



THE DOWNUNDER

Journal of the
Macfie Clan Society of Australia

Issue 124
March 2013



Colonsay



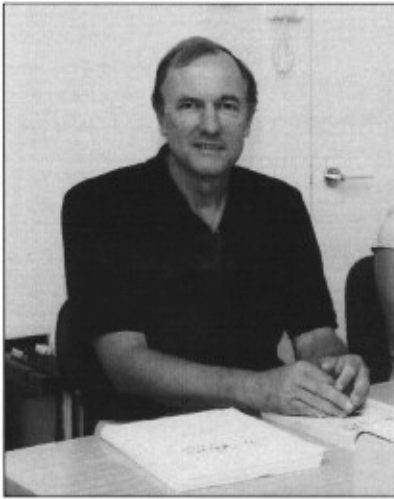
*Ancestral home
of Clan Macfie*

Oronsay

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

www.clanmacfie.co.uk

President's Message



This year provides an opportunity for all those in the Society to visit and enjoy a Clan Gathering in Scotland, which includes a visit to the Clan's ancestral home of Colonsay. Held every 4 years, it is a wonderful experience for any member who is able to go. The details are set out on pages 4 and 5.

Last year marked the first time members were given the option to pay their subscriptions online. As mentioned in my report last year, I had reservations about this change, not the least being the effect on donations to the Society and the identification of member payments. Although the new method of payment has created a little more work for me, I am pleased to report there have been no major problems so far. Over 30 members or 14% of the membership used the internet to pay their subscriptions last year. Being easier, faster and less costly than

using cheques to make a payment, I am sure that figure will grow. On the topic of subscriptions, if a personalised membership renewal notice is not included with this issue of *The Downunder*, it will be sent out separately by post in coming weeks. Again it is my pleasure to provide a brief update on the Society for the year ending 31st December 2012:

1. **Subscriptions:** The \$15.00 single and \$20.00 family subscription rates remained unchanged last year.
2. **Finances:** Geoff McPhee's finance report should be available for the next issue of *The Downunder*.
3. **Membership:** Last year there was another decline in membership. During 2012, 10 members who had been unfinancial for up to two years were removed, another 3 either passed away or relinquished their membership. In total the Society lost 13 members by the end of 2012. It was heartening however to see 7 new members joined the Society compared to only 1 the previous year. Hopefully the Society can attract more members this year.

	2010	2011	2012
Australian Capital Territory	10	9	9
New South Wales	94	78	80
Northern Territory	0	0	0
Queensland	66	57	54
South Australia	16	14	16
Tasmania	5	1	1
Victoria	73	65	60
Western Australia	13	11	11
Overseas	5	5	3
	<u>282</u>	<u>240</u>	<u>234</u>

4. **Inventory/ Expenditure:** Apart from the cost of running the BGM in Perth, there was no major expenditure this year. Currently QLD VP Susan Spinks has 1 banner, SA VP Judy Moore 1 banner, NSW VP Morris McPhee 2 banners (1 name + 1 map) Victorian VP Ross McPhie has 2 banners, (1 name + 1 map), WA member Trevor McPhee 1 banner and 1 banner is with me. We also have about 800 colour 'A Brief History of Clan Macfie' brochures, one Scottish flag, one Royal Flag of Scotland and 1 gonfalon.

In This Issue:

President's Report	2	Anzacs Remembered, Simpson & his Donkey	8
Profiles: Beryl McPhie & Peter McPhee	3	The Courage of Sergeant McPhee	9
General News	4	The Oronsay Priory	10
Clan Gathering, Dumfries & International Dairy Week	5	A Macfie Tale: The Castaway	11
Scottish Wills & Testaments	6	Scotland News	13
Ancestry Poem	6	'Bank Loan to a Scotsman' & Events Diary	14
Feathers and All That	7	Society Office Bearers	15

Front Cover: The young highland dancers who entertained those who attended the 2012 BGM in Perth.

MEMBERS IN PROFILE

NSW member: Beryl McPhie N76-162
Migrant forebears: not known
Home in Scotland: Isle of Skye
Pioneer forebears: James Ross McPhie & Annie Elder

Member's story in brief: Beryl is the daughter of Stewart and Edith (nee White) McPhie. Her father was a postal clerk in Narrandera and her mother a telephonist. Born in 1927, she grew up with her older brother Ross who was born in 1925.



Beryl attended Narrandera Intermediate High School and then boarded at a private Commercial College in Wagga Wagga where she completed a secretarial course. After college Beryl worked in Melbourne and at the end of WW II joined the Women's Royal Australian Naval Service (WRANS) until it was disbanded a year later. She resumed secretarial work for a time and then completed a Diploma Course in social welfare at Sydney University. Beryl then commenced a long career in social welfare work, employed mainly by government departments and hospitals. At Wollongong she worked as a liaison officer for the Dept. of Community Services (DOCS), organising community programmes with local councils and community organisations. She retired from that job in 1987. After living in Melbourne for 10 years where she cared for her father, Beryl relocated to Nowra on the NSW south coast, where she now lives.

Continuing her community involvement, Beryl is an active member of the Shoalhaven Arts Society and on the committee of the Association of Independent Retirees (AIR). She has been a member of the Macfie Clan Society for 36 years. Until recently she played tennis and now enjoys walking her dog.

NSW member: Peter McPhee V05-1007
Migrant forebears: John McPhee & children: Margaret 22, Alexander 20, John 18, Ann 16, Isabella 14, Robert 10 and Archibald 8
Occupation: Shepherd
Home in Scotland: Killiechonate, Shire of Inverness
Emigrant ship: *Childe Harold*
Arrived Australia: from Liverpool, Geelong 16th June 1853
Pioneer forebears: Archibald S McPhee and Mary Murphy

Member's story in brief: Born in 1935, Peter is the son of John and Margaret (nee Kinanne) McPhee. Peter's parents had an orchard in Shepparton where they grew pears, plums, apricots and peaches, predominantly for the local cannery. Peter was raised on the farm with his younger siblings, Maureen born 1936, Ray 1938, Anne 1940, John 1941 and Mary born in 1942. He attended Sacred Heart College Primary School in Shepparton and then Assumption College at Kilmore (out of Melbourne) for 2 years.



