



Clan MacNeil

Association of Australia

Newsletter for clan members and friends.

June 2016

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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.

It is most pleasing to see the ongoing support of our clan families who have continued to align themselves with our clan association.

Mary Surman
Jean Buchanan
Graeme McNeil
Sharon McNeil

Natalie McLeish
Valerie Stockings

Another McNeil birth

I have much pleasure in sharing the happy news of the birth of Wilkie McNeil in Singapore, son of John & Lisa McNeil and great- grandson of my cousin Ronald McNeil.

John & Lisa are to be congratulated in now providing three young McNeil sons in our next generation.



John, Wilkie and Lisa McNeil

The death of a dear friend and long term supporter of the Clan MacNeil

It is with much regret that I now tell you of the death of Graeme Rankin McNeill in Brisbane.

Our first clan event in Queensland was held with a luncheon at Caboolture in November 2005. Graeme was an important contributor to the success of this event and ably assisted by Gloria and Shirley McNeill. Between them they ensured that a large number of their family relatives came to the luncheon. We offer our sympathy to Graeme's wife, Bev.



John McNeil, Beverly and Graeme McNeill at an informal luncheon in Brisbane. Oct 2013

Australia Day award presentation to the Scottish Associations of South Australia

During the latter part of November and early December the Scottish Associations of South Australia assisted in organising the display at the Burnside Atrium of a large number of Scottish Diaspora tapestries.

The official opening of the exhibition was made by the Governor of South Australia, Scotland has a long history of migrations of families to other parts of Scotland, to England, Ireland and to the New World. They went not only to USA, Canada and New Zealand but to all corners of the globe, from Sweden to Argentina.

The tapestries represent Scottish families who settled in many countries and you can find more information by going to the following web site.
www.scottishdiasporatapestry.org/thetapestry

The tapestry exhibition drew a large number of visitors in Adelaide before it was moved to other locations in Australia.

Australia Day which is held each year on 26th January provides an opportunity for families who have recently arrived in Australia to be granted Australian citizenship.

A number of special awards were also presented in last January. One was a community award to the Scottish Associations of South Australia for providing and managing the Scottish Diaspora Tapestry Display.



Rosemary McKay and Jean Lumsden holding an award certificate and an embossed trophy.



Australia Day Awards 2016 John McNeil, Christina Cockerill, Rosemary McKay, David Parkin (mayor of Burnside Council) and Ann Wickhan



Scottish Diaspora Tapestry panels on display at the Burnside Atrium

HIGHLIGHTS OF SCOTTISH WEEK, Sydney 2016

Scottish Week this year was distinguished by the presence of no fewer than four Clan Chiefs. Not since the 1980's has the Week had such a convergence of clan leaders.

This was emphasised at the first event, the Clans & Families Forum held at St Andrew's Scots Presbyterian Church Rose Bay after the initial Kirkin', facilitated by Scottish Week Co-Patron Rosemary Samios and chaired by Co-Patron Sir Wayne Broun of Colstoun, Chief of the Brouns. *Boarders from Scots College acted as banner bearers for the Kirkin' entry procession.*

The Forum was addressed by Sir Malcolm MacGregor of MacGregor, speaking on the work and significance of the Standing Council of Scottish Chiefs, of which he is currently Convenor. Lady MacGregor gave a lively survey of the Reiver Clans of the Borders, which included her own Armstrong family. Other presenters were Stephen Szabo, Secretary of the Heraldry Society of Australia, and Dr Matthew Glozier, President of the Sydney Society for Scottish History.



Group picture taken at the Highland Festival, St. Leonard's Park, North Sydney
Mark Fletcher, Sir Malcolm & Lady MacGregor, the Earl of Dunmore and Malcolm Buchanan

Scots Day out – Bendigo, Victoria

Scots Day out was held this year on Saturday 13th February 2016.

This Scottish event grows larger each year and I decided to attend for the first time. Bendigo is located in central Victoria and has a history of gold mining from its early days. The wealth of the city

can be seen with the beautiful buildings and gardens.



