



Clan MacNeil

Association of New Zealand



May 2010 Newsletter: Failte – Welcome

Welcome to the second edition of 2010 Clan MacNeil newsletter. Enjoy!

MacNeil Clan Chief passes away (1929 –2010)

Obituary: Clan Chief, Professor Ian Roderick Macneil, died in Edinburgh on Tuesday February 16, aged 80yrs after 40 yrs as the Chief of Clan Macneil. He had been suffering from lymphoma.

Ian Macneil was born in New York, the son of Architect Robert Lister Macneil the 45th Chief. Macneil became the 46th Clan Chief and The Macneil of Barra in 1970 on the death of his father. Robert Lister repatriated the family back from America to Scotland in 1937 for several years (when Ian was 7 years old). They repurchased 12,000 acres of former clans land on Barra as well as the ruined stronghold of Kisimul Castle in Castle Bay. Ian Roderick himself, went to school on the island as the castle was being renovated. Macneil was mainly schooled in Marlboro, Vermont and then the University of Vermont, USA (B.A., 1950, majoring in Sociology) and Harvard (LLB 1955) where he studied contracts. He was a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and served as an infantry Lieutenant in the US Army from 1951-1953 and remained in the reserve until 1969, when he was honourably discharged with the rank of Major.

His legal career began as a Clerk to the US Court of Appeals (1955-1956), followed by practising law in Concord, New Hampshire until 1959. He became Professor of Law at Cornell University in 1962. In 1972 he became Professor of Law at the University of Virginia, in 1979 Honorary visiting professor of Law at Edinburgh University and in 1980 Wigmore Professor at Northwestern University. Macneil was also professor of Law at Harvard where in 1988 he famously told his wife that he thought he had the first black president of the United States in his class in reference to the young Barack Obama. Macneil was invited to President Obama's inauguration last year but for health reasons was unable to attend. For both his generosity and Presidential predictions his passing has made international news. After retirement he became John Henry Wigmore Professor Emeritus at Northwestern University, but went to live in Edinburgh, where he was highly active in the affairs of the Clan Macneil.

Many NZ clan members have met both the chief and his family at numerous clan gatherings over the years and we were very saddened to hear of his passing. Clan MacNeil NZ sent messages of condolence on behalf of all members. NZ Clan members remember him as a "gentle, caring man who was proud



of his family and with a genuine interest in clan members on both Barra and around the globe".

The Chief was also highly respected on Barra. Alasdair Allan the islands MSP (MP) said

"Ian was a remarkable person, not only as he headed one of Scotland's oldest clans but because he was an immensely kind, learned man who devoted his considerable talents to helping his community".

In 2000 he leased Kisimul to Historic Scotland for a thousand years for £1 plus a bottle of Talisker whisky. In 2004 he gifted 9,000 acres to Scottish ministers to be held in trust for the island as well as fishing and mineral rights.

The Chief was taken to the Isle of Barra on Sunday February 21. A service was held on Kisimul castle on Monday 22nd followed by the funeral service in the Catholic, Our Lady Star of the Sea on Wednesday 17 Feb. He was interred at Cuithir (Cueir Cemetery) on the west of the Island.

He is survived by his Canadian wife Nancy and three children Jenny, Sandy and his eldest son Roderick (Rory) who now inherits the chiefs title as 47th Clan Chief and is married to Sau Ming Kwan of Hong Kong.



A few words from the President - Peter McNeil

Hello again from Opunake and from a somewhat disorganised house. I am writing these few words in a living area which has been completely stripped as part of a major upgrade of our home (kitchen removed, two walls removed, etc). Our motor home is serving us well as a temporary home. This "retired" painter and decorator has had to pick up a brush and roller again. Hopefully by the time you receive this newsletter in your inbox or letterbox things will be back to normal – well everything except the bank balance.

On Saturday 30 January Marion, myself and our grandson Sam attended the Turakina Highland Games. Then on Saturday 13 February we attended the Paeroa Highland Games. During the day I had contact with members of the Auckland Pipe Band who wear the MacNeil of Barra tartan. I would like the clan to again consider making an annual monetary donation to the band. I will put this to the committee for consideration. At our

gathering in Auckland next year I'm sure we will ask for their assistance. Reports on these events are included in this newsletter.

