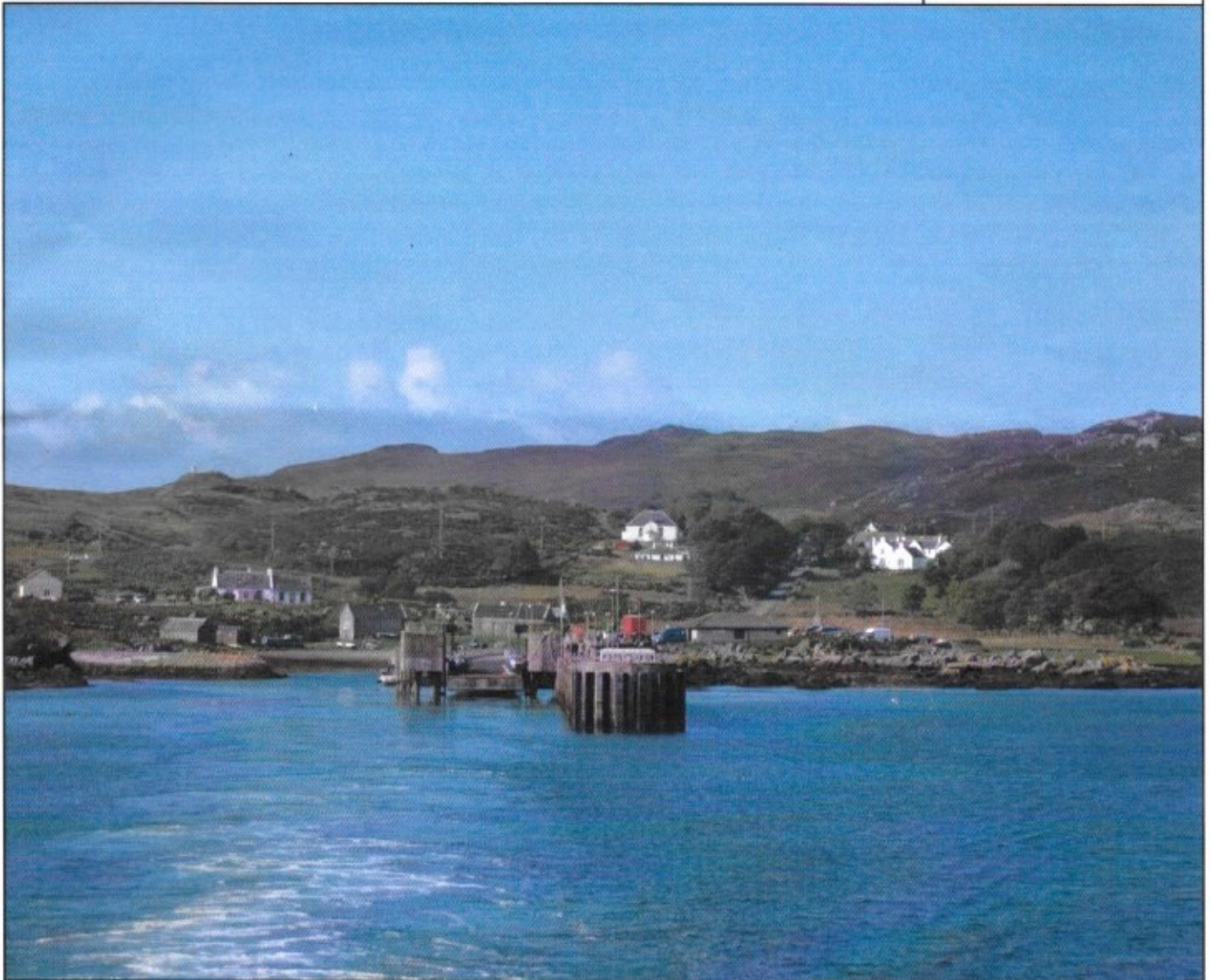




# THE DOWNUNDER

Journal of the  
Macfie Clan Society of Australia

Issue 118  
March 2011



Colonsay



*Ancestral home  
of Clan Macfie*

Oronsay

The Macfie Clan Society of Australia  
was founded at Richmond,  
New South Wales in 1974.

[www.clanmacfie.co.uk](http://www.clanmacfie.co.uk)

## President's Message



A warm welcome to the new year. As can be seen, *The Downunder* now has a slightly different format with improvements that include a large full colour image for the front page, an index and better quality paper. It is part of an ongoing process of improving and updating the Society's most important asset. Rather than a basic newsletter, *The Downunder* has evolved into a journal.

The following is a brief update on the Society for the year ended 31st December 2010.

1. Subscriptions: The new subscription rates of \$15.00 for a single and \$20.00 for a family came into effect last year. In view of increasing costs etc, they brought our membership fees up to a more realistic level.

2. Finances: Society treasurer Geoff McPhee's finance report is presented on page 13.

3. Membership: Last year there was another decline in membership. Endeavouring to arrest this long term trend has proved difficult. During 2010, the Society gained 6 new members (including a lapsed member who rejoined) compared to 4 the previous year. A very lenient approach continued with those members who for one reason or another failed to pay their subscriptions. At the end of last year, 6 members failed to rectify their 'long term' unfinancial status and were removed from the membership list. The balance of removals were made up of those who had passed away or relinquished their membership. It was rather pleasing that contact was lost with only 2 members because they had moved.