Marion McNeill, John McNeil & Jean (McNeill) Buchanan



Dancers and pipers at the Bendigo Scots Day Out 2016



Scots Day Out street parade showing highland warriors and Scottish deer hounds

Scots Day Out, Bendigo is an event not to be missed and here is a location map.

Before finishing on my report of the Bendigo Scots Day Out I must congratulate Jean Buchanan on her success of being the winner of the Scottish Shortbread competition for the third year in succession.



Bundanoon highland gathering at Bundanoon, NSW

The annual Bundanoon gathering was held on 9th April 2016. There were many events – for the visitors to both to watch and participate in if the mood takes them.

The current enormous interest in family research and genealogy, is well catered for at Brigadoon. Virtually all Clans are represented and have a wealth of information available to discuss with visitors.

Brigadoon is a spectacle well worth experiencing. Next year (2017) it will be the 40th Anniversary of Brigadoon and plans are already in place to make it bigger and better than ever. (see website for details <http://www.brigadoon.net.au/>)

Representative members of the Clan MacNeil attend this gathering most years.



Luke Reynolds Bundanoon Stones champion

An article from early copies of the Australian clan newsletter

Sashes as worn by ladies

The method of wearing sashes or light scarves had customary significance even two centuries ago, and although the wearing of sashes in any particular manner is of no legal significance whatsoever nowadays, ladies may feel more comfortable knowing that tradition is being observed!

All the following suggestions are based on a study of old portraits, prints and traditional practice and were approved by the then Lord Lyon King of Arms. The terms and criteria used are rather quaint and reflect a lifestyle that has all but disappeared even from the Scottish social scene.



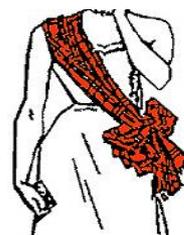
Left ~ Clanswoman

The sash is worn over the right shoulder across the breast and is secured by a pin or small brooch on the shoulder.



Right ~ Chieftainess

The wife of a clan chief or the wife of a Colonel of a Scottish Regiment would wear a slightly wider sash over the left shoulder and secured with a brooch on the left shoulder.



Left ~ Ladies married out of their

clan but who wish to use their original clan tartan This sash is usually longer than the Style 1. version and is worn over the right shoulder secured with a pin and fastened with a large bow on the left hip.



Right. Often worn by Scottish country dancers or where the lady wishes to keep the front of her dress clear of the sash - as when wearing the ribbons or decorations of any chivalric order. This style is very similar to a man's belted plaid and is really a small arisaid. It's buttoned on at the back of the waist or held by a small belt and is secured at the right shoulder by a pin or small brooch so that the ends fall backwards from the right shoulder and swings at the back of the right arm.

(Article by courtesy of the Scottish Tartan Authority)

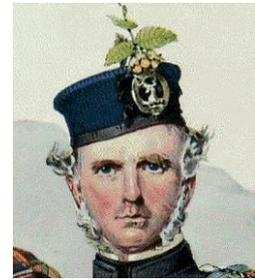
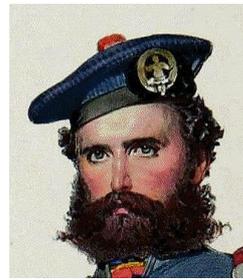
Scottish Headgear

The Glengarry

The Glengarry was made part of the uniform of the Glengarry Fencibles by Alasdair Ranaldson MacDonell of Glengarry when they were formed in 1794 and he was described as having invented the cap. However, as worn by Scottish Highland regiments the original voluminous blue bonnet gradually developed into a stiffened felt cylinder, often decorated with ostrich plumes sweeping over the crown from left to right (as well as flashes of bear skin or painted turkey hackles). In the 19th century this tall cap evolved into the extravagant full dress 'feather bonnet' while, as an undress cap, the plainer form continued in use until the mid-19th century.

