & Elizabeth Caslick |



Member's story in brief: Bill is a new member of our Society. He was born in 1944 and has three older siblings - Geoff, the Society's treasurer who lives in Sydney, Jim residing in Bathurst and Mary who also lives in Sydney.

On their arrival in NSW, Bill's ancestors were employed by William Semphill at Belltrees in the Hunter Valley. Thus began a long history of the family's association with the Hunter Valley. Although Bill was born in Sydney, his family were residents on a property in the Hunter Valley. Bill did his schooling in Scone where he also did his training as an electrician. Once his training was completed, Bill moved to Newcastle where he gained wide experience working in heavy industry and the mining sector. Bill met and married Anne Moore and they have three daughters - Joanne in Orange, Allison in Germany and Rebecca in Newcastle.

About 25 years ago Bill's father died and Bill returned to the Hunter Valley to take over the family property called 'Braemar' which is on the Waverly Road. This lush 2000 acre property runs poll hereford and poll hereford cross beef cattle. In addition to the farm, Bill also runs an electrical business in Scone. Not surprisingly those enterprises keep both he and his wife Anne fully occupied.

GENERAL NEWS

New members

A warm welcome to the following 17 new members

| | | |
|----------------------|------------|----------------------|
| Mrs Nan Polansky | (N06-1029) | Matraville NSW |
| Mrs Helen McPhee | (N06-1030) | Culcairn NSW |
| Elizabeth Cullinane, | (N06-1031) | Leura NSW |
| Malcolm McPhee | (N06-1032) | Armidale NSW |
| Anne Bell | (N06-1033) | Leura NSW |
| Gillian McPhee | (N06-1034) | St. Peters NSW |
| Kevin Aitken | (N06-1035) | Hunters Hill NSW |
| Lyn Abbott | (N06-1036) | St Narara NSW |
| Simon McPhee | (V06-1037) | Narre Warren Vic |
| Sally Perry | (V06-1038) | Gerangamete Vic |
| Jenny Beavis | (V06-1039) | Bunyip Vic |
| Duncan Holds | (S06-1040) | Col Light Gardens SA |
| Natalie Gould | (N06-1041) | Newtown NSW |
| Bill McPhee | (N06-1042) | Scone NSW |
| Andrew McPhee | (Q06-1043) | Oak Beach QLD |
| William McGuffie | (Q07-1044) | Kelso QLD |
| Mavis McPhee | (V07-1045) | Hampton Vic |

Donations

Many thanks to the following 67 members for your generous donations made to the Society & the Clan. Those donations, received between the beginning of November and the end of February, are an essential part of our funding and greatly appreciated.

| | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| Gwen Hubert | Pearce ACT |
| Ian McPhee | Scullin ACT |
| Beverley Badcock | Granville NSW |
| Margaret Barnes | Drummoyne NSW |
| Robyn Hancox | Wollstonecraft NSW |
| Russell Mattocks | Balgowlah NSW |
| Claire McGuffie | Drummoyne NSW |
| Alexander McPhee | Mt. Vincent NSW |
| Barbara McPhee | Brunkerville NSW |
| Greg McPhee | Urunga NSW |
| Ian McPhee | Brookvale NSW |
| Dr Ian Ross McPhee | Terranora NSW |
| Joyce McPhee | Bonnells Bay NSW |
| Morris McPhee | Cheltenham NSW |
| Ross McPhee | West Pymble NSW |
| Beryl McPhie | Nowra NSW |
| Helen McPhie | Moree NSW |
| Stuart McWilliam | Moree NSW |
| Joanna E Moore | Chiswick NSW |
| Mairi Petersen | Shellharbour NSW |
| John Redman | Wallsend NSW |
| Clyde Smythe | Turrumurra NSW |
| Bruce Taylor | Yagoona NSW |

Donations continued

| | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| Keith Caldwell | Annerley QLD |
| Jenny M Hutchins | Carindale QLD |
| Janet R Mackay | Bracken Ridge QLD |
| William McGuffie | Kelso QLD |
| Dorothy J McPhee | Bell QLD |
| Kevin A McPhee | Port Douglas QLD |
| Nevell J McPhee | Caloundra QLD |
| Sally R McPhee | Wooloowin QLD |
| Dorothy Murphy | Currumbin QLD |
| Robyn M Young | Jimboomba QLD |

| | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| Shirley Dickson | Naracoorte SA |
| Nancy H Holds | Whyalla SA |
| Ann Leask | Mclaren Vale SA |
| Ian L McPhee | Kidman Park SA |
| Dr John McPhie | North Adelaide SA |

| | |
|---------------------|------------------|
| Dr Bertel Sundstrup | Pipers Brook TAS |
| Marlena Turner | Ulverstone TAS |

| | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| Sheila Cogan | Williamstown VIC |
| Nancy Collie | Bentleigh East VIC |
| C C Gartland | Blackburn VIC |
| Jan Harper | M/Albert North VIC |
| Gwen D Jarvis | Dandenong VIC |
| Cherry McFee | Cowes VIC |
| Dr Ian McPhee | Rosanna VIC |
| Gwen McPhee | Balwyn VIC |
| John W McPhee | Doncaster VIC |
| Keith McPhee | Glen Waverley VIC |
| Peter McPhee | Abbotsford VIC |
| R Neil McPhee | Mornington VIC |
| Ross McPhee | Rosebud VIC |
| Ruth A McPhee | Kew VIC |
| Donald J McPhie | Warragul VIC |
| Margaret Mulherin | Williamstown VIC |
| Dene Rutledge | Doncaster East VIC |

| | |
|-------------------|----------------|
| Alex McPhee Holds | Geraldton WA |
| Ross McGuffie | Fremantle WA |
| Fr. Anscar McPhee | OSB Wyndham WA |
| John S McPhee | Lathlain WA |
| Margaret McPhee | Nedlands WA |
| Suzie M McPhee | Duncraig WA |

| | |
|----------------------|-------------|
| Harvey & Ann MacPhee | Canada |
| Gary MacPhie | Canada |
| G Bruce McFee | Thailand |
| Lynette Mok | New Zealand |

The Scottish Gaelic Association of Australia

Fàilte! Welcome!

Gàidhlig gu brath!

[Gàidhlig an seo]

Comunn Gàidhlig Astràilia (The Scottish Gaelic Association of Australia) is a non-profit organisation which supports the language and culture of Scottish Gaels in Australia. We welcome contact from anyone with an interest in these subjects.

Our members include native speakers and learners. We have members all over Australia and overseas. We produce a quarterly journal (An Teachdaire Gaidhealach) which is sent to all members, and we organise gatherings, events and occasional classes.

Committee Meetings

Committee meetings are open to members. They are usually held monthly, on Saturday or Sunday afternoons, by Skype internet telephone conference. If you would like to participate, please contact the Secretary via email at fios@ozgaelic.org, and we will arrange for you to join the conference.

Cearcall Comhraidh

(Conversation circle)
Sydney

Second Saturday of each month (February to November)

2.00 - 4.00 pm

Granville Neighbourhood Centre 2 Carlton Street, Granville

Gaelic lessons in Australia: Sydney, Wollongong, Newcastle, Canberra, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth, Brisbane, Ipswich.

Speak Gaelic every day

Madainn mhath!
Mah-ding va

Good morning!

Ciamar a tha thu?
Kimmer uh ha oo?

How are you?

Tha mi gu math, tapadh leat.
Ha mi goo ma, tahpuh let

I'm well, thank you.

Tapadh leat / Tapadh leibh
Tahpuh let (one person, or familiar) / Tahpuh layv (more than one person, or formal)

Thank you

Feasgar math
Fessger ma

Good afternoon/ Good evening

Gabh mo leisgeul
Gahv moh leshgal

Excuse me / Pardon me / I beg your pardon

Tha mi duilich, chan eil mi tuigsinn
Ha mee doolich, cha nyell mee tikshing ch is pronounced as in "loch"

I'm sorry, I don't understand

An can thu sin a-rithist?
An can oo shin a ree-isht?

Would you say that again?

Ciamar a chanas mi ... 'sa Gàidhlig? How do I say ... in Gaelic?
Kimmer uh channass mee ... sa Gahlik?

The Secretary Comunn Gàidhlig Astràilia, PO Box A2259, Sydney South NSW 1235, Australia
Or contact us at fios@ozgaelic.org

Rod McPhee whose address is Unit 5/4A Bishop Street, Woolner, Darwin, NT 0820, Phone [08] 89438751, Email rodmcphee@skycitydarwin.com.au is a descendant of our Scone McPhees and he would like to hear from other members of this family.

He is the youngest of four children and is aged 47. His father was **Hunter Wallace McPhee** [WW2 RAAF], his grandfather was **Wallace Hugh McPhee** [WW1 Army] and his great grandparents were **John McPhee & Elizabeth Caslick**.

If you have any information to help Rod McPhee, contact him directly or let Trevor Phee know the details.

Service in Vietnam

The following is a nominal listing from the Australian War Memorial of McPhees who served in Vietnam. There will be more information regarding Vietnam service available after August 2007.

