



# THE DOWNUNDER

Journal of the  
Macfie Clan Society of Australia

Issue 146  
March  
2023



Colonsay



Ancestral home  
of Clan Macfie

Oronsay

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

[www.clanmacfie.com.au](http://www.clanmacfie.com.au)

# PRESIDENT'S PAGE

Peter McPhee AM



**W**e have come to a turning point in the Clan history, with the opportunity to select our next Commander.

We have had three Commanders since the first was appointed in 1981. That was Dr Earle Douglas McPhee of Canada, who started the resurgence of our clan in 1968. He was followed by our own Sandy McPhie of Queensland, and more recently Iain Morris McFie from Scotland, who is resigning due to failing health.

Once this resignation is registered with the Lord Lyon we start the process of finding a new Commander. This will be overseen by a Supervising Officer appointed by the Lyon Court. It may be a lengthy process but it needs to be understood, transparent and fair.

I attended the Aberdeen (NSW) Highland Games last year with Vice President Morris and Ian McPhee who was the Games Chief of the Day.

This was an honour for our Clan and photos are in the centre pages. Vice President Morris has booked again for this year. I will have the Clan tent at The Melbourne Games

in March. Come along and introduce your family to us.

In late September we will have our Clan Parliament in Glasgow. I urge you all to attend. Normally held every four years, we have been delayed due to Covid restrictions. It provides an opportunity to meet and catch up with clans folk from around the world and, for those who are interested, visit our traditional home, the Isle of Colonsay.

The Macfie Clan Society of Australia usually holds a general meeting every two years. However, with Covid these meetings have been in abeyance. I have proposed a meeting on the **Gold Coast, Queensland on Saturday 27 May, 2023**. (Please see the notice in this edition for further details). This will give us a chance to get to know each other again and consider what we want to achieve at the Clan Parliament.

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Front cover: *Brian McPhee with his family at the standing stone on Colonsay*  
Back Row from L to R – *Jamie (son), Campbell (g.son), Angus (son), Rick (son)*  
Middle from L to R – *Merilyn (wife), Heather (DIL), Ella (g.daughter), Callum (g.son), Annie (DIL), Brian*  
Front from L to R – *Charley (g.daughter), Aimee (g.daughter)*

# VALE Brian McPhee

**B**RIAN McPhee, a stalwart of the Society and a founding member, sadly passed away on 7th November, 2022.

We extend our condolences to his wife, Marilyn and children Jamie, Angus and Ric and their families.

Whilst in hospital just before he died, Mac asked his three sons for eulogies that "would be worth dying for!" and here are some excerpts . . .

*Mac was born on March 1st 1936, and was most annoyed that he just missed a leap year by a couple of hours.*

*When he was four years old the family moved to Darwin, as his father was stationed there as a telegrapher for the Eastern Extension Cable Company.*

*Two years later they were evacuated when the Japanese launched 83 bombing raids on Darwin, so his life got off to an exciting start!*

*Mac studied Economics at Adelaide University, where he met Marilyn. They married in 1960 and before the end of the decade had three sons.*

*Mac worked as an accountant in various firms before setting up his own practice.*

*In 1972 Mac was one who answered a letter from Canadian academic, Dr Earle Douglas McPhee, who wrote to Macfies around the world, proposing they reform the defunct Macfie Clan.*

*After almost 10 years, on May 27th 1981, the Macfie Clan was recognised and led to a lifelong love affair with all things Scottish and Clan events for Mac.*



*'Mac' with his sons Jamie, Angus and Ric*



*Mac had lots of interests – theatre, music, sport, ornithology, several service clubs; but his family and friends were the most important part of his life.*

Mac died on November 7th last year, of respiratory problems with which he had been struggling for the past few years. He died peacefully in the Royal Adelaide Hospital with his three sons, Rick, Jamie, Angus and Marilyn by his side

*We followed Mac's instructions for his funeral. His kilt was covering his coffin and all the family wore a piece of McPhee tartan.*

The photo (on the cover) of his family standing in front of the Standing Stone on Colonsay was on the service sheet. He had taken the entire family to Colonsay in 2013 – his third trip there.

A piper had been asked by Mac to play 'Amazing Grace' at the conclusion of the service. Sing Australia, of which Mac was a member, sang 'The Carnival is Over', and the only part that he hadn't anticipated was the accompanying pianist was a McDonald!!

It was a beautiful send off for a very special man

# Macfie Clan Commander - Update

## and the Macfie Clan Family Convention in Glasgow in September

*From the Executive of the Macfie Clan Society of Australia*

### **Resignation of our Macfie Clan Commander**

Our Clan Commander Iain Macfie is standing down, due to ill health and a new Commander will need to be chosen to succeed him.

### **Lord Lyon's Guidance note**

In December 2021 the Lord Lyon issued a Guidance Note in the Succession of Chiefs and Family Conventions (<https://courtofthelordlyon.scot/notesandjudgments.htm>) where he outlined in general terms his role in determining the succession of Chiefs and the appointment of Commanders at the request of a clan or family.

The processes have been updated so it is now not only the 'great and good' (such as armigers) of the clan or family who are entitled to identify a suitable person for Commander. All interested clans folk, whether they are members of Clan Societies or armigers or not, are now encouraged to take an active part in this process.

### **The Macfie Clan Secretariat**

A Macfie Clan Secretariat was formed in Scotland in 2018 to assist the Clan Commander in his duties. It issued a statement of its goals and members (see later in this issue) in November last year. However, once Commander Iain resigned it took on authority, functions and responsibilities not assigned to it and without reference to the Lord Lyon or clans folk worldwide. Some Clan Societies are represented but others are not. Requests for representation and other information have been ignored. This is in direct contravention of the Guidance Note.

### **The process of selecting a new Commander**

Clan Society Presidents were informed in November by the Macfie Clan Secretariat that the process of choosing Commander Iain's successor had started. They were asked to send in nominations at very short notice. Protests about the short time frame, lack of due process and lack of transparency were

submitted by various societies and individuals and the deadline was extended. Three nominations have been received but, despite requests, we have received no further information about any of them.

It seems that in this rush to get things sorted that a few details have been overlooked. The principal one is that the Lord Lyon has yet to receive a formal letter of resignation from Commander Iain. Until he receives this, he cannot appoint a Supervising Officer or set in train the process of nomination and selection. This person works with the clan or family to ensure that the procedures adopted are understood by all concerned, and are transparent and fair.

So, it appears that the process has to start over. Once a suitable person for Commander is identified and agreed upon, their name and credentials are submitted to the Lord Lyon for formal approval and appointment.

### **The Macfie Family Convention**

We presume that the Macfie Family Convention will go ahead Glasgow in September, despite all this muddle, but we have received no further information since January. Notices are normally forwarded to all Clan Societies' senior representatives and then relevant details are passed on to all members via their Clan Newsletter, website and by email.

