



THE DOWNUNDER

Journal of the
Macfie Clan Society of Australia

Issue 131
November 2015



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



It is always sad to write an obituary for any Clan Society member who has passed away. Especially so for such a distinguished member as former Clan Commissioner Sandy McPhee from Mt. Vincent, NSW. Sandy, together with his wife Nora, the former Clan Society historian, have made a magnificent contribution to our organisation. It brings home to all of us, the responsibility we have to ensure their efforts were not in vein, and that our organisation remains healthy with a long term future.

This year, the Society is able to offer members something that is not only useful to them, but which may be used as a Christmas gift for other family members. Please support your Society by buying some of the new Clan writing pads mentioned below.

Prior to the last BGM in Adelaide, our chief historian Trevor Phee stepped down. Over the past 12 months I have made two trips to Trevor's home in Newcastle to collect files contained in three large filing cabinets. Some of those files are still to be collected. It is quite a task to go through such a mountain of material, before passing them on to new chief historian, Bev Knowles.

Among those files were a number of books. It has long been a wish of mine for the Society to have a good library of books relevant to all things Macfie. I have always believed the Clan in Scotland should have a reference library with books that can be made available to members around the world. Now that I have had an opportunity to see what our Society has in that regard, I am starting the ball rolling by establishing our Society's own library. An inventory of publications on hand has been drawn up, which I look forward to publishing next year. Of course issues of storage, access, management responsibility and caring for those books are still to be resolved.

New Clan Writing Pads

The Macfie Clan Society of Australia has had 250 writing pads printed which are available for members. The pads, which were printed by a small firm in Newcastle, NSW, are half the size of A4 paper and contain 50 sheets to write on.

Embossed with the clan tartan and clan logo, the pads make a stylish and practical small Christmas gift for any member of the family. They are ideal for a desk, the kitchen bench or any place where it is necessary to take down a message. To see what they look like, a sample (reduced in size) has been reproduced on page 5 of the Journal.



Two pads may be purchased from the Society for \$10.00 plus postage, or in packs of 5 for \$20.00 plus postage. For orders please contact secretary Robyn McPhee on 02 98681521 or Vice President Morris McPhee's mobile 0455 334846 or his email: colonsay@bigpond.net.au

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Front cover: Photo of Kiloran Bay Colonsay, taken by Vice President Morris McPhee's daughter Joanne.

MEMBER IN PROFILE

WA member: Christina Baccus (W89-707)

Migrant forebears: Patrick Fee, wife Jane Nixon & son James
Occupation: a baker and Jane a shopkeeper
Home in Ireland: County Fermanagh in Northern Island
Emigrant ship: *The Brothers*
Arrived Australia: Sydney, 11th March 1841
Pioneer forebears: James, married Ann McLoughlan 30th October 1872



Member's story in brief:

Christina's migrant forebears apparently also had an 8 months old son who died on the voyage to Australia. Their son James John married Anne McLoughlan on 30th October 1872. He was a grazier at Trunkey Creek NSW. Their son John Patrick was born in Bathurst on 4th August 1875 and he married Florence Louisa Coady. Their son, John Raymond McPhee born on 3rd August 1914 was Christina's father. He married Margaret Clare Coffey (born 26th August 1918).

Christina is one of John and Margaret's 6 children - Anthony born 1941, Christina 1943, Patricia 1945, Margaret 1946, Mary 1948 and Francis Ann 1952. Cristina grew up in the NSW country town of Cowra where her father was a pharmacist. A gifted student, she attended the Brigadine Convent there, and completed high school as a boarder at the Dominican Convent, Santa Sabina, at Strathfield in Sydney.

After helping in her father's pharmacy for 3 years, 20 year old Christina moved to Sydney where she became a receptionist for stockbroking firm Ian Potter & Co. There she gained a sound knowledge of stockbroking and numerous companies. This enabled her to move and become a stockbroker with her own clients at John N Robertson Thompson & Co. That firm sent her to their office in London, but when that closed after a year, she rejoined Ian Potter & Co. and stayed in London for 6 years.

On a visit to Sydney she met short term money market dealer and keen yachtsman Ronnie Backus, an Englishman who lived in Sydney. They married in 1978 and afterwards lived at Bondi Junction in Sydney. In 1980 they both relocated to Perth where Ronnie was involved with oil and gas development on WA's North West Shelf. Christina worked as a part time research assistant for stockbroker Hartley Pointon. About 4 years later she relinquished that role & formed a catering company called Moveable Feasts, which provided corporate lunches and cocktail parties. She continued with that company and its work for 15 years, until her husband died in 1999. She then retired aged 56.

Now settled in Mosman Park, in Perth, Christina is a member of a book club, loves reading, cooking, photography and looking after her 2 dogs and 2 cats. Each year she travels to the Isle of White to present the 'Backus Neil Trophy', a bronze Olympic yachting medal won by her husband, to the winner of an annual race at the Seaview Yacht Club on the Isle of White.

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Merry Christmas

I wish all members of the Society a safe and enjoyable Christmas and New Year. A big thank you to all members, who, by virtue of their membership, have supported the Society over the past twelve months.

To those who have sent in articles that have appeared in *The Downunder*, and all executive members who have either represented the Society at Scottish gatherings, or contributed to our Clan Society in some other way, go my best wishes and thanks.

