



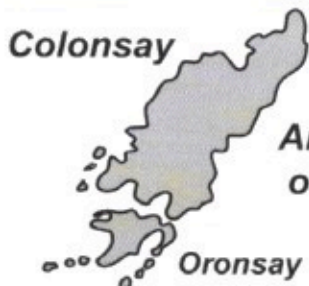
THE DOWNUNDER

Journal of the
Macfie Clan Society of Australia

Issue 126
November 2013



On Colonsay, standing: Commander Iain McFie & Brian McPhee, Australia; seated left to right: Clan piper Bobby McFie, Linda Gilchrist USA, the Commander's wife Fiona and Brian's wife Merilyn

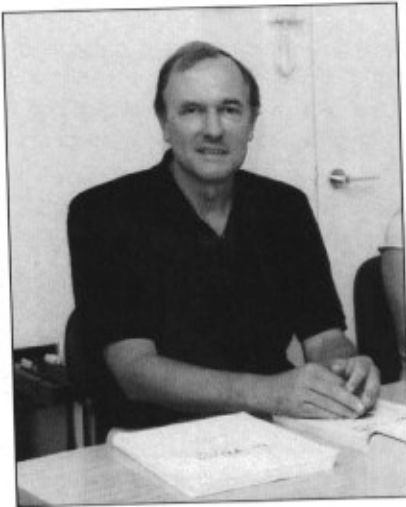


**Ancestral home
of Clan Macfie**

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

www.clanmacfie.co.uk

President's Message



It's been a memorable year for Clan Macfie with the holding of the four yearly Clan Parliament at Dumfries in Scotland. Australia was well represented this time with former Society President Brian McPhee, his wife Meryl and their extended family attending. I am grateful that Brian has been able to furnish an account of the Parliament's proceedings and details of his family's trip to Colonsay. His report is on page 5.

I had planned an extensive trip to Scotland in September which included attending the Clan Parliament and visiting Colonsay. In addition to that, my trip included stays on the islands of Mull, Islay and Jura not to mention about a week in Edinburgh to conduct some family research. My son Philip was accompanying me on part of the journey. With my bags packed with a kilt, large array of papers for the Parliament and the usual travel attire, I was ready to go by the day prior to my departure. Unfortunately fate intervened. About 12 hours before my plane flight was due to depart, I was forced to cancel the trip. It was a shock. Out of the blue, a rather nasty medical problem arose a few days before I was due to leave, which made it impossible (on doctor's advice) for me to travel.

Unfortunately things have deteriorated on the medical front. Faced with not being able to carry out my duties as Society President and editor of *The Downunder* satisfactorily, I have taken the decision to stand down from my position for the time being. I do so with a heavy heart, and the hope it will only be a temporary measure. It is rather unfortunate that Society Treasurer Geoff McPhee, due to the ill-health of his wife Ruth, has also found it necessary to step down. Both are great stalwarts for the Society. Geoff has not only helped me as President, but been a mentor in more ways than one. Geoff and Ruth are to be congratulated for their strong and continuing support of our Society.

Until further notice, New South Wales Vice President Morris McPhee will take over as acting President. The Society is fortunate to have Morris in its ranks, as he has taken an active role on the executive for many years. He will do a great job. Morris will be assisted by his wife Robyn, who is the Society's secretary. I have appointed Robyn as the interim treasurer, which will give her a right to vote on the executive.

The Downunder, as the voice and flagship of our Society, has been of particular interest to me. Over the years I have devoted a great deal of time and effort to its format, content, quality and development. New ACT Vice-President Heather Grove, who is featured in this issue's 'Members in Profile' on page 3, has agreed to take over as the journal's editor. As can be seen from her story, Heather not only has had a long association with our Society but is a person with a keen interest in literature. She will be a great custodian of perhaps our most important asset.

Next year will be an important one for the Society. Heather Grove intends to kick off a pilot membership drive in Canberra and plans have been made to develop some merchandise not only for promotion, but for the benefit of our members. Our Clan Commander Iain McFie and his wife Fiona will also be visiting Australia to help celebrate our organisation's 40th anniversary. The Society will be seeking the support of all members to ensure his visit is a successful and memorable one. All the 2014 prospects just mentioned can be accomplished without difficulty because the Society is in a strong financial position.

Before signing off, I thank all those who have supported the Society and assisted me in various ways throughout the year. To all members and friends I wish you a Merry Christmas and prosperous New Year.

In This Issue:

Profile: ACT Vice-President Heather Grove	3
General News	4
2013 Clan Parliament & Gathering Report	5
Clan Commander's Visit	5
New books from Bernie McPhee & Ian McPhee.....	6
The Immigrants Wall, Portland, Victoria	7
Robbie Burns' Selkirk Grace	7

The Floating Church	8
Facts about Strontian on Loch Sunart	8
Honey Bees, Colonsay & Kangaroo Island	10
Macfie Tales & Folklore	11
Book offer, Remembrance Day & Blue Label Whisky	12
Robbie Burns' Exposed & Auld Lang Syne	13
Scotland News	14
Office Bearers	15

MEMBERS IN PROFILE

ACT Vice President: Heather Grove

Migrant forebears: Thomas & Janet McPhee, with Angus 7 yrs, William 5 & Kate aged 3.

Occupation: Thomas was a shepherd

Home in Scotland: Strontian, on Loch Sunart

Emigrant ship: Kate, arrived in Sydney on 16th October 1852

Pioneer forebears: Angus McPhee and Ellen Lattimore

Member's story in brief: My pioneer forebears Angus and Ellen (nee Lattimore) McPhee had 6 children, William, Thomas, Finlay, Colin, Mary and Jessie. I am a descendant of William's family. I was born in 1953 in Grafton to Kenneth and Jean McPhee. My brother Roderick (1949-2008) and I grew up on our dairy farm at Calliope near Ulmarra. My father was born just a few miles away at Lower Coldstream on land selected by his ancestor Thomas. After the McPhees arrival in Australia they spent ten years in the Hunter Valley before trekking overland to their new selection. All of Thomas' brothers and sisters and his widowed mother Catherine eventually joined them and settled in nearby areas including Southgate, on the north bank of the Clarence River and Swan Creek.



My parents, early members of our Society, were very keen family historians and one of my childhood memories is of attending a family reunion they organised in 1962 to celebrate 100 years of settlement in the area. It was attended by 180 descendants of Catherine's children and a huge family tree was prepared. I went to South Grafton High School and then Lismore Teachers' College, graduating as a general primary teacher.