	2008	2009	2010
Australian Capital Territory	12	10	10
New South Wales	105	99	94
Northern Territory	0	0	0
Queensland	74	65	66
South Australia	22	17	16
Tasmania	5	5	5
Victoria	92	79	73
Western Australia	15	14	13
Overseas	6	5	5
	<u>331</u>	<u>294</u>	<u>282</u>

4. Inventory/Expenditure: In 2010 treasurer Geoff McPhee had 3 banners printed at a total cost of \$568.00. Geoff utilised the most commonly expressed clan surname spelling of 'McPhee' rather than the official 'Macfie' spelling. They will be another asset for use at clan gatherings etc. In addition to the banners a new Australian flag was purchased to replace the one given to our Clan Commander.

The new purchases above add to the 8 pull-up banners of which 6 bear our clan surnames & 2 have a map of Scotland. Currently, QLD VP Susan Spinks has 1 banner, SA VP Judy Moore 1 banner, Society Piper Bob McPhee 1 banner, NSW VP Morris McPhee 2 banners (1 name + 1 map) and 3 banners are with the President. We also have 1,000 colour brochures titled 'A Brief History of Clan Macfie' and one Scottish flag and one Royal Flag of Scotland. Continued page 4

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**Front Cover:** The island of Colonsay, showing the pier at the main village of Scalasaig

## MEMBERS IN PROFILE

**NSW member:** Linda Waddington (N04-992)  
**Migrant forebears:** Donald & Catherine (also) McPhee & 6 children  
**Occupation:** gardener  
**Home in Scotland:** Ardnamurchan  
**Emigrant ship:** *Brilliant* from Tobermorey on Mull  
**Arrived Australia:** Sydney 1838  
**Pioneer forebears:** John and Jane nee McPhee (unrelated)



**Member's story in brief:** Linda is related to the Clarence River McPhees. Several of her McPhee forebears married related and unrelated people with the same surname. Her family tree is full of McPhees. Linda was born in 1954 at Enmore in Sydney, the 4th of 7 children born to Francis and Marjorie Horsburgh. Her father worked for the Sydney City Council. The family moved to Kogarah where Linda grew up attending Ramsgate Public School and Moorefield Girls High.

After finishing school in 1972, Linda joined the Sydney City Council in the Library and then the Lands Dept as a clerk. There she met survey draughtsman Bruce Waddington, whom she married in 1979. They moved to Taree on the NSW north coast where their son Adam was born in 1980. In 1983, after a move back to Sydney, Linda achieved a tracing certificate from Sydney TAFE. Living at Belmore, their daughter Emma, was born in 1984. A few years later Linda joined the Public Trustee (now NSW Trustee and Guardian) as a legal clerk where she continues to work.

Over the years Linda has had numerous interests including family history, caving with the Highland Caving Club, renovating the family home, dancing, reading and spending time with the family. She also has a diploma in remedial massage. Linda currently lives with her daughter and granddaughter.

**NSW member:** Bernadette McPhee (N04-994)  
**Migrant forebears:** John McPhee & 4 of his 7 children  
**Occupation:** baker, Tobermoray on Mull & at Fort William  
**Home in Scotland:** Fort William  
**Emigrant ship:** *Great Britain*, from Liverpool  
**Arrived Australia:** Melbourne, 1869  
**Pioneer forebears:** Dugald McPhee & Margaret Emma Crooks



**Member's story in brief:** Bernadette is the daughter of George and Pauline (nee Knowles) McPhee. Her father worked for the CBA all his life. Her parents resided in Melbourne but relocated to Sydney in 1940. Bernie was born in March 1943, at Homebush in Sydney, and has 5 siblings: Gabrielle 1941, Barbara 1946, Peter 1948, Andrew 1952 and Pauline 1954. Bernadette, known as Bernie, attended St. Ambrose Catholic Primary School at Concord West and finished her schooling at Loreto Convent School at Normanhurst in 1959.

Bernie initially worked in the office of a paint & wallpaper firm. In 1961 she entered the Loreto Sisters at Normanhurst where she was a novice until 1963, after which she attended teachers' college. For the next 20 plus years she taught at Ballarat, South Melbourne, Kirribilli and Normanhurst. After joining a renewal programme to study theology for religious sisters in 1987, Bernie worked with people with AIDS. For 10 years she worked mostly at 'Ankali' (which means friend), which was part of the Albion Centre at Surry Hills, an inner Sydney suburb.

In 1994 Bernie left the religious order & 4 years later, aged 55, moved to Blackheath in the Blue Mountains west of Sydney. To support herself she cleaned holiday houses until she retired due to illhealth. Bernie's main interests now revolve around gardening, knitting, family history and her membership of the Blue Mountains Refugee Support Group which is mainly active in fundraising.

# GENERAL NEWS



## New Members

A warm welcome to new member:

N11-1082 Garry McPhee Carlingford NSW

## Donations

Many thanks to the following members for their generous donation made to the Society and the Clan. Those donations, banked between the beginning of August 2010 and the end of February 2011 are an essential part of our funding and greatly appreciated.

Dr Ian McPhee	Kingscliff	NSW
Garry J McPhee	Carlingford	NSW
Keith & Joyce Cardwell	Annerley	QLD
Heather Knowles	Albany Creek	QLD
C. C. Gartland	Blackburn	VIC
Bernard P McPhee	Middle Park	VIC
Martin Roberts	Moree	NSW

## News from QLD VP Susan Spinks

My husband John and I had lunch with Clan Commissioner Sandy and his wife Helen in their new home in Toowoomba. His sister Heather Guinness and 1st cousin, Dick Rutledge were also present. They have settled in very well and were thankful to be away from Townsville with the cyclone. We have had enough rain this month and I suppose it will have to last all year. We fared quite well during the floods. The only thing was we couldn't get to town.