Ian McPhee, President

GENERAL NEWS

Donations

Many thanks to the following members for their generous donation made to the Society and the Clan. Those donations, banked as at the beginning of December 2015, are an essential part of our funding and greatly appreciated

Gwen Duff
Glen & Glenda McPhee
Darlene Jones

Tewantin
Pukekohe
Papakura

Queensland
New Zealand
New Zealand

In Memoriam

It is with sadness that we report the passing of Alexander Lachlan McPhee, known to one and all as Sandy (N74-012). Former Clan Commissioner Sandy, from Mt. Vincent NSW, died on 29 September 2015. He is remembered with an extensive obituary on page 6

Update on Former Commander Sandy McPhie

From Helen in Towoomba

"Sandy's wife Helen sent in the following during the last week in November:

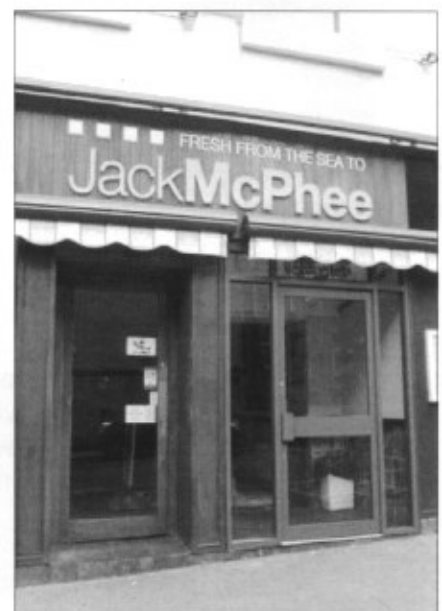
I eventually got Sandy home from hospital and transition care on the 8th October after going to hospital on the 23rd August. He is very thin and frail and spends a lot of time sleeping though still enjoys keeping up with the news and seeing our extended family. Unfortunately, yesterday he had to have a tooth out and that has knocked him about a bit but he handled the whole thing rather better than we both had expected. RSL Care are coming to assist with his showering etc., and to sit with him if I have to be away for more than an hour or so, as I worry about the possibility of him having a fall. Our son is a great help and our daughter frequently comes up from Brisbane to help and support us both, so we are very lucky."

Vice President's Visit to Scotland

Following my retirement an overseas trip was planned for Robyn, her sister Joan, our daughter Joanne and myself. As Joanne had not been to Colonsay and wanted to go, she and I left Australia a couple of days before Robyn and Joan, and flew to Glasgow. Robyn and Joan left a couple of days later flying to Paris where Joanne and I would catch up with them a few days later.

Joanne and I arrived in Glasgow in the middle of the day rented a car, went to our hotel and then wandered around Glasgow. After a little more sightseeing the next morning we headed for Oban, driving up the side of Loch Lomond. After some sightseeing in Oban we caught the evening ferry to Colonsay, arriving at 7PM.

As there was a four day music festival, "Ceol Cholasa" being held on Colonsay ending the day after we arrived, available accommodation was extremely limited. As we were only staying one night on Colonsay we had decided to be adventurous and had booked one night in the Keepers Lodge Bothy. We had dinner and a drink in the Hotel dining room and then drove to the Bothy. I was glad my memory of the island roads from 10 years previously was still reasonably fresh and we reached the Bothy safely. The Bothy is one of two small stone buildings adjacent to the Keepers lodge.



Jack McPhee's shop is located just up from the corner of Hope and Sauchiehall Streets in Glasgow



Keepers Backpackers lodge, Colonsay, where Morris and Joanne stayed

The sleeping Bothy has three rooms, each with a double bunk, a chest of drawers a coat stand and a heater. Also in this Bothy, accessed externally, is the bathroom. The bunks were comfortable, the showers were good with plenty of hot water. We had a good night's sleep, getting up early the next morning, showering and getting dressed before going to the other Bothy which housed the common kitchen and lounge area. We prepared and ate a breakfast of Pin Head Oats porridge, toast and coffee, sharing our porridge with an elderly gentleman, from one of the other Bothy rooms, who was spending a few days cycling around the island.



Keepers Backpackers Lodge kitchen and sleeping bothies

The day was then spent driving around the island visiting the Dun Eibhhan cairn, the Macfie Clan Standing Stone, Kiloran beach, the Colonsay & Oronsay Heritage Trust building and the tidal causeway, "An Traigh (The Strand)", linking Colonsay to Oronsay. Due to the tides not co-operating we were unable to visit Oronsay. Also, unfortunately, the Colonsay House gardens, where the flora is totally different to the rest of the island, were not open. Only open on Wednesday & Friday 12 to 5. Lunch was at the "Pantry" near the wharf, and we ended the day, after visiting the Colonsay Bookshop, back at the Hotel for a light meal before the ferry departed at 8:05 PM to return us to Oban.

The next morning, after a bit more sightseeing and a short visit to the Oban Distillery, we drove to Edinburgh, fitting in a drive through Cowdenbeath, a suburb in Fife on the northern side of the Forth where my mother came from, and spent that evening and most of the next day exploring Edinburgh before flying to Paris.

I would encourage any Clan member visiting Scotland to include Oban on their schedule and make the time to visit Colonsay, even if only for one day. I leave the choice of accommodation on the island to your imagination and sense of adventure.

Notes: General island information <http://www.colonsay.org.uk/>
Keepers Lodge and Bothies <http://www.colonsayestate.co.uk/BackpackerLodge/Accommodation.aspx>
Ferry details <https://www.calmac.co.uk/>

The new Clan Macfie Society of Australia writing pad. It is embossed with the Clan logo within a section showing the design and colour of the modern Macfie tartan. A great small gift for the family this Christmas, which also helps to promote the Clan and our Society.