By then known as the 'Kilmarnock' bonnet, it was officially replaced by the Glengarry bonnet, which had been in use unofficially since the late eighteenth century and was essentially a folding version of the cylindrical military cap.

It is interesting that the three Victorian illustrations below show approximations of all three stages of the Balmoral's supposed conversion to the Glengarry. Hopefully a military hat historian will leap to our rescue!



Capable of being folded flat the Glengarry became a characteristic part of the uniform of the Scottish regiments where it was worn in various guises.

During World War II it was always worn by the Forces at a very jaunty angle and known as the forage cap: the right side of the cap was worn low, often touching the ear, and the side with the cap badge higher on the head. The trend since the end of the war has been to wear the Glengarry level on the head.

Nowadays it's commonly worn by civilians, notably civilian pipe bands, but can be considered an appropriate hat worn by any males with Highland casual or evening dress.



The Balmoral

The Balmoral bonnet dates back to at least the 16th century when it was a soft, knitted wool cap with a voluminous, flat crown, traditionally blue in colour, sometimes with a diced band (usually red-and-white check) around the lower edge and with a coloured toorie (pom-pom) set in the middle of the crown.



The name 'Balmoral' as applied to this traditional head dress appears to date from the late 19th century. Today, the crown of the bonnet is smaller, made of finer cloth and tends to be blue or Lovat green.

Tapes in the band originally used to secure the bonnet tightly are sometimes worn hanging from the back of the cap. It can have a regimental or clan badge worn on the left hand side with the bonnet usually worn tilted to the right to display these emblems. The Balmoral was adapted into the Caubeen by Irish Forces and military forces around the world have worn it and referred to it simply as a 'beret.'

Future clan gatherings, heritage and culture

Gatherings of our association members and their families are important to provide a time for meeting each other and sharing experiences.

They are also important to allow for other families interested in our clan to meet members and learn about our history and culture.

An extension to our clan gatherings is for each of us to participate in Scottish community events where we can meet a wider group of people.

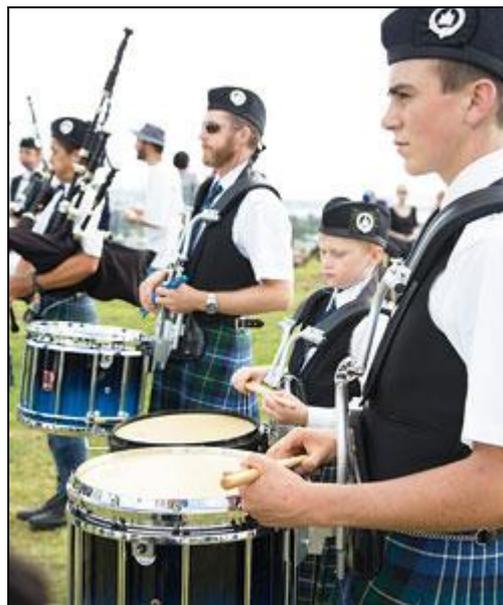
The future of our clan association depends upon being able to continually attract new members who will over time replace those of us who retire through illness or death.

All of us who are members of the Clan MacNeil Association of Australia have a personal interest in our clan history, culture and heritage. Some of us are passionate about our family ancestry, the history of the clan, highland dancing, highland pipe bands, enjoying Scottish literature such as the poetry of Robert Burns or Scottish history stories by Nigel Tranter.

As we move more and more to a digital age many of the features of Scottish culture and history are becoming increasingly more accessible to each of us.

We all have become increasingly more knowledgeable with this information over time and we have a responsibility to ensure that we introduce it to the next generation of our friends and relations.

I would very much like to hear from you about ideas which you may have or ways in which you can assist to spread the culture and heritage of our clan.



City of Auckland, New Zealand wearing MacNeil of Barra tartan kilts

Clan MacNeil Association national clan gathering in Canberra, October 2016



It is some years since we last held a national clan gathering in Canberra and I am delighted that Toni McNeill and John Palmer have agreed to be our hosts for the gathering.