When his father became ill, Peter returned to help run the farm. His father died 2 years later and the farm was sold so Peter took a job with a local transport company. Moving on 2 years later, he worked for the following 5 years as a fruit buyer for an export company. In 1961 he married Judy Dudley and 3 daughters were born; Lisa 1963, Donna 1965 and Nicole in 1972. After jobs with an insurance company and industrial manufacturing company, Peter worked in production and programming for the local television station. In 1972 he joined the Shepparton Chamber of Commerce as the General Manager and in 1989 moved to the Road Safety Council. He stayed there until his retirement in 2011.

Peter has always been active in community affairs. He participated in the opening of the Shepparton Civic Centre in 1965, played as a drummer in a local band called The Esquires and is a life member of the local brass band. He is a member of Lions and has been President of the Shepparton RSL Club for 5 years. He was awarded an Order of Australian (OAM) for community service in 2005.

GENERAL NEWS



New Members

A warm welcome to the following new members:

N12-1087	Karen Law	San Remo	NSW
N12-1088	Vanessa Warne	Mt Barker	SA
N12-1089	John Moore	Glen Osmond	SA

Clan Parliament

Clan Commander Iain Macfie has sent the following details of the forthcoming Clan Parliament and Clan Gathering to be held in September this year at Dumfries in Scotland. Information can be obtained via the Clan Macfie Society web page. The tentative programme is as follows:

Wednesday 4th

PM Registration at hotel & reception
7.30pm Dinner

Thursday 5th

AM Opening of Parliament
PM excursions
Evening Ceilidh, band entertainment.

Friday 6th

All day Excursion: Lake District & Hadrians Wall
Evening Talk on Robert Burns

Saturday 7th

Am Clan Parliament
Pm Local excursion
Evening Clan Dinner.

Sunday 8th

Travel to Oban and then by ferry to Colonsay

Monday 9th

Sights of Colonsay and or Oronsay

Tuesday 10th

Sights of Colonsay and or Oronsay

Wednesday 11th

Depart Colonsay by ferry and return to Oban

SA Radio

Scottish Radio of South Australia broadcasts every Tuesday between 12.30 and 1.30 pm on 5EBI 103.1 FM

John McPhee, Vic

Thanks to former dairy farmer John McPhee from Old Toolamba in Victoria, for sending in the article featuring Graham McPhee, that appeared in the Jan. 14th edition of 'Country News'. The story is on the opposite page.

SA News

Cass and Brian McHaffie from Tweed Heads forwarded the following information about their son Stuart and his wife Nicole who live in South Australia.

'Stuart and Nicole have a landscaping business in Adelaide named Garden Partner and just recently they won two Awards in the South Australian Garden Awards programme; one for Best Garden under \$30,000 and the other for \$40-60,000. Needless to say we are very proud of them for achieving this as they work so very hard.'

Brian & Cass McHaffie

Brian is now in remission from the cancer that struck him down recently. He continues to make an excellent recovery and has booked a trip to the UK in May. After attending a wedding there, he will be having a holiday in Korea. Brian assures me it is South Korea, and assumes in the mean time North Korea doesn't go to war with the South.

The cartoon that appears on page 14 is one that Brian and Cass sent to the editor in December. Their contributions to *The Downunder*, like any contribution, is most welcome.

Gwen Hubert ACT VP

Gwen is currently undergoing treatment for cancer. It is great to hear she is making progress and can look forward to improved health in the future.

An Old Scottish Toast

Here's to you as good as you are,
And here's to me, as bad as I am;
As bad as I am, as good as you are,
I'm as good as you are,
I'm as good as you are, bad as I am

THE MACFIES GATHER IN DUMFRIES

Clan Parliament Gathering 4th - 7th September 2013

All clan members are invited to attend the Macfie Clan Gathering and Parliament which will be held in the town of Dumfries in South West Scotland. Dumfries is known as the 'Queen of the South', and clan members, family and friends will be treated to a packed programme of events during their stay.

The itinerary will include excursions to the Lake District, a Robert Burns trail and other visits to local attractions. These include the birth place of John Paul Jones, the father of the American Navy, The Old Blacksmith's Shop in Gretna and a visit to Hadrian's Wall and Museum to see what life was like 2000 years ago on the border between England and Scotland.



The Auld Bridge over the River Nith



Statue of Robert Burns, Dumfries

Vanessa and Andrew Duffy are looking forward to welcoming all clan folks to 'doon hame' and are working to organise a memorable Clan Parliament and Gathering.

The Gathering will be based at the Cairndale Hotel, close to the centre of the town. Special rates for dinner, bed and breakfast have been negotiated; £64.50 per person per night for those in shared accommodation. A programme of social events is planned with a local ceilidh band entertaining us, plus a local speaker who will bring to life Robert Burns, his life, his loves and his works. More details and booking forms will be available soon, so that you can plan for your stay in Dumfries. NB people from Dumfries are called 'Doonhamers'. (article courtesy of The Galley, Vol 35, the Journal of the Macfie Clan Society of Scotland).



International Dairy Week

Established in 1990, International Dairy Week (IDW) began as a Holstein show and sale and an all-breeds youth show, that included international speakers invited to discuss global dairy trends. As interest grew other dairy breeds were invited into the show ring and offered for sale. The Jerseys and Brown Swiss were introduced in 1997 and the following year the Ayrshire and Guernsey. In 1999 the Illawarra joined the show, representing all main dairy breeds in Australia.