## In Memoriam

It is with sadness we report the passing on 18/2/2011 of Sid Aitken, the father of Society members Lyn Abbott of Narara and Kevin Aitken of Hunters Hill.

**President's Report** continued from page 2

## 5. Member Payments

Subscriptions have been sent out to all members. It is important the return - the lower half of the notice, be included with the payment so that members can be correctly identified.

Again this year, several members have requested the Society's banking details be provided on the subscription notice, so that payment can be made directly into the Society's bank account.

As I send out all the subscription notices and do all the Society's banking and therefore have to make numerous trips to my local bank to deposit cheques etc, direct deposit (by members) is something I welcome. Regrettably, various issues to date have prevented the introduction of this method of payment.

Hopefully next year, members will have the opportunity to pay subscriptions and donations by direct deposit.

## 6. Downunder Articles

As the editor of *The Downunder*, I do my best to see it is well presented, informative, accurate and interesting. Countless hours are spent researching and preparing articles for each issue. As it is the Society's most important asset, I have always believed that approach is essential.

It is a concern that so few among a membership of nearly 300 submit anything for inclusion in *The Downunder*. As a one man operation, such a situation creates an onerous workload for me.

The Society's journal is for the benefit of all members. It is to not only to provide information and reading enjoyment, but provide members an opportunity to have articles on a topic they are interested in printed for other members to share. That may be a simple genealogical question, notice of a birthday or anniversary, an achievement by a family member or an article on a specific issue. Sometimes such contributions may only require a phone call.

All members are invited to submit articles for *The Downunder* or indeed request any topic be included in an issue. I would especially like some feedback from members about significant birthdays, weddings, arrival of new family members, travel tales and so on.

Ian McPhee

## A Young Bacculaureate

Granddaughter of South Australian Vice President Judy Moore (nee McPhee) and daughter of NSW member Joanna Moore, Bonnie Fraser has successfully completed and been awarded the International Bacculaureate (IB), whilst studying at St Andrews Cathedral School, Sydney.

The IB embraces the togetherness of learning and that education should be a journey of self discovery and self motivation to be shared with your learning partners as opposed to them being solely "competitors"! It is not yet a course widely used in Australian education, but is fast becoming a solid alternative to mainstream.



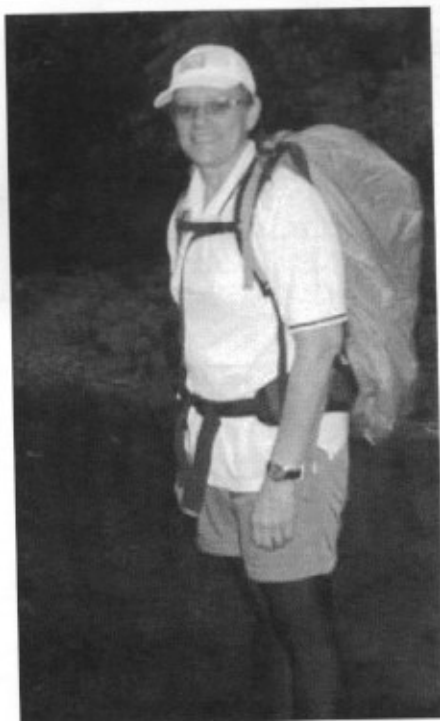
Her family was thrilled that she was offered a place at the University of New South Wales to study Architectural Landscaping – a field of endeavour related to BOTH sides of her Scottish heritage!!

Bonnie's grandfather on her maternal side, Rowland Moore, was a draughtsman and designed Sydney's first International Runway at Mascot, and went on to also design one of Adelaide's first underground houses at Eagle on the Hill. It was the first of a few he designed in an endeavour to decrease the effects of bushfires in the Adelaide hills.

On Bonnie's paternal Scottish side, her Glaswegian born uncle, Duncan Fraser, is an architect and consultant to Calvin Klein, with a large graphic design business in California formed by her first cousins. So far so good, but Bonnie's other passion is music and she will be continuing to record and sing her own music throughout her university years and hopes to do a course exchange with an overseas uni and take her music with her!

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## From QLD VP Susan Spinks



At the end of May our daughter Jenepher Hintz is going to walk the Simpson Desert to raise money for 'Youngcare'. This is a place where young people (18-60) can go to get care 24/7.

'Youngcare' was established in 2005 following the inspirational story of one woman's battle to find relevant and dignified care. Currently more than 6,500 young Australians (under the age of 65) with full-time care needs are living in aged care simply because there are few alternatives. There are also 700,000 more young Australians being cared for at home by family and friends. 'Youngcare' is committed to raising awareness of the issue across the nation.

Jenepher's husband, Peter, suffered a brain tumour in his 20's followed by several strokes. Peter is now in his 40's and requires full-time care. Jenepher is his carer but if that was not so, he would have to go into a nursing home for the aged. When she needs a break, she is forced to seek assistance from aged-care facilities as there just isn't a service nearby that caters for young people.

An avid trekker, Jenepher lives in the world acclaimed Bunya Mountains, about 100 kilometres northwest of the city of Toowoomba. Jenepher plans on completing in the 'Youngcare Simpson Desert Challenge', a 320-kilometre trek across the heart of the desert, as a tribute to her husband. You can look up her endeavours to raise money for this walk at [www.youngcaresupporters.com.au/jenepher\\_hintz](http://www.youngcaresupporters.com.au/jenepher_hintz)

## Assisted Immigration

Membership co-ordinator Rosemary Szente is a keen internet explorer. From the 'Index to Registers of Assisted British Immigrants 1839-1871' which is available on the internet, Rosemary has compiled a list of assisted immigrants to Australia with clan names. The full list runs to many pages so it is impossible to provide them all in one issue of *The Downunder*. Other clan names on the list will thus be featured in future issues of our journal.