- *Alan James McPhee Service Number 217041. Army
- *Daryl Michael McPhee Service Number 16752. Army
- Lindsay John McPhee Service Number 3789988. Army
- Malcolm David McPhee Service Number 3793930. Army
- Robert Alan McPhee Service Number 2788396. Army
- Paul Frederick MacPhee Service Number 21466827. Army
- Michael Anthony Fee Service Number 3791293. Army

- Cyril Charles McPhee Service Number A51984. RAAF
- Glen Campbell McPhee Service Number A315725. RAAF

- Michael John McFie Service Number R105774. RAN
- Gordon McPhee Service Number 0841. RAN

* In regards to Alan James McPhee. He was attached to the 176th Air Dispatch Company and I think he was from WA. Also I have a photo and some service details in regard to Daryl Michael McPhee from QLD.

Useful Web link for family tree research

www.cofe.anglican.org/about/librariesandarchives/familyhistory/index

There are also a great many books on the topic, such as "Smart Family History" by G Swinefield (The National Archives, 2005) or "Trace your Family Tree: Advice and information for taking your first steps in genealogy" (Society of Genealogists, 2004).

Information on these pages is split into three main areas:

- [Baptisms, Marriages, and Burials pre-1837 and Wills pre-1858](#)
- [Births, Marriages, and Deaths from 1837 and Wills from 1858 onwards](#)
- [Sources for Anglican Clergy and other Church records](#)

Sorry, there are no more copies of our McPhee Shipping Book.

WORLD WAR I



**No. 3989, Private Finlay McPhee,
3rd Battalion, A.I.F.
D of W. 13.5.1917**

Private Finlay McPhee was the son of Angus and Ellen McPhee and was born and educated at Coldstream, NSW.

He enlisted in the army in August 1915, and trained at Liverpool and Holdsworthy camps, and sailed for England on 7th January 1916. He survived the hideous shellfire of Pozieres, suffering severe wounds to the legs and right arm, on 27th July 1916 near the Wind Mill.

After a five month 'Blighty' recuperation, Finlay McPhee returned to his 3rd Battalion and died of wounds (DoW) suffered while attacking the Hindenberg Line at Bullecourt.

The Hindenberg Line was the strongest fortification built by the Germans in World War I and its design was based on their previous experiences on the Somme and Ypres.

Two lines of serrated trenches, 200 metres apart, were supported by concrete machine gun pits 500 metres to the rear, which could maintain a continuous crossfire through the barbed wire. Three bands of coiled barbed wire, each 30 metres thick and 2 metres high, fronted the trenches. Strong field artillery was placed in support two miles behind the front line.

AIF Battalions, 1 to 12, 17 to 28, and 53 to 60, all took part in the series of attacks on the Bullecourt section of the Hindenberg Line starting on 10th April 1917. Frontal mass attack, inadequate artillery, few tanks and a shortage of hand grenades doomed these attacks to be costly failures and caused great anger among the AIF troops.

The attacking troops assembled at 3am in the snow covered no man's land facing the Hindenberg Line and waited for the tanks to flatten the barbed wire. The tanks broke down before they reached the front. The attack was postponed but the Germans were alerted and bombarded the front, causing casualties among our troops. Despite the complete loss of surprise, the Australian 4th Division was ordered to again attack Bullecourt at 4am the next morning. The attack failed again with great loss of over 3000 casualties. Private Finlay McPhee survived this disastrous attack. On 3rd May at 3.45am another mass attack was made on the Hindenberg Line at Bullecourt, and after hand to hand bomb fighting a small section of the German front line trenches were captured. After holding out in the German trenches all day, some of the Australian positions were overwhelmed by a counter-attack in which the Germans used flame throwers, machine pistols and new egg size grenades that could be hurled 70 metres. A small pocket of the Hindenberg Line was still held at 9pm on the 3rd May. A heavy German barrage fell on the Australian positions at about midnight as the 3rd Battalion was again relieving the front line.

Private Finlay McPhee was one of those mortally wounded; he died 10 days later on 13th May 1917.

Note: Sergeant G.R. McPhee, 17th Battalion, and Sergeant A.R. McPhee, 2nd Battalion, were Bullecourt veterans who survived the failed attempt to break the Hindenberg Line.

Special thanks to Clyde Smythe for collecting and formatting the valuable information of the Macfie Clan people who served in in the Australian Services



'The Scots of Victoria Coordinating Group'

Many of our clan members and others with a Scottish background can trace their origins back to colonial ancestors who arrived at a port in Victoria. It is not surprising therefore, that Victoria has traditionally been a stronghold of Scottish culture and interest in Australia. In a state with such a large number and diverse range of Scottish interest groups, it is surprising that it is only in recent times that an organisation to coordinate them has been established.

The impetus for a peak body to represent Scottish organisations came from the reluctance of the Victorian Government to deal with so many small clubs, societies and associations. In late 1999, the Victorian Scottish Union hosted a seminar for Scottish groups. The key groups were asked to provide speakers who could present an overview of their organisations and put forward their goals and aspirations.