As the selection of a new Commander is of major importance to the Clan and the various Clan Societies' members, we believe that details of the discussions leading up to the September meeting should be made available to as many members as are interested, in a more direct and timely manner.

Each member for whom we have an email address can receive information directly by contacting the Society Vice President Morris McPhee ([colonsay@bigpond.net.au](mailto:colonsay@bigpond.net.au)). If you have not already notified him, please let him know if you agree to receiving email correspondence. You are able to opt out of this direct communication at any time.

# Clan Macfie Secretariat

**NAME** The Clan Macfie Secretariat The Secretariat (within the Clan)

**MISSION** To maintain and promote the Clan Macfie and ensure its future.

**VISION** To maintain and develop the Clan whilst promoting the Clan and kinship amongst members and informing the world of our heritage.

**VALUES**

- Kinship and Recognition
- Support & Promotion
- Inclusion
- Communication

**COMPOSITION**

- To consist of no more than TEN (10) individual Clan Members To include:
- The Clan Trustees
- At least ONE (1) Clan Commissioner
- Clan Members willing and able to undertake tasks for the Clan Secretariat
- At least half of the members must be resident in Scotland
- Other persons with identified specialist skills to be seconded as required to act for the Secretariat.

**FUNCTIONS** To support the:

- Clan
- Clan Chief/Commander in their role.

**METHOD** Promote and undertake:

- Organisation
- Communication
- Research
- Continuity

**RESPONSIBILITIES TO**

- support the Clan internationally
- support the Clan Chief/Commander
- provide support and continuity for the Clan in the absence of a Chief/Commander or at the occasion the change of a Chief/Commander.
- gather information etc., for the Clan and the Chief/Commander as required
- disseminate information etc., for the Clan and the Chief/Commander as required
- organise or facilitate the organisation of Meetings/Gatherings and/or Parliaments for the Clan and the Chief/Commander as required.

<b>IDENTIFIED MEMBERS</b>	Andrew Duffy (Scotland)	<i>Trustee, Armiger, Commissioner</i>
	Linda Rae McFee Gilcrest (USA)	<i>Armiger, Commissioner</i>
	Finlay McFee (Scotland)	<i>Treasurer, Trustee</i>
	Bob McFie (Scotland)	<i>MacFie Society President (UK), Piper</i>
	Pär-Magnus Macfie Hagman (Sweden)	<i>Trustee, Armiger</i>
	Vanessa Duffy	<i>Gathering (Parliament) Co-Ordinator</i>
	Lorraine Mcfee	<i>Gathering (Parliament) Co-Ordinator</i>

# Are we related? Part 1

## - Going Beyond Ancestry.com

by Barbara McPhee

HAVE you met someone with your surname and wondered: are we related? Its exciting when you find out you could be or know of someone else who is.

### Gathering information on family histories

Over the years members of the various McPhee/ MacFie/ McDuffy societies around the world have continued to explore Clan history and their relationship with other members.

Recently we have had the advantage of online platforms, such as Ancestry.com and Family Search, which provide assistance with linking us with relatives and ancestors.

As well, there have been significant advances in genetic research that can link families and individuals. The McDuffie DNA surname project is one such venture, providing reference information for different branches of the clan. (see - [www.clanmacfie.co.uk/clanhome/surname\\_project.php](http://www.clanmacfie.co.uk/clanhome/surname_project.php) for more information)

Before the internet and Ancestry.com there were (and still are) Clan historians and genealogists, who search for information from numerous sources. They spend hours scanning microfiche records and old newspapers, trawling graveyards and church records; discovering links in the most unlikely places.

Much of this information has been dispersed to various family trees and online genealogy websites, and is available at the touch of a button – or fifty. In these days of instant communication, it is hard to appreciate how much time and effort it took before the Internet.

### Filling gaps in family histories

Nevertheless, there are still a lot of gaps in most family histories. As well, there is material that has been passed down through families that has not been verified, or for which there is no evidence at all. I am sure that we all have apocryphal stories of aristocratic heritage, lost millions and heroic deeds performed by ancestors. Our family certainly has more than its fair share.

As extended families over several generations tend to accrue information separately, it is useful to be able to make direct contact with family members to fill in gaps and cross check facts and uncover fiction.

We would love to hear of your own personal researches into your family histories, and publish it in the newsletter. Tell us of what you have found and what you still would like to know – join the dots and fill the gaps! There could be somebody out there who knows!

Send any stories or questions to

[bmcphree@gmail.com](mailto:bmcphree@gmail.com)

### Out of interest ...

You will notice on the front cover that Brian McPhee is wearing a slightly different coloured tartan. This is known as the 'ancient' tartan and derives from the traditional use of vegetable dyes. The modern form has the bright reds and greens which the others in the picture are displaying.

We are told that Brian only ever wore the 'ancient tartan'.

# Are we related? Part 2

## - My own family journey

by Barbara McPhee

The aim of this section is to start the ball rolling with some mysteries from my own branch of the McPhee clan. My mother, Norah McPhee, started this research when she was Clan Historian and I have been able to continue it using modern resources. But a certain points you have to go back to the valuable personal family records and memories.

### My McPhee Ancestors

My McPhee ancestors came to Australia in the 1800s I am really keen to know more about certain descendants of these early arrivals, who were notable in their own right but who seem to have disappeared off the record.

#### Alexander Robert (AR) McPhee

AR was Capt. Donald McPhee's only son and was born on Mull (Achnacraig near Craignure) Argyle, in 1834. His mother, Euphemia (Effie), was from a different McPhee family on Mull but there is no evidence that Effie married Capt. Donald.

AR migrated to Australia when he was 17-year-old in 1851 arriving in Sydney on the 'Earl Grey'. He came with his first cousin or his uncle, 23-year-old Malcolm McPhee, who was an ancestor of long-time member of Macfie Clan Society of Australia, Maurine Cunningham.

#### AR and Mary Anne O'Brien

In 1860, AR married Mary Ann O'Brien in 1860 in St Peters and St Pauls Catholic Church in Goulburn. They had 12 children, one of whom (Arthur) probably died as an infant; and another died when he was four (Colin Campbell).