In the second of this series of shipping tables, Rosemary's work is presented here detailing the clan name Coffey. It is rather unfortunate that unlike the original shipping lists, which show family groups, this list is compiled alphabetically using the Christian name of the immigrant with a clan name.

Family Name ^	Given Name ^	Age ^	Month ^	Year ^	Ship ^
COFFEY	ANN	35	OCT	1854	BLACK EAGLE
COFFEY	ANN	24	APR	1857	DAVID MCIVOR
COFFEY	ANNE	31	JUN	1869	GRESHAM
COFFEY	ANNE	17	APR	1841	ARGYLE
COFFEY	ANNIE	-	JUN	1869	GRESHAM
COFFEY	BESSIE	24	JUL	1859	TELEGRAPH
COFFEY	BESSY	24	JUL	1859	TELEGRAPH
COFFEY	BRIDGET	23	SEP	1863	ROBERT SMALL
COFFEY	BRIDGET	23	SEP	1863	ROBERT SMALL
COFFEY	BRIDGET	13	JUN	1855	EPAMINONDAS
COFFEY	BRIDGET	20	APR	1855	EPSOM
COFFEY	BRIDGET	21	JUL	1855	TORNADO
COFFEY	BRIDGET	12	OCT	1854	BLACK EAGLE
COFFEY	BRIDGET	25	MAR	1850	RELIANCE
COFFEY	BRIDGET	24	MAY	1850	SIR ROBERT SALE
COFFEY	BRIDGET	24	MAY	1850	SIR ROBERT SALE
COFFEY	CATHE	18	JUN	1855	EPAMINONDAS
COFFEY	CATHERINE	26	JUL	1855	TORNADO
COFFEY	CHRISTOPHER	23	AUG	1841	WILLIAM METCALFE
COFFEY	DENIS	24	APR	1858	COLDSTREAM
COFFEY	DENIS	24	APR	1858	COLDSTREAM
COFFEY	ELIZTH	30	MAR	1862	SHACKAMAXON
COFFEY	ELLEN	18	MAR	1859	MONICA
COFFEY	ELLEN	18	MAR	1859	MONICA
COFFEY	ELLEN	18	MAR	1859	MONICA
COFFEY	ELLEN	18	APR	1854	PERSIAN
COFFEY	FRANCIS	15	FEB	1841	GEORGIANA
COFFEY	JANE	5	JAN	1854	WANATA
COFFEY	JOHN	26	MAY	1850	SIR ROBERT SALE
COFFEY	JOHN	26	MAY	1850	SIR ROBERT SALE

Family Name	Given Name	Age	Month	Year	Ship
COFFEY	JOHN	22	FEB	1858	CARACTACUS
COFFEY	JUDITH	21	APR	1854	PERSIAN
COFFEY	JULIAN	18	APR	1855	EPSOM
COFFEY	MARGARET	8	OCT	1854	BLACK EAGLE
COFFEY	MARGARET	25	DEC	1854	PHOEBE DUNBAR
COFFEY	MARGARET	20	APR	1858	COLDSTREAM
COFFEY	MARGARET	20	MAY	1850	SIR ROBERT SALE
COFFEY	MARGARET	40	MAY	1850	SIR ROBERT SALE
COFFEY	MARGARET	40	MAY	1850	SIR ROBERT SALE
COFFEY	MARGARET	20	MAY	1850	SIR ROBERT SALE
COFFEY	MARGT	23	AUG	1841	WILLIAM METCALFE
COFFEY	MARIA	20	APR	1854	PERSIAN
COFFEY	MARY	16	MAY	1849	PEMBERTON
COFFEY	MARY	22	MAY	1850	SIR ROBERT SALE
COFFEY	MARY	22	MAY	1850	SIR ROBERT SALE
COFFEY	MARY	33	JAN	1854	WANATA
COFFEY	MARY	27	SEP	1858	CONWAY
COFFEY	MARY	38	JUN	1855	EPAMINONDAS
COFFEY	MARY	16	MAR	1859	MONICA
COFFEY	MARY	28	JUL	1863	CADUCEUS
COFFEY	MARY	21	APR	1855	EPSOM
COFFEY	MARY	16	MAR	1859	MONICA
COFFEY	MARY	16	MAR	1859	MONICA
COFFEY	MARY A	25	APR	1868	VIMIERA
COFFEY	MARY A	1	JAN	1854	WANATA
COFFEY	MICHAEL	43	JUN	1855	EPAMINONDAS
COFFEY	MICHAEL	16	JUN	1855	EPAMINONDAS
COFFEY	ROSE	22	JUL	1859	TELEGRAPH
COFFEY	ROSE	22	JUL	1859	TELEGRAPH
COFFEY	THOMAS	3	OCT	1854	BLACK EAGLE
COFFEY	THOMAS	35	OCT	1854	BLACK EAGLE
COFFEY	THOMAS	37	JAN	1854	WANATA

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**BUNDANOON**  
IS  
**BRIGADOON**

The Bundanoon Highland Gathering

*"Always in April"*

## Focus on Oronsay

The following quote comes from a plaque in a room that was once part of the Oronsay Priory. The room houses numerous stone memorials that were found on Oronsay and elsewhere. The plaque tells a brief story of the Priory and details the importance of our Clan Chief, known in that era as MacDuffie (rather than Macfie). The fact the Clan Chief's family had its own mortuary chapel attached to the church indicates its position of power and influence in the area.