A follow up seminar was held a month or so later, where it was determined the Council of Clans would host another meeting in the year 2000 to further the issues that had been canvassed. Those issues included: The Scottish reference book/website, an annual Scottish week, the dissemination of Scottish history/culture – i.e. creation of a coordinating organisation, a Scottish calendar, participation in the 2001 Centenary of Federation Programme and the appointment of a Scottish community cultural worker.

At the 2000 seminar hosted by the Council of Clans, workshop discussions confirmed the need for a structure that would facilitate the coordination and cooperation between the numerous Scottish groups. Con Alliminos from the Victorian Multicultural Commission pointed out the importance of recognising the Scots and their descendants as an identifiable ethnic group within the multicultural community. He also pointed out the great advantages of all Scottish organisations working in unity and not just in small, self-interest groups.

A subsequent meeting established a coordinating committee. From that flowed the 'Scots of Victoria Coordinating Group' which was then incorporated as a legal entity in Victoria. Its purpose is to facilitate the shared goals of the Scottish community by coordinating the uses of various resources within the Victorian Scottish community as well as canvassing the wider community. One of its principal aims is to help maintain the presence of Scottish heritage within the broader Victorian community. It also is a vehicle of communication between the Victorian Government and the Scottish community.

The Scots of Victoria Coordinating Group run a Resource Centre which operates out of 316 Queen St Melbourne. The centre is staffed from Monday to Friday by about 14 volunteers. One of the most dedicated volunteers is our past president, Bernie McPhee, who provides his services for one day a week.

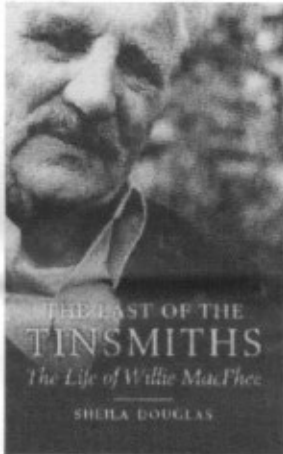
The Scots of Victoria Coordinating Group has about 160 members. Annual membership is \$20.00. The majority of the members are affiliated organisations drawn from numerous cultural groups. The Macfie Clan Society of Australia is a member by virtue of its membership of the Council of Clans in Victoria. The majority of members who make up The Scots of Victoria Coordinating Group are drawn predominantly from:

- Clan Associations
- Highland Pipe Bands
- Highland Gathering Societies
- Highland Dancing Societies
- Robert Burns Clubs
- Scottish Dance Societies
- Scottish/Caledonian Societies

Book Review

"Last of the Tinsmiths - The Life of Willie MacPhee"

by Sheila Douglas



Sheila Douglas is a founding member of the Scottish Storytelling Forum and has been researching and studying the life and culture of Scotland's travelling people - the *luchd siubhail* - for many years. Here; she pays tribute to a most remarkable man, Willie MacPhee, a famous storyteller and piper who lived for 92 years in the twentieth century, carrying in his head the songs, ballads and stories of generations of his people.

Scotland's "tinkers" travelled the country working on tin or other metal, repairing pots and pans and other utensils and tools - and in earlier times using their skills to repair swords and other weaponry. They also had the versatility to make baskets and other items and had a role as seasonal workers. However, their great contribution to Scottish culture has been as storytellers and entertainers. There is a tradition, among MacPhees, that these skilled people were joined by the dispossessed members of the Clan after they were dispersed from their Colonsay homeland. This tradition seems vindicated by the fact that one of the last men to have truly and completely [he apparently never settled in a house] lived this ancient way of life, was named MacPhee.

The book is a mixture of biography, reminiscences and traditional - what would have been until recently - oral stories. His early life, early in the century, was the time of horses but with the great adaptability of his race he later became a talented mechanic who could reputedly work "magic" in cases of breakdown. His was a hard life but one in which the oldest Scottish customs, those of kinship, family life, music and hospitality were at its heart; where the word "ceilidh" is a verb!

To me the best thing about the book is the re-telling of Willie MacPhee's own, or should one say his "inherited", stories, with their traditional repetition and double meanings and often told in the first person. Sheila Douglas uses these to join up the various threads of Willie's life including the sad story of the Tragic MacPhees, who were part of his extended clan of west coast travellers. Throughout her narrative she emphasises again and again the great respect Willie commanded among other pipers and storytellers and that he was also endlessly generous with advice and encouragement to the young and to learners both within and from outside his own tradition. A section on piping includes traditional tips on the maintenance of the "bag" and even a tune of his own.

For information as to where to purchase this book contact Ian McPhee Email: irmac10@bigpond.net.au

VALE

It is with much regret that we record the passing of the following member:

Pearlie McPhee (V79-463) 13/1/1912– 14/11/2006

Born in Carlton, Victoria in 1912, Pearlie lived in Mildura and Ballarat for most of her life.