After becoming a teacher, I married David Grove of Grafton, in 1974. He was a Grafton boy and, although our families knew each other, we met through a mutual friend who was also his cousin, in Sydney. We settled in Sydney initially where he worked in air conditioning. We had our own air conditioning business in Albury where we lived for 12 years, then moved to Canberra where he was involved in setting up and then maintaining the air conditioning system at Parliament House.

In Canberra I studied Early Childhood Education, receiving my Bachelor degree from Canberra University in 1992. I taught primary classes in Mt Druitt, Albury and Canberra, then, when I had a young family, taught part time in Canberra Preschools including the Language Preschool - a wonderful joint venture with speech pathologists, to assist children with language disability or delay. This led to my placement as a kindergarten teacher in the Introductory English Centre at Hughes Primary School which caters for new arrivals in Canberra. My use of music as an everyday teaching tool to encourage language development led to my involvement with several school bands and choirs and my last two years of teaching included music lessons for every class, both mainstream and IEC.

My three children, Michael born in 1977, Phillip 1979 and Alice 1981 have settled in Canberra, for which I am grateful, especially since David's sudden death last year. Fortunately David and I were able to travel considerably before our retirement and amongst my treasured memories are two visits to Scotland including a golden afternoon in Strontian with our son, Phillip, in 2003.

Although I retired in 2010, I still teach casually at Hughes Primary School in the Introductory English Centre where I taught for eleven years. I belong to Rotary and sing with Conchordia Choir. One of my passions is literature, both current and past, and I belong to several groups celebrating the work of children's authors. I am a member of the Jane Austen Society of Australia, the Elsie J Oxenham Appreciation Society, UK, and the Abbey Girls of Australia. I also belong to a group which appreciates the work of Georgette Heyer and a Read Around Australia Book Club where we read and discuss more contemporary literature. I am currently the Youth Director at my Rotary Club and look forward to home hosting a student from Belgium in 2014. My very personable dachshund called Mr Snags also keeps me busy and active on a daily basis.

GENERAL NEWS



New Members

A warm welcome to new members:

V13-1091 Maggie Cahtie Neville Maribyrnong VIC
 V13-1092 Elizabeth Miller, Fern Tree Gully VIC
 N13-1093 Brian Wallis, Mittagong 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 and 22nd November 2013, are an essential part of our funding and greatly appreciated. Apologies to anyone who has been overlooked.

Gwen Hubert	Pearce	ACT
William & Rebecca McVie	Bonython	ACT
Robyn Hancox	Wollstonecraft	NSW
Michael & Mary McPhee	Vaucluse	NSW
Ross & Joyce McPhee	West Pymble	NSW
Trish McPhee	Seaforth	NSW
Neville & Sonia McPhee	Cooma	NSW
Marie Tattam	Moree	NSW
Keith & Joyce Caldwell	Annerley	QLD
Dorothy McPhee	Bell	QLD
Kevin McPhee Port	Douglas	QLD
Robyn Young	Jimboomba	QLD
Ann Leask	McLaren Vale	SA
Anthony Gartland	Box Hill	VIC
Beverly Knowles	Balwyn	VIC
Bernard McPhee	Middle Park	VIC
Norman R McPhee	Ringwood	VIC
Fr. Mathew McPhee	Middle Park	VIC
Haydn McPhie	Mirboo North	VIC
Erina Wood	Masterton	NZ

Fewer losing Touch Now

Members failing to notify the Society of a change of address is always a problem. This year it is pleasing to note an absence of this issue.

Email from Cass McHaffie, Tweed Heads

Hi Everyone

So happy to report that my husband Brian was cleared today of the Lymphoma and the doctor does not want to see him until December. No more scans or blood tests in sight so this is great news and a relief for us. Thank you all for your concern over the last few months.

Love from us both.

New Arrivals

As President of our Society, I was given a firm rebuke recently by my daughter-in-law for failing to mention the inclusion of a new member for the Society in the last issue of *The Downunder*. In some ways I was thankful for it because at least I knew she read the journal. My son Philip and his wife Freya recently celebrated the arrival of their third child, Claire Amanda McPhee. She joins brother Lachlan and sister Lauren. My wife and I are now fortunate to have three lovely grandchildren. Still on the family, it has taken a long time to happen, but recently my elder son Ashley married Melbourne girl Jane Pearson. It's great to welcome another McPhee to the family and to the Society.

President's Postscript

Since taking over as President, I have tried to keep members informed about how the Society is progressing (or otherwise) by publishing a basic annual report in each March edition of *The Downunder*. My report included an inventory list to let members know what they actually owned, and who held what.

It is the question of inventory that I would like to touch on before handing over my responsibilities to Morris. It had been my intention next year to not only suggest the Society acquire some merchandise (as discussed at the last BGM in Perth), but to start and build up a library of relevant Clan literature. I think such a library in the hands of a President or Clan Historian would be a wonderful resource for members. A list of publications could be printed in *The Downunder* each March and would form part of the Society's inventory list. All being well, that may be possible next year.

In Memoriam

It is with sadness that we report the passing on 19th July, of Queensland member Esma McCarthy (N81-497), aged 92. Esma was the first child of Alexander Allan McPhee and Ethel Florence Lees. Six of their children are still living.

Report on 11th Macfie Clan Parliament & 19th International Gathering at Dumfries

from former President Brian McPhee Reports:

The following is a Report on proceedings at the Clan Gathering held at Dumfries in Scotland, between the 4th and 7th September 2013.

Some 47 participants from Australia, Ireland, Netherlands, NZ, Spain, Sweden, UK, and USA gathered at the Clan Parliament opening by Clan Caenn- Cath Iain Macfie, but unfortunately missing was Australian President Ian McPhee due to a last minute health hiccough.

On the 2nd day the Parliament broke into various areas of interest:

Tartan Committee: A hunting tartan designed by Caenn-Cath Iain was adopted.

Legal Committee: This committee was charged with determining how many trustees should be appointed to administer the Trust A/c. It was determined there should be 3 with power to appoint a further 2. The Caenn-Cath will settle on this later.

Genealogy: Information on Macfies has been put up on "rootsweb. com" for Clan members to access.

Music Dance & Arts Committee: Bob Macfie, Chair asked for any poems, songs or artistic work to be sent to him.