### Oronsay Priory Monuments

"By tradition Saint Columba is said to have established the first monastic community on Oronsay. However none of the ruins can be positively identified as belonging to a Celtic Community, nor have any early Christian monuments been found. The present priory was established by John I, Lord of the Isles, sometime between 1325 when he became head of Clan Donald and 1353, the date of the earliest surviving document referring to the priory, a papal mandate to an unnamed prior of the house. The first monks, Augustinian canons regular from a monastery dedicated to the Holy Cross probably came to Oronsay from Ireland.

The extant monuments belong to two groups. Those in the first group, including the two effigies and the Great Cross were brought to the island and date from the 14th and 15th centuries. Those in the second group were carved on Oronsay from an imported chlorite-schist between 1500 and 1560, and most carry either a claymore or a black - letter inscription.

Soon after 1500 Canon Celestinus of Oronsay directed restoration work on the priory including the rebuilding of the cloister. The mason was Mael-Sechlainn O Cuind who had carved, on Iona, the Great Cross erected by Malcolm MacDuffie of Colonsay outside the entrance to the Oronsay church. The private mortuary chapel on the south side of the Church belonged to the MacDuffie family. The two effigies, as well as others of the pre-1500 memorials, most likely commemorate members of this family. Four of the Oronsay school grave-slabs are inscribed to a chief, a prior and two canons named MacDuffie.

Malcolm MacDuffie was probably able to persuade Mael-Sechlainn O Cuind to come to Oronsay since the spread of local schools of carving had led to a lack of orders for monuments from Iona. Once on Oronsay, the mason not only repaired and rebuilt the priory, but also founded a school of monument carving which lasted for sixty years, producing memorials with several distinct motifs such as galleys with sails spread rather than furled as found on grave-slabs from Iona and Kintyre, and plant scrolls with stems threaded over, under and occasionally through the leaves. The Oronsay carvers also copied from the back of the Great Cross a circular design incorporating eight pairs of crossed tri-lobed leaves.

Although the production of monuments was limited and late and the priory remote, scattered examples from Oronsay are found on the mainland at Lochaline and on the islands from Islay to Barra and Skye. The lap-dogs on Mariota MacLan's grave-slab (28) are unusual, but they are also found on a tombstone carved on Oronsay for Anna MacLean, prioress of the Augustinian nunnery on Iona, who died in 1543. This memorial, one of the most remarkable of all West Highland grave-slabs, may be seen in the museum on Iona."

### Ecclesiastical Connections

By Andy Bryce Macphee, Spring 2010 edition of *The Galley*.

Among the Oronsay tombstones and effigies can be found the grave of Canon Bricius MacDuffie and his father Canon Patrick, 1538. During the Reformation many old Celtic saints' names were abandoned and forgotten due to their religion. Today Saint Bryce is listed in 'The Scottish Book of Saints' as the 'Grumpy Saint'. Bricius was a common personal name from 1100-1300. Bricius, the Briton, was adopted by St. Martin and was educated in France (Gaul) together with St. Ninian and St. Patrick and named by Martin as his successor as Bishop Bricius of Tours in 410 AD. Bricius came to Scotland with St. Ninian to convert the Picts to Christianity. St Brice's Day is on the 13th February. There are many references in records to the name Bricius.

In the Abbey of Iona there is an effigy of the chief on a tombstone. The shield bears the royal galley indicating descent from the old Norse Kings of the Isles. On the pillow the inscription commemorates Bricius and his two sons, who probably died at Bannockburn the inscription bears only the name, Bricius. Early Scottish records show that clergymen used only one name. For Example, Bricius de Douglas became Bishop Bricius de Moray in 1203.



Little is known about the early history of the Clan MacDhubhshith (the Macfies) who served under the Lord of the Isles. Early records mention a MacDhubhshith who was a Fer Leiginn (fear leughadair) or reader on Iona in 1164. Abbot Bricius rendered homage in 1296. The stone effigy of Bricius on Iona, his shield bearing the Bhirlinn or Galley, indicates Royal descent, 1314.

The Priory was built on Oronsay in 1325 - 53, and the tombstone of Canon Bricius MacDuffie on Oronsay dated 1538. The stone-carved effigy and the tombstone are testaments of Clan Macdhubhshith ecclesiastical heritage. The name Bricius being inherited indicates that the name was probably revered as an ancestor or royal descent rather than religious patronage.

For a full account of the life of St. Bricius visit website: [www.visitdunkeld.com/brycedale-church.htm](http://www.visitdunkeld.com/brycedale-church.htm)



The magnificent Oronsay Cross

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### Is it Oronsay or Oransay?

There are 2 theories for the origin of the name. Either it is Oran's Isle, St. Oran being the founder of the island's monastery in 563, or it is from the Old Norse Orfirisey, meaning 'island of the ebb tide'.

In a publication put out by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) Oronsay is spelt with o. Local opinion and usage however apparently favours spelling the island's name with an 'a' - Oransay. Academic opinion seems to favour the 'o' spelling and maintains that 'Oronsay' has nothing to do with St. Oran.

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### Oronsay Archaeology

Archaeology is usually referenced to the following time line:

The Mesolithic Period	c. 7000 - 3500 BC
The Neolithic Period	c. 4000 - 2000 BC
The Bronze Age	c. 2500 - 600 BC
The Iron Age	c. 600 BC - c. AD 400
The early Christian Period	
The Middle Ages & later	

A 10 year field research project on Oronsay some years ago revealed a remarkably detailed picture of life before the appearance of agricultural communities in Britain.

