



# Clan MacNeil

## Association of Australia

Newsletter for clan members and friends.

June 2014

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### New Member

I am pleased to welcome a new clan family to our association.

Thea and John Kenna of Buderim in Queensland. Thea's great grandfather was born in Greenock in 1852.

### Members and their families who have renewed their membership

During the last 6 months the following people have renewed their membership as it became due. I thank them for their ongoing support for the Clan association.

Graeme & Robyn McNeil  
Cliff and Jane McNeil

### Births, Marriages and Deaths

#### Births

I am pleased to be able to report to you that I have another new member of my extended family in Australia.

John & Lisa McNeil are pleased to announce the birth of their second son, Jenkin Peter Alec McNeil. He was born on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2014 and is the great grandson on my cousin Ronald McNeil.

### The 700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the battle of Bannockburn, Scotland

“An enactment of the battle of Bannockburn took place on 28<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> June.

A massive thank you to all 20,000 that attended this incredible event. Bannockburn Live was a huge success and one of the highlights of the 700th anniversary year.”

[www.bannockburn.com](http://www.bannockburn.com)



Robert the Bruce



Weapons of the Scottish infantry



Neil Oliver and Tony Pollard on site at the filming of "The Quest for Bannockburn"

Further information and pictures can be found on the following web site address.

[www.battleofbannockburn.com](http://www.battleofbannockburn.com)

## World Gathering of the Clan MacNeil 2014 on the island of Barra, Scotland

As I write this newsletter the clan gathering on the island of Barra is fast approaching. This is a unique opportunity to travel to Barra with other families from different parts of the world and share our heritage together.

This year travelling to Scotland and in particular Glasgow will be more challenging as the Commonwealth Games are being held there during 23<sup>rd</sup> July to 3<sup>rd</sup> August. Visitors will in many cases be staying on in Glasgow after these dates to tour around the area and available accommodation is very tight for some time.

The clan gathering on Barra is attracting a larger number of visitors this year and accommodation on Barra appears to be fully committed.

I am not able to join with my Australian friends who will be participating in the Barra gathering this year and I have fond memories of the past gatherings and new friendships that we have established.



Information about travelling to the island of Barra and accommodation can be found on the following web site and the link to the Barra Community web site –

<http://www.the-macneils.org.uk/>

## Island of Gigha –an ancient territory of the McNeills

The local community-owned Isle of Gigha, the most southerly and one of the most beautiful of the Hebridean Islands. Seven miles long by a mile and a half wide, Gigha is situated three miles west of the Kintyre peninsular, less than a three hour drive from the City of Glasgow. The final part of the drive from Glasgow is a 20 minute ride from Tayinloan on the Kintyre Peninsula on the ferry across to Gigha.

Gigha is breathtaking - sandy beaches, clear green seas and a host of wildlife. There are also the Achamore Gardens to explore.

To help you explore Gigha, there are 12 designated off-road walks. These are described in detail (with maps) in the "Walk Gigha" booklet available from Gigha Stores and Gigha Hotel. Many of the walks start and end at the centre of the island, not far from where the ferry comes in, and are therefore ideal for foot passengers who enjoy walking. The walks vary in length, from half a mile to three miles, and several can be linked to give a whole day's walking. They cover a range of terrain, from mixed woodland, pasture land, sandy beaches, rocky shores, bracken and bramble-covered hillsides to rocky heather-clad hilltops.

On a clear day you can see the coast of Antrim in Ireland to the south west, the long mountainous shapes of Islay and Jura to the north - west, Ben More on Mull far to the north, the hills of Kilberry to the north east, and Goatfell on Arran rising behind the hills of Kintyre to the east.



View from the island of Gigha looking towards the island of Jura

## Glasgow Commonwealth Games 23 July to 3 August



The tartan dress to be worn by the female medal bearers at the Commonwealth Games



Clyde the mascot for the Glasgow Commonwealth Games

### “Queen’s baton relay

From 14 June to 23 July the Queen’s Baton Relay will travel the length and breadth of Scotland, inviting everyone to be a part of the excitement, celebrations and countdown to the Games. There are countless sports and cultural events taking place daily along the route, including an evening celebration, so that even bigger crowds can enjoy and take part in the festivities.