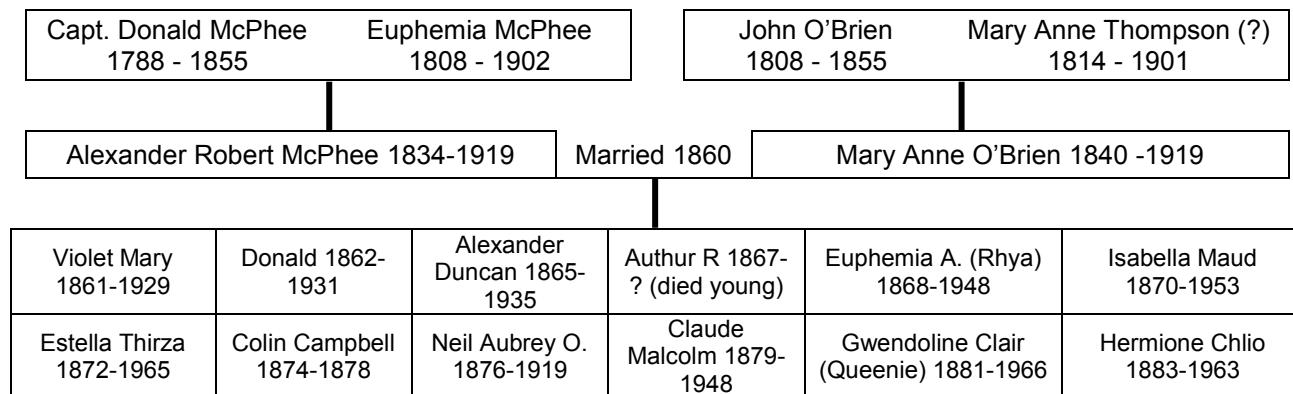
Alexander Robert McPhee  
My great great grandfather

(Those who knew my father Sandy, will notice the strong resemblance!)



Mary Anne McPhee (nee O'Brien)  
My great great grandmother

# Descendants of Capt. Donald McPhee:



*Alexander Robert McPhee and his wife Mary Ann (nee O'Brien) taken about 1875 and picturing five of their 12 children. They are thought to be Violet Mary (about 14), Donald (about 13), Alexander Duncan (about 10) Euphemia (about 7) and Isabella Maud (about 5). The picture is probably taken in Orange where AR was a school master)*

## 'The Aunts' of Bellevue Hill

Of the 10 children of Alexander Robert and Mary Ann, who survived into adulthood, at least four never married. They were:

### Isabella Maud 1870 – 1953

Isabella was born in Bathurst. She became a teacher.

She is listed in the Sands Directory from 1916 as Principal of a Girls Boarding School at 72-74 Victoria Rd Edgecliff /Bellevue Hill called 'Deloray' or 'Deleray'. In one later list she was listed as having a Bachelor of Arts (BA), quite unusual in those days.

### Estella Thirza 1872 – 1965

Estella was also born in Bathurst and at one point was a teacher at Hunters Hill, NSW. It is believed she also taught at Qambah.

### Gwendoline Clair (Queenie) 1881- 1966

Gwendoline was born in Hartley NSW. In 1917 she was a teacher at Rose Bay and in 1923 she was listed in Sands Directory as the Principal of the C of E School for Girls, Caledonian Rd, Rose Bay.

### Hermione Chlio 1883 – 1963

Chlio was born in Woollahra, NSW and in 1917 she was a teacher at Hunters Hill.



## 'Qambah'

Between the wars it is believed that 'Deleray' (later known as 'Quambaai' or 'Quambah' or "Qambah") became a finishing day school for girls who were preparing to be presented at the Court of St James in London in their 'Coming Out' Year. The Headmistress (or Principal) was Isabella.



*The larger house at Qambah in 1951*

By 1951 the four sisters had retired and were known to the extended family as 'The Aunts'. They continued to live at 'Qambah', 72 Victoria Rd, Bellevue Hill which was a large property with two houses. It had driveway access to Kambala Rd to the south and one of the best addresses in Australia with views over Rose Bay flying boat base and the harbour.

In 1966, when all four sisters had died, 'Quambah' was left to St Marks, Darling Point. I understand that the will was contested by the wider family and eventually a number of descendants of their brothers and sisters shared in the proceeds of the sale in 1968.

**BELLEVUE HILL**  
McPHEE ESTATE 4 PRESTIGE SITES  
72 VICTORIA ROAD

See Plan on Board or ring for Brochure. 4 lots; 6,874, 7,963, 9,937 and 10,073 sq. ft.

**AUCTION SALE DATE, 5th DEC., 1968 at 11 a.m.**  
in the Auction Rooms,  
61 Goulburn St., Sydney.

**RAINE & HORNE PTY. LTD.,** Conj. Agent  
34 Hunter, Cnr. Pitt St. 25-2244. **KEVIN McALOON & CO.,**  
A.H. 32-5691 or 32-7940. 10 Marlin Place.  
25-2104.

*Sale of 'Qambah' advertised in the Sydney Morning Herald on 13 November 1968.*

Eventually the houses at 'Qambah' were demolished and the land became part of the large garden of Frank Packer's property which was next door.

Despite looking in the usual places, I can find no public records of the Aunts, the property or the school. Next stop will be Waverley Council records. I met a former pupil in 1970; and Judith Moore of Adelaide, my third cousin, remembers visiting the Aunts as a teenager. But that's it.

This is one part of our family's ancestry and we're looking for more information. Can anyone help?

### **So My Questions Are:**

1. *Does anyone have any further information of these four ladies and their school, how they may have acquired their property and its sale?*
2. *Violet Mary apparently married into the Norman Lindsay family. Can anyone provide further information on her?*
3. *Euphemia (Rhya) married Robert Wilkinson and had at least one son, Geoffrey who lived in Paris after WWII. My parents met up with him in Paris in 1960. Does anyone have more information on this family?*
4. *Neil Aubrey was in Sth Africa at the beginning of WWI and is believed to have died in France in 1919. Does anyone have any further information on him?*
5. *Claude Malcolm died in Sydney in 1948. Did he marry and have children?*

Don't forget our website

[www.clanmacfie.com.au](http://www.clanmacfie.com.au)

The website is gradually being built with news, resources and archive information as well as an easy membership portal.

Designed and maintained by

**Echo Andarta,**

[honeywiseness@gmail.com](mailto:honeywiseness@gmail.com)

Contributions welcome!

# Clan MacFie International Gathering 2023 - Glasgow

Vanessa Duffy & Lorraine McFee  
Gathering Coordinators for the Clan MacFie Secretariat

**W**E look forward to meeting you in Glasgow in 2023.

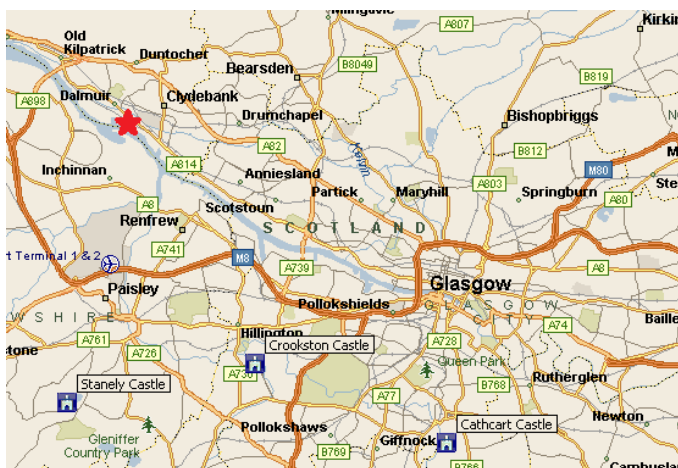
Clan MacFie members worldwide are invited to attend the International Gathering taking place on the outskirts of Glasgow, and onwards to the Isle of Colonsay, the ancestral home of Clan.

