



THE DOWNUNDER

Journal of the
Macfie Clan Society of Australia

Issue 132
March 2016



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



There was a very sad end to 2015 with the death of former Clan Macfie Commander and founder of The Macfie Clan Society of Australia, Sandy McPhie, who passed away in Toowoomba on 5th December 2015.

Sandy's death is a big loss to both the Clan and our Society. Sandy not only had a wonderful historical and practical knowledge of both, but also a memory that could recall information about them known to very few. He was highly regarded by our kinsmen around the world not to mention by those who occupied the Lord Lyon's Office in Edinburgh.

After founding our Society in 1974, Sandy nurtured it for over 25 years. As Brian McPhee from Adelaide, one of the original founding members once said, the Society was 'Sandy's baby'. Indeed it was. Sandy leaves us with a wonderful legacy. I can't help repeating the same words penned in the last issue of *The Downunder* when writing about the death in September last, of founding Society Treasurer and former Australian Clan Commissioner Sandy McPhee from Mt. Vincent: 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. In the hectic world we now live in, I hope that can be achieved. With the death of both the Society's founding President and Treasurer within a few months of each other, 2015 marked the end of an era.

It was gratifying to know that our Society and the Clan were well represented at Sandy's funeral in Toowoomba. Our current Clan Commander Iain McFee sent a Eulogy that was read by the Clan Commissioner for New Zealand, James McPhee. The President of the Clan Society of New Zealand and former ACT Vice President of our Society Glen McPhee, also flew over from New Zealand to attend.

Regrettably, I was unable to be at Sandy's funeral. Misfortune struck the day before Sandy died, when I tore my Achilles tendon running around a tennis court. Fortunately, surgery was avoided, but with specialists to see and mobility curtailed with crutches and a large 'moon boot', I was unable to travel to Queensland. Fortunately, our Vice President Morris McPhee and his wife Robyn were able to attend. Morris did a sterling job representing the Macfie Clan Society of Australia, delivering a fitting tribute to Sandy.

Sandy will be missed on a personal level by all those who had the privilege to know him. As the current President, Sandy mentored me over the years. Sometimes we had to agree to disagree on some issues, but generally the advice he offered me was sound and welcome. Writing the tribute to Sandy that appears in this issue, has been difficult in more ways than one. It was impossible to document all his accomplishments as Commander of our Clan or as founder and President of our Society. As a result, some of his achievements have by necessity been omitted. I have however attempted to give Society members a comprehensive picture of Sandy's life.

Because Sandy's life story takes up more than half of this *Downunder*, a number of other items that were to be included in this edition have been held over until the next one. That includes details of long time member Clyde Smythe, who passed away early this year. Our condolences, thoughts and prayers go out to both Sandy's family and also to that of Clyde Smythe for the loss of their loved ones.

In This Issue:

Vale: Alexander (Sandy) Carpendale McPhie	3	What is the Mod?	12
Images of Sandy McPhie	8	Colonsay Fish Farm	13
Images of Sandy McPhie	9	Scotland News	14
General News	10	Office Bearers	15
DNA & a possible 'cuckoo' in the nest	11	Events Diary	15

Front cover: Former Clan Commander & Macfie Clan Society of Australia founder, Sandy McPhie

Alexander (Sandy) Carpendale McPhie 1929 - 2015

Sandy's Forebears in Scotland

Alexander Carpendale (Sandy) McPhie is a descendant of Alexander McPhie, a crofter who lived at Catchean, on the western end of the Isle of Mull. That area of Mull was, and still is, known as the Ross of Mull.

Alexander married Ann MacDonald in late January 1807 after which they had 14 children. Not unusual for the era, several of their children died in infancy. It appears Alexander died between 1827 and 1836.

In 1836, crop failure led to a terrible famine gripping the whole of Britain. It was probably as a result of that famine, that the McPhie's living on the Ross of Mull either decided to or were forced to emigrate to Australia. They were able to do so thanks to the efforts of the Rev. Dr. John Dunmore Lang, a pioneering Presbyterian minister living in Australia.

On 13th September 1837, Ann, together with John aged 29, Margaret 21, Catherine 19, Mary 17, Flora 15 and Neil 10, boarded the *SV Minerva* at Greenock near Glasgow, and sailed for Sydney, arriving on 23rd January 1838. The voyage was a long and difficult one, with an outbreak of typhoid fever occurring in November. Of 86 passengers and crew who contracted the fever, 14 died and 34 were still sick on arrival in Sydney.

Sandy's Family in Australia

Established in Australia Neil McPhie married Mary Kennedy. They are Sandy's great grandparents. Neil and Mary lived and farmed with one of Neil's brother's on a property called *Iona*, at Woodville in New South Wales. They had 4 children - John Alexander born 1860, Ann 1862, Alexander 1864 and Angus 1866.

Alexander worked as an accountant for a stock and station firm called Bacon and Co. In 1889, he moved from Gunnedah in New South Wales and established a branch office for Bacon and Co at Toowoomba in Queensland. Some 9 years later he took control of the business and from then on traded as "McPhie & Co". Living there Alexander married Emily Ethel Carpendale. Alexander and Ethel are Sandy's grandparents.