On the last evening of the Gathering at Dumfries, Marilyn & I were joined by eldest son Rick for the Clan Commander's Dinner with some 70 Macfies attending. Next day it was to Oban to meet with sons Jamie, Angus, their wives and children. Then the culmination of a lot of planning. We all boarded the ferry to Colonsay. Our family of 12 had made it. Great great, great. The excitement on board was palpable. Landing at 8 pm meant straight to our accommodation at Machrins, a house that slept all 12 of us and a history lesson on the Macfie Clan from 1623 to today.

Next morning it was to the Macfie Standing Stone which was the Mecca of our trip and a very emotional time. Alastair Scouller, who lives on the island said a prayer and then Iain dedicated a replacement plaque to Earle Douglas McPhee of Canada who was responsible for reviving Clan Macfie. We all loved that morning which was the highlight of our trip. In the arvo it was across the Strand to Oronsay & the amazing relics there. Other highlights of our time on Colonsay were the best bread ever from "The Pantry". A ceilidh at the Colonsay Hotel where Bobby from Glasgow piped, Alister recited some really humorous poetry, Linda Gilcrest from USA had us sing a song of the Macfies she had written, our family of 12 sang "Waltzing Matilda" and so on.

One afternoon we walked to Balnahardt Bay followed by seeking Macfie's Cave which is particularly difficult to find but with the help of Wayne and brother Glen from Florida we eventually did. It is suggested a Chief of Clan Macfie was shot there by an arrow through the roof Wayne has just become armigerous and has his crest tattooed on his leg. We visited Kiloran Bay which is just so beautiful and believe it or not Rick swam. We visited the Colonsay Brewery; yes Colonsay has its own brewery, and the golf course but no golf this time. Eventually it was time to catch the ferry back to Oban and say goodbye, but hopefully for the grandkids, it will be back again one day.

Clan Commander to Visit Australia in 2014

2014 marks the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Macfie Clan Society both of Australia and New Zealand. To help celebrate that milestone, Clan Commander Iain McFie and his wife Fiona will travel to New Zealand and visit Australia before returning to Scotland. The trip is the brainchild of NZ Commissioner James McPhee.

It is anticipated Iain and Fiona will fly into Sydney from New Zealand on the 31st October and spend the first 2 weeks of November in Australia before returning to Scotland. It is hoped as many members as possible will turn out to see him while he is in the country. More details will follow next year.

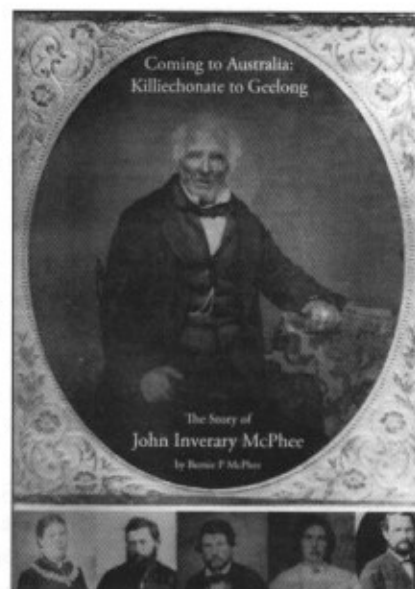
GENEALOGY

A New Book

from Past President Benie McPhee

Bernie has composed this 96 page book shown at right for the benefit of his own McPhee family, pinpointing Killiechonate on the Inverloch Estate as their Scotland home. John Inverary McPhee, 1706 to 1867 is the great grandfather of the author, and John's parents also had the very Lochaber names of Duncan McPhee and Ann Cameron.

In the book's first chapter, John Inverary McPhee tells his own story, and in the second chapter, Bernie McPhee tells us where he got the information to write that material. While the book presents some documentary information about the Lochaber McPhees of the 1840's, and information about the Highlands and Islands Emigration Society of the 1850's, and some family documents and some drawings by Greg Jorgenson, and finally lists McPhee soldiers of the Great War, the book is about more than these few facts. Beyond this, Bernie McPhee has opened up for readers the close connection of the 14th and 15th Century MacDonells of Keppoch and the Camerons, to the McPhees of Lochaber: of Glen Spean and of Glen Pean.



The main thrust of this book has to do with the DNA Study, undertaken by Roderick MacDuff for the MacFie Clan Society. One significant group of those participating in the study were the Lochaber or Glen Urquhart group, and these thirteen people had identical DNA for the male haplotype. Identical, not just similar. So, these people had a common ancestor about 400 years ago, in Lochaber obviously. John Inverary McPhee takes us back to more than half that time in Lochaber.

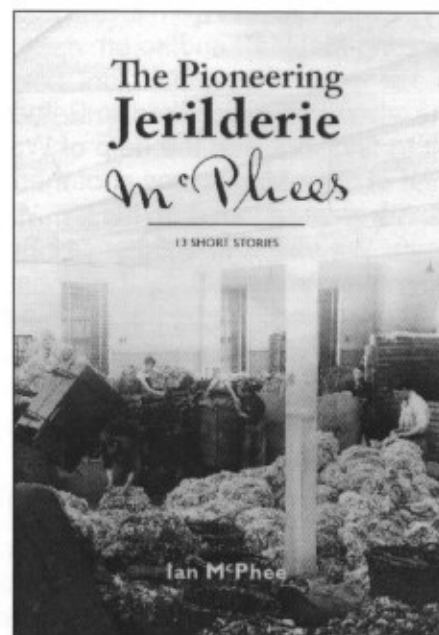
New Book

from Society President Ian McPhee

My great grandfather, Angus McPhee, came to Australia with his parents in 1852 on the *Marmion*. Margaret McPhee arrived in Australia with her mother on the *Utopia* in 1854. Angus married Margaret (who was not related), in 1857 at Hamilton in Victoria.

This book shown at right, is about the life of each one of Angus and Margaret's 13 children. Isolation, hardship, self reliance, financial uncertainty, and lack of opportunity were all part of living on the land in the Australian outback during the 1800s. It was not a place for the weak or faint hearted. The sacrifice and effort made by those who helped develop rural Australia is often overlooked.

After selecting property and then farming near Dunkeld in Victoria for nearly ten years, Angus and Margaret McPhee eventually settled in outback New South Wales near Jerilderie in 1875, where they raised 13 children on their property 'Summer Glen'. Being brought up in the bush had a significant impact on those children and influenced the direction of their lives. This book tells the story of the 13 'Jerilderie McPhees'. The life of each one is explored in 13 individual chapters with particular reference to history and the social norms of the era.