The International Meeting will be a mixture of a Clan Business meeting and social functions. It will be held at the Golden Jubilee Hotel & Conference Centre, Clydebank, Glasgow. Attendees are welcome to arrive early or stay a little longer at this great facility.

You are also welcome to join Clan Members on the Isle of Colonsay after the International Meeting. 2023 is the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Malcolm, our Clan Chief.

Events to mark this historic milestone will be held between 30th September and 3rd October.

Details follow for booking your accommodation and registration for the International Gathering as well as details about staying on Colonsay. There is much to see and enjoy in Scotland and we hope you make the most of your visit.



★ Golden Jubilee Hotel

## Programme

### Wednesday 27th September

Registration 1pm -6pm

Clan Reception 6pm- 8pm

### Thursday 28th September

Clan Business Meeting (includes lunch) 9am - 5pm

Clan Dinner 7pm – 11pm

### Friday 29th September onwards

Travel to and stay on the Isle of Colonsay

### 1. The Golden Jubilee Hotel & Conference Centre - Glasgow

The 4-star Hotel is located just a 15-minute drive from the centre of Glasgow City, in Clydebank, which is on the north side of the River Clyde, and to the west of the city. It is 20 minutes from Glasgow Airport.

The hotel has 168 rooms, onsite free parking as well as a swimming pool and health club.

The hotel also offers free pick-up and drop off to Glasgow Airport. The nearest rail connection to the hotel is Dalmur Station, which is a 10-minute walk away.

All the social functions and meetings will take place within the hotel's conference facilities.

The hotel is offering the following rate to Clan members, this includes breakfast.

**£92 Single - per room, per night.**

**£102 Twin or Double – per room, per night. Some rooms can hold up to 3 persons.**

When you book, you need to reserve your room with a credit card number. No payment will be taken until you arrive, but there is a cancellation period to allow you to cancel up to two weeks prior to your arrival.

We have block booked a number of rooms for the Gathering. Any not taken by 31st July will be released back to the hotel. We advise that you book as soon as possible. To book your room(s), either ring 44 (0)141 951 6006 or email: [conferences@goldenjubilee.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:conferences@goldenjubilee.scot.nhs.uk), quoting Clan Macfie Gathering and provide your credit or debit card details.

You may choose to stay elsewhere in Glasgow and there are many accommodation options.

## 2. Clan Gathering Information

All Clan members are invited to attend both the business meeting and social functions being held on 27th & 28th September 2023, at the Golden Jubilee Hotel and Conference Centre.

If you are attending, you can register your interest using one of the methods laid out below. Please note that you must make your own reservations for staying at the hotel or if staying elsewhere.

Inevitably, there are costs involved in running a Clan Gathering and we have endeavoured to keep these to a minimum. The prices are the best we can offer at this time based on the current prices provided by the hotel for all our functions. We will work to keep any future increases to a minimum.

We ask that all payments be made in cash when you attend registration on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> September. Payment in Sterling. (British pounds)

**Registration** - £5 per person

**Clan Reception** – Drink & snacks - £20 per person

**Clan Business meeting**, including lunch - £20 per person

**Clan Dinner** – 4-course meal - £38 per person

The preferred method to register is via the online form, which, once completed, only needs submitting electronically. Please complete a form for each person attending, even if they are not attending the business meeting.

[Clan MacFie Gathering 2023 \(google.com\)](#)

Alternatively, at the end of this document there is a form, please fill it in and send back as an email attachment. Alternatively, you can post it to the address at the bottom of the form.

If you are unable to use any of the above methods, you can email your responses by listing the question number, and giving your answer. Email to [gathering2023@clanmacfie.co.uk](mailto:gathering2023@clanmacfie.co.uk)

Although we will accommodate late reservations, it is hoped you will register by the end of June 2023.

If you have any questions about the Gathering, or we can assist you in any way, you can contact us via the same email address.

At this point, we are not able to give details of the agenda for the Clan business meeting. However, it will most likely include a financial report, greetings and reports from the worldwide Clan Societies and other Clan Business.

## 3. Visit to Colonsay

When the Gathering concludes, many Clan members will be moving on to stay on the Isle of Colonsay. There will be some Clan activities to mark the 400th anniversary of the death of Malcolm, our last Clan Chief.

You should make your own arrangements to get to the island and book accommodation.

### Please note:

Colonsay has limited facilities that are spread across the island and you are advised to have the use of a vehicle. Alternatively, bicycle hire is available for the more active.

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

### Getting There

The beautiful Isle of Colonsay is accessed by ferry from Oban. The ferry service for both vehicles and foot passengers is operated by Caledonian MacBrayne. You can book your ferry tickets online. There is a ferry to the island each day. You can access the Cal Mac website via: [Colonsay: Oban-Colonsay-Port Askaig | CalMac Ferries](#) to make your booking.

Alternatively, there are flights that operate on Thursdays from Oban to Colonsay. There is also an extra service on Fridays during school term time. More details are available from [www.hebrideanair.co.uk](http://www.hebrideanair.co.uk)

### Staying There

There are a number of holiday properties available to rent catering for couples and up to groups of 14.

The main provider of holiday lets is Colonsay Holidays. Please book via: [www.colonsayholidays.co.uk/](http://www.colonsayholidays.co.uk/)

There is also the Colonsay Hotel, view via: [www.colonsay-hotel.com](http://www.colonsay-hotel.com)

We will provide any information about Clan activities on Colonsay when they become available.

### Further help and information.

As more details become available, we will send out further information. If you need further help, please contact us via [gathering2023@clanmacfie.co.uk](mailto:gathering2023@clanmacfie.co.uk)

# Aberdeen: An Historical Perspective

Ian McPhee - Society Historian & Past President

**T**HE inaugural Highland Games in Aberdeen, near Scone in NSW, was held on 1 July 2000, that date being the annual Tartan Day. On that day in 1782, the Dress Act, which for 36 years made the wearing of tartan cloth in Scotland illegal, was repealed. The day is celebrated in various ways around the world.

The Aberdeen Highland Games has always been supported and attended by members of our Society. That is hardly surprising, as the surrounding area has been home to McPhee families since the earliest days of settlement. Former Society treasurer Geoff McPhee was raised there, and together with his wife Ruth (both deceased), manned a tent at the Games for many years. Geoff's brother Bill, who still lives in the area, continues to be a regular contributor.

It was at Geoff's insistence that the Society's large banners display purposes were made, using the most common form of the Clan name in the area, which is McPhee.

Our Society also has a strong connection to the local pipe band, which plays a leading role in the day's festivities. The band is based at Scone, 14 km north of Aberdeen. The Scone RSL Pipes and Drums was formed with the assistance of local businessman Eddie McPhee, who provided some of the funds that brought the band into existence. This connection led to the band choosing to wear the beautiful Macfie Clan Tartan, the only band in Australia to do so.