The move to Queensland was the start of a long association with the town of Toowoomba. The marriage to Emily Carpendale was also the start of a long association with the name Carpendale within the McPhie family at Toowoomba. Alexander and Emily McPhie had 4 children, Victor Alexander Carpendale born 1897, Hector Kitchener 1900, Lyndall 1901 and Alison Fairfax in 1908.

Hector Kitchener McPhie was Sandy's father. Born in Toowoomba, he attended Toowoomba Grammar and then The King's School at Parramatta in Sydney. Later he joined the firm McPhie & Co. Hector married Florence Nellie Shanasy and they had 3 children, Heather Mary Primrose born in 1927, Alexander Carpendale (Sandy) 1929 and Alison Glen 1932.

Sandy's Life Story

Born on 10th February 1929 at Charleville in Queensland, Alexander Carpendale McPhie, known always as Sandy, was the second child of Hector and Nellie McPhie. His father was known to many by his nickname Ginty. Hector was a stock and station agent and manager with McPhie & Co, the firm his forebear started in Toowoomba. After the Company was sold in 1940, he became a property owner, property valuer and company agent. Sandy grew up with his elder sister Heather Mary Primrose, born 25th December 1927, and younger sister Alison Glen, born 13th July 1932.

Sandy did his early schooling at Toowoomba North State School before following in his father's footsteps going on to the prestigious Kings School, Parramatta in 1944 as a boarder. Living at Kings he became completely involved in the life of the school. He represented the Kings School in boxing, shooting, athletics and rugby union, gaining colours for those sports for two years.

In his final year (1947) at the Kings School, Sandy was made School Captain. Although he was gifted academically, when he left high school his father wouldn't allow him to attend university. After moving back home, Sandy maintained a great interest in sport with an ambition to represent Australia in pentathlon at an Olympic Games. To achieve that goal, he trained for athletics, shooting, swimming, show jumping and fencing.



Sandy began his working life back in Toowoomba, working for the agricultural firm AML & F Co. Ltd., the firm that purchased McPie & Co in 1940. He started out in their Brisbane office, then in Sydney and for period worked as a jackaroo on country properties they owned.

From early childhood, Sandy always had a fascination with aeroplanes. It was no surprise to his family that in his early 20s he learnt to fly during 1951 with No 23 (F) City of Brisbane Squadron of the Auxiliary Air Force. Although Sandy was discharged in 1953 he maintained his civil flying licence.

In 1955, Sandy gave up working as an employee for AML & F Co. Ltd., to take up farming. He moved to a partly developed farm called *Curyo*, north of Chinchilla in the Brigalow belt of Queensland. The Brigalow belt is an area characterised by hardy species of root-suckering acacia (wattle) trees and scrub.

In 1957 Sandy hired a Tiger Moth to check his property's sheep and boundary fences from the air. Flying low over the adjoining property, near a homestead, Sandy crashed the plane into a dead tree trunk poking up out of the Brigalow scrub. His passenger escaped almost unharmed, but Sandy's injuries were severe. Taken to hospital, he was encased in plaster from the armpits down, his pelvis broken in two places as well as many ribs. His left foot faced backwards and the tibia and fibula stuck out through the bottom of his heel. Fortunately the doctors were able to save his leg.

Sandy spent the next 3 years recovering, about 12 months of that period being spent in hospital. While recovering he developed osteomyelitis, pleurisy and pneumonia. The effects of the plane crash haunted Sandy for the remainder of his life.

Added to the pain of the crash, was the fact Sandy had to pay for the wrecked Tiger Moth. Unable to physically work the farm again on his own, or to meet his financial commitments, Sandy was forced to leave the land. That set-back was soon put behind him when he was granted a permanent commission in the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) in 1962, qualifying not long after as an Air Traffic Controller.

In 1963, Sandy delivered a lecture at the Institute of Aviation Medicine at Point Cook, Victoria, to a group of Air Force nurses. It was there he was introduced to Helen Michell, a nurse at No. 3 RAAF Hospital at Richmond, NSW attending a course there. By year's end, Sandy had been posted to RAAF Base Darwin in the Northern Territory and Helen had accepted Sandy's proposal of marriage. They married in March 1964 at St. Mathew's Anglican Church in Manly, N.S.W., Helen's local church, where she had been confirmed.

From Darwin, Sandy and Helen went to RAAF Butterworth in Malaysia and then back to Williamstown, just outside Newcastle, N.S.W. From there, it was another posting to Darwin in the Northern Territory for 3 years, before going to Richmond, N.S.W. This was followed by staff appointments at RAAF Headquarters Support Command in Melbourne and Dept of Air, Canberra, ACT. During those years in the Air Force Sandy moved up the ranks from Flight Lieutenant, to Squadron Leader, to Wing Commander

During Sandy's service with the Air Force, Sandy and Helen had four children, Lyndal born in Darwin, 1965, Alexander Scot born in Penang, Malaysia 1966, Malcolm Alexander 1968 (died one day after birth) and Katrina born in Darwin in 1972.

While serving in the Air Force, a colleague drew Sandy's attention to a 'Letter to the Editor', which appeared in an Australian newspaper on the 2nd April 1973. It was from (Dr) Earle Douglas MacPhee of Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada seeking to make contact with "Macfie" descendants in Australia who could provide family migration data for a clan history he was compiling. Dr. Earle Douglas MacPhee was endeavouring to re-establish Clan Macfie as an active clan, because since 1623, it had been classed as a "broken clan".