Vale

Alexander (Sandy) McPhee (N74-012)

Born on 5th January 1924, Alexander Lachlan McPhee, known to one and all as Sandy, died on 29 September 2015. Sandy, the elder son of George and Daisy (nee Byrne) McPhee, was born at Pennant Hills in Sydney. His younger brother David, was born on 24th August 1930.

Sandy comes from a family with a distinguished military background. He is a great-grandson of Captain Donald McPhee of the 79th Regiment, Cameron Highlanders, who settled in Australia in 1844 on retirement from the army. Captain McPhee served as a volunteer at the bombardment of Copenhagen in 1807; in the expedition to Sweden in 1808; in the Peninsular War; and was wounded at the Battle of Quatre Bras. He first came to Australia in 1838 in charge of male convicts on the *Portsea*, but served in India in 1842 and 43 before returning. At one stage he owned portion of Brickfield Hill in Sydney and sold to one Anthony Horden, who wished to "build a bigger draper shop".



Sandy in 1948 with daughter Barbara

Sandy's father was an officer in the Australian Forces during both World Wars, being decorated with the Croix de Guerre with star for rescuing fellow soldiers under fire in France - his grandfather had been decorated for bravery at Waterloo some hundred years earlier!

Sandy's first few years were spent on a soldier settler block, Minalong, near Mount Albert west of Dubbo in central western NSW. Later the family moved to Sydney. In the 1930s Sandy's father became a Prickly Pear Inspector for the Prickly Pear Destruction Commission. When World War II broke out, Sandy was living with his family at Inverell in northern NSW. After finishing high school there, he joined the RAAF on 14th July 1942, and trained as a pilot at Narrandera and Uranquinty in New South Wales. Twelve months later, and still only 19 years old, he sailed to the UK via North America where he completed his training in 1943 on larger aircraft at Banff in Scotland. Eventually he was posted to 149 Squadron of No 3 Group of Bomber Command, where he flew Stirling and Lancaster bombers. During the war he flew them all – Tiger Moth, Wirraway, Airspeed Oxford, Vickers Wellington, Short Stirling, Avro and Lancasters.

As a bomber pilot based at Lakenheath, Sandy flew many missions including 'top secret' flights over France. One of those was to drop key French Resistance personnel behind enemy lines. On 3rd January 1945 Sandy completed his 'tour' of 30 missions - two days before his 21st Birthday.

While serving in England, Sandy met Norah Spalding, a member of the WAAF (Women's Auxiliary Air Force) from the Squadron Meteorological Office. Sandy proposed to Nora on Christmas Day 1944 and they married in March 1945 at Wymondham Abbey, in Norfolk, England.



Sandy with his parents Daisy and Roy in 1943

When Germany surrendered in May 1945, Sandy was appointed as a flying instructor and in May he left for Australia. By the time he arrived, Japan had also surrendered and World War II was over.

In Australia, Sandy flew with Australian National Airways for 5 months before studying engineering at Sydney University for two years. He then joined Qantas, Australia's international airline, as a pilot. Living at Pennant Hills in Sydney, Sandy and Norah had three children. In 1947 their daughter Barbara was born, followed by Andrew in 1949 and Sally in 1956.

Sandy flew all over the world as a Qantas pilot. After 32 years of service, he retired as a jumbo jet pilot in 1981 at the young age of 57. Following that milestone, he and Norah relocated to Mt. Vincent in the beautiful Hunter Valley of NSW in 1984.

A few years before his retirement, Sandy received a letter during late 1973 from Flight Lieutenant Alex (Sandy) C. McPhie, about reconstituting the Macfie Clan in Scotland. That letter, to which Sandy responded, was also the pre-cursor to the formation of the Macfie Clan Society of Australia. Sandy together with his wife Nora, became founding members of the Society formed at Richmond in 1974. As both men were known as Sandy, the President, Alex C. McPhie, became known as 'Sandy One' and the future Vice President as 'Sandy Two'.

As membership of the Society blossomed, Sandy became the inaugural treasurer in 1975 and Vice President in 1976. In 1980 he was appointed as the Society's Seneschal. The role of the Seneschal was to act as the Clan's Custodian and guard the mythology, traditions, history and perquisites of the Clan within Australia. After his appointment, he wrote an article in the August 1980 edition of the Society's Newsletter part of which stated: 'Dr Earle MacPhee, our World seneschal, has set us an example in the collection of histories and the recording of the years since we last had a chief. In this message, I would ask every Macfie (whatever the spelling) to delve into the past and to bring out whatever can be discovered about our pioneering families, whose contribution to the development of this country should be permanently recorded.'

Before the Macfies could be recognised as a Clan in Scotland, a number of clansmen needed to become armigers i.e a person with a coat of arms registered in the Public Register of All Arms and Bearings in the Court of the Lord Lyon in Edinburgh. In April 1980, Sandy was granted his personal coat of arms. With the help of a number of armigerous clansmen and women from around the world, Clan Macfie was reconstituted in May 1981 at a ceremony in Edinburgh with the Lord Lyon. After 400 years the Macfies were a clan again.