International Dairy Week, based at Tatura in Victoria, is now the largest annual dairy expo event in Australia and the Southern Hemisphere. It proudly rates amongst the top five dairy cattle shows in the world. During IDW over 1,000 cattle are entered into 7 National Shows, with breeders and exhibitors competing fiercely for the pride and honour of winning at IDW.

One of the judges at this year's expo held in mid January, was Graham McPhee from Finley, in southern NSW. Graham was chosen as the judge for the young people's section for all breeds.

Graham and his family relocated from the south coast of NSW to Finley in 1990, taking the Hillview Park Stud with them. The past 20 years have seen Graham successfully develop and promote the Hillview Park name, recently being awarded one of the few 2nd Master Breeder awards in Australia. Having judged at various Australian royal shows, on farm challenges, IDW in 2012 and numerous regional shows, Graham brings passion and knowledge to the ring. He enjoys a great relationship with exhibitors and officials alike, being a successful exhibitor himself. The Hillview Park Stud has achieved not only grand champion at IDS, but also numerous champions, reserves and most successful breeder and exhibitor awards at renowned shows along with All Australian winners.



Graham McPhee

GENEALOGY

Scottish Wills & Testaments

A colourful picture of life in Scotland in the early 20th Century is revealed today, with the release of the Wills and Testaments from 1902 to 1925 by the National Records of Scotland on the [ScotlandsPeople](http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk) website.

The new records, 392,595 in total, document the last wishes of 267,548 individuals who lived and died in Scotland during this period. The collection also includes the wills of Scots who died outside Scotland, but still had assets in the country. As inventories of moveable estate (savings, cash, furniture, stock, etc) are also included, you can discover the fine details of people's worldly possessions in this era.

Those of all social classes are included in the records - from famous industrialists and philanthropists such as Andrew Carnegie and George Coats, to the impoverished inmates of the nation's poorhouses. With more than 35 millionaires included in the records, you can learn how the members of this Scottish 'Rich List' ultimately chose to divide up their wealth. Conversely, simpler and cheaper procedures for recording wills meant that estates below £500 were also included. The Acting Registrar General and Keeper of the Records of Scotland said: 'We're proud to be marking the tenth anniversary of ScotlandsPeople by creating a major enhancement of our popular resource for Scottish family history. The 400,000 additional testament entries from 1902 to 1925 will open up exciting new avenues for people in search of their Scottish ancestry.'

The Wills and Testaments are available on the ScotlandsPeople website (www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk) and at the ScotlandsPeople Centre in Edinburgh. These new online records will be interesting both to people in Scotland and to the Scottish diaspora across the UK, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and the rest of the world (from ScotlandsPeople)

.....

Ancestry Poem

NSW member Rosemary Szente sent in the following poem from an unknown author. In a note she explained: "I adapted it to fit the Macfie Clan and added a word or two to make the rhyme better."

When speaking of our ancestry,
My Mother's eyes would shine
And proudly she would tell us all,
'You're of the MacFie line.'
But, Father with a smile would say,
'While bearing that in mind,
You keep your eyes on goals ahead
Leave the past behind.
You have a noble ancestry
But, all are dead and gone,
Tis you who have to prove your worth,
Not those who've journeyed on!
And back along the MacFie line,
Tis a sorry truth, I state
There may be some you can't approve,
And some that you would hate.
The way to prove your ancestry,
(is what you are yourself)
Not by the charted family tree,
in books upon the shelf.
So try to be an ancestor
Within the time allowed,
Of whom your children's children
In the future can be proud.'

Feathers and All That

From Clan Commissioner Sandy McPhie

"Not surprisingly, after the article on the Strap and Buckle Badge in last November's "Downunder", I was asked questions regarding the wearing of feathers in one's bonnet as a mark of one's status. Again the answer is fairly straight forward but must be qualified in the case of Clan Macfie.

The article in the November "Downunder" was amplified by an additional note quoted from Sir Thomas Innes of Learney's "Science of Heraldry" and broached the legal position regarding the wearing and displaying of a strap and buckle badge etc.. The wearing of feathers is tied in with this.



Traditionally, a chief, chieftain or armigerous members wear their crest and motto on a plain circlet (i.e., not with a strap and buckle). A chief surmounts the circlet by three small silver feathers, a chieftain with two such feathers and an armiger with one. Alternatively, they may, should they prefer, wear eagle feathers in their bonnet, as a sign of their standing within their Clan. So we have the old problem of Clan Macfie not having a Chief, or Chieftain/s for that matter. We do, however, have a number of armigers and all (or most) have no hesitation in wearing a single feather with the Clan strap and buckle badge.

Our first Clan Commander, Dr. Earle Douglas MacPhee of Vancouver, Canada, was appointed by the Lord Lyon King of Arms in November 1981 but sadly died in September the following year. I do not know if he discussed the entitlement to wear feathers with the Lyon or not. Following my appointment as Clan Commander in September 1989, I raised the subject with the Lord Lyon. In his reply in May 1990 the then Lyon said, "I think it is perfectly appropriate as Commander of the Clan for you to wear three feathers. With regard to your Lieutenants or Commissioners, they should wear two feathers while acting as such..... if they are not so acting, they should then revert to what they would wear if not Commissioners (e.g. one feather if they are armigerous and the strap and buckle if they do not happen to be armigers)."

This opinion was confirmed several years later when a new Lord Lyon took office and remained in force when I stood down as Clan Commander in October 2008. I am not aware of any changes being made since then."

Editor's Note

Based on the Macfie strap and buckle badge, the 4 images shown below depict the wearer's ranking within a clan. They have been drawn up for the editor by a graphic artist. In recent times, there has been some confusion about the number of feathers a clan commissioner should wear. The above quotation from the Lord Lyon's office clarifies the position.



Clan Chief or
Commander's badge



Clan Lieutenant or
Commissioner's badge



Armiger's badge



Clansman's badge

Anzacs Remembered

Simpson & his Donkey

It would be hard to find a nationalistic Australian who didn't know about the legend of Simpson and his donkey at Gallipoli. Very few however would know that Simpson's donkey was known by one of the names recognised as belonging to Clan Macfie.