Small groups of perhaps three or four families would appear to have moved successfully around a series of coastal sites, harvesting supplies of fish, shellfish, crabs, seals and sea birds according to a strictly defined pattern of seasonal settlement.

Evidence of the seasonal pattern of occupation has come primarily from studies of the otoliths of saithe (coalfish) - small bony concretions which form part of the hearing and balancing mechanism of the fish. Systematic studies of the growth of otoliths in modern fish populations have shown that the average size of the otoliths can provide a surprisingly accurate indication of the age of the fish.

By comparing the size distributions of the otoliths recovered from the archaeological sites with those of modern specimens, it has been possible to show that at least four of the sites were occupied at various times ranging from the early summer, through the autumn and winter, to the early spring.

Continued over leaf

The archaeological sites consist primarily of large accumulations of marine shells associated with numerous fireplaces, and traces of simple shelters where the late Mesolithic communities camped for periods of several weeks at a time close to the seashore. Radiocarbon dating has placed the occupation of these sites within 4,300 to 5,000 BC

Grey seals seem to have been exploited mainly during the autumn, when the female seals and newly-born pups would have been easily captured. Remains of land mammals, principally red deer and wild boar, on the other hand are rare in the sites, and were almost certainly exploited during occasional hunting expeditions to some of the larger adjacent islands such as Colonsay and Jura. Significantly, remains of domesticated animals such as cattle and sheep are entirely absent, and suggest that the occupation precedes the introduction of a fully agricultural economy into western Britain.

The 50 or so human bones recovered from the sites show some puzzling features. The greatest majority came from hands and feet. There were no indications of cut marks on the bones nor any other features which would point to cannibalism among the prehistoric occupants; the bones may have come from bodies gathered and buried elsewhere.

Perhaps the greatest puzzle is to know why this pattern of intensive occupation on Oronsay came to such an apparently abrupt end at around 4,300 BC. This date is tantalisingly close to the date at which Neolithic farming communities are known to have become established in other parts of western Britain.

Were the Mesolithic communities on Oronsay displaced by these Neolithic colonists, or did they perhaps adapt their communities to this new way of life?

Source: London Times, 28th November 1987, courtesy Commissioner Sandy McPhie



The tomb of Murchardus McDuffie, who died in 1539

### The Tobar Oran Sculptured Stone

By the middle of the first millennium AD, Colonsay and Oronsay, like other parts of Argyll, had attracted settlers known as Scottii, from the coastal areas of County Antrim called Dal Riata. Most of the surviving archaeological evidence generally relates to the activities of the early Christian church.

One of the most remarkable such objects is a cross that was originally found in the ruins of the deserted village of Riasg Buidhe, on the north east coast of Colonsay. The stone artefact is now more commonly known as the Tobar Oran Sculptured Stone. The cross is believed to be late 7th or early 8th century, though an alternative date of late 9th century has also been put forward. The stone measures 0.37 metres by 0.33 metres (17" x 13"). The stone is epidotic schist, quarried locally, which suggests that it was also carved by an inhabitant of Colonsay rather than brought to the island from outside.

The Tobar Oran carved stone has no Scottish parallels. It belongs to a group represented in Ireland, where a symbolic representation of the Crucifixion was inspired by Mediterranean art. It is unusually carved with a human face, possibly depicting Christ, or God, at the top, tapering to a fish tail at the bottom. The 'arms', such as they are, are no more than small bumps, carved in a tight spiral pattern.

The stone originally stood near the chapel of Ruisg Buidhe, but it was then moved to the holy well of Tobar Oran, in the grounds of Colonsay House. There has been much speculation that Colonsay House is built on the site of a medieval monastery, though there is no evidence to substantiate this.

# Colonsay Spring Festival

How lucky are we as a clan to have two Scottish Islands as our ancestral home!

Over the years some of our members have been fortunate enough to visit the clan's island home of Colonsay. Those who have done so in conjunction with attending a Macfie Clan Parliament in Scotland, would have benefited tremendously from the knowledgeable people who accompanied them. For the average tourist visitor without such an advantage, it can be hard to find and learn about many of Colonsay's natural and historical treasures.

If the inaugural Colonsay Spring Festival is successful and becomes an annual event, it may offer Society members from Australia and elsewhere a great opportunity to have a fruitful and rewarding visit to the island. The festival will have a diverse group of experts to walk and talk visitors through all the island has to offer. Their expertise and talents cover flora and fauna, archaeology, wild foods, farming, gardening, landscape art, poetry, golf and bridge.

The festival runs for 3 weeks from 30th April to 20th May. Included in the programme are 3 events of particular interest to members of the Macfie Clan Society of Australia:

## **Gaelic Place Names**, conducted by Alastair Scouller.

As mentioned in the last issue of *The Downunder*, Alastair is a member of the Clan Macfie Society in Scotland. He has long standing links with Colonsay and has a home on the island. He is a conference interpreter by profession, and is currently engaged on a PhD at Edinburgh University on 'The Gaelic Dialect of Colonsay'. He has run several Gaelic workshops on the island over the past 20 years.

Alastair will identify the key elements in Gaelic placenames on Colonsay so that people can begin to work out for themselves what the names of hills, coastal features, etc mean. No previous knowledge of Gaelic is assumed.