In 1981, Sandy was appointed as the Clan Commissioner for Australia by Clan Commander Dr Earle MacPhee. On September 1990, he was re-appointed as Clan Commissioner by the new Clan Commander, Sandy McPhie of Australia. Some thirty eight Clan members gathered at Sandy and Norah Mt. Vincent home for the investiture, which was followed by afternoon tea and much talk on family and genealogical matters. Over ensuing years Sandy and Norah hosted numerous gathering and members of the Society at their home. The Clan Society was a significant part of their life.

Sandy remained as the Commissioner for Australia until 2008. In recognition of both his and Norah's outstanding contribution to the Macfie Clan Society of Australia, it was my privilege as President to see them both made life members in that same year.

In 2012, 88 year old Sandy was one of the former World War II Bomber Command airmen able to represent Australia as a member of the Bomber Command Association at a ceremony in London's Green Park. It was there that a memorial to the 55,573 airmen of Bomber Command who died during World War II had been erected. The memorial was unveiled by Queen Elizabeth on 28th June 2012. Sandy travelled first class to England for the ceremony with his son-in-law Jim Knowles.

A few days before this Journal went to press, Sandy's family was notified by the French Embassy that Sandy had received the Legion of Honour (Légion d'Honneur), awarded before he died. This was in recognition of his service to France during the D Day invasion of France in 1944 and the period after it.

Throughout his life, Sandy loved all things nautical, mechanical, scientific astronomical, armorial and trivial. He was involved not only with flying small planes, but with competitive car rallies. During retirement he made a great contribution not only to the Macfie Clan Society of Australia, but to community groups such as the local bushfire brigade.

A devoted family man Sandy is survived by his wife Nora; daughter Barbara and her husband Jim Knowles; son Andrew and his wife Glenys and daughter Sally; Grandchildren Tanya, Scot and Mathew (Andrew & Glenys' children) and Jane (Sally's daughter). Also great grandchildren Madison and Ryan.



Sandy with RAAF escort at the Bomber Command Memorial.

GENEALOGY

DNA

Traditional family history research involves looking for documents that name an ancestor and hoping that everybody told the truth! By contrast, genetic tools that are now available to genealogists tell the truth but do not name ancestors - however they can be used to find relatives and to check the accuracy of our constructed family trees.

What is DNA Testing

Genetic genealogy testing is all about comparing our DNA with others. Closer relatives share more DNA in common with us than distant relatives. Genetic genealogy tests examine the areas of DNA where we differ - and predict approximately how closely we are related.

Sometimes we have a particular theory to check and we know in advance the two individuals we wish to compare. At other times genealogists are 'fishing' in the DNA 'nets', hoping to find unexpected genetic matches who might share an ancestor with us and who might then have information about unknown family branches. In the latter case there are benefits in comparing with as many people as possible. One way to do this is choosing a company with a large database of other people already tested.

DNA Testing Companies

Currently the main options for genealogists looking for living genetic relatives are the three US companies Family Tree DNA, 23andMe and Ancestry DNA (a branch of Ancestry.com).

1. Family Tree DNA is the company chosen by most genealogists - and these tend to respond to family history enquiries.
2. 23andMe offers genetic health predisposition reports as well as ancestry information. Many of their customers chose the company for those health reports and so are less interested in responding to genealogists.
3. AncestryDNA tests were released first to US customers and so most of the people in their database are in the United States. AncestryDNA has announced that they will begin offering tests to Australians during 2015.

Which Test Should I Take?

DNA testing is advancing (as well as becoming cheaper!) and so is more available for checking theories about your family history and perhaps even breaking down brick walls you might currently face.

Test 1: Y-chromosome tests, for males to test DNA inherited from their fathers.

Y-chromosome tests are only available to males, as only males have a Y chromosome. This DNA test can determine whether two males are likely to share a common ancestor 'within a genealogical timeframe', and how many generations ago that shared ancestor probably lived. This test is valid for any two men who might share a male ancestor. It can be used to discern whether two families with the same surname are actually related to each other.

Test 2: Mitochondrial tests, for anyone to test DNA inherited from their mother.

Everyone has DNA called mitochondrial DNA inherited from our mother's mother's mother. Previously mitochondrial DNA could only tell us about ancient ancestors and their migratory patterns, but now it is possible to obtain much more recent information. Mitochondrial DNA can allow us to identify people who share an ancestor with us on our maternal line within about 100-400 years.

Test 3: Autosomal tests, to test the DNA inherited half from each of our parents.

It is now possible to test DNA inherited equally from our parents - this DNA is called 'autosomal'. These tests compare the DNA of our ancestors regardless of gender, because we inherit half our autosomal DNA from each of our parents. When comparing autosomal DNA with someone else, the best conclusions are obtained when the shared ancestor lived no more than about five generations ago. (Ref: Reprinted from the Journal of the Society of Australian Genealogists, Vol 45, part 1, p 26 by Kerry Farmer.

Fascinating DNA Research in Scotland

Scotland's DNA Project

Scotland's DNA project, is a ground breaking research project that probes far beyond family trees by analysing the genetic make-up of Scottish men and women. Its interim results show that 1 per cent of all Scots are descended from the Berber and Tuareg tribesmen of the Sahara.

In a radical re-drawing of the genetic map of Scotland, the project has revealed that the ancient lineage of Scots is far more colourful and complicated than ever imagined. After testing DNA samples from almost 1,000 Scots, the project, led by geneticist Dr Jim Wilson at Edinburgh University, found that 15 per cent of men with the surname Stewart are descendants of the Royal Stewart line.