John "Jack" Simpson Kirkpatrick (6 July 1892 – 19 May 1915), who served under the name **John Simpson**, was a stretcher bearer with the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) during the Gallipoli Campaign in World War I. He was born on 6 July 1892 in South Shields, United Kingdom, the son of Robert Kirkpatrick and Sarah Simpson Kirkpatrick. He was one of eight children, and worked with donkeys during summer holidays as a youth

After deserting from the merchant navy and travelling around Australia, prior to the war, John Simpson Kirkpatrick apparently enlisted as a means of being able to return to England. Apparently he dropped "Kirkpatrick" from his name and enlisted under his middle name of Simpson to avoid being identified as a deserter. He was accepted into the army as a field ambulance stretcher bearer on 23 August 1914 in Perth. This role was only given to physically strong men.

Simpson landed on the shores of the Gallipoli Peninsula on 25 April 1915 as a member of the 3rd Field Ambulance, Australian Army Medical Corps. In the early hours of the following day, as he was bearing a wounded comrade on his shoulders, he spotted one of the donkeys brought in to carry water, and quickly began making use of it to bear his fellow soldiers. Simpson used the donkey to carry wounded British Empire soldiers from the frontline in Monash Valley to the beach at Anzac Cove, for evacuation. He would sing and whistle, seeming to ignore the deadly bullets flying through the air, while he tended to his comrades. One of the names the donkey came to be known as was Duffy.

Colonel (later General) John Monash wrote: "Private Simpson and his little beast earned the admiration of everyone at the upper end of the valley. They worked all day and night throughout the whole period since the landing, and the help rendered to the wounded was invaluable. Simpson knew no fear and moved unconcernedly amid shrapnel and rifle fire, steadily carrying out his self imposed task day by day, and he frequently earned the applause of the personnel for his many fearless rescues of wounded men from areas subject to rifle and shrapnel fire."



Five days before his death, Simpson was one of 8 members of his Field Ambulance unit commended for their work by the officer in charge of medical services at Gallipoli. All of them including Simpson, were subsequently Mentioned in Dispatches, an award entitling them to wear an oak leaf emblem on their service medals.

After a mere 24 days of action, Simpson was killed by machine gun fire on 19th May 1915 as he carried a wounded soldier on the back of the donkey he had found wandering at Anzac Cove the day after the landings. He was buried on the beach at Hell Spit. Simpson and his donkey went on to become a key part of the "Anzac legend".

The Legend Questioned

Recently a year long enquiry by an Australian Government tribunal into the awarding of posthumous medals for bravery or distinguished service was concluded. It found against awarding honours posthumously to numerous service personnel whose names had been put forward as deserving of being awarded a medal. One of those was Simpson. The tribunal rejected a year long campaign to have Simpson awarded a posthumous Victoria Cross - Australia's highest award for bravery.

Despite many accounts describing Simpson's conduct 'The Tribunal was, however, unable to find any witness accounts of a specific act of valour which could single out Simpson's bravery from other stretcher-bearers in the Field Ambulance'. The Tribunal heard that much of the legend surrounding Simpson and his donkey had been built on evidence that was false and richly embellished. History had been turned into hagiography. As historian Les Carlyon put it 'The myths are stronger, and more numerous than the facts. Simpson became the legendary figure of Gallipoli, not on the peninsula itself, but in Australian and British newspapers months after his death'.

The extraordinary tales of Simpson and his donkey started with a report from the front by war correspondent Charles Bean, who wrote a colourful, but apparently not so factual story about Simpson's exploits. His account was then taken up by journalists writing for other Australian newspapers, and so Simpson's fame grew and spread. (ref. www & Age 7th March 2013)

Courage of Sergeant McPhee

While Simpson transporting the wounded with Duffy the donkey did not receive a medal for gallantry at Gallipoli, an Australian fighting on the Western Front working with some mules did.

John Alexander McPhee (1889 - 1976) was the son of Donald and Catherine (nee Robertson) McPhee. Known as Jack, he worked on country properties in NSW from an early age. He was working on a property as a labourer at Boggabilla in 1915 when he joined the army during WWI. Fighting for the 55th Australian Infantry Battalion on the Western Front, he was awarded the DCM for bravery. His actions were described thus:

'For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty during the period 16/17th Sept. to 11th Nov. 1918. During this period Sergt. McPhee carried out the duties of transport sergeant.

During the successful attacks on the Hindenburg Line in the latter part of September and early October, this NCO had charge of ration limbers and mules taking up hot food, water and ammunition to the Battalion always under fire, through the village of Bellicourt.

At all times he has shown an utter disregard of danger, and by his coolness under fire and trying circumstances has so inspired and led his men that his comrades in the front line have always been supplied with every possible necessity and in doing so has largely contributed to the success of the operations the Battalion has taken part in. During the morning of 2nd October when the enemy unsuccessfully counter attacked our front line troops, Sergt. McPhee led ration lumbers through the enemy barrage and by his determination and quick judgement delivered the rations without a casualty and so defeated the efforts of the enemy artillery.'

Jack McPhee was Queensland member Heather Knowles' father. Heather, her son Donald and daughter Bev, both also Society members, decided some years ago that Jack's DCM should go to the Australian War Memorial in Canberra so that it could be put on display for the general public.



Sergeant 'Jack' McPhee



Society member Bev Knowles from Victoria, with her mother Heather, who resides in Brisbane.

The Oronsay Priory

Background

The small island of Oronsay is joined to Colonsay by a 1 mile (1½ km) wide tidal causeway called The Strand, which is accessible by foot from Colonsay at low tide. It is only 2¾ miles (4.5 km) from east to west and 2 miles (3 km) from north to south. Five and a half miles (9 km) to the south of Oronsay is the island of Islay. It was once speculated that the name Oronsay came from St. Oron, one of St. Columba's disciples, but it is now generally accepted it originated from the Norse Orjiris-ey meaning 'ebb-tide island'. The origin of the name Colonsay is not clear, but it also is most likely of Norse origin.