With up to 4,000 baton bearers joining the relay in more than 400 communities, this is Scotland’s biggest ever relay.

### **The relay has extended to include the Outer Hebridean islands of Scotland.**

The Queen’s Baton landed on the Tràigh Mhòr airport on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> July around 3.30pm, on its latest leg which included the Western Isles. It had travelled more than 200 miles from Stirling to Barra.

Safeguarding the baton was young actress Cherry Campbell, who plays Katie Morag in the BBC series based on the popular children’s books. Cherry was piped off the beach by Claire Frances

MacNeil, one of the Feis Bharraigh pipers, and was welcomed by a good crowd of people. Cherry and Clyde, the Commonwealth Mascot, then spent some time posing for photos before the baton heading on its journey to Castlebay.

On Tuesday morning the baton left on the first ferry over to Eriskay and the relay then visited Daliburgh, Liniclate, Benbecula Airport, St. Kilda, Tarbert, the Butt of Lewis Lighthouse and finished in Stornoway.”

*(Guth Bharraidh)*

### **Clan MacNeil Australian National Gathering 2014**

There will be no gathering held in 2014 due to the World gathering being held on the island of Barra in Scotland.

### News from the Isle of Barra Items published in the “Guth Bharraidh” weekly newsletter.

#### **Barra Airport Lands another award**

Barra Airport has picked up a 3rd place award in the Private Fly’s 2014 poll for the most stunning airport approaches in the world. The shortlist was selected by an expert judging panel and the finalists were judged by the voting public. Private Fly’s website highlighted -

"Where else in the world can you fly over majestic mountains, stunning coastline and turquoise seas before descending over an historic harbour castle and landing on a large silver sand beach? Totally stunning and totally unique. Nothing comes close".



Traigh Mhor airport, isle of Barra

### “World’s largest Haggis

WHAT is claimed to be world’s largest haggis, weighing in at about a ton (1010kg), has been unveiled at the Royal Highland Show.

Hundreds of pounds of pork offal, oatmeal and onions went into the colossal creation which measured more than a metre wide and high and



had to be transported to the Ingliston showground near Edinburgh on a truck.



The world's largest Haggis

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Wayne Godfrey, chief executive of Browns Food Group, which owns Hall's, said: "2014 is the official year of the haggis and so we thought this was the perfect occasion to reclaim the Guinness World Record title that was first held by Hall's over 30 years ago.

"We knew we were aiming for a very ambitious size and weight and so everyone at Hall's is thrilled we pulled it off, reclaiming the title - and beating the previous record by such a significant amount."

Hall's said the 2,227 lb. (1,010 kg.) haggis' claim to be the world's largest has been officially verified by Guinness World Records. The previous record stood at 1,234lb (560 kg.).

Scottish food and environment secretary Richard Lochhead said: "Haggis is Scotland's iconic national dish and is enjoyed by people from all over the world.

It is the perfect way to celebrate one of our nation's proudest culinary traditions whilst raising money for a good cause."

*Daily Record 19th June 2014*

**Scottish Community events which we have attended in the last 6 months**

**Australia Day Celtic festival**

Held at Milson's Point, Sydney, NSW

**Robert Burn's anniversary dinner**

Held at the Stonyfell function centre, Adelaide, SA

**Bendigo Scots Day Out**

Held at Rosalind Park, Bendigo, Vic

**Mount Barker Highland gathering**

Held at the showground, Mount Barker, SA

**Geelong Highland gathering**

Held at Deakin University Waurn Ponds ground, Vic

**Brigadoon at Bundanoon**

Held at Bundanoon, NSW

**Clan Campbell annual luncheon**

Held at the Feathers hotel, Burnside, SA

**For Auld Lang Syne**

Held at the Art Gallery of Ballarat, Ballarat, Vic

**Tartan Night**

To celebrate Tartan Day held at the Burnside Library, SA

**Clans Night**

Clans' night celebration at the Port Adelaide Caledonian Society, SA

**Coming events 2014**

20<sup>th</sup> July

Scotland in the park, Logan, Queensland

27<sup>th</sup> July

A Robert Burns concert to be held at the State Library of South Australia, Adelaide, SA