Three Australians responded to Dr Earle Douglas MacPhee's letter – Brian McPhee of Adelaide, Miss Kaye McPhee of Melbourne and Sandy McPhie, RAAF Air Traffic Control officer at RAAF Base Richmond in New South Wales. In reply, they discovered that in addition to his request for migrant details he also wished to see an active Clan Macfie Society established in Australia. Correspondence between the three resulted in Sandy McPhie agreeing to undertake the task of forming a clan society.

As luck would have it, the ground work for a clan society had been put in place several years earlier when Sandy was a controller at RAAF Base Williamstown. His father, Hector McPhie, had mentioned their family forebears had settled in the Hunter Valley (west of to-day's Williamstown) when they arrived in Australia in 1838. In due course Sandy located family gravestones, the site of the original farm and relevant births, deaths and marriage entries at the Maitland CPS Office. In an endeavour to trace other descendants of his original family immigrants he wrote to a number of people with an 'ie' spelling of the family name but without success. However, it established a base of information which enabled him to write to the 31 people approached to form a Clan Society.

At Richmond in 1974, Sandy convened a meeting comprising 24 of the 31 'McPhies' he had contacted, which founded a society called The McPhee Clan of Australia. Sandy became its first President and co-opted his wife Helen as the Society Secretary. Brian McPhee from Adelaide became the Vice-President, Kaye McPhee (Melbourne) was a founding member and Qantas Captain Sandy McPhee of Sydney became the Society's first Treasurer. The society name was changed several years later to The Macfie Clan Society of Australia to better reflect its status as a Clan Society and to use the officially recognised spelling of the Clan name.

Membership of the new society quickly spread to all the States of Australia. Sandy began a news bulletin to keep members up to date on Clan and Clan Society activities. The news bulletin to-day, known as *The Downunder*, a 16 page journal with colour photographs is a far cry from the 1974/75 Gestetner duplicated wax sheets mailed in hand addressed envelopes. The full collection of news bulletins is a wonderful record of the Clan Macfie's presence in Australia and contains many (and varied) stories of the early Clan migrants, their descendants and their achievements in Australia.

A posting from RAAF Base Richmond to Headquarters Support Command for Sandy McPhie at the beginning of 1975 saw the Clan Society base move to Melbourne. This proved a blessing in disguise for the society membership for, amongst other duties, Sandy McPhie, then a squadron leader, was required to work an occasional weekend shift in the Command Operations room. With (thankfully) very little going on over the weekends he had available spare time. The Operations Room held current copies of all Australian telephone directories – this was 1975 when there were no computers, no internet and every little country town had its own telephone exchange. Directories for closer settled rural areas could contain listing of dozens of country telephone exchanges.

Using a base list of some 24 'accepted' clan surname spellings, Sandy worked his way through all directories over a number of duty weekends, extracting names and addresses of clan members. In February 1977 he wrote to 763 people inviting them to join The Macfie Clan Society of Australia and received several hundred acceptances.

Sandy's uncle, Victor McPhie, was a strong supporter of the move to re-establish the clan. In 1977 he became the first McPhie armiger in Australia i.e. the first McPhie (or anyone with a variation of that spelling) with a coat of arms registered in the Public Register of All Arms and Bearings in the Court of the Lord Lyon in Edinburgh, Scotland. At this time however, Clan Macfie was still not a recognised clan.

With the help of a number of armigerous clansmen and women from around the world, Clan Macfie was recognised as an active clan on 27th May, 1981 at a ceremony in Edinburgh with the Lord Lyon. Dr Earle Douglas MacPhee was invested as the Clan Commander on 6th November 1981.

Sadly Dr. Earle Douglas MacPhee died on 25th September 1982, leaving the Clan leaderless. Fortunately Clan Societies such as that in Australia continued to function and expand.

In 1982, after 20 years in the Air Force, Sandy retired from the RAAF as a Wing Commander, holding a senior Air Traffic Control appointment in the Air Force. He was by then 53 years old, and moved back to Toowoomba. Not ready for any sort of retirement, Sandy began work as a property and investment consultant, until he was asked to stand as a candidate for the Queensland Parliament.

Sandy was successful, and elected to the Queensland Parliament in 1983 as the National Party member for Toowoomba North. With an eye for detail and a no non-sense approach to life, Sandy never really came to grips with the waffle that characterised many Parliamentary debates. That said, he took his obligations seriously and over the years, served on a number of community and Parliamentary committees including the Royal Agricultural Society of Queensland, and was the inaugural Chairman of the Parliamentary Public Works Committee. He also played an integral role in the establishment of the Cobb and Co Museum in Toowoomba.

After serving two terms (1983-1989), Sandy lost the marginal seat of Toowoomba North in a huge state wide swing against the conservative government of Queensland in the 1989 state election. Owing to his personal popularity, he lost it by a narrow margin. At that point, aged 60, Sandy decided to retire.

It was about this time, that Sandy and Helen invested in a campervan and spent the next 8 years exploring Australia. Via Sandy's newsletters, Society members were often treated to some of Sandy and Helen's travelling exploits in remote parts of the country.