Both Colonsay and Oronsay have an extensive ecclesiastical history. In addition to the priory on Oronsay and an important abbey at Kiloran on Colonsay, twelve other religious sites have been recorded; 2 on Oronsay and 10 on Colonsay. Considering the combined area of both islands is only about 23 square miles (60 sq km), and before 1800 A.D. had a maximum population at any one time of reportedly less than 800 people, that number of religious sites is quite remarkable.

Religious communities on Colonsay and Oronsay go back a long way. Tradition has it that on his way to Iona in the 6th century, St. Columba established the first monastic community on Oronsay. In Columba's time the monks' homes would have been like 'beehive' huts, constructed of mud and wood, although the more important buildings such as churches were perhaps made of oak. None of the stone ruins seen on Oronsay today can be identified as belonging to the early Celtic Christians.

As the head of a monastery, the abbot appointed a person to assist him, called a prior. Small isolated priories would normally be dependent on a nearby monastery for support. A prior was close to men of influence, power and learning, and was thus an important member of any clan. After the chief and his heir, he was the most influential member. On Oronsay the dominant McPhee Clan provided many priors and cannons for the church there, and they lived in a house next to the church.

Ecclesiastical History

In a Vatican document dated 1203, Pope Innocent III granted a constitution to the Abbey of Iona in which the Abbey's ownership and protection of the church of 'Coluansei' and the islands of 'Coluansei' and 'Oruansei' are confirmed. This is the earliest reference to Colonsay and Oronsay in any manuscript, and indicates the church was well established on the islands when it was written.

A new religious outpost on Oronsay was re-established by John, the first Lord of the Isles, between 1325 and 1353. The earliest surviving record referring to the priory he established is a Papal mandate addressed to the prior dated 1353. The stone priory on the island was established for the Augustinian Order of the established Roman Church, and the ruins on the island are a legacy of theirs. It is said Augustinians from Holyrood Abbey in Edinburgh were brought to Oronsay to establish the priory, but there appears no evidence to substantiate that proposition, and it is just as likely they may have come from Ireland. The priory is sometimes referred to as the Priory of St. Columba on Oronsay, but whether it was dedicated to Columba is another matter open to question.

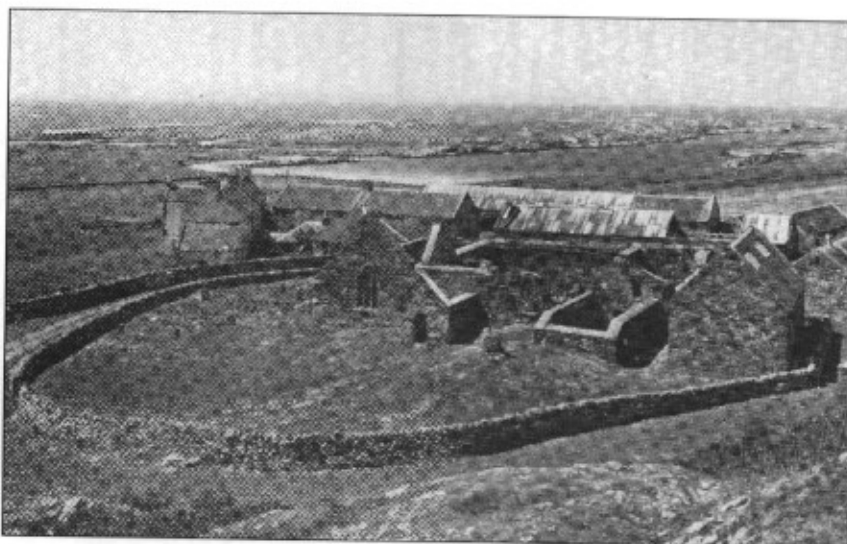
As a recognised holy place with a long history, the monastic settlement on Oronsay not only attracted religious devotees but those seeking sanctuary from violence or apprehension by the authorities. The sanctuary's boundary was a line between two crosses erected in the middle of The Strand. They are no longer there, although there is a cross made up of loose stones laid flat on the tidal Strand not far from one of the original ones. It is referred to as the Sanctuary Cross (Crois an Tearmaid), and dates from more recent times.

Like Iona, that holiest of holy sites in Scotland, Oronsay was also a sought after burial site for people of note from all over the country. From the mainland, there was a recognised 'Via Dolorosa' or 'way of grief' that was followed by those conveying a body destined for internment on Oronsay.

One of the starting points for that journey was at Corpach, which means 'place for corpses', near what is today the town of Fort William. From there and elsewhere, bodies were transported to the island of Jura and taken to Ruantallain, at the western extremity of the northern shore of Loch Tarbert. At that place

which is opposite Colonsay, they could be held in a cave known as The Corpach, to await favourable weather and sea conditions for the crossing to Oronsay. On Colonsay there was also a corpach cave near Balnahard Bay.

The Oronsay Priory was altered and added to over the centuries and expanded in a number of building phases. In one of those, probably in the late 1400s, a mortuary chapel, the ruins of which still exist, was built for the MacDuffies on the southern side of the Priory Church. It catered for clan leaders and other clan notables. The chapel is about 8 yards (7.3 m) long by 4 yards (3.6 m) wide with a lean-to style roof. In a section of the northern wall of the chapel is a recess, where Prior Donald MacDuffie was buried in 1555. On the opposite stone wall is a socket, where according to one early historian, an ensign staff was placed on which rested the fate of the MacDuffies.



An overview of the Priory on Oronsay



.....

A Macfie Tale: The Castaway

from Clan News No 59

The Chief of Clan McNeil of Barra held sway over a number of islands, including Mingulay. The people who lived on the island were tenants of their feudal master, McNeil, and as such owed rent and other taxes to him. He had not heard from them in some time, nor had he received any rent nor goods, so he decided that he must investigate this and send a trusted servant to look into the mystery.