6<sup>th</sup> September

Norah Head highland gathering, NSW

14<sup>th</sup> September

Armadale highland gathering and kilt run  
Armadale, WA

20<sup>th</sup> September

Clans on the coast – Celtic festival at  
Nelson Bay, NSW

11<sup>th</sup> October

Canberra highland gathering

7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> November

Beechworth Celtic festival to be held at  
Beechworth, Vic.

6<sup>th</sup> December

Daylesford highland gathering to be held at  
Victoria Park, Daylesford, Vic.

18<sup>th</sup> January 2015

A picnic to be held at the Robert Burns statue,  
Treasury Gardens, Spring Street, Melbourne, Vic

26<sup>th</sup> January 2015

Australia Day Celtic festival to be held at  
Bradford Park, Milson's Point, NSW



Bill Hart speaking at the clan national gathering dinner at Caboolture on the topic of the MacNeils and piping

## Piping music of the Clan MacNeil

We were honoured at our last national clan gathering in Caboolture to have Bill Hart, retired piping master of Knox Grammar School play an assortment of pipes to us during our dinner and to talk to us about the pipers and music which has related to the Clan MacNeil.

Bill has been recognised by the Celtic Council of Australia for his valuable contribution to teaching of highland piping with an award, Duine Urmach.

He presented to us a folder of information about pipers such as Archie MacNeill born in Govan, Glasgow, Seumas MacNeill who was born on the isle of Gigha and became the founder of the College of Piping in Glasgow with Thomas Pearson and Andrew MacNeill of Colonsay.

Bill provided some notes and the music to a selection of tunes some of which he played on the evening –

The MacNeill's march

The Fair maid of Barra

MacNeill's Oran Mor

Mull of Kintyre

The MacNeills of Ugadale

Donald MacLean's Farewell to Oban

Duncan MacNeill esq. Farewell to Melfort

Seumas MacNeill

Islay Ball

Andrew McNeill of Oransay

A. S. MacNeill of Oransay's Salute

An Islay Jig

Mrs. C. MacNeill

Bill Hart has a web site at which you can find out more information about his pipe manufacturing of Scottish small pipes and double small pipes. You will also find a link to be able to listen to Bill playing his double chanter small pipes.  
[www.iona-bagpipes.com](http://www.iona-bagpipes.com)

Another famous piper was Lachlan McNeill Campbell who descended from the McNeills of Gigha. His father was Hector McNeill who was born at Tarbert, isle of Gigha about 1764 and married Margaret Campbell of Kintarbert of Duntroon in 1794.

Margaret was the daughter of Dugald Campbell of Kintarbert and Isabella Campbell of Melfort. They produced the following children –  
Lachlan McNeill born 1795  
Dugald McNeill born 1797  
Isabella McNeill born 1799

The three children changed their surname on the death of their mother to McNeill Campbell when they inherited the Kintarbert estate.

Lachlan was a recognised piper and there are two piping tunes in his memory, "Salute to Lachlan McNeil Campbell of Kentarbert" and "Lachlan McNeill Campbell of Kentarbert's fancy".



Pipe-major Angus Macdonald with Seumas MacNeill

## A new book from Janeen Webb

Janeen has recently written to me with information of her new book which has just been published.

It is an adult book and is titled "Death at the Blue Elephant".

You can find more information about the book at this web site.

<http://ticonderogapublications.com/index.php/our-books/163-death-at-the-blue-elephant/360-don-t-miss-death-at-the-blue-elephant>

Joy & I send our best wishes to all clan families and friends of the clan.

*John McNeil*