Sadly on our return from Paeroa we received the news about the death on 16 February of our Clan MacNeil chief Ian Roderick MacNeil of Barra. On behalf of the Clan MacNeil Assn of NZ, I sent a message of condolence to Mrs Nancy MacNeil and family and have also received back a letter of thanks from the family.

Subs are due for the year April 2010 to March 2011. Single \$25. Double/Family \$30. The money received from subs pays for newsletter expenses and also helps with the cost of our gatherings. The next gathering is due to be held in Auckland in March 2011. That's all from me this time.

Take care
Peter McNeil, President Clan MacNeil Assn of NZ

Reflections on my Dad - By Rory Macneil : The 47th Clan Chief

"I always thought that Dad would be remembered primarily for two things: the unique relationship that he and the people of Barra jointly crafted over the past 40 years, and his development of the theory of relational contract law. The outpouring of support and affection that has taken place after his death – in Barra, throughout Scotland and from around the world, has proved me wrong: both of these take a back seat to the myriad of personal relationships and interactions he had with so many people in so many places. In the conversations and reminiscences that have come forth since his death it is Dad's interest in, respect for, and kindness to individuals which shine through most clearly". www.isleofbarra.com/node/543 (For the Full article)

Turakina 146th Annual Highland Games - By Peter McNeil

30 JANUARY 2010

We travelled to Turakina on Friday and stayed overnight in the Domain in our motor home. Many other folks camped out in tents, caravans and motor homes also. Saturday morning dawned with fine, hot weather which stayed with us all day. We set up our clan display in the awning of our motor home. Our grandson Sam (age 7) took part in the primary children's highland games in the morning (mini caber, shot putt, toss the sheaf). He was placed 4th just missing out on a medal but thoroughly enjoyed himself. He'll try again next year.



Sam McNeil tossing the caber

On opening up this year's programme I got a surprise to see a photo of myself carrying the clan banner in the clan march during the 2009 games. Fourteen clans had displays and the clan march held at 1pm looked really colourful. Highland dancing competitions took place on two boards throughout the day. In the morning the solo piping and drumming competitions took place. It was great to see lots of young talented competitors. In the afternoon the pipe band competitions were held with eighteen bands taking part. Also in the afternoon the men's, women's and novice's field events took place and to finish up a tug of war competition was held. In the late afternoon there was a massed bands parade followed by the haggis ceremony and prizegiving. This was followed by a recital by guest piper William Rowe. A great day.

Do try and join us next year – **Saturday 29 January 2011.**

MacNeil competes well in Winter Olympics for New Zealand

Ben Sandford (Grandson of Aubrey Sandford, Daughter of Herbert Malcom McNeill from the Colonsay, Argyll McNeills) proudly represented New Zealand at the Vancouver Winter Olympics, in February as a skeleton racer. (For those unfamiliar, it is a form of Luge/Bob sled. The sport also often described as hurtling down a mountain on an oven tray) .

Only 5 Kiwis have ever finished in the top 10 at a Winter Olympics and Ben Sandford is one of them. Sandford was competing in his second Winter Olympics, hoping to improve on his 10th placing at Turin in 2006. Unfortunately while the 30 year old was unable to achieve this, his 11th placing did make him the highest achieving performer in the New Zealand Winter Olympic team at Vancouver in February. Injury had prevented him racing at 100% in the past season but he had hoped to overcome that at the Games. Prior to leaving for the Games Sandford said:

"I had a nerve problem in my back, that was giving me hamstring problems, and it took a really long time to recover. I still have some problems but I'm on top of everything at the moment and pretty happy with the build up"

Sandford, from Rotorua has skeleton success in his blood—his uncle Bruce Sandford was the 1992 World Champion. On the impact of this Sandford said:

"That made quite an impression on me when I was 11 yrs old, and it was always in the back of my mind that skeleton was there for me to try. Once I finished university I didn't want to go straight into a law firm, so I talked to Uncle Bruce and headed off to Europe and have been doing this ever since."