What were they like? What did they do? Where did they go? How did they end up? They were questions I sought to answer. Born in the 1800s, they were pioneers in our country before it became the nation we know today. I have published this book as a tribute to them and to record their life histories for future generations of their descendants. The book comprises 250 pages.

Did your ancestors first set foot on Australian soil at Portland Bay Victoria?

from the President

Former Society member Bernadette, or rather Bern as she prefers to be called, McPhee, sent me a note and a most interesting leaflet put out by the Portland History Group. Bern resides at Blackheath in the Blue Mountains of NSW and had returned home after a stay at Portland. The leaflet was titled "Did your Ancestors first set foot on Australian soil at Portland Bay? Then you or a family member may consider erecting a plaque in their memory on the Immigrants' Wall, Portland, Victoria". The following information is taken from that leaflet.

Immigrants Wall, Bentinck St, Portland

Glenelg Shire Council has granted permission for descendants of those immigrants who first set foot on Australian soil at Portland, to place a memorial on the Immigration Wall on the Ploughed Field. A photo of the wall is on the back page.

38 ships carrying assisted migrants arrived at Portland between 1851 and 1857. A few migrants arrived on cargo ships — *Francis Henty*, *Maid of Julpha* and *Cornelius* and a few others jumped ship at Portland Bay. These qualify, however proof needs to be provided. If immigrants arrived at Melbourne and they came directly to Portland, they do not qualify. They are Melbourne arrivals. Also settlers coming from interstate do not qualify. Initial enquiries should be made to Portland Family History Group.

Immigrant ships from Great Britain that landed at Portland 1851-1857

- 1851 Tasmania
- 1852 Runnymede, Emma Eugenia, Flora McDonald, Priam, Dominion, John Davies, Helen, Marmion
- 1853 Anne Milne, Duke of Richmond, Eliza, Oithona, New Zealander
- 1854 Utopia, Hooghly, Almora, Edward Johnson, Arabian, Indian Ocean, Nestor, Panama, Clara, Bloomer, Violet
- 1855 Birmingham, Shand, Derry Castle, Oithona (2nd visit), Athletae, Constant, Cairngorm, Balnaguith
- 1856 Anna Maria, General Hewitt, Severn
- 1857 Mary Ann, British Empire

Council regulations

Council has set a permanent rental and placement fee of \$100.00. This fee will not cover damage to/or replacement of the plaque. The plaque will be no larger than A4 size but may vary in shape and orientation. The plaques will be put in place by an employee of the Glenelg Shire Council. Help can be offered with wording for your plaque if required.

Erecting a plaque

The plaques are 22.5 x 22.7cm and the cost is \$335.00. A variety of shapes and tinted plaques are available, subject to size requirements and prices are available on request. You may also make your own choice of foundry or monumental firm. Plaques are available from: Parkers Monumental Masons, Fitzgerald Street Portland Vic 3305, phone (03) 5523 1090. All enquiries concerning the Immigrants' Wall can be handed by contacting the Portland Family History Group: P.O. Box 409 Portland VIC 3305, Email: history-house@glenelg.vic.gov.au or by telephoning the Group on 03 5522 2266.

.....

Robbie Burns' Selkirk Grace:

In connection with the poet's visit to the seat of the Earl of Selkirk, it has been stated that at one of the meals there, Burns was asked to say Grace, and he delivered what is usually styled 'The Selkirk Grace'. Apparently the Selkirk Grace was already known in the 17th century, as the 'Galloway Grace' or the 'Covenanters' Grace'. The Selkirk Grace can be said as follows:

Some hae meat and canna eat;
And some can eat that want it;
But we hae meat and we can eat,
So let the Lord be thanket.

The Floating Church

from ACT Vice-President, Heather Grove

As we grow older, many of us are rediscovering an interest in our family history and of course now, with the internet, genealogy sites etc., it is becoming easier. But we need to remember that nothing takes the place of writing down our memories while we still have them...

Finding some old family papers recently reminded me of one of the favourite stories told by older family members during my childhood. All the Lower Coldstream McPhees were firm adherents to the Free Presbyterian Church, a decision which their family would have made in 1845 when an event known as "The Disruption" took place in Scotland.

Anyone who has ever read Jane Austen will be familiar with the system of patronage in the Church of England. The most important landowner in the district had the right to appoint the clergyman of his parish, was therefore virtually his employer and usually provided him with his manse. The landlord obviously had a large amount of influence, for better or worse. It was the same in the Presbyterian denomination but in the 1830's Presbyterian congregations found themselves divided into two groups, those who were satisfied with this comfortable arrangement, and the others – the fundamentalists - who believed that a congregation should be able to select their own leader which would enable them to follow more closely the other Biblical principles they believed in.

Of course this is a very simple analysis. The differences went much deeper, but in 1843 at the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Dr Chalmers led a group of over 200 dissenting ministers into the street where they signed a "Deed of Demission" separating them and their congregations from the Church of Scotland and forming the "Free Church of Scotland"; FREE because they were no longer beholden to landlord, government, or, in their eyes, to any but God. This was a very brave stand because it meant that ministers no longer had regular incomes, homes or places to preach. They often had to work at other occupations as otherwise they were reliant on their usually poor parishioners for support. But, as you will see, the parishioners too, were brave and resourceful.

My ancestors lived in Strontian on Loch Sunart. The whole district of Ardnarmurchan where they lived, was the property of Sir James Riddell, extending over an area of forty miles in length. Many of the people joined the Free Church, and forwarded a respectful petition, asking for sites to build a church and a manse. His reply was a refusal. In one letter Riddell stated, "I find it impossible, conscientiously, to grant sites for churches, manses, and schools, which would imply a sanction on my part, and give a perpetuity on my estates, to a system which I believe to be anti-social and anti-Christian". As a consequence, the people of Strontian and others in Ardnarmurchan, totalling some 500, had to meet in the open air. At communion season, and at other times, Mr. MacLean of Tobermory held services on the hillside, often in severe weather, and sometimes when the congregation was very wet. A Mr McRae of Knockbain, had preached to them with snow on the ground, and when 'it was laying snow'"

Denied even permission to erect a tent by the local landlord, they worshipped in barns and open hillsides until someone had the bright idea of building a floating church which could be anchored in some sheltered bay near the beach, and give accommodation to the people until better days came round. The idea was eagerly taken up, subscriptions were raised from local congregations, and plans carefully drawn up for a vessel. The ship was commissioned at a cost of £1400, and much interest was felt as her construction went on in one of the ship building yards along the Clyde.