Since its formation, Sandy continued to run and foster the Macfie Clan Society of Australia. The Society's constitution was developed and biennial general meetings held around the six Australian states. He and Helen attended numerous Highland Gatherings and other meetings for the Society. Sandy was a diligent correspondent, a literate writer and stickler for detail and protocol. Drawing on his parliamentary experience he instituted a system of numbered 'standing orders' for the Society.

On 7th September 1989 he took on a new role. After some 7 years without a leader following the death of Dr. Earle Douglas MacPhee, Sandy was appointed by the Lord Lyon in Scotland as Commander (or Ceann-Cath) of Clan Macfie.

This opened up a whole new world for both Sandy and Helen as they became immersed in things Scottish. In addition to Scotland and Australia, Clan Macfie has active clan societies in Canada, USA, Sweden and New Zealand. Sandy and Helen visited all of them for Clan Gatherings, Highland Games or Clan Society meetings, often as honoured guests.

One gathering Sandy presided over was the Great Clan Gathering held from 1st to 8th September 1993 on Colonsay, which current Clan Commander Iain McFie helped him organise. It turned out a great success with over 170 members of the Clan in attendance. One of the great moments of the Gathering happened in Oban when all the Macfies who had gathered for lunch marched from the town to the pier where Sandy was waiting to greet them before they boarded the boat bound for Colonsay.

Commander Sandy McPhie had the honour of leading some 160 Clan members ashore on Colonsay for the Clan's first organised return to its homeland islands in 370 years. On Colonsay, the Clan held an international Highland Games. There were four teams, with Sandy managing the Oceanic team i.e. Australian and New Zealand. When it came to the tug of war final between Oceania and the USA, Sandy did all he could to encourage his team to win.

Sandy and Helen travelled extensively representing the Clan, and did so with style and dignity. One of the most important gatherings they attended on three occasions was the Stone Mountain Highland Games and Scottish Festival in Atlanta, Georgia, USA. Once in 1991 just as one of the Clan, in 1998 when Sandy was the Honoured Guest, and again in 2002 when Sandy was the Distinguished Guest and Patron. The last visit to the Stone Mountain Highland Games was a fantastic experience, where Sandy and Helen were feted, wine and dined, and had the most sumptuous accommodation. Everything was turned on for them, a 'never to be forgotten' experience.

As Clan Commander, Sandy was active and dedicated to the duties of his office. He instigated four yearly Clan Parliaments in Scotland, open to Macfie's around the world. He established sensible rules for the Clan, including prudent financial arrangements to ensure the Clan remained viable. As someone who 'crossed every T' and 'dotted every I', Sandy conducted all Clan business by 'the book'. In addition to his usual Clan duties, Sandy wrote and distributed a *Clan News* to keep Clan members around the world informed of Clan activities.

Leading the Clan and the Australian Society was often hard on the pocket. Although some costs for travel and accommodation were provided, considerable personal expense was still incurred. Sandy and Helen were never deterred from fulfilling their duties for the Clan or the Society by the financial burden.

Sandy stepped down as President of the Macfie Clan Society of Australia at the 12th Biennial General Meeting held at Donvale, Victoria, in May 1998. Sandy and his wife Helen had run the Society for 25 years, and by that time Sandy was approaching 70 years of age. It was fitting that the new President was Brian McPhee from Adelaide, one of the original respondents to Dr. Earle Douglas MacPhee's newspaper appeal.

In that same year, Sandy and Helen moved to Townsville in north Queensland to be near their two daughters, Lyndal and Katrina and their families. In Townsville, Helen returned to work as a nurse, and Sandy took on the home duties. Living there Sandy joined the voluntary coast guard. Sandy and Helen stayed in Townsville for twelve very enjoyable years, before returning to Toowoomba in 2010.

Despite his travels, moving house and his advancing years, Sandy continued as the Commander of Clan Macfie and also to write up his family's history. In 2008 he published a history of his family titled *My Lot Tracing Sandy McPhie's Family Tree from Mull, Scotland, in 1687 to Queensland, Australia, to-day*. The publication is a well written and researched booklet for the future generations of his family and others - a significant achievement.

Over the years Sandy conducted himself as Clan Commander with great distinction. In 2008, with his health deteriorating, he stepped down as the Commander of Clan Macfie. Sandy had led and nurtured the Clan for 19 years. It was a great effort because by then he was nearly 80 years of age.

Sandy's contribution to Scottish heritage and community service was recognised at the Macfie Clan Society's Biennial General Meeting in 2014. That meeting was held in Adelaide, South Australia in the home of former Society President Brian McPhee with the current Clan Commander from Scotland, Iain McFee and his wife Fiona in attendance. At that meeting, a unanimous resolution was passed to put forward Sandy McPhie's name for an 'Order of Australia' award.

Regrettably, Sandy died before approval was given for the application to include him as an Order of Australia recipient. Aged 86, Sandy passed away peacefully at St. Andrew's Hospital in Toowoomba, on 5th December 2015 with his family around him.

Sandy had a remarkably active and varied life. He was a leader and a high achiever. He was a devoted family man, a man who served his country in the Royal Australian Air Force, a man who was elected to high office as a member of the Queensland Parliament, a man who served various community organisations;

As the man who founded the Macfie Clan Society of Australia, and a man who Commanded Clan Macfie, he leaves us with a wonderful legacy. He will be missed by those who knew him, none more so than his family.