The best wisdom I got before the games though was from my old Boss - *"Results not excuses!"*



Upcoming Events

Worldwide McNeil Clan Gathering

2-5 August , 2010

Isle of Barra, Scotland

www.the-macneils.org.uk

Australian National Clan Gathering

1-4 October 2010

Canberra

For more information contact John McNeil
kisimul@chariot.net.au

Editor Note

Remember we would love to hear what MacNeil clan family members are up to. Just email me your stories.

Any Scottish information you are keen to find out more about, just e-mail your queries, comments or suggestions for topics.

Amanda Wilkinson at wash.wilk@xtra.co.nz
or phone (09) 520 4066 or post to 36 Ventnor Road, Remuera, Auckland 1050.

Christchurch Scottish Festival — By Sally Washington

Nimble footwork on the part of Doug Washington had the MacNeil clan banner at the front of the parade, in pole position behind the Christchurch Metropolitan pipe band, at the Scottish Cultural Festival held in Riccarton Bush, Christchurch, on Valentine's Day. Kitted out in MacNeil tartan trews and flanked by grandchildren Archie and Stella Washington Brown and Lucy and Matilde Washington Emerson, with wife Pauline and daughters Susannah and Sally coming up the rear, he did the clan proud. It was almost sabers at dawn when the Donalds and Frasers questioned the pecking order, but they eventually gave in on the grounds that "Scots never argue"!

Interest in the Festival was obvious with some 2000 locals coming out to see the pipe bands, highland dancing displays, vintage cars, whisky tasting, groups dressed in period costumes and even a troupe of penny farthing riders. There was a thankful respite from the notorious Canterbury winds, that only the day before had caused havoc at the regular farmers' market held at the same venue. In advertising the event, an article in the local paper suggested that with the combination of wind and so many kilts there might be quite a spectacle on offer.

It is hoped that the Scottish Festival will be a regular event. The inaugural Festival held last year unveiled a memorial to the Scottish settlers, some of whom camped at Riccarton Bush when they first arrived in Canterbury.



Clan MacNeil (Washington family) leads the parade



Douglas McNeil Washington with Hon Lianne Dalziel (MP) celebrating her Scottish heritage

Calor Mosaic Completed on Barra

In 2008 the Isle of Barra won the prestigious, 'Calor Village of the Year'. Barra beat hundreds of rural communities from the length and breadth of the UK to win both the Scottish and Overall UK to be crowned the first ever Calor UK Village of the Year. The community impressed judges with its wide variety of community activities, how it works to protect and enhance its environment and the efforts made to include people of all ages in its activities. The islanders also demonstrated how they are constantly striving towards ensuring Barra's own sustainability by growing their own vegetables for local consumption and installing a community owned 900kW wind turbine. As the winners of the Scottish competition Barra received a total £4,000 of prize money to invest in the community and as the Overall UK winner they received a one-off commissioned mosaic piece of artwork for their community.

Alan Potter, the artist was commissioned to design and construct Barra's Calor mosaic. Work started on site in November 2009 and this was completed in December. The mosaic is a large ground mosaic, inside a semi circular drystone wall on the shore pathway in Castlebay. The mosaic is surrounded by 16 community border panels designed by community groups and school pupils. Workshops were held in late 2009 to design these community tiles. The 16 border panels are cast into mould cases.

The mosaic will be the focal point of a feature which will include a dry-stone wall and bench created by Ian MacNeil. Thanks to John McNeil in Australia for alerting us to this mosaic completion.



The City Of Auckland Band wearing 'Approved' MacNeil Tartan

We've had a number of queries from both NZ and our clan associates around the world, following my reference in the January newsletter to the Clan MacNeil links with The City of Auckland Pipe Band. I've subsequently done some further investigating and thought I would share this. Thanks go to the current City of Auckland Pipe Band treasurer, Chris Lucas, for finding their relevant records for us.

The City of Auckland Pipe Band to our knowledge, is the only competing Pipe Band in the world wearing the Clan MacNeil tartan. They were founded in 1942 and since that time have proudly sported the Clan MacNeil tartan. I found the decision to wear the MacNeil tartan, a fascinating and surprising one, given I'd seen in their records, that the President of the Band in the early 1940's was both a Mac-Donald and a Kiltmaker!