The huge vessel, constructed with a timber frame on an iron hull, was built, fitted up with a pulpit and benches, small vestry etc., and towed from the Clyde round the Mull of Kintyre by one or two tug-steamers, and in the end safely moored. At first there was some difficulty as to a proper anchorage for the vessel. The best place, safest for the ship and most convenient for the people, would have been just under the windows of Sir James Riddell's mansion, but, as a matter of good taste, another site was chosen two miles away, and there, at a point about 150 yards from the shore, the vessel was safely moored by cables off the beach near Strontian in 1846. Rowing boats conveyed the congregation to and from services on the floating church. It was said that for every 100 worshippers the church sank an inch in the water.

As a place of worship the accommodation was very comfortable. The pulpit stood at the bow – under cover of course – having the vestry at one side. The entrance for the congregation was towards the stern; that for the minister near the bow. A passage on one side, running the whole length of the church, afforded access to the benches, which were ranged straight across ship throughout her whole length, and occupied the entire breadth, excepting what was required for the passage. About 750 worshippers could be comfortably accommodated

They worshipped there for about 10 years until the miracle took place! In Scotland, as far as the tide rises is considered *common land*. During a major storm the church was lifted by a high tide and stranded on the beach. Here it was secured in its new position and the Free Kirkers continued to worship much more conveniently. The landlord could not interfere as the tide had put it there. Apparently he was so anxious to get this eyesore removed that he granted land for the building of a new church. Indeed, I visited my ancestor Alan's grave in the churchyard there in 2003.

The Reverend Alexander McIntyre preached in the floating church. Later he, too, came to Australia and was the minister in Maclean, visiting Lower Coldstream regularly and holding services in the McPhee family home. No doubt the story was told and retold from every viewpoint.

During World War II a McPhee descendant, Lieutenant John Davison, visited Strontian whilst on leave and wrote to his father to tell him he had seen the *remains of the church*. The letter was published in *The Daily Examiner* (Grafton) on March 7, 1941. My mother, Jean McPhee, wrote an article for the same newspaper in 1962, when my family held a family reunion, quoting from the letter as well as telling the story in more detail than my childish memory retained. And I was able to read more about *The Disruption* in Ian's book, *The McPhees of Argyll* (2001)...

As a point of interest, apparently the last living link with the floating church was broken in November 1949, with the death at the age of 88 of crofter Alexander Macphee who had been baptised on the vessel.

Let us continue to write our family stories... and wouldn't it be a great idea to share some of them in our very own McPhee magazine?

.....

Some Facts About Strontian on Loch Sunart

from the editor

Strontian is the main village in Sunart, an area in western Lochaber, in the western Highlands of Scotland. It lies on the north shore of Loch Sunart, close to the head of the Loch which opens out to the Sound of Mull, opposite Tobermory. Strontian was listed among 2000 "moribund" Highland villages and selected to receive government funding for regeneration. This resulted in the shopping centre, cafe and information kiosk which are now located in the centre of the village.

The Strontian area has a long history of mining dating back to 1722, when Sir Alexander Murray discovered galena in the hills in the region. A mine was opened in 1725, in partnership with Thomas Howard, 8th Duke of Norfolk, and General Wade. Various materials were mined there including lead. Lead mined at Strontian was used in bullets manufactured for the Napoleonic Wars and in the early part of the 19th century, part of the workforce was made up of captured French soldiers from Napoleon's imperial army.

It was in the mines at Strontian that the mineral strontianite was discovered, from which the element strontium was first isolated. In 1790, Adair Crawford, a physician, recognised that the Strontian ores exhibited different properties to those normally seen with other "heavy spars" sources. He concluded "... it is probable indeed, that the scotch mineral is a new species of earth which has not hitherto been sufficiently examined". The new mineral was named *strontites* in 1793 by a professor at the University of Glasgow.

The first large scale application of strontium was in the production of sugar from sugar beet. Although a crystallisation process using strontium hydroxide was patented by Augustin-Pierre Dubrunfaut in 1849, large scale introduction came with the improvement of the process in the early 1870s. The German sugar industry used the process well into the 19th century. The last mining in the area took place in the 1980s when barite was extracted for use in the North Sea oilfields.

Clan Macfie News

from Scotland

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 or 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 small 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.

A Macfie Tale: Macfie's Black Dog from Clan News No 61

The Chief of the Macfies was hunting and came upon an old man whose dog had a litter of puppies, one of which was completely black. Macfie decided it was the one he would like to own. "The rest you may take," said the old man, "but not the black one."

"No other will do," insisted the Chief. "I must have it." The old man relented, saying, "Take it then. Only one day's work will it do for you and that will be well done."

When the dog grew up it had a ravenous appetite and would not hunt, but Macfie would not get rid of it. One day as the Chief readied his bhirlinn for a hunting trip to the island of Jura, and would not move. The Chief's friends laughed at him for keeping such a useless creature, but Macfie cried, "Wait. The black dog's day has not yet come." Before they could leave, a storm came up very suddenly, and the hunters returned home.

In the morning of the next day the boat was loaded up again, but still the dog refused to go. This time a worse storm raged. The Clansmen looked at the dog and said, "The dog has foreknowledge."

When the boat was being prepared the next day, Macfie's dog jumped in ahead of the Clansmen. "The black dog will soon have its day," said the Chief. That very night his friends were murdered in a cave by an evil spirit, but the black dog would not let them near Macfie. From the top of the Cave a hand reached down through a hole in the roof and tried to grab the Chief. The black dog sank its teeth into the monstrous arm, which then withdrew. As it did so, the dog lay down at his master's feet and died.

Footnote: *The President of the Clan Macfie Society (Scotland), Bob McFie, is an excellent piper and composer. He also at one time had a big black dog. Guess what? He wrote a pipe tune entitled "The Black-Dog's Master."*

The Honey Bees of Colonsay & Kangaroo Island

There are about 250 species of native bees in the UK, consisting of 24 species of bumblebees, 225 species of solitary bees, but just one honey bee species, the native black bee (*Apis mellifera mellifera*). The native black bee is much hardier than the yellow or Italian bee (*Apis mellifera ligustica*), and thus the native black bee can survive the harsh climate of the Inner Hebrides.