Kenneth Macfie was put in charge of a small party to investigate. The boat was brought into a sheltered bay where a little beach offered a landing below the towering cliffs that ring the island. There was no easy access to the hinterland, so Macfie waded ashore and climbed the steep cliffs to find nothing but death. Everyone on the island had succumbed to the plague.

Climbing back down to the shore, Macfie shouted out to the other men the terrible news. But when Big Kenneth Macfie reached the base of the cliff, he turned round to find the boat already well out to sea. The crew, in fear for their lives, did not return and left him stranded on the island.

Macfie lived in the open, surviving by eating seaweed, shellfish and seabirds, while keeping constant watch for the sight of a rescue party. After one year and one day a boat approached from the direction of Barra.

Those who had reported back to the Chief of Clan McNeil returned, bringing Big Kenneth Macfie a wife and provisions. After a time, when it was obvious the plague was now dormant, the island was repopulated with tenants, and Macfie was given a grant of land.

One of the peaks on Mingulay was named Ben Macfie to honour Big Kenneth. Today, no one lives on the island. Its only inhabitants are grazing animals. The difficulty of having no easy place to land goods and ship out produce meant the island was never a viable place.

Scotland News

Scotland's Oldest Home Unearthed in Forth Dig

An Archaeological excavation in a field at Echline in South Queensferry, Edinburgh, in preparation for the building of the Forth Replacement Crossing, has uncovered the remains of what is believed to be one of Scotland's earliest homes. Senior archaeologist at Historic Scotland, Rod McCullagh, said that a 7m oval pit is all that remains of the dwelling, dated to the Mesolithic Period around 10,250 years ago. "The radiocarbon dates taken from this site show it to be the oldest of its type found in Scotland, which adds to its significance," he said. The remains feature a number of postholes which would have held wooden posts to support the walls and roof, probably covered with turf. Several internal fireplace hearths were also identified and more than 1,000 flint artefacts were found, including materials used as tools and arrow-heads.



Artist impression. The dwelling is 5,000 years older than Stonehenge and an important discovery to help understand how prehistoric people lived along the Forth.

Other discoveries include large quantities of charred hazelnut shells, suggesting that they were an important source of food. Archaeologists believe the dwelling, which is more than 5,000 years older than Stonehenge, would have been occupied on a seasonal basis, probably in winter. The discovery of this rare site will further studies into Scotland's early inhabitants. The new Forth Road Bridge will build over the ancient home. (Ref: Scots News Vol 2 No 8 Dec 2012, & www)

Edinburgh

Last year the annual Guardian/Observer poll named Edinburgh as the United Kingdom's best city for the 13th year in a row. It was followed by Bath and York.

Anyone who has been to Edinburgh over the past few years will have seen the work being done to establish a light rail line system in the city. It has been announced recently, that trams in Edinburgh will start running along 2.8 km of track from Grogar Depot to the airport.

Restoration of St Oran's Cross

The world's first Celtic High Cross, St Oran's Cross, pictured on the opposite page, dating back to the 8th century, is being reassembled in Selkirk before it is returned to Iona for the celebration of the 1450th anniversary of the arrival of Columba on the island and the foundation of the Iona Monastery.

This was the springboard for the spread of Christianity in Scotland. St Columba and his followers arrived from Ireland and established a monastery on Iona in AD 563. St Oran's Cross will be re-erected for the first time in centuries in a new display as part of the 1450th anniversary celebrations.

Peter Yeoman, Historic Scotland's Head of Cultural Heritage said: "The complete cross originally weighed in excess of 1 tonne and was 4.4 metres high. We believe it was commissioned by a King around the mid 700s. "It is beautifully carved with Biblical scenes and Celtic interlace patterns. Just below the centre of the cross arm is an extremely rare and early image of the Virgin and Child sheltered by the wings of angels. "This monumental, powerful, and decorative use of the Christian cross had never been seen before anywhere in Western Europe. It's one of the largest and finest in the collection of early medieval carved stone grave slabs and crosses to be found at Iona Abbey."

The cross, which was in five pieces, will be re-erected within a specially constructed steel structure designed by Borders based museum mountmaker Richard West. Historic Scotland's experts are cleaning, studying and conserving the carved stones before they go back on display in a new exhibition in time for the anniversary in 2013.

The agency is also investing in new interpretation and visitor facilities to help visitors fully appreciate Iona Abbey's fascinating history and the significance of the spectacular carved stone collection. This anniversary will be officially marked in May 2013 in partnership with the Iona Community who are celebrating their 75th anniversary. The Iona Community is an ecumenical Christian Community of men and women founded in 1938 by Rev. George MacLeod. Its headquarters are in Glasgow, but its main activities take place on Iona and also on Mull.

St Oran's Cross is chiselled out of schist stone blocks quarried from the Ross of Mull, close to Iona, which is difficult to carve and susceptible to lamination. It has a unique experimental construction in three parts comprising of a shaft, cross arm and upper arm, thereby attempting to reduce the stresses.

The cross could be an imitation in stone of the Golgotha jewelled cross, erected at Jerusalem by the Roman Emperor Theodosius in AD 417. It may have been coloured in red and gold to replicate jewels, in imitation of timber or metal prototypes.

The cost of producing this cross was enormous and so it must have been commissioned by a King, possibly Óengus, son of Fergus King of the Picts, following his conquest of the area around AD 741. It was created by the finest carvers in Scotland.

The shaft is covered in dense patterns of spiral, snake and boss ornament – the snake being a symbol of Christ's resurrection in the way it shed its skin. The bosses, derived from precious metalwork forms, are grouped in various cross shaped arrangements, as other symbols of Christ and of the five wounds which he suffered on the Cross.