The city of Auckland Pipe Band records also showed that:

"Due to funding restrictions during World War 2, the Band initially paraded in white shirts, grey slacks and MacNeil tartan ties". Funds were raised in the post-war years for uniforms and instruments, and in 1946 the MacNeil of Barra tartan was chosen as the official band tartan, after receiving permission from the Clan's Chieftain. The Band turned out with army styled khaki officer jackets, plaids, kilts and belts".

In 1992 a book of music composed by Band members was published on its 50th anniversary and it stated.

"Selection of the tartan for the uniforms was by majority choice after a few members had tried to seek approval to have their own tartans chosen. McNeill of Barra was the popular choice and a letter was sent to the ruling chief (in America) for permission to wear his clan tartan. In reply we were sent a charter granting the Band's request. (Unfortunately a copy of this can not be found). The Tartan was woven by the Wanganui Woollen Mills (NZ) and the kilts were made by John McDonald of Takapuna, Auckland, a kilt maker from World War 1."

Harrie Storrie (The Band's second pipe Major, from 1947 to 1956) in his personal recollections of the Band's history, confirmed that the tartan selection process was subject to some debate, his written account is as follows:

"When the time came John Barbour got the committee to place before the members, samples of various tartans (I hate the word plaid applied to tartan design). During the debate which followed, someone mentioned how well the Band would look all in blue to match the McNeil of Barra. Each individual member was asked his opinion and almost without exception, the McNeil was chosen. Later, when playing during engagement at the G.P.O in Auckland (General Post Office) I was approached by a man who asked me "on whose authority we were wearing his tartan". When I asked who he might be, he produced his seaman's papers which showed that we was none other than Roderick McNeil of Barra (The McNeils were Mainly seamen). On informing him as to how we got the right to wear the tartan of the McNeil he was more than delighted and swore that we were the best band in the world. In that re-



spect he was not alone as we thought so ourselves and were a very proud outfit at that time".

Chris Lucas said *"The Band has subsequently been asked on a number of occasions about our right to wear the McNeil of Barra tartan and we are proud that we went through the proper process of requesting permission from the chief."* While the Band does not have a copy of the charter, evidence of this official permission, is confirmed however, in an article they provided us from the March 1, 1962 New Zealand Herald newspaper.

On It was a photo and story on Robert Lister Macneil, 45th chief of clan Macneil (Father of the recently deceased Ian Roderick Macneil) and his wife, in Auckland, New Zealand on holiday in 1962. The article stated that:

"An American who is chief of a Scottish clan arrived in Auckland yesterday, wearing a kilt. He is 72 year old Robert Lister Macneil (Official title: The Macneil of Barra). "He was keen to get ashore as 17 years earlier (1945) The City of Auckland Pipe Band asked him if it could wear the Macneil tartan, and he said, yes".

For more information and a playing itinerary see:

www.cityofaucklandpipeband.org.nz/



Paeroa 17th Annual Highland Games — February 13, 2010

Marion and I travelled to Paeroa on the Friday and stayed overnight at the Race course in our motor home. We moved to the Paeroa Domain early on Saturday morning and set up our clan display in the motor home awning. The weather was a bit changeable with showers and then hot and sunny.

We were joined for the day by Patricia Duncan and Judith Bean fellow clan members from Tauranga.

As at Turakina highland dancing, solo piping and drumming, pipe band, field events competitions were all held. A fantastic axeman's carnival also took place as did a black and white dog show.

Twenty clans had displays and we were arranged in a U shaped area and entertainment took place in the centre of the U throughout the day. The clan march went from the Domain to the Town Square and back to the Domain. In the evening a Tattoo was held which was just spectacular. The highlight for me the massed bands emerging from the mock castle in semi darkness complete with Scottish mist. Also the lone piper and lights out – it was truly spine tingling.

We hope to see more clan members join us at this wonderful event next year. Saturday 12 February 2011. I know you will enjoy it.
Peter McNeil



Above: Peter, Patricia and Judith flag bearers at Paeroa



Above: Judith, Patricia & Marion on the MacNeil stand

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