Pearlie married Allen McPhee in the early 1930s and they had seven children.

She was a proud member and supporter of the Macfie Clan Society. She knitted and gave away near 20 Macfie tartan rugs to family and friends. She also made a knitted Scottish piper (Hamish) that won an award in the Ballarat Show.

A dedicated family elder, keen gardener, a great conservationist, and a keen follower of the Australian rules football kept her occupied for many hours.



Two Kingdoms

An overview of the Church of Scotland in Scotland and Australia 1560-1929

A Report by Ian McPhee

Back in late January I received an email from Scottish House, an organisation in NSW our clan society subscribes to. I was one of many the email had been forwarded to advising Scottish House members and affiliates that a talk relating to Scottish history was to be held on 13th February at Mosman in Sydney. The email caught my eye as the topic was an interesting one: "Two Kingdoms: An historical overview of the Church of Scotland in Scotland (and Australia) 1560-1929". As luck would have it the talk was being held in the evening not far from home and therefore a must to attend.

The guest speaker was a person with impeccable credentials. Simon Fraser is a solicitor and Law Agent (solicitor) of the Presbyterian Church in Australia. He has been a member of the Sydney Society of Scottish History for many years and is an elder at the Presbyterian Church Annandale in Sydney. He is an expert on Scottish ecclesiastical history.

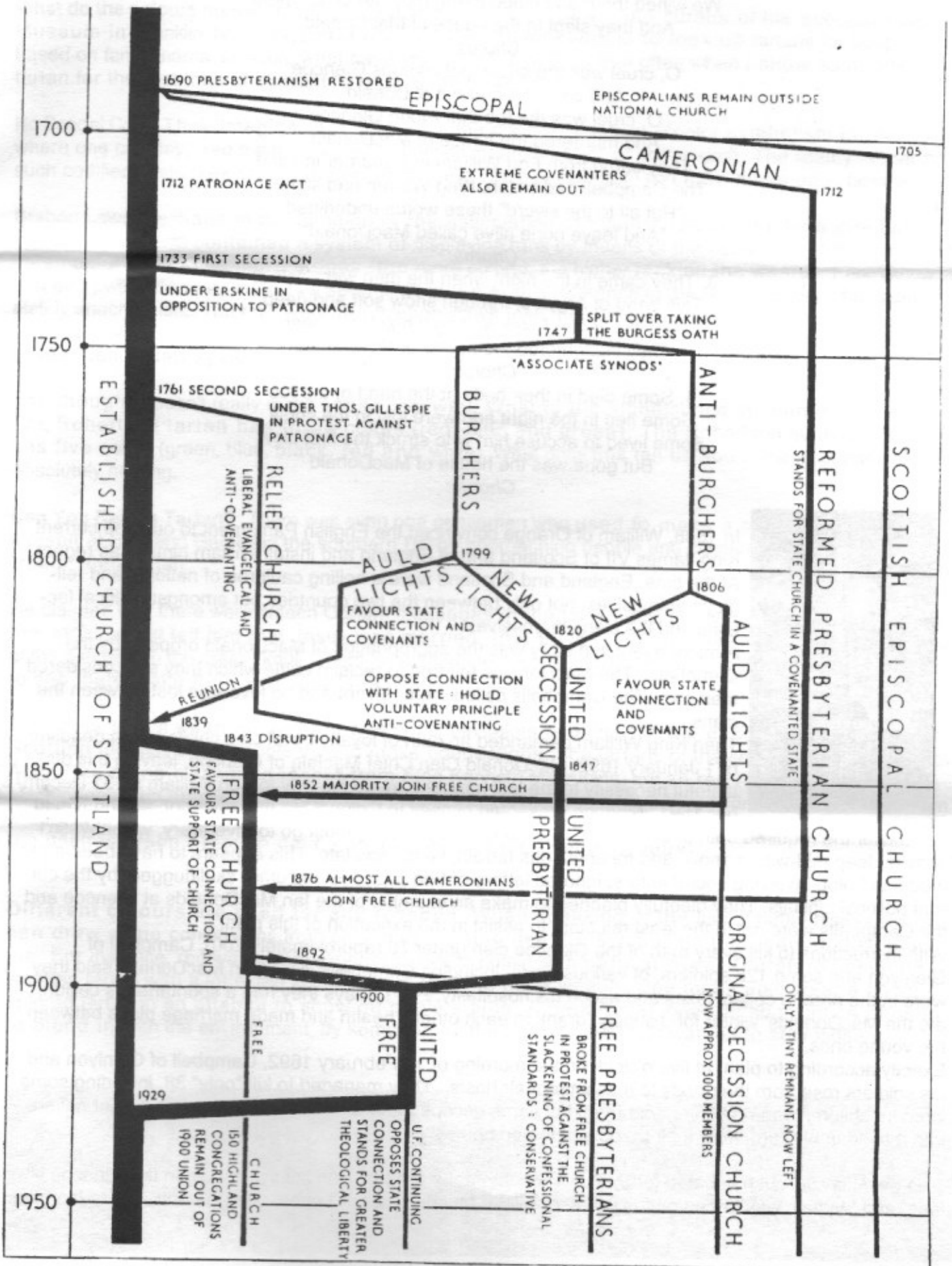
The venue for the talk could not have been more appropriate as it was held in a beautiful old stone church at Mosman called Scots Kirk. The only odd thing about the evening was the fact it was organised and run by a speakers group from the local Anglican Church called St Clements! The cost for the evening was a gold coin donation with the net proceeds going to Barnardo's Australia.