To the left on the cross-arm is an Old Testament Biblical image of Daniel in the Lion's Den – a scene which reminded believers that God will save the faithful. Just above the centre are a pair of rampant lions, backwards biting each other's tails. Above this are a group of four roundels, with a snake with gaping jaws coming out of each. The cross features exuberant Celtic spiral ornamentation, closely matching that on the Book of Kells manuscript which was produced at the Iona Monastery not long after this cross was carved. (ref: Historic Scotland & www).

NB Historic Scotland is an executive agency of the Scottish Government charged with safeguarding the nation's historic environment. The agency is fully accountable to Scottish Ministers and through them to the Scottish Parliament.

Eriskay Ponies

Eriskay, the Old Norse for "Eric's Isle", is an island and community council area of the Outer Hebrides in northern Scotland. It lies between South Uist and Barra and is connected to South Uist by a causeway which was opened in 2001.

The Eriskay Pony, one of Scotland's rarest breeds of pony, has been making a comeback thanks to the diligent efforts of a group of islanders. The Eriskay pony was on the verge of extinction 40 years ago, but has now been taken off the endangered species list. In the 1970s the Eriskay Pony Society was founded and twenty pure Eriskay females (original mares) were located in the Hebrides. But no pure stallion was believed alive so they were cross bred with Highland ponies. Then a pure stallion called Eric was located in South Uist but the then Department of Agriculture refused to let him breed on Eriskay but conceded to let him serve mares on Barra. The Eriskay Pony Society has helped to boost their numbers to around 300 purebred animals. The pony is rumoured to be descended from wild horses stemming back from prehistoric times. The native Icelandic pony is said to have strong Eriskay DNA as the Vikings took them from the Hebrides when they conquered Iceland some 1,000 years ago.

The ponies' immense strength and docile nature have made them popular both as pets and as work-horses on Hebridean crofts. With a dense waterproof coat, they are able to withstand the harshest of weather and do not need to be housed indoors. The Eriskay Pony Society also tries to create demand for the ponies by promoting their versatility and practical qualities. (ref: STV News)



Bank Loan to a Scotsman

A Scotsman walks into the Bank of England in Threadneedle Street, Central London and asks for the manager. He tells the manager that he is going to Australia on business for two weeks and needs to borrow £5,000.

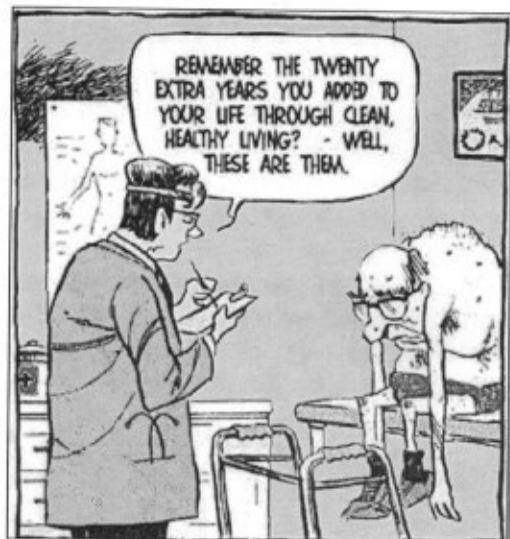
The manager tells him that the bank will need some form of security for the loan, so Hamish hands over the keys and documents of his new Ferrari parked on the street in front of the bank. He produces the Log Book and everything checks out.

The manager agrees to accept the car as collateral for the loan. The bank's General Manager and its officers all enjoy a good laugh at the rough looking Scotsman for using a £120,000 Ferrari as collateral against a £5,000 loan. An employee of the bank then drives the Ferrari into the bank's underground garage and parks it there.

Two weeks later, Hamish returns, repays the £5,000 and the interest, which comes to £15.41.

The manager says, "Sir, we are very happy to have had your business and this transaction has worked out very nicely, but we are a little puzzled. While you were away, we checked you out and found that you are a multi millionaire. What puzzles us is, why would you bother to borrow £5,000?"

Hamish replies: "Where else in London can I park my car for two weeks for only £15.41 and expect it to be there when I return?"



.....

The Bare Facts on Wearing the Kilt

Here's what you should find under a Scotsman's kilt: underwear. So said The Scottish Tartans Authority some time back when it called time on the tradition of going commando, deeming it "childish and unhygienic". The Authority's director told an English newspaper that just because tartans have been around longer than Y-fronts, it didn't mean they don't belong together. "You only have to ask hire specialists about the problems they have cleaning kilts. We have heard quite a few hygiene horror stories." But a spokesman for the Scottish Kilt Makers Association was among those to dismiss the call. 'The tradition of no underwear being worn was a stipulation of Scottish military regulation. To say it is unhygienic is wrong. The freedom of movement is healthy.' (SMH 24/11)

EVENTS FOR THE DIARY

- | | |
|----------|---|
| April 6 | Bundanoon Highland Gathering, Bundanoon, NSW |
| April 14 | Ringwood Highland Gathering, Jubilee Park, Greenwood Ave, Ringwood, VIC |
| April 25 | Scottish Act of Remembrance, Martin Place, Sydney NSW |
| May 2-5 | Glen Innes Celtic Festival, Glen Innes, NSW |
| May 25 | The Berry Celtic Festival, Berry, NSW |
| May 31 | Bonnie Wingham Scottish Festival, Wingham, NSW |
| June 8 | Ipswich Thistle Pipe Band Contest, Limestone Park, Lyon St. QLD |
| July 1 | Kirkin O' the Tartan, Scots Church, Cnr Collins & Russell Streets, Melbourne, VIC |
| July 6 | Aberdeen Highland Games, Aberdeen, NSW |