## **Colonsay House Gardens**

This guided tour will give visitors an insight into the history and planting of this unique garden. The Colonsay House rhododendron and woodland garden is considered to be one of the finest rhododendron gardens in Scotland. It was mostly planted in the 1930s and has an exceptional variety of trees and shrubs. The more formal walled gardens surround Colonsay House and the borders are filled with wonderfully colourful plantings. The lens from the Rhubhal Lighthouse on Islay provides a striking centrepiece. As mentioned in a previous article, within the grounds near the ancient well called Tobar Oran, there is an early Christian rock carving now known as the Tobar Oran Sculptured Stone. (see the photo on back cover)

## **Historical & Archaeological Walks & Talks**,

conducted by Kevin Byrne.

A resident of Colonsay since 1978, Kevin has a keen interest in social history and the built environment. He transcribed and published all the graveyard inscriptions and unravelled the largely untold story of Colonsay's diaspora. He has published a key to the Ordinance Survey placenames of Colonsay, an account of 17th century local history and a brief guide for visitors. At present he is researching the McNeill lairdship 1688-1904.

With years of painstaking research behind him, Kevin will walk and talk visitors through the history of the island and lead visitors to the significant landmarks that have shaped its past. During the walks Kevin will share with visitors the stories and events that have become such a large part of Colonsay's heritage. Naturally, a large part of that heritage involves Clan Macfie.



# Scotland News

## John O'Groats

Anyone who has been to John O'Groats at the very top of Scotland, will know what an unappealing place it is. In September last year, the town was awarded the annual Carbuncle Award for the most dismal place in Scotland. Architecture magazine Urban Realm described the town as a 'bleak outpost'. That may be about to change with a new £6.5 million tourist venture for the seaside town. Ref: Scottish Banner vol34, no 6

## Bell Rock Lighthouse

The Bell Rock Lighthouse is the oldest surviving sea-washed lighthouse. It is situated on a reef called Inchcape or Bell Rock in the North Sea, 19 km off the Scottish coast, east of the Firth of Tay. It operated in tandem with a shore station called the Bell Rock Signal Tower, at the mouth of Arbroath Harbour. Legend has it that the rock outcrop is called Bell Rock because in Medieval times, the Abbot of Aberbrothock, as Arbroath was known in those times, installed a bell on it to warn sailors. The bell only lasted a year before it was stolen by a Dutch pirate.

The Bell Rock Lighthouse was a masterpiece of engineering and construction. Built by Scottish engineer Robert Stevenson between 1807 and 1810, it has been described as one of the Seven Wonders of the Industrial World. The reef on which the lighthouse was constructed was covered by up to 3.7 metres of water for 20 hours each day so construction could only take place for a few hours a day. Stormy winter weather also meant work could only take place between April and October.

The Bell Rock Lighthouse commenced operation on 1st February 1811. The 200th anniversary will be celebrated with a year of special events which are expected to attract people from around the world. The events which include displays, parades and boat trips to the lighthouse, are being co-ordinated by the Arbroath and Area Partnership's Year of the Light Steering Committee. Ref: internet & Scottish Banner vol 34, no 7

## Historic Bagpipe Chanter

Scotland's oldest Highland bagpipe chanter has been donated to National Museums Scotland after it was taken to Canada 205 years ago. The instrument had belonged to composer Iain Dall McKay, born in 1656, who trained as a piper on Skye. The chanter has been put on display at Glasgow's National Piping Centre. Ref: internet and Scottish Banner vol 34, no 7

## West Highland Train Line

According to readers of the independent travel magazine Wanderlust, the best train journey in the world is in Scotland. For the third year in a row, the West Highland Line comes out on top as the premium train trip. The West Highland Line, the 'Iron Road to the Isles' links the ports of Mallaig and Oban on Scotland's west coast, to Glasgow. It passes through some of Scotland's finest scenery. During the summer season a steam locomotive known as 'The Jacobite' operates between Fort William and Mallaig.

## Edinburgh Tattoo Site

Excavations for new grandstands for the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo in Scotland, watched by thousands of visitors from around the world on the castle esplanade, have unearthed remains of the historic boundary which once separated the town from the castle.

The old boundary wall was revealed by a team of archaeologists who will now look at the surrounding areas to get a clearer understanding of what it may have been a part of. Reacting to the news, the Minister for Culture and External Affairs for the Scottish Government said: "It is very exciting that this work to accommodate the new Tattoo stands is revealing previously unknown aspects of one of Scotland's most iconic sites."

Last year the team found the foundations of the artillery bastion known as The Spur that formed part of the outer defences dating to the 1540s, paid for by Scotland's French allies. The excavations are being carried out in close cooperation with the Historic Scotland team that manage the castle, to ensure that the works do not impact on the visitors' experience. The works are part of a Scheduled Monument Consent granted by Scottish Ministers for the new tattoo stands.

# Financial Statement for 2009 & 2010

From Treasurer Geoff McPhee

I feel that, financially at least, we are showing some rewards for our rationalisation of The Clan Functioning and Financing as covered in our 2008 Report. Our promotional material has enabled us to present a better "Clan face" at Gatherings and functions where we are represented by various Clan members. The greater interest has continued but to date has not reflected a marked increase in membership. Your executive will continue to explore methods and strive for that increase. Financially we now have two consecutive years of surplus and have been able to term deposit \$12000.00 which we plan to increase on maturity.