Connection to Sahara Tribesmen

In a surprising twist, the team discovered that a tiny fraction of Scots can trace their ancestry back to the tribesmen of the Sahara. Among the most startling revelations was that the actor Tom Conti, who took part in the project, has a family link to Napoleon Bonaparte. It was discovered that the actor's DNA marker, the M34 marker is Saracen in origin and that his ancestors settled in Italy around the 10th century before one of them, Giovanni Buonaparte, settled in Corsica and founded the family line that sired Napoleon.

Scotland's DNA was set up last year by Dr Wilson and Alastair Moffat, the historian and current rector of St Andrews University, with a view to using the latest genetic discoveries to paint a more detailed picture of where the ancestors of Scotland's current population came from. Dr Wilson, who is a senior lecturer in population and disease genetics at Edinburgh University, said he was delighted with the results, although he had to check them twice when some participants were found to have hailed from the Sahara. "I didn't believe it at first and checked it twice. But more than one, in fact quite a few of our participants had this marker that is only found in and around the Sahara and among the blue men of the Tuareg.

"So what on earth is it doing in Scotland? I didn't know. It took me a little while to work it out but what I learned was that it was spread to Spain by the Moorish conquest of Spain, and then it came up the Atlantic margins, along the coast and up to France and then up to Scotland."

The Romans & Ancient Maetae

Among some of people who took part in the project will be people whose ancestors were the Maeatae, a lost tribe whose historic homelands were around Stirling and who fought Roman legions in 208 AD. The tribe was mentioned in historical sources until the 8th century, after which it vanished into the mists of time. For Mr Moffat, the author of *The Scots: A Genetic Journey*, the results have been fascinating. He said: "When the great Roman emperor Septimius Severus invaded Scotland with the largest army ever seen north of the Tweed, 40,000 legionaries and auxiliaries and a supporting fleet, he fought the Maeatae. They were mentioned by Roman historians as a fierce people and much later, noted by Adomnan, the biographer of St Columba. "And then they disappeared from history," Mr Moffat said. "Now they are found. DNA has uncovered a high concentration of a distinctive marker clustered around Stirling and the foothills of the Ochils – the homeland of the fierce Maeatae. These are stories only DNA can tell."

Is Macaulay Really a Macaulay?

Among those who have had their family history turned on its head is the comedian and radio presenter Fred Macaulay, as it was thought that he would have been of Viking descent as his surname meant Mac-Olaf. However, the DNA tests showed that his ancestors were not Hebridean Vikings but Irish and were probably captured and sold as slaves at the large slave market at Dublin sometime in the 9th century. From there it is most likely that the comedian's ancestor was taken by ship to the Hebrides and, at some point, had sex with his owner's wife and, in the process, intruded his DNA into the Macaulay line. Six other men who took part share Macaulay's DNA and the same story.

The DNA of the Duke of Buccleuch was found to be an exact match of a descendant of Charles Stewart of Ardsziel, who fought at Culloden, both men descended from Alan, the Seneschal of Dol, a Breton aristocrat. His family came to Britain in 1066 with William the Conqueror and then made its way to Scotland to found the Stewart line.

Yesterday Dr Wilson promised new discoveries to come. "We are sequencing the whole genome of seven Scots whose DNA is central to our history and we are looking at the role of Neanderthal DNA in Scotland."

Ref: The Scotsman 7/9/2015

McPhee Family Reunion at Mildura

From Andrew McPhee, QLD (R77-261)

A reunion of the descendants of Donald McPhee, born in Scotland in about 1832, and Jessie McPhee (nee Cameron) was held at a church hall in Mildura, Victoria, on Saturday August 22nd 2015. Approximately 70 people attended the reunion and the dinner that evening.

Donald and Jessie migrated to Australia on the *Admiral Boxer*, a ship of 1,160 tons constructed in Quebec using oak, elm, birch, tamarack, pine and spruce. It was registered at Liverpool and undertook its first voyage to Australia in 1854. It was 'lost' in 1863.

The Admiral Boxer left the English port of Liverpool on 23rd May 1855 and arrived in Adelaide 3 months later on 21st August. On board were Donald McFee listed as a labourer from Lanark, and Jessie Cameron. Donald and Jessie married in 1856 and settled on a farm at Strathalbyn in the Adelaide hills of South Australia. They had five children:

Flora b. 24/05/1861, m. Isaac Coad 1881,
Jessie b. 23/02/1863, m. Alfred Woolfitt 1893,
Donald b. 29/12/1865, m. Honorah Skipworth, 1856
Mary b 14/06/1872, m. Robert G Kirgin 1897
Isobell b. 15/03/1875, m. John Fraser 1904

The descendants of the girls mostly live in South Australia. Donald and Honorah first lived in Mount Gambier but eventually settled in Mildura. They had 13 children who with their descendants mostly still live in Mildura and that is why the reunion was held there. Donald and Honorah are Andrew's grandparents. Former Clan Society ACT Vice Glen McPhee, who now resides in New Zealand, is also a descendant and attended the re-union.



Left to right: Donald Snr., Jessie, Flora, Jessie Snr., holding Mary and Donald standing.



The re-union at Mildura was organised by Ross Douglas. His email contact is ross_douglass@hotmail.com

More information about the McPhee/Cameron family can be obtained from the Cameron Family Web Site: www.clan-cameron.org.au

Clan Macfie News No 74

from Clan Commander (Ceann Cath) Iain McFie

Email: commander@clanmacfie.co.uk

The Oldest Book in Scotland

In the Edinburgh University Library there is a book thought to be so precious that it had not seen the light of day since the 17th century. It is reckoned to be the oldest book in Scotland and described as the country's Book of Kells. A few years ago it was decided that the book could be placed on public display. Up until that day only a handful of scholars had had access to the book.