As most Scottish history buffs would know, Scotland was almost completely transformed by the Reformation in the 16th Century. Simon commenced his talk with the establishment of the Presbyterian Church during the Reformation and elaborated on some of the key figures in its past including Knox and Melville. He went on to take the audience through the developments and splits affecting the church both in Scotland and Australia until 1929. During the talk, I couldn't help thinking of the squabbles in the Church of Scotland being comparable to the fighting between the Highland clans. He also made interesting comparisons with other churches, in particular the Anglican (Episcopal) Church. It was a fascinating talk.

While it is beyond me to put in words a synopsis of the talk, I am delighted to be able to share something of significance from the evening. Simon handed out 3 charts to help explain some of the complexities surrounding the various splits that occurred in the Church of Scotland between 1690 and 1929. One of those charts was a summary of the divisions that occurred in Scotland. It has been reproduced opposite on page 11. The other two charts related specifically to Australia - one relating to the Presbyterian Church in NSW to 1865 and the other to 1870 in Victoria. Hopefully they can be reproduced in the next issue of The Downunder.

Prior to the commencement of Simon's talk, I was fortunate to be able to chat with him informally over a cup of tea and biscuits. During the course of conversation, his membership of the Sydney Society of Scottish History came up. I expressed my surprise having never heard of the Society. It makes you wonder just how many societies there are out there that relate to some aspect of Scotland's history.

Divisions and Reunions of the Scottish Church 1690-1929



Ballad of Glencoe

They came in a blizzard, we offered them heat
A roof for their heads, dry shoes for their feet
We wined them and dined them, they ate of our meat
And they slept in the house of MacDonald.

Chorus:

O, cruel was the snow that sweeps Glencoe
And covers the grave o' Donald
O, cruel was the foe that raped Glencoe
And murdered the house of MacDonald

2. They came from Fort William with murder in mind
The Campbell had orders King William had signed
"Put all to the sword" these words underlined
"And leave none alive called MacDonald"

Chorus:

3. They came in the night when the men were asleep
This band of Argyles, through snow soft and deep
Like murdering foxes amongst helpless sheep
They slaughtered the house of MacDonald

Chorus:

4. Some died in their beds at the hand of the foe
Some fled in the night and were lost in the snow
Some lived to accuse him who struck the first blow
But gone was the house of MacDonald

Chorus:



In 1688, William of Orange convinced the English Parliament to oust the current King James VII of Scotland and of England and install William himself as regent. At the time, England and Scotland were a boiling cauldron of national and religious animosities, not only between the two countries but amongst political factions and the clans themselves.

A minor event in history was the appropriation of MacDonald property by the Campbells. The MacDonalds felt free to reclaim cattle which they still considered their own. The Campbells called them reivers and no love was lost between the clans.

Then King William demanded an oath of loyalty by all clan chiefs with a deadline of 1 January 1692. MacDonald Clan Chief Maclain of Glencoe, leaving this distasteful necessity to the last moment, made his way to Fort William on 31 December 1691. Glencoe presented himself to Colonel Hill the governor, asking him to

administer the required oath of allegiance. Hill told Glencoe that he must go to Inveraray, which wasn't easy in deep mid-winter snow, and mountainous terrain, so he was late. This appears to have been a premeditated plot, involving secret letters, ignored letters of free passage and other skulduggery by the current political officials. They gleefully planned to make an example of the Ian MacDonalds at Glencoe and the Campbells were not in the least reluctant to assist in the execution of this plan.

With instructions to kill every man of the Glencoe clan under 70 (approximately 200), Campbell of Glenlyon and some 128 soldiers, of various clans, including Campbells, called on MacDonald, said they were in the area to collect taxes and asked his hospitality. For 12 days they had a spontaneous ceilidh, ate the MacDonalds' winter food supply, drank to each other's health and made marriage plans between the young ones.

Exactly according to plan, at five o'clock on the morning of 13 February 1692, Campbell of Glenlyon and his soldiers rose from their beds to massacre their hosts. They managed to kill "only" 38, including some women, children and an 80 year old man, but some escaped and women and children were sent naked, into a sudden blizzard, from their razed and looted homes.