		<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>
<b>Income</b>	Subscriptions	\$2,420.00	\$3,430.00
	Subscriptions in Advance	\$325.00	\$95.00
	Donations to Society	\$1,730.85	\$1,884.00
	Donations to Clan	\$700.00	\$520.00
	B G M		\$539.00
	Interest		
		\$5,175.85	\$6,468.00
<b>Expenditure</b>	Downunder Print/Post	\$3,835.85	\$2,358.95
	Functions and Promotions	\$419.00	\$886.97
	Sundry Office	\$581.99	\$151.45
	B G M		\$825.00
	Sundry Postage		\$199.80
	Public Liability Insurance		\$242.90
	Bank Fees for keeping Account		\$167.75
	Clan Levy		
		\$4,836.84	\$4,832.82
<b>Surplus/(Deficit)</b>		\$339.01	\$1,635.18
Opening Cash Book		\$15,382.26	\$15,721.27
Closing Cash Book		\$15,721.27	\$17,356.45
Term Deposits Established			(\$12,000.00)
Add Term Deposits Cashed			
<b>Total Cash at Bank</b>		<b>\$15,721.27</b>	<b>\$5,356.45</b>
Term Deposits			\$12,000.00
<b>Total Assets</b>		<b>\$15,721.27</b>	<b>\$17,356.45</b>
<b>Represented by</b>	Trust Fund		\$6,337.17
	Subscriptions in Advance		(\$70.00)
	Society Travel Fund		\$90.00
	Standing Stone Account		\$20.00
			\$6,377.17
<b>Net Assets</b>			<b>\$10,979.28</b>
<b>Members Funds</b>			
	<b>Balance 01 January 2010</b>		<b>\$9,249.10</b>
	Surplus/(Deficit) for Year	\$1,635.18	
	Subscriptions received in Advance	\$95.00	\$1,730.18
	<b>Balance 31 December 2010</b>		<b>\$10,979.28</b>

## EVENTS FOR THE DIARY

- April 2 Bundanoon Highland Gathering, Bundanoon NSW
- April 10 Ringwood Highland Games, Jubilee Park, Greenwood Ave, Ringwood VIC
- April 16 & 17 3rd Australasian Scottish Genealogical Conference, Scotland 1750 to 1850: A Century of Transformation. Hemisphere Conference Centre, 488 South Rd Moorabbin VIC  
Information: 03 96624455.
- April 25 Anzac Day, Scottish Act of Remembrance, Martin Place, Sydney NSW
- April 25 Anzac Day, Anzac Day March, North Terrace, Adelaide SA
- April 30 The Australian Celtic Festival, Glen Innes NSW
- May 15 Combined Clans Picnic, Kings Park WA. The event takes place under the trees, just behind the Light Horse Memorial off Frazer Avenue. Starting time is 11 am.
- May 28 Berry Celtic Festival, Berry Showground NSW
- June 4 Scottish Heritage Festival, Wingham NSW
- June 17-24 Scottish Week NSW
- July Tartan Day, Martin Place, Sydney NSW
- July Tartan Day, South Bank Cultural Forecourt, Brisbane QLD

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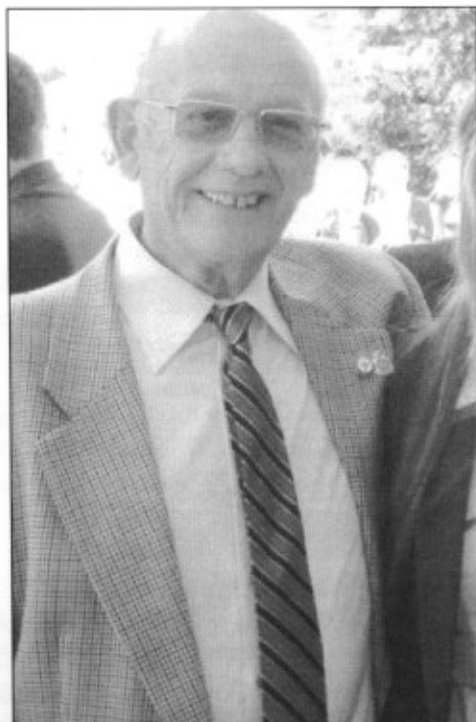
### **The Eyes Have it !**

from Brian McHaffie

I would like to share an experience I had recently (18th Feb) when I had cataract surgery in my left eye at the Murwillumbah Hospital, NSW. Just before going into the operating theatre I was introduced to the Anaesthetist who asked me, to my great surprise, if I was a member of the Clan McFie. I was even more surprised to find that his name was Ian McPhie.

As I have attended Clan functions both here and in Scotland, I was able to describe the events and the people involved and give a description of Colonsay. I found that although both Ian and his father enjoyed our magazine, they had never found time to attend the functions. However, he did tell me that his father was compiling a family tree and in the process had found another MacPhie in Melbourne who was a distant cousin who was also doing his family tree, so they could help each other. I suggested that he send you the tree for publication and a copy to our historians who would also give assistance.

This interesting discussion was terminated by the surgeon who said, " When you two have finished the Clan meeting, can we get on." I know you must wonder at times whether your readers enjoy the magazine but I can assure you these McPhies were very interested .



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### Disclaimer & Note

As the newsletter of The Macfie Clan Society of Australia, The Downunder is produced solely for the information and enjoyment of the Society's members. It has been compiled with due care and in good faith from a variety of sources. Any views expressed in the newsletter are not necessarily those of the executive or members of the Society. All contributions submitted for publication are subject to alteration and editing.



The Oronsay Priory ruins. On the left of the church building is the private mortuary chapel that belonged to the MacDuffie family



What was once a crypt inside the ruins of the MacDuffie Mortuary Chapel



The Tobar Oran Sculptured Stone at Colonsay House. See page 10 for its history



Two of the stone monuments housed at the Oronsay Priory ruins



NSW Vice-President Morris McPhee and to his right, Society Treasurer Geoff McPhee