The isles of Colonsay and Oronsay are currently home to about 50 colonies of the native black bee. Between 5 February and 19 April 2013, the Scottish Government sought views on the creation of a protected area for *Apis mellifera mellifera*, encompassing Colonsay and Oronsay, using the powers contained in the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. The public consultation process received overwhelming support. Environment and climate change minister Paul Wheelhouse said 'the new reserve fits in with wider work being undertaken on bee health in Scotland and would be significant in ensuring a bright future for black bees on the island. He said the order is a targeted measure to protect an important population of black bees on Colonsay from hybridisation with non-native bees'.

Beekeeper Andrew Abrahams has campaigned for the islands to be recognised as a sanctuary for the species. He began keeping bees on Colonsay 35 years ago, but the island has an even longer tradition as a haven for the black bee. The island's isolation and lack of existing honeybee population saw it chosen as the site for an experimental breeding station for the native bee in 1941.

In September 2013, The Bee Keeping (Colonsay and Oronsay) Order 2013 was laid before the Scottish Parliament and comes into force on 1st January 2014. The new law makes it an offence to keep any honeybee on Colonsay or Oronsay except *Apis mellifera mellifera*. Thus the islands have become a sanctuary for the bees. Welcoming the legislation, Andrew Abrahams said, 'It's the government's acknowledgement that native bees should be conserved because they are much more suitable to our difficult environment, and the increasingly difficult environment global warming will bring us'.



Most of Britain's native honeybee species were wiped out in the early 20th Century by the 'Isle of Wight' disease, caused by a parasitic mite which spread throughout the country. A few isolated populations survived and formed the basis of apiaries set up by Abrahams in 1978. The biggest threat to bees kept in apiaries today is the deadly Varroa mite, which was first discovered in the UK in 1992 and has led to the virtual elimination of feral bee colonies in many areas. Colonsay was chosen as a reserve because its bees are free from the disease and are genetically pure.

Eric McArthur, vice president of Glasgow and District Beekeepers' Association said 'the need for the reserve has been a long time coming'. He added the Colonsay and Oronsay reserve ranks in importance with Australia's Kangaroo Island, which was designated as a reserve for the native bee of Italy, *Apis mellifera ligustica*, which was imported there in the 1800s. It is now believed to hold the last remaining pure stock of the species anywhere in the world. He said 'the honey bees on Colonsay and Oronsay have the same significance for future *Apis mellifera mellifera* genetic purity as Kangaroo Island has for *Apis mellifera ligustica*. These islands become a Mecca not only for worldwide beekeepers interested in seeing the pure race *Apis mellifera mellifera* for themselves, but also for scientists investigating the limits of genetic diversity in any closed isolated population. The importance of the Colonsay and Oronsay honey bee reserve to Scotland's economy cannot be stressed strongly enough and the islands should be developed as a Centre for Excellence for the black bee of Scotland'. (Ref: BBC News and The Scotsman)

Free Book Offer

from Ian McPhee

Recently, the husband of a good friend of my wife's passed away. Like me, he played the bagpipes, had a great interest in Scottish history and had a collection of Scottish books and literature. Rather than discard the books, or give them to an organisation like St. Vincent de Paul, a number of them were given to me, something I was very grateful for. One of the books that came into my possession was a magnificent hard-cover, published in 1985 titled, 'In All Things Faithful', compiled by T. F. Wade-Ferrell, . The book runs to nearly 400 pages and is sub-titled:

"A History and Album of the 30th Battalion and New South Wales Scottish Regiment 1885-1985".

The above book is in pristine condition and something, that apart from its historical value, would be a worthy acquisition for anyone with particular interest in the subject. I now offer it to any member at no cost other than the cost for postage. The first member to contact me about it and pay the postage, can have it.

Remembrance Day

Remembrance Day on 11th November, where Australia honours those fellow countrymen who made the supreme sacrifice during war, was celebrated recently. The 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month marks the signing of the Armistice that ended World War I on 11th November 1918. After that signing, the guns on the Western Front, which included Flanders Fields, fell silent. The poem In Flanders' Fields was written during the First World War by Canadian physician Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae. He was inspired to write it on May 3, 1915, after presiding over the funeral of friend and fellow soldier Alexis Helmer, who died in the Second Battle of Ypres. It is a poignant reminder of what happened on the Western Front.

In Flanders Fields

In Flanders' Fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
Scarce heard amid the guns below.
We are the dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved, and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders' Fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders' Fields.

Blue Label Whisky

Last year, ahead of its official launch, Johnnie Walker revealed that a nip of its opulent new drop, Blue Label marquee whisky could be enjoyed for \$190! A bottle costs \$4,500. Johnnie Walker Blue Label is a commemoration of Alexander Walker's 1867 Old Highland Whisky. According to the Johnnie Walker company, the rare casks used in the blending of Blue Label are drawn from the largest reserves of whisky in the world. They are hand selected and set aside for the exceptional quality, character and flavour, with only one in 10,000 containing whisky of sufficient character to deliver its remarkably smooth signature taste. According to the maker, Blue Label is 'best savoured with the palate cleansed and cooled by iced water. The whisky has a mellow, rounded nose, with a dry smokiness mixed with raisin sweetness. The first sip reveals a velvety mouth-feel, then an explosion of flavour - hazelnuts, honey, rose petals, sherry and oranges. (Ref: Scots News, Aug 2012, Vol 2 No 4 page 5)

Celebrating Robbie Burns

Robbie Burns was born on 25th January 1759 in a two roomed thatched cottage in the village of Alloway, about two miles from the town of Ayr. As Scotland's favourite bard, his birthday is celebrated around the world each year with 'Burns Nights' on or near 25th January.