This event is still much debated today. The monument for the MacDonalds is situated in the Glencoe village, and Maclain was buried on the island of Eilean Munde, in Loch Leven, near the entrance to the glen.

Tartan Symbolism

Acknowledgement: This article was adapted from the 'The Scottish Banner' article November 2006 edition and written by Matthew AC Newsome, FSA Scot, GTS (Guild of Tartan Scholars).

What do the colours mean? Many of my readers know that I am the curator of the Scottish Tartans Museum in Franklin, NC. A big part of what we do at the museum is to look up tartans for people, based on family name, location, what have you. And I've noticed that often when I show someone their tartan for the first time, they want to know what the colors "mean."

No Special Code. They imagine that there is some codified system of color symbolism in tartans, where one can say, "red means courage," or "white means purity," or some such. The reality is that no such codified system exists. That certainly doesn't stop people from trying to make one, however!

Brehon Laws. Perhaps most common is the association of Scottish tartan with the ancient Irish Brehon Laws, which contained a system of displaying rank by means of the number of stripes in a ceremonial cloak. The more stripes (the more colors), the higher ranking the wearer. I don't know how many web sites on tartan I've seen that make some reference to the Brehon Laws. This is completely anachronistic! Not only were the Brehon Laws Irish, not Scottish, they became obsolete after the Norman invasion of Ireland in the twelfth century, some six hundred years before the advent of the clan tartan system in Scotland.

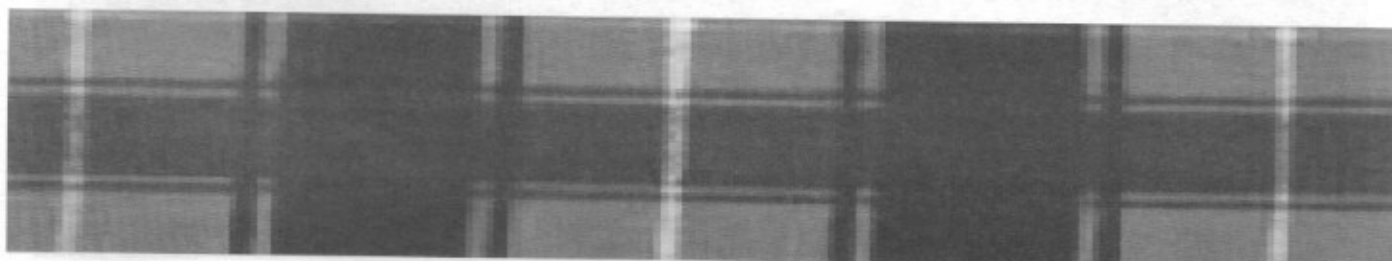
The thought doesn't really make sense, anyway. What is the significance in counting colors? The Robertson tartan has three colors (red, blue and green). The Robertson hunting tartan has five colors (green, blue, black, red and white). What does this tell us about the Robertson clan? Absolutely nothing.