Sandy is survived by his sister Glen Mactaggart, his wife Helen, their daughter Lyndal Wallace, her husband Andrew and their children Mahala McPhie Wallace and Rebekah Lara Wallace; their son Alexander Scot, his wife Jennifer and their children Seana Grace Catherine McPhie, Alexander William Malcolm McPhie, Cosme Joanne Hayes McPhie and Lara Elizabeth Louise McPhie; their daughter Katrina and her daughter Mia Frances McIntyre.



The arms granted to Sandy McPhie's uncle, Victor McPhie in 1977. They were the first arms to be granted to a McPhie or anyone with a variation of that spelling in Australia.



The arms granted to Sandy's father, Hector Kitchener McPhie in 1978. They were matriculated from Victor McPhie's arms, and inherited 'undifferenced' by Sandy following his father's death in 1984



Sandy & Helen at the Grandfather Mountain Highland Games, Linville, Nth. Carolina, USA in July 1991



Helen and Sandy McPhie at an early Clan Society function.



2008 BGM, Toowoomba: Sandy, with Society President Ian McPhee and NSW Vice President Morris McPhee



2008 BGM, Toowoomba: Sandy & Helen with one of the Society's new pull-up banners



September 1990: Gathering of Clan Society members at the Mt. Vincent home of Sandy and Norah McPhee, when Commander Sandy McPhee reappointed Sandy McPhee as the Clan Commissioner for Australia



On Colonsay, 2001
Clan Commander Sandy McPhee at the unveiling of the Dun Eibhinn marker on Colonsay in 2001. He is with Rev. Freda Marshall and Alistair Scouller, who is singing a psalm in Gaelic



The Gatlinburg Highland Games, Tennessee USA, circa 2007. Sandy with the President of the Clan Macfie Society of America, the Rev. Jim McAfee in the khaki shirt



Sandy as he appeared in the 1998 issue of The Downunder magazine

Sandy and Helen at a Macfie Clan Society function.

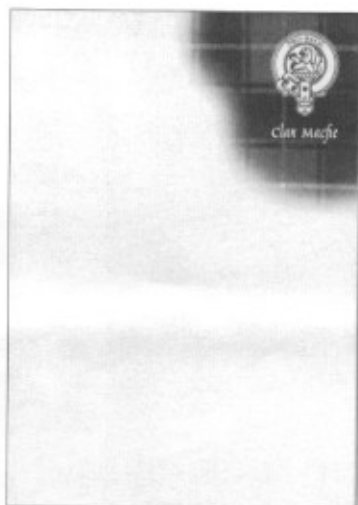


GENERAL NEWS

Clan Society Note Pads for Sale

Below is the new Macfie Clan Society of Australia writing pad, which is half A4 in size. Designed by your executive, it is embossed with the Clan logo within a section showing the design and colour of the modern Macfie tartan. Offered as a Christmas gift at the end of last year, it is a great small gift for the family, which also helps to promote the Clan and our Society.

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

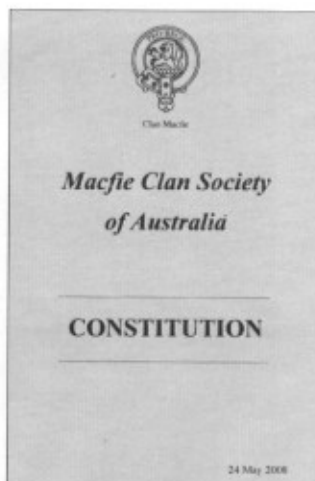


Sick List

Society member and contributor to *The Downunder*, Rosemary Szente has curtailed all her activities to look after her husband Andrew, who has serious health problems.

Updated Constitution

The Macfie Clan Society of Australia's Constitution was last updated in 2008. Out of print for a several years, it has now been reprinted. Any member wishing to have a copy, please contact the Society's secretary Robyn McPhee whose details are listed above and also on page 15.



Subscriptions

Keep an eye out for your membership renewal. Subscriptions for 2016 will be sent out during March

Clan Update

Clan Parliaments are held in Scotland once every four years. The next Clan Parliament is due to be held next year, most probably in September.

Clan Commander Iain McFie has not settled on a venue for the Parliament yet, but apparently Stirling is one of the main contenders. It is centrally located with good access to either Glasgow or Edinburgh. At the last Parliament the Island of Bute, was also suggested as a good venue. It is about an hour from Glasgow by train, followed by a 25 minute ferry ride to the main town of Rothesay. As a point of interest, Rothesay was a McPhee enclave for many years.

In the tribute to former Commander Sandy McPhie in the previous pages, it was mentioned that Sandy started the *Clan News*. The idea behind the newsletter was to keep clan societies around the world in touch with one another.

There has been no *Clan News* now since October last year. Linda Gilcrest is the person who edits and dispatches the *Clan News* from her home in the USA., something she has done now for quite a few years. Some Australian Society members will know Linda, and also know what a great Macfie supporter she is. Regrettably Linda has had some serious health issues that required extensive surgery and a long recovery. We wish Linda well on her way back to good health, and look forward to her being able to resume the great job she has done in the past, writing and editing the *Clan News*.