Book of Kells



Celtic Psalter



Book of Deer

Dating from the 11th century, the Celtic Psalter has lain under lock and key in a darkened nook of the Library. The Psalter, handwritten in Latin, is a copy of the Psalms of King David, and is illustrated with images of Dragons and other beasts, plus Celtic and Pictish symbols.

The head Librarian said, "This is our book of Kells. It has always been seen as one of the most precious items in the Library and has not really been allowed out. Its public display caused a lot of excitement." The background to the pocket sized Celtic Psalter is a complete mystery. Experts can only speculate on its origins and journey to the University.

As the Psalms are hand illustrated, a monastery would seem the likely source of the books production, and the most likely would be the Iona. Why? The monks on Iona were involved in the crafting of the world famous Book of Kells (now on display at Trinity College Library in Dublin) so it is likely they had a hand in this copy also.

It would have cost a small fortune to produce this book and so it is likely that the Scottish nobility commissioned the work. Perhaps even St. Margaret Queen of Scotland was involved in its production. A later note in the book indicates it remained in a noble's house until it mysteriously appeared in the Library of the University. It may have been at the Library longer, but the 17th century is the first time it appears in a Library catalogue.

Having been cherished for over a thousand years, it looks like it was written yesterday. It is reckoned it is the oldest book in Scotland, but there is an older Scottish book residing at the Cambridge University Library...The Book of Deer, from Aberdeenshire, taken as a prize of war at some point, dates from the 10th century.

Story of a 1901 McPhee Dead Letter

From President Ian McPhee

On a family history trip to Victoria some years ago, I visited a property near Dunkeld in Victoria, where my family forebears had taken up land in 1865. My great grandfather, Angus McPhee, had 'selected' 303 acres (123 ha) on the property. Today that land is part of a beautiful 5,800 acre (2,350 ha) farm.

Country hospitality is still alive and well in Australia. The current owners of the property were most welcoming and showed me over their land, including the site where my family once lived. It was a lovely rewarding visit. Long after that visit, the family sent me a newspaper article from the Hamilton Spectator, which they thought may concern my forebears. While investigation into the contents of that article didn't bear fruit for me, the newspaper article about the Australian Post Office, (which I came across again recently) was an interesting one. The Hamilton Spectator article is reproduced below:

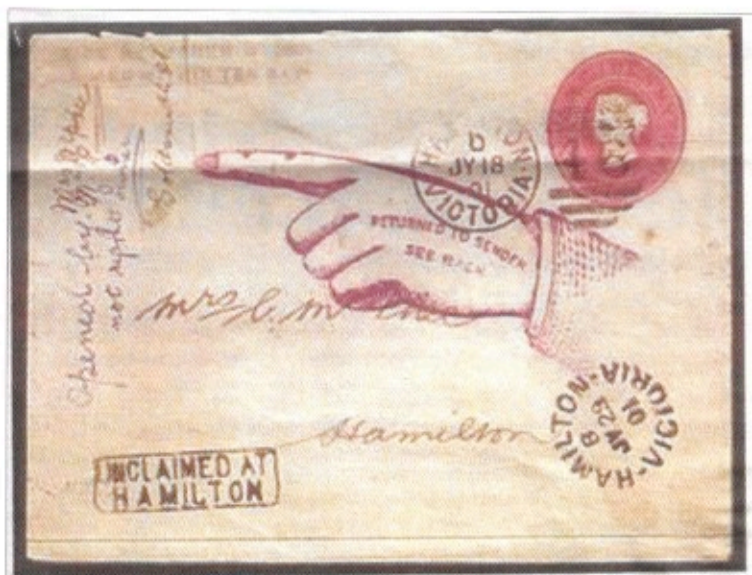
"An envelope that made its way around Hamilton in 1901 and thence to the Melbourne and the 'Dead Letter Office' is rich in history.

The small and apparently insignificant item linked to the history of Hamilton tells us much about the postal services of the era and a little about life in general. The object of interest is a prepaid postal stationary envelope, a product of the postal authorities of colonial Victoria. Most of the Australian colonies produced such items to satisfy a postal need. Postal stationary included envelopes, registered envelopes, letter-cards, postcards and newspaper wrappers.

These items were ready to post. The 'stamp' was printed on the item. The price included cost of postage and a small additional cost for the envelope or postcard. All one had to do was address the item and post it! As well as being a relatively cheap form of postage, pre-stamped envelopes were very much about convenience. Having purchased the pre-stamped envelope, all that was required was a pen or pencil and a piece of notepaper.

The envelope in question (pictured at right) was issued in February 1901 and remained on sale for several years. The 'stamp' was rose-red in colour and a one penny denomination, the cost at the time for the postage of a standard letter. ...

Although the Australian colonies federated in 1901 to form the Commonwealth of Australia, the postal system could not be changed overnight. New stamps and postal stationery items were not introduced immediately due to cost and the need for an orderly transition from colonies to Commonwealth. For nearly a decade, Australians continued to use stamps and postal stationery bearing the names of individual states. Australia's first stamps had to wait until 1913.