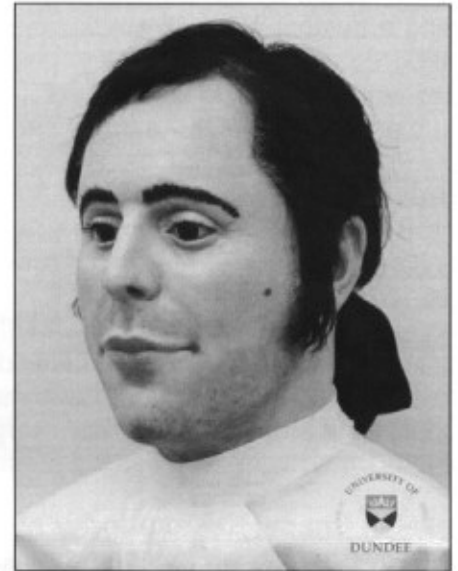
Robbie Burns Unmasked

Robert Burns died of rheumatic fever in Dumfries on 21st July 1796. He was originally buried in St. Michael's church yard in Dumfries but, in September 1815, his remains were moved to the purpose built mausoleum paid for by public subscription, located in the corner of the churchyard. In 1834, the mausoleum was opened to allow Burns' wife, Jean Armour, to be buried alongside him, and the opportunity was taken to make a plaster cast of the Bard's skull. The cast then lay, for the most part undisturbed, for almost 200 years until recently !

Scientists at the University of Dundee which is home to the Centre for Anatomy and Human Identification (CAHID), have used the latest reconstruction techniques to recreate the face of Robert Burns. The task fell to Professor Wilkinson to work with the cast of Burns skull to see what she might come up with, and here it is (at right).

The unmasking of Burns' face featured in an STV documentary called "*In Search of Robert Burns*" which was first shown in January 2013. The documentary unveiled the model of Robert Burns' head, reconstructed using state-of-the art forensic technology by Professor Wilkinson and her team. The Professor commented :

"To be able to reveal the 3D head of Burns to Scotland and the world is an immense privilege for us, and all the team have watched this head develop and take on character over the last year. Finally we can see this charismatic poet as others would have seen him in life, and it has not been disappointing. This project has been quite a challenge and an enormous responsibility. We assessed as much material as we could for this reconstruction, including skeletal and anatomical structure, facial proportions from the Reid miniature and the Miers silhouette, and texture details from the portraits. This 3D depiction is as accurate as possible based on the available information, and shows Burns in his full living glory." (ref: The Scotsman, BBC and the internet)



Auld Lang Syne

The earliest known version of Old Lang Syne was a 15th century poem called 'Auld kindness Foryett', the story of a man in impoverished circumstances, who is reflecting on the ingratitude of those who claimed to be his friends in better days. Then in 1711, in Watson's collection of Scottish verse, a poem appeared called 'Old Langsyne'. Attributed to an unknown writer, it consists of twelve stanzas of eight lines, and is written throughout in English, rather than Scots. It begins 'Should old acquaintance be forgot, and never thought upon?' There was also a song published by Allan Ramsay in 1724, entitled 'Auld Lang Syne', which began, 'Should auld acquaintance be forgot, tho' they return with scars?'

The first record of the song in the version that we know today is mentioned in Robert Burns' letter to his friend Mrs Dunlop, dated December 17, 1788. Burns enclosed a copy of the verse, saying, 'Here is an old song and tune which has often thrilled through my soul'. Burns claimed to have taken it down 'from an old man's singing'. Five years later he sent a copy of the song, with new verses composed by himself, to George Thomson, who was compiling a collection of Scottish songs with music. A few years after Burns' death, in 1799, his version of Auld Lang Syne was published in Thomson's 'Songs of Scotland' appearing for the first time with the melody to which it is sung today.

Burns' song Auld Lang Syne has spread around the world and is used for very different purposes. In Taiwan and Hong Kong, it is a well known funeral song whereas in the Philippines, it is played at university graduation ceremonies. In Japan and Hungary, Auld Lang Syne is often played at the end of the business day to tell customers that a store or restaurant is closing, while in Italy and Holland it is used with different words as a footballer's supporters' anthem. (ref The Scottish Banner, Vol. 35, No 6)

Scotland News

Trains & Trams, Old & New

On 3rd August 1863 the Highland Railway from Perth to Inverness (via Grantown and Spey) was completed and the opening event in Strathspey was attended by over 1200 people. A record of the event tells of a 'beautiful spot' at the foot of Craigellachie Rock being chosen for the formalities which were presided over by Mr. Grant Rothiemurchus. This past August and 150 years later, the Strathspey Railway replicated this event by having the current Grant of Rothiemurchus, the Earl of Dysart, Johnnie Grant, send off a celebratory train from Aviemore to Broomhill.

Trains that can go from Glasgow to Edinburgh in under 30 minutes and on to London in less than 2 hours could boost the central belt as a world beating 'mega region', according to the Scottish Transport Minister. He has called on the UK Government to accelerate work to bring high speed rail to Scotland, and is developing a business case for a fast line between Scotland's two biggest cities. Edinburgh's new tram system will be up and running by May next year. After 6 years of construction, the capita's streets will be clear of road works. Tram testing between the airport and Edinburgh Park has already begun and test trams will run along the entire route to the centre of the city by December. (ref; Scottish Banner Vol 37, no 4 & 5, BBC News)

Battle of Flodden Anniversary & Excavation

The Battle of Flodden was the greatest military disaster in Scotland's history. This year marks the 500th anniversary of the Battle, which took place between the English and the Scots at Branxton on 9th September, 1513. In just 3 hours 14,000 men including King James IV of Scotland were killed. James IV was the last reigning monarch to die in battle on British soil. Excavation to find the remains of thousands of the bodies buried on Flodden battlefield in Northumberland was begun recently. Volunteers took part in the project to locate and protect the remains of those killed. It is hoped the findings can be used to declare the burials as war graves. The work targeted the sites of body pits indentified in the late 19th and early 20th century when work was carried out to lay water and drainage pipes. (ref: Scottish Banner Vol 37, no 4)

Rosslyn Chapel Restoration

Rosslyn Chapel was founded as a Catholic collegiate church, with between four and six ordained canons and two boy choristers, in the mid-15th century. Rosslyn Chapel & the nearby Roslin Castle are located at the village of Roslin, Midlothian, Scotland. The Chapel was founded by William Sinclair, 1st Earl of Caithness. In 1592, when the Chapel was seized by Protestant reformers, it ceased to be used as a place of worship and over the years fell into a state of disrepair. Although some initial restoration work was carried out in 1736, it was not until the early 1800s that the St Clair family began work in earnest to restore the interior of the building. By 1862 the Chapel was once more a working church. A 16-year project to restore Rosslyn Chapel has come to an end, with the last piece of scaffolding removed from the building. Work started in 1997 after it was found the intricate stonework was being damaged by dampness and high humidity levels. A steel structure was constructed over the listed Chapel in Midlothian to allow the roof to dry out naturally.