Upcoming Events

Two important events are coming up. The Highland Gathering at Bundanoon in NSW takes place on Saturday 9th April. Nationally, there is the Anzac Day March. On Anzac Day in Sydney, Vice President Morris McPhee will represent our Society for the Scottish Act of Remembrance, which marches off at 12.30 pm

In Memoriam

It is with sadness that we report the passing on 18th January of Clyde Smythe (N74-059) from Turrumurra NSW.

GENEALOGY

In the last issue of The Downunder, there were two extensive articles on DNA. The following story shows just what is possible with DNA when it involves family history. Its a fascinating story.

DNA & a Possible 'Cuckoo' in the Nest

Britain's entire title system could be shaken up if it is ruled that there has been a "cuckoo in the nest" in a baronetcy lineage for more than a 100 years, a Supreme Court judge said. Lord Neuberger, the country's most senior judge, heard evidence relating to two men in the Pringle family, who are locked in a dispute over who should be granted the rightful baronetcy of Stichill.

Scientific analysis of a DNA sample, obtained for the purpose of a family tree, unexpectedly revealed that the family's last baronet came from a different bloodline to his relatives. The suggestion is that more than 100 years ago, there may have been an illegitimate child wrongly granted a title that has been passed down for two generations.

At a hearing of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, in London, seven judges finished hearing evidence and discussed legislation dating back more than 150 years. Their decision could have "startling consequences" for the British aristocracy for if the committee agree to using the DNA evidence presented, it could lead to other cases.

"We would have some pretty startling consequences if going back over past generations people were not who they thought they were," said Lord Neuberger, the Supreme Court president. "this may show that there is a cuckoo in the nest."

Charles II granted the baronetcy of Stichill - a village near Kelso, Roxburghshire - to Robert Pringle and the "male heirs from his body" in 1683. Ten generations later, Sir Steuart Pringle held the title of the 10th baronet, as he was the eldest son of the 9th, Sir Norman Hamilton Pringle, and he was the eldest son of the 8th, Sir Norman Pringle. However Sir Steuart agreed to provide a DNA sample before he died in 2013, as part of a project into the Pringle Clan, which involved a distinguished lineage dating to the 13th century.

This Y chromosome test showed that his DNA did not match that of the Pringle family. Evidence suggests that the 8th baronet, Sir Norman, passed his title to his eldest son although he was an illegitimate child, and by law the title should have gone to Ronald, his second eldest - and legitimate - son.

If proved to be true, this would make Murray Pringle, 74, an accountant from Bucks, the rightful heir to the 11th baronetcy title, and not his second cousin Simon Pringle, 56 a businessman from East Sussex.

The pair's two year dispute, costing thousands of pounds in legal fees, was referred to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council by the Queen, who signed a letter requesting that Britain's seven most senior judges consider the matter under the Judicial Committee Act 1833. If the committee agrees to use the scientific evidence in the case, it will set a precedent, and could see DNA testing being used in any other future claim to the peerage. This would mean significant implications for the British aristocracy.

(ref: Australian Financial Review 28-29/ November 2015)

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The logo features the words "BUNDANOON" and "BRIGADOON" in a large, bold, serif font, with "IS" in a smaller font centered between them. The text is white and set against a dark rectangular background.

Annual Highland Gathering
SATURDAY 9th APR 2016
Bundanoon, Southern Highlands, NSW

What is the Mòd?

The Royal National Mòd (in Scottish Gaelic: Am Mòd Nàiseanta Rìoghail) is the most important of several major Mòds that are held annually, mostly in Scotland. It is the main festival of Scottish Gaelic literature, song, arts and culture. It is often referred to simply as the Mòd. Culturally, the Mòd is comparable to the Welsh Eisteddfod.

The Mòd was founded by the Gaelic Association. It is still run by the Association (An Comunn Gàidhealach), and includes competitions and awards organised by the Gaelic Association. St Columba's Church, Glasgow was influential in establishing the Mòd's when, in 1891, its choir was invited to give a Gaelic Concert in Oban, presided over by Lord Archibald Campbell. The concert was attended by much of the nobility, including Louise, Princess Royal and Duchess of Fife. After the Concert, the Choir was entertained to supper at the Alexandra Hotel, and a description of the entertainment is given in one of William Black's novels. This concert was the prelude to the Gaelic Mòd, the first being held at Oban the following year, when the St. Columba Choir was successful in the Choir competition.

The Mòd has been held most years since 1892 in October. The only years in which the National Mòd was not held were the war years of 1914-1919 and 1939-1946. The "Royal" was not originally part of the name. It is still the practice of the St Columba's Church to send a Concert Party to start off the fund-raising when the Mòd visits Oban. As well as winning the premier Choir competition for the first three years, the church has also had many Mòd Gold Medallists over the years.

Mòd largely takes the form of formal competitions. Choral events and traditional music including Gaelic song, fiddle, bagpipe, clarsach and folk groups dominate. Spoken word events include children and adult's poetry reading, storytelling and Bible reading, and categories such as Ancient Folk Tale or Humorous Monologue. Children can also present an original drama, and there are competitions in written literature. The Mòd also runs an annual shinty competition, the Mòd Cup, between the two shinty teams closest to the place where the Mòd is taking place. The winners of each day's competitions are invited to perform in the winners' céilidhs held every evening.