Charles Cook was the founding President of Aberdeen Highland Games and has always been a great friend to our Society. Nicola O'Driscoll took over from Charles as the President in 2019. It was an honour to be asked by Nicola if I would be the Chief of the Day for the Games in 2020. Unfortunately, Covid intervened and those games were cancelled. I was asked again in 2021, but those Games were also cancelled for the same reason. Finally, the Games went ahead in 2022. After being asked for the third time, it was my privilege to represent our Society as the Chief of the Day at those Games.

On the Sunday morning after the Games, there is a "Kirkin' O' the Tartans" at St. Mark's Anglican Church in Aberdeen. This is a lovely occasion, where the clan banner bearers, clans' folk and the minister are piped into the church. All the various clan tartans are placed at the front of the church and, as bearers are seated, the piper finishes playing. As Chief of the Day, it was my pleasant duty to give a short address to the congregation.



*The MacFie clan was given the honour, in the person of Ian McPhee, of being Chief of the Day and asked to open the games  
The local Scone Pipe Band also wears the Macfie tartan.*

In my view the Aberdeen Highland Games are the best in NSW. As Charles Cook once said: "they are not too big and on a great site". Nicola and other members of her committee are to be congratulated for the excellent job they do. Plenty of parking is provided, all the stall holders are treated well; there are activities to interest children, the food and entertainment provided are terrific and the programme is run efficiently.

# 2022 Aberdeen Games



Aberdeen Games officials:  
L to R  
Garth Belford, Master of Ceremonies, Nicola O'Driscoll, Games President, Ian McPhee Chief of the Day and Duncan McIntyre

L to R: Duncan McIntyre, Nicola O'Driscoll, President of the Aberdeen Highland Games Committee and Ian McPhee, Chief of the Day.

Note the feathers in Duncan and Ian's glengarries. This signifies they are armigers

*Below:* Outside the Clan Society's tent at Aberdeen: L to R Morris McPhee, Qld Vice President, Ian McPhee and Peter McPhee, Society President



# 2022 Aberdeen Games



Ian McPhee (R) , his son Ashley (L)  
(both proudly wearing their kilts)  
Grandsons Cameron and James in front  
The Aberdeen Highland Games makes a special  
effort to cater for children. Apart from lots of fun  
food, there are fun events for them to participate in.



Ian in his full regalia!  
He is holding a **cromach** which is a Gaelic term  
for a Scottish walking stick. His Highland dress  
of tweed coat and waistcoat with a leather  
sporrans, is normal day wear attire.



The Parade of Clans

# 2022 Aberdeen Games



Some more of the troops manning the McPhee tent:

L to R

Ian McPhee, Barbara McPhee, Peter McPhee and Jim Knowles (Barb's husband)

Some of the younger spectators watching the massed pipe bands



Addressing the haggis before the end of the Games.

In the photo watching: Ian McPhee, Nicola O'Driscoll and Charles Cook, founding President of the Aberdeen Highland Games Committee.

"As Chief of the Day, it was my pleasure to consume a hearty dram of whisky after the address, to toast the haggis." *Ian McPhee*

# Dispelling the Tinker Myth

by Ian McPhee

*Society Historian & Past President*

A Scottish dictionary defines a tinker in two ways. Firstly, as “An itinerant pedlar or trader, frequently living in a tent, caravan etc, and dealing in small metal wares, brushes, baskets etc, some being descendants of dispossessed Highland peasantry, some of mixed gypsy descent.” Secondly, it describes a ‘tinkler’ as “a tinker, worker in metal, an itinerant tinsmith and pedlar.”<sup>1</sup> Tinkers were sometimes referred to as ‘travellers,’ which included hawkers of various description. Such people were not gypsies. “They were indigenous, Gaelic Scots ...”<sup>2</sup>

Over many years in the Society, I have heard the McPhees referred to as ‘tinkers’. A year or so ago, a chap writing about his family and aspects of Scottish history asked me to review what he had written to ensure it was factual. He was mainly concerned about aspects of the Highland Clearances, but his work included information about a McPhee family. In writing about the Clan Macfie, he stated among other things that they were ‘tinkers’. Such an assertion is a common one about our Clan.

The association of our Clan with tinkers also came up at the last Clan Parliament held at Stirling in Scotland during 2017. In the absence of Commander Iain McFie at the Parliament, his brother Bobby, the President of the Clan Society in Scotland, gave an opening address to those present. His address was recorded in the minutes of the Parliament, part of which state: “Bob McFie welcomed everyone to the Clan Macfie 12th Parliament, and gave a short presentation on the history of the early members of Clan Macfie. History states that they were mainly ‘tinkers,’ and Bob explained that although many believe that ‘tinkers’ was a less than honourable profession; it was in fact quite the opposite. Tinkers were travellers who went from village to village repairing and selling pots and pans and other instruments needed for cooking. The villagers looked forward to their arrival.”<sup>3</sup>

The statement, that the Macfies were “mainly tinkers,” is simply not true.

I would challenge anyone to show me “History states that they were mainly tinkers.” History states no such thing. A few writers over time may

have said it, but there is no evidence to substantiate it. To say our Clan was comprised of mainly tinkers or even had many more tinkers than other clans is a fallacy. The claim has been exaggerated and perpetuated to take on mythical proportions. The Macfie-tinker myth should be rejected whenever it is claimed to be an historical fact.



*William Strang 1859–1921, Tinkers*

So how did this claim come about? As far as I can see, it appears to go back to when there was a great deal of conflict among the Clans of Scotland around the 1600s, when some clans like the Macfies were dispossessed of their land and many ordinary clan folk were displaced. As one reference put it when referring to the ‘MacPhees’, “So many of the broken clan became completely rootless that the very name MacPhee is today equated with the profession of the itinerant tinsmiths known as tinkers.”<sup>4</sup> In other words, the clansmen were like itinerant tinsmiths but didn’t become itinerant tinsmiths.

Another reference associating the tinker myth with elves is pertinent: “The more recent association of MacPhee with the trade of tinker tends to encourage the belief in their ancient association with the elves, though more realistically this was due to their misfortune in losing their lands and livelihoods.”<sup>5</sup> The key word in this quote is ‘association.’ No evidence is presented to prove any significant number of our Clansmen became tinkers. To make such an assumption would be wrong.



An article written in the early 1970s that appeared in the Canadian Clan Society newsletter stated, "The ranks of these Scots tinkers were augmented at various periods as a result of events in the country's troubled history. Writing in the 1690s, Fletcher of Saltoun stated that as a result of repeated famine and breakdown in trade there were at least 200,000 people wandering homeless in Scotland and reduced to begging for their bread."<sup>6</sup> There is no indication from the writer that Clan Macfie was a significant contributor to the tinker trade. It is clear the augmentation was from people from any number of clans in different areas and from all walks of life.