EVENTS FOR THE DIARY

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| December 7 | Daylesford Highland Gathering, Victoria Park |
| January 1 | Maryborough Highland Gathering, Princes Park Maryborough, Victoria |
| January 25 | Burns Anniversary |
| January 25 | St Andrew's Society of Western Australia Burns Supper, WA |
| January 26 | Australia Day Celtic Festival, Bradfield Park, Milson's Point, NSW |
| February 8 | Bendigo Scots Day Out, Rosalind Park, Bendigo, VIC |
| February 16 | Mt Barker Highland Gathering, Mount Barker Oval, Mt Barker, SA |
| March 2 | Geelong Gathering, Deakin University, 75 Pigdon's Rd, Waurn Ponds, Geelong, VIC |
| March 30 | Ringwood Highland Gathering, East Ringwood Sports Ground, VIC |
| April 5 | Bundanoon Highland Gathering, Bundanoon, NSW |
| May 1-4 | Glen Innes Celtic Festival, Glen Innes, NSW |

SOCIETY OFFICE BEARERS

President*
 Ian McPhee PO Box 6464 Frenchs Forest NSW 2086
 02 9938 2550 mobile: 0419 382555
 Email: irmac10@bigpond.net.au

Vice President*
 Margaret Barnes 201/5 Cary St Drummoyne NSW 2047
 91811689 mobile: 0419 612845
 Email: mbarnes@netspace.net.au

QLD VP*
 Susan Spinks Chertsey M/S 212 Oakey QLD 4401
 07 4691 6206 mobile: 0408 063122
 Email: susanfaithspinks@tadaust.org.au

NSW VP*
 Morris McPhee 24 Cobran Road Cheltenham NSW 2119
 02 9868 1521 mobile: 0439 407492
 Email: colonsay@bigpond.net.au

ACT VP*
 Heather Grove 20 Mellor Crt. Florey ACT 2615
 02 62583219 mobile: 0404612891
 Email: heathergrove1@hotmail.com

VIC VP*
 Ross McPhee 18 Faulkner St. St. Kilda VIC 3182
 0421048207
 Email: rossandkarenmcphee@gmail.com

SA VP*
 Judith Moore 107/125 Montacute Rd Campbelltown SA 5074
 08 83650220
 Email: -

TAS VP*
 Robyn McPhee 24 Cobran St Cheltenham NSW 2119
 02 93716117 mobile: 0434 072845
 Email: colonsay@bigpond.net.au

WA VP*
 Jillian King PO Box 3320 Joondalup WA 6027
 08 94054884
 Email: Semark63@bigpond.net.au

Treasurer*
 Geoff McPhee 43 Cedar Street Lugarno NSW 2210
 02 95334195 mobile: 0408 215290
 Email: gandrm@bigpond.com

Clan Commissioner*
 Sandy McPhee 2 Sandalwood Drive Glenvale QLD 4350
 07 46345919 mobile: 0419 766578
 Email: ahmcphee@bigpond.com

Clan Armiger*
 Sandy McPhee 49 Rodney Rd Mt Vincent NSW 2323
 02 49380350
 Email: norsandy@bigpond.net.au

Secretary
 Robyn McPhee 24 Cobran St Cheltenham NSW 2119
 02 93716117 mobile: 0434 072845
 Email: colonsay@bigpond.net.au

Chief Historian
 Trevor Phee 24 Bibby Street Hamilton NSW 2303
 02 4962 2672
 Email: t.phee@bigpond.com

Historian
 Bernie McPhee 1/18 York St. Mont Albert VIC 3127
 03 98997138
 Email: berniepmcphee@hotmail.com

Historian
 Helen McPhee 2 Sandalwood Drive Glenvale QLD
 07 46345919
 Email: ahmcphee@bigpond.com

Society Piper
 Michael Phee 90 Brennan Rd Gorokon NSW 2263
 02 43923666 mobile 0405 735887
 Email:

Downunder Editor
 Ian McPhee PO Box 6464 Frenchs Forest NSW 2086
 02 99382550 mobile: 0419 382555
 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 6464 Frenchs Forest NSW 2086

Telephone: 02 9938 2550

mobile: 0419 382555

Email: irmac10@bigpond.net.au

Disclaimer & Note

As the journal 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.

Brian and Marilyn McPhee's family in front of the Macfie Standing Stone on Colonsay. Brian is wearing an 'ancient Macfie' clan tartan

Front row left to right: grand-daughters Charley and Aimee

Middle row left to right: Marilyn, Jamie's wife Heather, grand-daughter Ella, grand-son Callum, Angus' wife Annie and Brian wearing his ancient Macfie tartan kilt

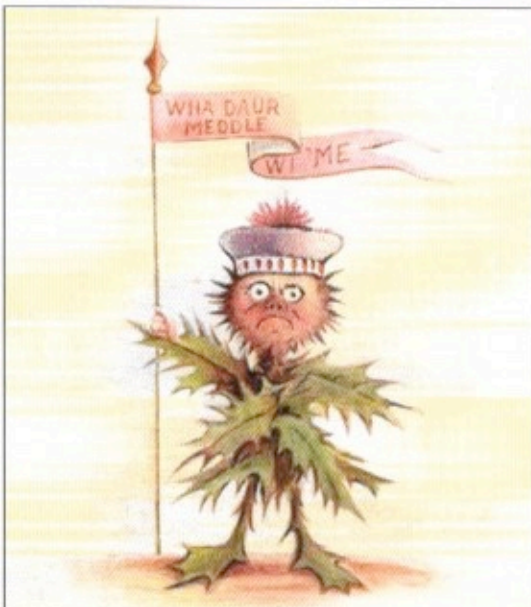
Back row from left to right: Jamie, grand-son Campbell, Angus & Rick



The Immigrants' Wall at Bentinck St, Portland Victoria.
For the story see page 7



One of the new gonfalons for the Macfie Clan Society of Australia. The stand has been designed and made by NSW Vice President Morris McPhee.



From NSW member Rosemary Szente to the editor:
"After reading your interesting article on the Scottish thistle (March 2012 Downunder), I thought you might like to see one which could be put in another issue of the magazine. It is a Scottish thistle painted in 1908 by a friend of my great aunt. I don't know if J.B. Jack became a professional artist. Many of the people who drew in my great-aunt's autograph book did become professional artists"