The Mòd is a celebration of (Scottish) Gaelic language and culture, which raises the profile and contributes towards the aim of securing its future. Improvements in the provision of Gaelic-medium education across Scotland has meant that by 2007 the junior native speakers' section had increased to such an extent that the organisers were forced to extend some of the competitions beyond one day. (ref: www)

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Western Australian Kilt Run & Highland Games

On 13th September 2015 last year, the annual Perth Kilt Run and Highland Games were held in the beautiful Minnowarra Park, Armadale in Western Australia.

A plethora of Scottish/Celtic organisations and community groups from all over Western Australia converge on Armadale for the renowned Highland Gathering to participate in state competitions and showcase their culture. About 10,000 people attended Minnowarra Park to show their love of all things Scottish in Western Australia. It is Western Australia's largest Scottish event. It includes entertainment for the kids, pipe bands, Highland dancing and clan stalls.

The Kilt Run route encompasses both the 2.5km Classic (two laps) and 5km Warrior (four laps) distances. Similar kilt runs take place in Perth, Scotland and Perth, Ontario Canada.

Homeland News

Colonsay's New Fish Farm

Prior to the establishment of its fish farm near Colonsay, foreign multinational Marine Harvest was accused of offering "bribes" to the islanders of Colonsay to get them to agree to a controversial plan to turn their waters into a giant fish farm. The Norwegian firm promised the 120 residents of Colonsay, to the north of Islay, £50,000 up front and £10,000 a year thereafter if they voted for 12 salmon cages to be moored 1500 metres off their east coast. It would be the island's first commercial fish farm.

Islanders were split on the issue, with some worried about environmental risks and others anxious for new jobs. People on different sides of the argument, all agreed a vote on the issue was too close to call. One of the most ardent opponents was 60 year old Mike McNicholl, who retired last year as owner of the local shop. The cash on offer was undoubtedly "a bribe", he said, aimed at winning support for a development that would later expand. He fears a fish farm would damage Colonsay's reputation as an "unspoilt" holiday destination. "I really don't see the benefits," he said. "Whatever the outcome, it's already caused damage."

Laird Alex Howard, 50, owns 60% of the island and 38% of its homes. He stated, "I have not yet seen enough evidence to say that we are not taking an unacceptable risk," he said, warning the farm "could backfire horribly" because it "could have incredible, far-reaching negative consequences, ruining the environment." He added: "If you dangle money in front of people who haven't got much, they will take an interest." Marine Harvest had failed to control pollution at some fish farms. Eight of its west coast and island salmon farms were rated as "poor" by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (Sepa) in 2010. The company's fish-processing plant in Fort William, failed Sepa's pollution assessment in 2008 because of smells, though it has improved.

Some Colonsay residents, however, were in favour of the fish farm. Kevin Byrne, 64, who drives the school bus, was worried about the lack of work for young people. "It would be foolish of those of us who are past working age to stand in the way of this," he said. Local development officer and crofter Donald Macneill, 58, said: "Anything that brings new jobs to Colonsay is not just important, it is vital". He pointed out the vast majority of the 95 islanders were over 45, with 49 of them over 60. "We do need young people, and jobs to give them," he argued. The fish farm would create six full-time jobs, a significant boost to the 16 existing full-time jobs. Marine Harvest saw the development as an opportunity to help the community as their farm staff and families would live on Colonsay and benefit from the funding the firm offered. In time, Colonsay fish farm was expected to produce in excess of 2,500 tonnes.

The fish farm project that was first mooted a few years ago was the subject of numerous meetings and informative sessions. It culminated in a democratic vote at which it received the overwhelming support of the islanders on Colonsay. (Sunday Herald).

In July last year, Colonsay resident Kevin Byrne (known to many Macfies) was lucky enough to get a good look at the new barge being installed to service the Colonsay fish farm.

Among his detailed observations, he noted the following. The barge to service the new Colonsay Fish farm was brought into position on Friday 5th June 2015, following a rather lengthy tow at a maximum speed of 4 knots. The investment in the new farm approaches £5.5m and the magnificent barge unit alone cost ca. £1.25m, having been built at Inverness by GaelForce. It is a most impressive piece of engineering and Marine Harvest staff quite rightly remarked that they were proud to know that it was built here in Scotland. Having just arrived, it was still being positioned by an anchor-laying vessel, secured by 8 large danforth-style anchors each weighing 3 tonnes and fitted with very heavy chain.

All in all, this enterprise seems to be designed and implemented to extraordinarily high standards - the working environment is stable, ergonomically designed and appears to outrun all obvious H&S standards. The working pattern seems to involve two teams of five people, who will normally work 12 hr shifts 24/7 on a fortnight on/off basis. It is clear that the company and the staff are committed to the very highest environmental standards and that this project offers a great future for all concerned, including everyone in Colonsay.

Scotland News

Culloden Battlefield Protection

Culloden was the site of the last pitched battle on British soil. It was where Bonnie Prince Charlie, the Young Pretender to the English throne, and his Jacobite army were defeated by government forces on 16 April, 1746, ending his claim to the British throne – and costing more than 2,000 lives. It is a war grave for Jacobite soldiers killed in the battle.