One of the most respected books about history of the Scottish clans is the publication called *The Clans of the Scottish Highlands* by R. R. Mclan, first published back in 1845.<sup>7</sup> The book has become a classic reference work about the Highland clans of Scotland. It is interesting to note in the section that covers the Macfie Clan, there is not a single mention of the Clan's association with tinkers. That is simply because in the early days of the clan there was none.

Going back to the era before the Battle of Culloden in 1746, the Macfies mostly lived in the Western Highlands and islands, where they were engaged in various occupations common for the period. The vast majority were subsistence tenant farmers who worked with others on Highland estates. They included mealers who rented some arable land and paid the rent with part of the harvest or their labour. Farm workers and tenants called bowmen, worked on a similar basis. Others included shepherds, grass-keepers, moor-herds, cottars (labourers), millers, brewers, weavers, crafters, servants, broguemakers, shoemakers, boat carpenters, wheelwrights and blacksmiths.<sup>8</sup>

The era between Culloden and the end of the Highland Clearance (circa 1860s), saw all Highland clansmen including the McPhees primarily engaged in a different range of occupations. The most common ones included crofters who paid cash to rent small holdings, landless cottars, shepherds, fishermen and kelp workers. In addition to the crafts and trades mentioned above, many also became seamen and soldiers. As the population grew rapidly, towns developed and poverty became more widespread. The number of itinerant workers like tinkers and pedlars also increased.

Tinkers in the Scottish Highlands were composed of people from many clans including the most

prominent ones. As a book about 'travellers' published in 1996 called *The Summer Walkers* states: "The Highland Travellers should not be confused with gypsies, nor with tramps or pedlars: they live in family groups, many carry the great clan names – Stewart, MacDonald, Cameron, MacAlister, MacGregor, MacMillan."<sup>9</sup> The same publication tells the story of several prominent 'travelling people' and their families, descendant from several different clans. Among them is a prominent family of MacPhees.

In my view, the relatively recent phenomenon of the Clan Macfie being classed as one that was once full of tinkers, can be put down to the latter decades of the 1800s and first half of the 1900s.

During that period, it seems a handful of Macfie families became well-known around Highland population centres as 'summer travellers.' Some of their family members were renowned bagpipe players who helped support themselves by playing their music. Those families with various surname spellings accepted as Clan Macfie names, inadvertently consolidated the association of Clan Macfie with tinkers and other itinerant people.

As an amateur Clan historian with a strong interest in Scottish history, I have looked at a great many old records in Scotland going back to the 1700s. I can't recall coming across one that gave a man's occupation as a tinker, let alone one who was a McPhee. That is not to say there aren't any. The same goes for Scottish history books that have been consulted. I have viewed hundreds of shipping records that detailed individual Scots and their families who emigrated to Australia during the Highland Clearances. In searching those records, I didn't come across one emigrant who gave his occupation as a tinker.

Unless there is evidence to prove otherwise, I am firmly of the view that claiming "the McPhees were tinkers" is a completely erroneous assertion. It is an historical error that should be corrected. I hope this article goes some way to doing that.

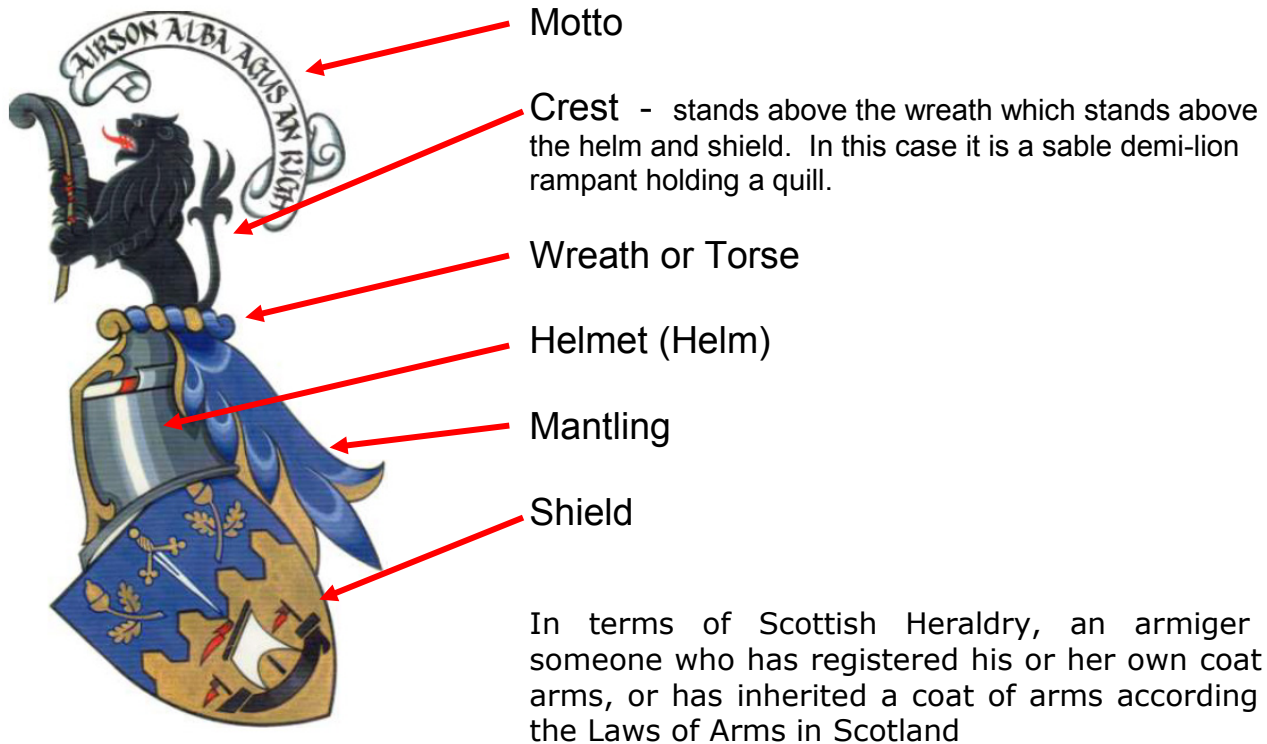
1. The Scottish National Dictionary Association Ltd, *The Concise Scots Dictionary*, pp. 723-724
2. Neat, T, 1996, *The Summer Walkers*, p. vii
3. Minutes of the 12<sup>th</sup> Clan Macfie Parliament, Sterling, Scotland, 7<sup>th</sup> September 2017
4. Grimble, I, 1986, *Scottish Clans and Tartans* p. 199
5. Grant, N, 1987, *Scottish Clans and Tartans*, p. 203
6. The Macfie Clan Society of Canada, *The Torch*, August 2011 Vol. 17 No 2, p. 4
7. Mclan, R. R, 1845, *The Clans of the Scottish Highlands*, pp. 158-160
8. 1779 Old Statistical Account of Scotland, et al.
9. Neat, T, 1996, *The Summer Walkers*, pp. vii-viii