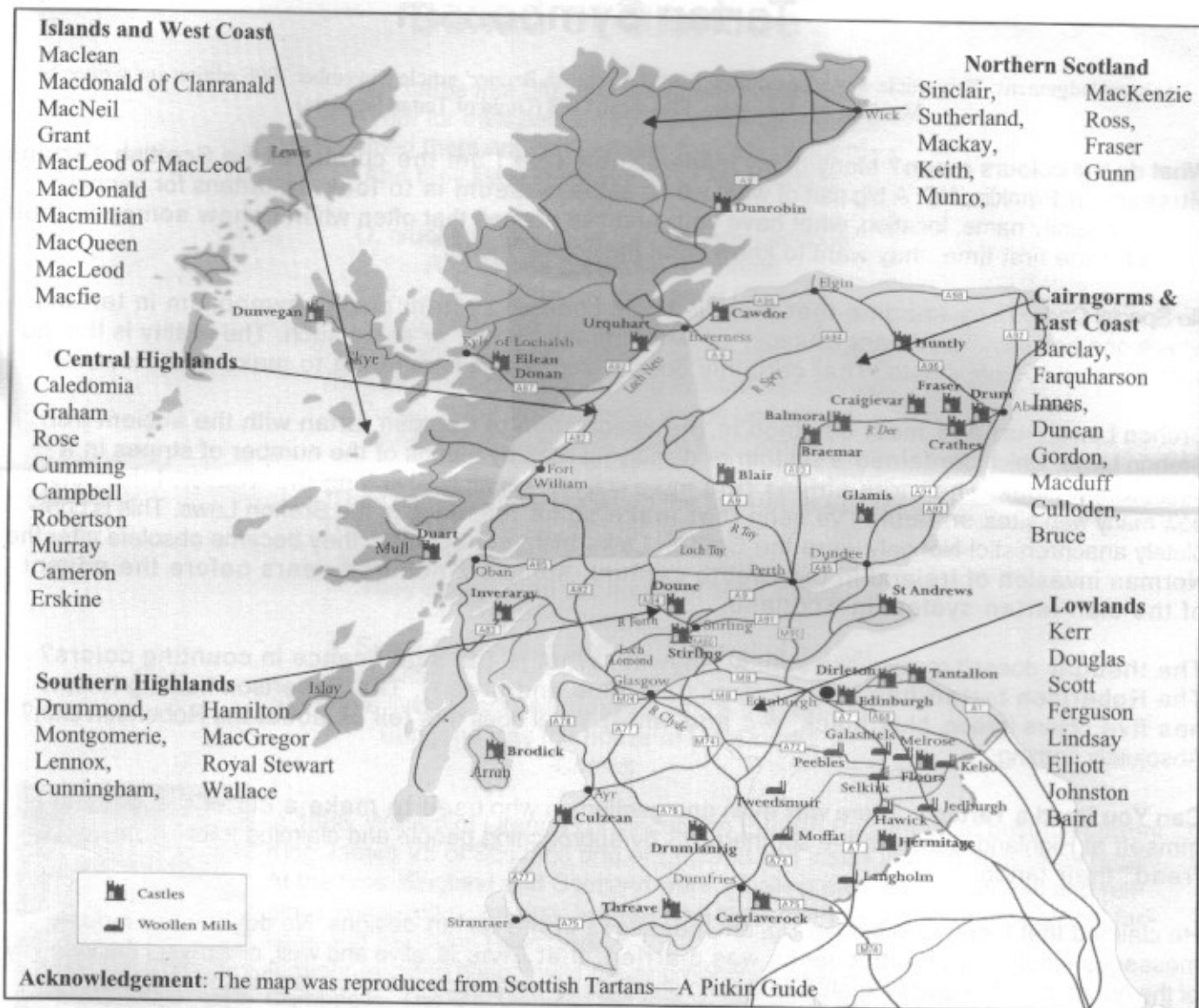
Can You Read a Tartan? There was even one gentleman who used to make a curious spectacle of himself at Highland Games in the southern US by approaching people and claiming to be able to "read" their tartan.

He claimed that there were hidden Ogham messages in the tartan designs. No doubt these hidden messages would tell him that Jesus was married, that Elvis is alive and well, and reveal the identity of the gunman on the grassy knoll. There is no shortage of conspiracy theories, so it's hardly surprising to see them make their way into tartan lore.

The reality is that we truly don't know why certain colors were used in the designs of traditional Scottish tartans. Some people try and make connections. The tartans of the seven clans of the Siol Aplin (the clans claiming descent from King Kenneth MacAlpine) are all red (Grant, MacGregor, MacKinnon, MacQuarrie, MacNab, **MacFee** and MacAulay). Some have tried to draw significance from that fact, but it's quite a stretch. About every other clan tartan is red and the MacAlpine tartan itself is green (though dating only to the late nineteenth century).

Different colours are used for any reasons. When speaking of the use of tartan historically, we can draw some conclusions from color, but nothing like the symbolism that many today imagine. For instance, red was a very expensive color to obtain with natural dyes. Therefore someone wearing tartan with a lot of red in it was more likely to have wealth. One might also wear a bright colored tartan in an attempt to show off one's status. A dark, earth-toned tartan might be chosen to blend in with the environment, by someone on the hunt (or who just wanted to stay hidden).





Colonsay House, photograph taken by Robyn and Morris McPhee on a trip to Scotland in 2005.

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| 8-9/4/ 2007 | Kapunda Celtic Festival | Kapunda South Australia | 08 8566 2866 |
| 14-15/4/2007 | Maclean Highland Gathering | Maclean North Coast NSW | http://www.macleanhighlandgathering.com.au/ |
| 14-15/4/2007 | The Australian Federation Tattoo | Bendigo Victoria | www.theaustralianattoo |
| 15-16/4/2007 | Championship Highland Dancing | Mile End South Australia | 08 8387 5831 saschdi_secretary@bigpond.com |
| 28/4/2007 | Bundanoon Highland Gathering | Bundanoon NSW | Ian McPhee 02 9938 2550 |
| 3-6/5/2007 | Australian Celtic Festival | Glen Innes NSW | www.australiancelticfestival.com |
| 1-3/6/2007 | Bonnie Wingham Scottish Festival | Wingham, Manning Valley NSW | 02 6553 5118 Gndcam2bigpond.met.au |
| 9-12/6/2007 | National Celtic Folk Festival | Port Aarlinton Victoria | http://users.pipline.com.au/celtic/ |
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