SOCIETY OFFICE BEARERS

President*		Treasurer*	
Ian McPhee	PO Box 237 Brookvale NSW 2100 02 9938 2550 mobile: 0419 382555 Email: irmac10@bigpond.net.au	Geoff McPhee	43 Cedar Street Lugarno NSW 2210 02 95334195 mobile: 0408 215290 Email: gmcphie@mas.nsw.edu.au
Vice President*		Clan Commissioner*	
Margaret Barnes	201/5 Cary St Drummoyno NSW 2047 02 91811689 mobile: 0419 612845 Email: mbarnes@netspace.net.au	Sandy McPhie	2 Sandalwood Drive Glenvale QLD 4350 07 46345919 mobile: 0419 766578 Email: ahmcphie@bigpond.com
ACT VP*		Clan Armiger*	
Gwen Hubert	8 Trumble St Pearce ACT 2607 02 62861058 Email: -	Sandy McPhee	49 Rodney Rd Mt Vincent NSW 2323 02 49380350 Email: norsandy@bigpond.net.au
NSW VP*		Secretary	
Morris McPhee	24 Cobran Road Cheltenham NSW 2119 02 9868 1521 mobile: 0439 407492 Email: colonsay@bigpond.net.au	Lyndsay Armstrong	3 Beaumont St Rose Bay NSW 2029 02 93716117 Email: lyndsaysarmstrong@bigpond.com
QLD VP*		Chief Historian	
Susan Spinks	Chertsey M/S 212 Oakey QLD 4401 07 4691 6206 mobile: 0408 063122 Email: susanfaithspinks@tadaust.org.au	Trevor Phee	24 Bibby Street Hamilton NSW 2303 02 4962 2672 Email: t.phee@bigpond.com
SA VP*		Historian	
Judith Moore	107/125 Montacute Rd Campbelltown SA 5074 08 83650220 Email: -	Jan Harper	62 Relowe Cres Box Hill VIC 3129 03 9890 583 Email: J-harper@bigpond.com
TAS VP*		Historian	
Vacant		Helen McPhie	2 Sandalwood Drive Glenvale QLD 07 46345919 Email: ahmcphie@bigpond.com
VIC VP*		Society Piper	
Ross McPhie	18 Faulkner St. St. Kilda VIC 3182 0421048207 Email: rossandkarenmcphie@gmail.com	Vacant	
WA VP*		Downunder Editor	
Jillian King	PO Box 3320 Joondalup WA 6027 08 94054884 Email: Semark63@bigpond.net.au	Ian McPhee	PO Box 237 Brookvale NSW 2100 02 99382550 mobile: 0419 382555 Email: Email: irmac10@bigpond.net.au

* Denotes Macfie Clan Society of Australia Executive

All correspondence should be sent to:

The President, Macfie Clan Society of Australia

PO Box 237 Brookvale NSW 2100

Telephone: 02 9938 2550

mobile: 0419 382555

Email: irmac10@bigpond.net.au

Disclaimer & Note

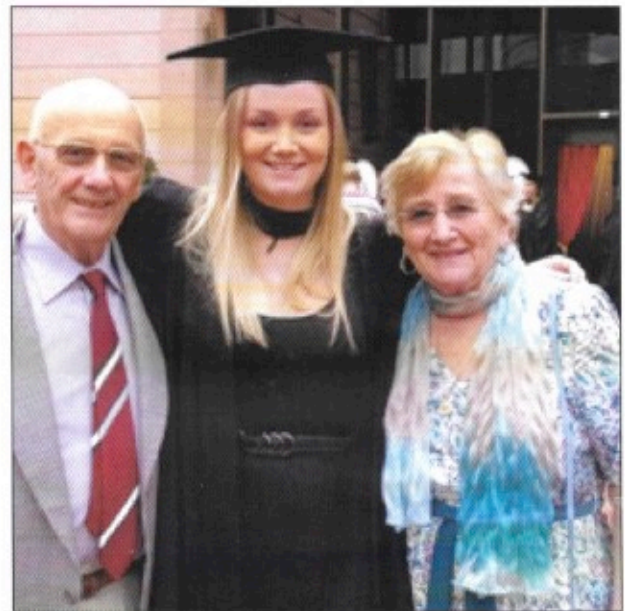
As the newsletter of The Macfie Clan Society of Australia, The Downunder is produced solely for the information and enjoyment of the Society's members. It has been compiled with due care and in good faith from a variety of sources. Any views expressed in the newsletter are not necessarily those of the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



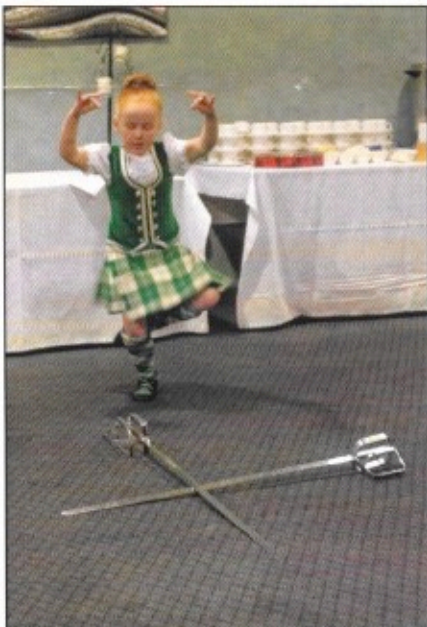
The Commissioner for Clan Cameron Bob Cameron at left, with Society President Ian McPhee, in front of one of the Standing Stones at last year's Glen Innes Celtic Festival



The Abbey Church at New Norcia, north of Perth. Society member and Benedictine resident of New Norcia, Father Anscar, hosted a tour of the church and other facilities at the monastic town, for those attending the Clan Society's Gathering in Perth



Charlotte McHaffie, with her grandparents Brian & Cass McHaffie at her university graduation in Adelaide. Charlotte is the daughter of SA members Stuart & Nicole McHaffie



Sword dancing at the Perth Biennial General Meeting Dinner

The address to the haggis at the 2012 Perth Biennial General Meeting Dinner. SA member, and former President, Brian McPhee is second on the left, with NSW VP Morris McPhee second from the right