# Scottish Coats of Arms Explained

The following information has been taken from the website of the Court of the Lord Lyon in Edinburgh. For more detail information go to the Lord Lyon website - [www.courtofthelordlyon.scot](http://www.courtofthelordlyon.scot) – and click on Coats of Arms>Petitioning for Arms

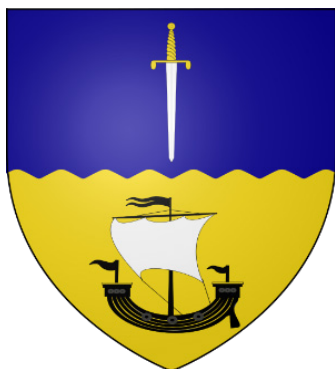
Scottish Arms are individual to a person. There are no "family or Clan Coats of Arms". However, Arms of people with the same surname are usually based on similar "undifferenced" Arms (usually those of the Chief or a senior Clan Armiger).

Below is an example – they are the arms of our retiring Commander (Ceann Caith), Iain Morris McFie.



In terms of Scottish Heraldry, an armiger is someone who has registered his or her own coat of arms, or has inherited a coat of arms according to the Laws of Arms in Scotland

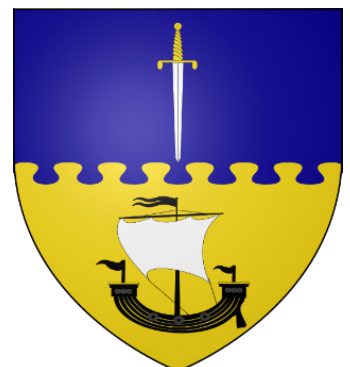
## First coats of arms for the Macfie Clan



Macfie of Langhouse 1864

In 1864 Robert Macfie of Langhouse was granted Arms and since then about 50 Macfie clans' folk have been granted or matriculated arms including about 20 who are still living.

Macfie of Dreghorn 1867 - from an ancestor who had arms recorded with the Lyon Register.



All Macfie armigers have a ship on the lower half of the shield after the original Macfie of Langhouse arms. This is described in traditional heraldic terms as '*a galley Sable under sail of the Third, flags and pennants flying Gules.*'

# Crest Badges

Clan members without Arms may wear a badge consisting of the chief's crest within a belt and buckle design showing the chief's motto. The crest is the symbol above the helmet which is on the top of the shield containing the main part of the arms.



*Crest of an armigerous clan member*

Crest badges are commonly worn by members of Scottish clans. They consist of the heraldic crest and a motto/slogan which are heraldic property and protected by law in Scotland. Crest badges may be worn by anyone. However, those who do not have arms wear a crest badge that incorporates a strap and buckle. This indicates that the wearer is a follower of the individual who owns the crest and motto. An armiger who is entitled to the heraldic elements may wear a crest badge that incorporates a circlet.

These badges usually consist of elements from the clan chief's coat of arms. Clan members who wear their chief's crest and motto surrounded by a strap and buckle show they are members of the chief's clan (family). There are established clans that do not have chiefs recognised by the Lord Lyon King of Arms. In such cases, clan members sometimes wear the crest badge of the last known chief. Some clans wear crest badges derived from the arms of individuals who were never recognised as clan chiefs.



*Crest of a non-armigerous clan member*

In the case of MacFie/ MacPhee/ McDuffie (whatever the spelling) clans folk may choose to wear the crest of either MacFie of Langhouse or MacFie of Dreghorn which looks like this.



## 2023 Memberships are now due

Renewals are being sent out in the mail or you can  
**JOIN or RENEW** online at

**[www.clanmacfie.com.au](http://www.clanmacfie.com.au)**

And click 'Become A Member'

Payment is by Direct Deposit – be sure to clearly identify your payment

# Applying for Your Coat of Arms

Any person who wishes to obtain personal Arms, must petition for a Grant of Arms - OR - if they can trace their ancestry back to an ancestor who had a grant of Arms, petition for a 'matriculation' showing their place within the family.

When a grant of Arms or Matriculation of Arms is obtained, an illuminated parchment (called Letters Patent), narrating the pedigree as proved, is supplied to the Petitioner, and a duplicate is recorded in the Public Register of All Arms and Bearings in Scotland.



This example is the Letters Patent for Dr Earle Douglas MacPhee

## Who is eligible to apply for Scottish Arms

### Owning land

Apart from the requirement that the petitioner should be, in terms of the Lyon King of Arms Act 1672, a "virtuous and well-deserving person", in general the governing factor in the case of an original Grant of Arms is the residence of the petitioner rather than the ownership of property in Scotland. Does the petitioner have a Scottish residence of origin? If not, has he acquired a Scottish residence of choice?

The petitioner's claim to fall within the jurisdiction of the Lord Lyon rests on the ownership of property. The key question is whether the petitioner is able to reside on the land. A dwelling house of whatever size presents no problem. However, the ownership of forestry land or "amenity" land on which there is no house and for which planning permission for a house would not be obtainable would not necessarily be sufficient to bring the owner into the Lord Lyon's jurisdiction.

The ownership of "souvenir" plots of land of a few square feet or thereby such as are marketed from time to time, is insufficient to bring anyone within the jurisdiction of the Lord Lyon King of Arms.

### Matriculating arms

Where the petitioner is seeking to matriculate off a previous Grant of Arms, he or she will have to prove his/her relationship to the original grantee and show that s/he comes within the destination of the original Grant of Arms.

Those who live in England, Wales or Northern Ireland should approach the College of Arms in London, while those living in the Republic of Ireland should approach the Chief Herald of Ireland in Dublin.

Commonwealth citizens, in particular those of Scottish descent - save for Canada and South Africa which have their own heraldic authorities - can apply to the Lord Lyon King of Arms.

## Those who live in foreign countries

While it is not generally possible for non-British citizens to be granted Scottish Arms it is possible for non-British citizens who descend from a Scottish armigerous ancestor bearing the same surname to apply for a cadet matriculation, as above described. It is also sometimes possible for a cousin who is living in Scotland to seek a Grant of Arms with a destination which includes the other descendants of a common ancestor if the ancestor had also been living in Scotland.

## Petitions for a new Grant of Arms

The Court of the Lord Lyon is a court of law, and applications for Arms are made by a formal "Petition". This is done on the initiative of the person wishing to obtain Arms, who submits a Petition to the Lord Lyon stating who he is and asking for Arms to be granted to him. The process is not complicated. There are four main varieties of Petition:

- Petition for a new Grant of Arms
- Petition for a Grant of Arms to an Ancestor
- Petition for a Matriculation of Arms from an Ancestor
- Petition for a Grant of Arms to a Company.