Our envelope was posted in Hamilton on 18 July 1901. It was cancelled with a Hamilton date-stamp and with a barred-numeral '46' - an early form of postcode. The envelope was addressed to 'Mrs McPhee', Goldsmith Street, Hamilton, who duly opened it and established that it was not meant for her. She would seem to have returned the letter to one of Hamilton Post Office's letter carriers, as postmen were known at that time. The letter carrier or someone of higher authority made an annotation on the reverse of the envelope; 'Opened by but not for one of name'.

Comments written on the front top left of the envelope indicate that the letter carriers made additional attempts to deliver this piece of mail, albeit without success. They gave up on the task nearly two weeks later, as indicated by an unframed date stamp for July 29, 1901.

At this stage, the Hamilton Post Office attempted to follow the instructions at the top left of the envelope—'To be returned if not claimed within ten days'. The Postmaster applied two instructional hand-stamps to the envelope. One was a black framed 'Unclaimed At Hamilton'. The other consisted of a large left-hand and pointing finger, with the instruction 'Returned To Sender/See Back'. Unfortunately there was no return address on the front or back of the envelope.

So, the Postmaster conceded defeat, ensured the envelope was properly re-sealed and sent it off to Melbourne for further action. Unfortunately the re-sealing of the envelope with waste paper from the edge of a sheet of stamps obscured a good clue to the sender of the letter. There was a firm's embossed seal applied to the back of the envelope. The top part contains the word 'Solicitors' - the bottom part, probably the firm's name, was damaged when the letter was opened and was then obscured by the Hamilton Post Office's re-seal.

In Melbourne, a large violet 'Dead Letter Office /B/J/Y30/01/ Melbourne' was applied. The letter would then have been opened and every best effort made to return it to its sender." (Hamilton Spectator 25/2/2012)

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Kiloran Bay, Colonsay

Colonsay has one of Scotland's greatest concentrations of Viking graves. One of the more spectacular graves was found at Kiloran Bay and demonstrates the interaction between the pagan and Christian faith in the time of Viking settlement in Scotland. Kiloran Bay is an inlet on the north-west coastline of Colonsay about a two kilometres from the settlement of Kiloran.

Viking remains in the Western Isles have often been found by chance when land erosion over time has revealed evidence of burials; through the unearthing of human bones and grave goods, or settlements; through the middens, walls or building foundations. There are a greater concentration of Viking burials remains in Colonsay, Oransay and Islay than on any of the other islands. The strength of the Viking influence on the islands and the west coast of Scotland can be seen from place names, many of which are Scandinavian, suggesting a considerable Viking presence in the area.

In 1882 one of the most important discoveries of a Viking burial site was found in the sand dunes at Kiloran Bay on the northwest coast of Colonsay. The grave dates from between 875 and 925. With a rocky precipice and sandy beach with grass covered sand dunes, the bay was the perfect landing place for the Viking long ships. Excavations of the area revealed the burial of a man with a horse, along with a selection of grave goods.

The man had been placed in the grave on his left side in a crouched position in the corner of a rectangular enclosure measuring around 4.6m x 3.1m (15ft x 10 ft), constructed with stone slabs in an upright position. The horse was outside the enclosure. Evidence of iron rivets surrounding the animal and scattered about the grave-structure suggests that an overturned boat had covered the whole grave. The boat must have been at least 9m (30ft) in length.

Buried alongside this Viking warrior were a number of weapons and other possessions including; sword, a spearhead, an axe-head, a shield boss, two arrowheads, a knife, a buckle, shards of a pot, a whetstone, and a silver pin. There was also a selection of tools vital for trading, scales, weights and measures and a selection of coins.

Also found in the burial site, at either end of the enclosure, were two slabs, each roughly carved with a Christian cross. Had they been built into the original grave-structure, it would imply that despite being a thoroughly pagan burial site, there were also Christian influences and beliefs evident within the Viking colony.

As well as the Kiloran Bay grave, there have also been two other burials with animals found at Machrins on Colonsay. The artefacts from the Kiloran Bay burial site form a significant display in the Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh. (ref: www.VikingShipMuseumRoskilde)

Scotland News

85th St Kilda Anniversary

St Kilda was abandoned by its native people in 1930 after life there became too difficult. On that day the last 36 islanders boarded a boat and sailed for the Morvern peninsula, as their way of life became unsustainable and many were tempted to move elsewhere. The remaining elderly people were left tasked with running the whole community as the young ones left to work in industries on mainland Scotland. The burden became too heavy on their shoulders so they petitioned the then Scottish Secretary to have them removed from the remote location. Although it proved difficult for many at first and there was a longing to go back by many of the older generations that left, eventually they settled on the peninsula and further afield on mainland Scotland.

Today the St Kilda archipelago is under the care of the National Trust of Scotland. It is the UK's only natural and cultural heritage World Heritage site. It is the remotest part of the British Isles lying 66 km west of Benbecula. The area was allocated World Heritage status by UNESCO in 1986. (ref: www)

Bronze Age Sauna

Archaeologists in Orkney have uncovered the remains of over 30 buildings dating from around 4000 BC to 1000 BC, together with field systems, middens and cemeteries. The find includes a very rare Bronze Age building which experts believed could have been a sauna or steam house, which may have been built for ritual purposes.

EASE Archaeology recently made the exciting discovery on the periphery of the prehistoric Links of Noltland, on the island of Westray in Orkney, next to where the famous 'Westray Wife' was found in 2009, which is believed to be the earliest depiction of a human face in Britain. The work is being funded by Historic Scotland, who are this week merging with the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historic Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) to form a new heritage body called Historic Environment Scotland. (ref: Historic Scotland)

Happy Scotland!