Culloden Battlefield has been approved by Highland Council to give greater protection from development. The fighting at Culloden took place over a wider area than the parts of the battlefield currently in the care of the National Trust of Scotland. The conservation area will be extended to become six times larger than its current size. In 2015, a dispute broke out after a Scottish Government appointed planning officer approved plans for 16 houses about 400 metres from the existing boundary.

The National Trust of Scotland warned the battlefield could become surrounded by properties in the same way as New York City's Central Park. The housing project still has planning permission but nothing has yet been built on the site on farmland at Viewhill. This is the first formal review in 47 years to the existing conservation area around Culloden - first designated in 1968. (The Scotsman & Scottish Banner Vol 39, no 7)

UK's First Floating Offshore Wind Farm

The world's largest floating offshore wind farm will be installed in the North Sea off the coast of Peterhead after the Scottish government gave it consent. Peterhead is on Scotland's east coast north of Aberdeen. Norwegian energy firm Statoil has been granted a licence for the pilot scheme of five turbines. They will be attached to the seabed by a three-point mooring spread and anchoring system, making them easy to install in deep water.

It is expected that the Hywind project could power up to 19,900 homes. The turbines will transport electricity via an export cable from the pilot park to the shore at Peterhead in Aberdeenshire just over 15 miles (25km) away. The pilot project is designed to demonstrate the technology on a commercial scale, according to Statoil. Construction is planned to start as early as next year with final commissioning in 2017, according to the company.

Currently offshore wind turbines are rigidly attached to the seabed which makes them difficult and expensive to install in deep water. The Carbon Trust believes that floating wind concepts have the potential to reduce generating costs to below £100/MWh in commercial deployments, with the leading concepts such as Hywind producing even lower costs of £85-£95/MWh. Deputy First Minister John Swinney described Hywind as a "hugely exciting project in terms of electricity generation and technology innovation. (BBC News).

Most Expensive Street in Scotland

An Edinburgh street has been named Scotland's most expensive with an average house price of £1.3 million, according to new research. Northumberland Street (pictured), in the heart of New Town, claimed the title in the Bank of Scotland study.

The capital, in total, is home to 13 of Scotland's 20 most expensive streets, with Aberdeen boasting four and Glasgow two. Mar Hall Avenue in Bishopton, Renfrewshire, is the only street featured in the top 20 outside one of the main cities, with homes worth £917,000.

The latest Bank of Scotland street value report is based on house price data collected by the Registers of Scotland on house sales between January 2010 and October 2015. Only streets where there have been at least 7 transactions over the period are included in the survey. (The Independent)



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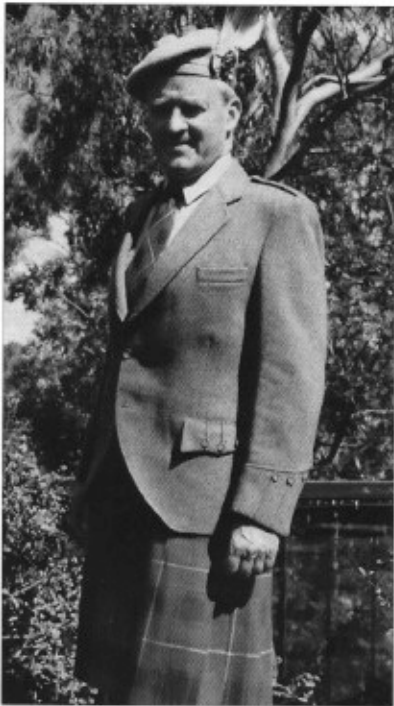
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EVENTS FOR THE DIARY

- March 20 Geelong Highland Games, Goldsworthy Oval, 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
- May 20/22 Robert Burns Scottish Festival, Camperdown VIC
- May 28 Berry Celtic Festival, Berry NSW
- May 28 Bonnie Wingham Gathering NSW
- July 2 Aberdeen Highland Games NSW

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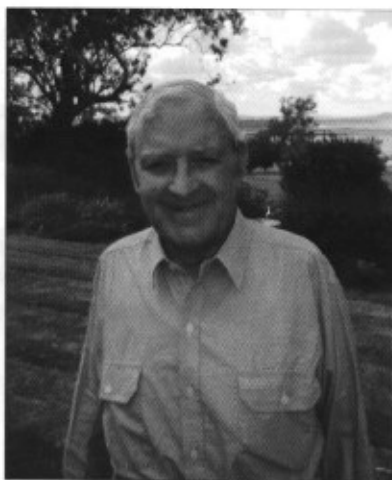
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Commander Sandy McPhie



2008 BGM, Toowoomba. Back: Cass & Brian McHaffie, Trevor Phee, Ian McPhee, Helen & Sandy McPhie, Morris McPhee. Front: Susan Spinks, Brenda Herd & Robyn McPhee. The photo was taken at John & Susan Spinks' home at Oakey, QLD



Sandy at the 2008 BGM Toowoomba



2010 BGM, Sydney. Back: Geoff McPhee, Helen & Sandy McPhie, Ian McPhee, Morris McPhee, Ruth McPhee & Gwen Hubert. Front: Judy Moore & Robyn McPhee, taken at Geoff & Ruth's home Lugarno NSW



2010 BGM, Sydney. Sandy with the customary glass of whisky with Ian McPhee



2010 BGM, Sydney. Sandy McPhie with Trish McPhee