Advice on any special difficulties or matters not covered can be obtained by writing to the Lyon Clerk at the Court of the Lord Lyon, HM New Register House, Edinburgh, EH1 3YT, and to whom all completed Petitions should be sent. All such correspondence is 'CONFIDENTIAL'.

Petitions are considered in the order in which they are lodged. The Petition is laid before the Lord Lyon who normally communicates with the Petitioner, who, if willing to grant the Petition, discusses the design of the Arms.

The whole process generally takes between 10 and 12 months from the date of lodging of the Petition.

Petitioners requiring assistance in preparing the Petition may write to the Lyon Clerk at the Court of the Lord Lyon stating their requirements and objectives.

## Once Arms have been granted

Arms are recorded in the Public Register of All Arms and Bearings in Scotland, and they are protected under the law of Scotland. Any infringement of a person's armorial rights in Scotland may be drawn to the attention of the Procurator Fiscal to the Court of the Lord Lyon, who may mount any necessary prosecution of the offender.

In return for this permanent legal protection and for the maintenance of the permanent registration of Arms in the Court of the Lord Lyon a fee is charged to the Petitioner. The fee is made up of Government dues, Herald Painter's fees and costs of materials in preparing the Petitioner's Letters Patent. This is his/her title deed to the Arms, written in a formal script on vellum, illustrating his Arms in full colour, and sealed with the Seal of the Lord Lyon King of Arms. The fees are fixed by Statute and rise from time to time.

## Footnote

There is some informative content on arms, their design, and the language used to describe them on the Lord Lyon's website. <https://www.courtofthelordlyon.scot/blazoning.htm>

FAQs <https://www.courtofthelordlyon.scot/faqs.htm>

# NOTICES

## **The Macfie Clan Society of Australia** **Notice of Biennial General Meeting (BGM)**

The Macfie Clan Society of Australia will be holding its BGM on  
Clan Macfie Day - Saturday 27 May 2023 at 2pm.

**Venue: Broadbeach Bowling & Community Club**

169 Surf Parade (cnr Armrick Ave)

Broadbeach, Gold Coast, QLD 4218

Website: [broadbeachbowlsclub.com.au](http://broadbeachbowlsclub.com.au)

The meeting will be followed by refreshments and an opportunity  
to catch up after five years of Covid lockdowns.

**Members, families and friends are all welcome.**

Please let our Vice President Morris know if you plan to attend by **30th April**,  
so that we can organise catering - [colonsay@bigpond.net.au](mailto:colonsay@bigpond.net.au)

Looking forward to seeing you there.



Included with this newsletter will be nomination forms  
for office bearers,

# NOTICES

## Upcoming Events for 2023:

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION / DETAILS
27th May Start 2.00pm	Macfie Clan Society of Aust. Biennial General Meeting	Broadbeach Bowling and Community Club, Gold Coast, Queensland <i>Contact:</i> Morris McPhee - colonsay@bigpond.net.au
1st July	Aberdeen (NSW) Highland Games	Jefferson Park, Aberdeen, NSW <i>Contact:</i> Ian McPhee – irmac10@bigpond.net.au
27th & 28th September	International Macfie Clan Gathering	Golden Jubilee Hotel & Conference Centre, Clydebank, Glasgow, Scotland <i>Contact:</i> Vaness Duffy & Lorraine McFee gathering2023@clanmacfie.co.uk <i>Post/mail to:</i> Mrs V. Duffy, 11, Ewart Drive, Dumfries, DG2 7LT, U.K.

*Planning or going to an event?  
Let us know so we can add it to the calendar*

We would love to publish items of interest to Clan members, in the Downunder. You are invited to send in articles, upcoming events, items of interest or notices for the Newsletter

Next issue: July 2023

Deadline: 30th June, 2023

Send to

bmcphree@jkggroup.com.au



Find us on  
**Facebook**

For Australia search ..

**Macfie Clan Society of  
Australia**

For UK (Scotland) search ...

**The Official Clan Macfie Group**

and

**The Official Clan Macfie Page**

## Reminder

2023 membership renewal notices are being sent out now

OR you can JOIN or RENEW online at [www.clanmacfie.com.au](http://www.clanmacfie.com.au)

Payment is by Direct Deposit – be sure to clearly identify your payment

BSB: 062 218    A/C No.: 10093498

# Society Office Bearers

## President\*

Peter McPhee AM  
7 Shrewsbury Rd., Nunawading VIC 3131  
03 9874 1460 mobile: 0412 342 426  
Email: pmcphee@bigpond.com

## Vice President & QLD VP\*

Morris McPhee  
7 Rani Circuit, Noosaville QLD 4566 mobile: 0455  
334 846  
Email: colonsay@bigpond.net.au

## Past President\* & Clan Armiger\*

Ian McPhee  
PO BOX 546 Balgowlah NSW 2093  
mobile: 0419 382 555  
Email: irmac10@bigpond.net.au

## Treasurer\*

Ian McCathie  
66 Banks St. Newmarket QLD 4051  
07 3356 8054  
Email: 2012tardis@gmail.com

## Secretary

Vacant

## ACT VP\*

Heather Grove  
2/30 Krichauff St. Page ACT 2614  
02 6278 5703 mobile: 0420 825 396  
Email: hjeangrove@gmail.com

## NSW VP\* & Armiger

Barbara McPhee AM  
Hillside 6 Q10 Private Access Brunkerville, NSW  
2327 Australia  
Box 113 Kurri Kurri NSW 2327 Australia  
Mobile: +61 (0)419-293 840  
Email: bmcpcpee@jkggroup.com.au

## SA VP\*

vacant

## VIC VP\*

Terrence McPhee Guthridge  
PO Box 2118 Camberwell West 3124  
Email: eactionnet@aol.com  
Phone 0419 054 40477

## WA VP\*

Trevor McPhee  
33b Collier Ave Balcatta WA 6021  
08 9440 4748 mobile: 0423 905 850  
Email: tma@iinet.net.au

## TAS VP\*

Vacant

## Chief Historian

Ian McPhee  
Email: irmac10@bigpond.net.au

## Historian

Bernie McPhee  
1/18 York St. Mont Albert VIC 3127  
03 9899 7138  
Email: berniepmcphee@hotmail.com

## Clan Webmaster

Echo Andarta  
Email: honeywiseness@gmail.com

## Newsletter

Barbara McPhee  
Email: bmcpcpee@jkggroup.com.au

## Society Piper

vacant

\* Denotes Executive member of Macfie Clan Society of Australia

## 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.

## Go electronic!

The DOWUNDER will be emailed to all members who have provided their email addresses

If you would prefer to receive your copy of the Downunder via email, that is now possible.

You can still receive a mailed paper copy as well if you wish. Please indicate your preference by emailing Vice President Morris McPhee at [colonsay@bigpond.net.au](mailto:colonsay@bigpond.net.au)

If we don't hear from you will continue to receive a paper copy in the mail.