Inverness has been ranked second in the list of happiest places to live in Britain, a report which asked people how contented they are with their home and local community. Falkirk also made it on to the list, coming fifth in the top ten of British towns while Edinburgh and Glasgow finished outside the top 50. (ref: The Scotsman 21/5/2014)

Top 10 Places in the UK

1. Harrogate, Yorkshire and the Humber
2. Inverness, Scotland
3. Taunton, South West
4. Stockport, North West
5. Falkirk, Scotland
6. Norwich, East Anglia
7. Hull, Yorkshire and the Humber
8. Preston, North West
9. Truro, South West
10. Telford, West Midlands

Top 10 Places in Scotland

1. Inverness
2. Falkirk.
3. Dundee
4. Perth
5. Edinburgh
6. Kirkcaldy
7. Glasgow
8. Aberdeen
9. Kilmarnock
10. Paisley

National Library of Scotland

Centuries of Scottish knowledge are to be made available online for the first time - under major plans to digitalise a third of the National Library of Scotland's archive. The library has announced plans to put a third of its collection of 24 million items online over the next ten years, in one of the biggest programmes of its kind anywhere in Europe. The move will offer a worldwide audience a gateway to information on Scottish culture and history, to view unique documents including manuscripts of major Scottish writers such as Robert Burns and Walter Scott, thousands of films on life in Scotland, and memorabilia from last year's referendum on Scottish independence, among many others.

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EVENTS FOR THE DIARY

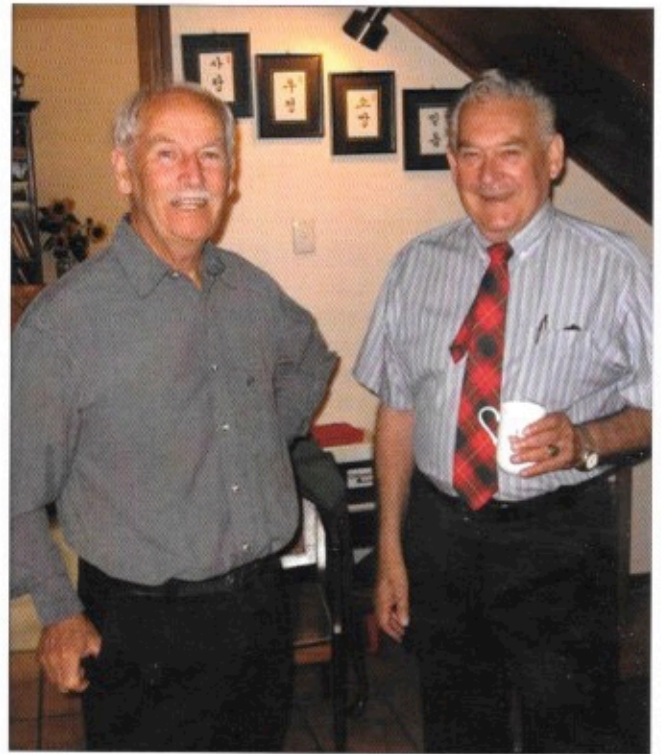
- December 5 Daylesford Highland Gathering, VIC
- January 1 Maryborough Highland Gathering, Maryborough VIC
- January 26 Australia Day Celtic Festival, Bradfield Park, Milsons Point NSW
- March 20 Geelong Highland Games, Geelong VIC
- March 25/26 Maclean Highland Gathering NSW
- April 3 Ringwood Highland Gathering VIC
- April 9 Bundanoon Highland Gathering, Bundanoon NSW
- April 28 Australian Celtic Festival, Glen Innes NSW

Disclaimer & Note

The Downunder is produced solely for the information and enjoyment of the Macfie Clan Society of Australia members. It has been compiled with care and in good faith from a variety of sources. Any views expressed in the journal are not necessarily those of the Society. All contributions to The Downunder are subject to alteration & editing.



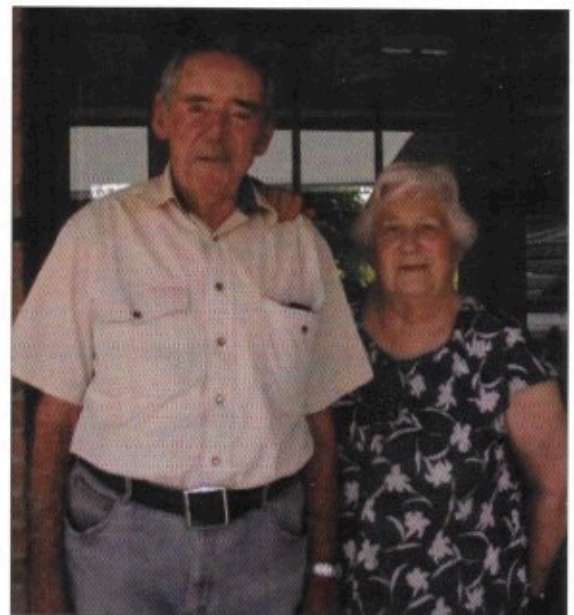
At left, Sandy McPhee, displaying the certificate given to him when he became Clan Commissioner for Australia. With him is former Clan Commander Sandy McPhie



At left, former Society Treasurer Ian McPhee from Adelaide, with current WA Vice President Trevor McPhee at last year's BGM



Morris and Robyn McPhee's daughter Joanne beside the Dun Eibhen Cairn on Colonsay



Sandy & Norah McPhee at their Mt. Vincent home in 2008