As you know Canberra is the capital city of Australia and besides being the place for the meeting of the Australian government, it also provides numerous places of interest in the city, nearby vineyards and wineries and the snow fields at Thredbo and Perisher Valley.

The gathering will be held over the weekend of 7th to 9th October. The choice of this weekend will allow

us to visit and participate in the annual Canberra highland gathering.
The gathering will be held at Kambah Oval, Kett Street, Kambah.

The Clan MacNeil Association program of events will be held at the Mercurie Canberra hotel.

News from the Isle of Barra

One of the striking things about living on Barra and Watersay is the strong Gaelic culture and traditional musical heritage which is so evident here. Gaelic is the first language of many islanders and traditional music and Gaelic song is an inherent part of the culture.

Over the last 35 years Fèis Bharraigh has been instrumental in fostering this cultural identity with the next generation. Fèis Bharraigh is an annual weeklong event where local and visiting children and young people are given the opportunity to receive tuition in traditional musical instruments such as the accordion, chanter and pipes, guitar and fiddle.

There are opportunities to take part in Gaelic singing, spoken Gaelic sessions, highland dancing, shinty and Gaelic drama as well as evening dances and concerts. Last year over 130 children took part! Tuition now continues over the winter in playing musical instruments, including the creation of the Fèis Pipe Band, Gaelic drama and most recently in social dancing.

Thought is being given to developing Gaelic media with secondary school young people. The work of the Fèis continues to develop and evolve. Fèis Bharraigh might not be the only Fèis in the country, but it was the first. Begun in 1981 by Father Colin MacInnes and Dr Angus Campbell, with the support of interested local people, the Barra Fèis has led to the spread of the concept to other parts of the country and the development of a whole Fèis movement.

According to the Fèisean nan Gàidheal website there are now 46 tuition based Fèisean, involving around 6000 young people, as well as touring musical and drama events and work in schools. I wonder if those who began the Fèis Bharraigh all those years ago could have realised the huge benefit and impact their actions would have. Like so many organisations on Barra and Watersay the Fèis is an example of local people seeing a need and rising to meet it.

It is dependent on volunteers - be they members of the organising committee, those who help at the Fèis week and the related winter activities or involved in fundraising.



The 17th Barrathon was held on Saturday 25th June 2016 and attracted 233 runners, with around 80 others taking part in the fun runs. Colin Doig of HBT won the overall race with a time of 1:19:22. The first female home was Megan Mowbray, for the second consecutive year, with a time of 1:31:49. HBT, represented by Colin Doig, Michael Bareford, and Ivor Normand, won the team prize with a cumulative time of 4:12:57.

World Clan MacNeil gathering on the island of Barra August 2016

It is now only a few weeks before the commencement of the Barra gathering. I am attending my third gathering and on the occasion I will be accompanied by our son Andrew. At the age of 76 years this may be my last trip to Barra so it is to be a dear occasion for me.

Sharon McNeil, daughter of Alan and Marion McNeil is joining us for a part of the gathering and this will be her first visit to Barra,

I am looking forward to renewing friendships with families at the gathering, both local residents and other visitors from overseas.

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

Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo concert at Etihad Stadium, Melbourne 12-14 February.

Bendigo Scots Day Out at Rosalind Park, Bendigo, 13th February.

Geelong Highland Gathering, Geelong 20th March.

Bundanoon Highland gathering at Bundanoon
9th April.

Clan Campbell annual lunch at the Maylands hotel,
Adelaide 29th May.

Scottish Week Sydney June.

Coming events

Sept 3

Norah Head Gathering of the clans at the Norah
Head sports ground. SW
<http://gatheringofthec clans.weebly.com/>

Sept 3

Royal Scottish Country Dancing Society annual ball
at the Burnside ballroom, Burnside, SA

Sept 18

Armada Highland Gathering and Perth Kilt run
at Minnowarra Park, Armadale commencing at 9.00
am – further details www.perthkilt.com.au

Oct 1-2

Australia & South Pacific pipe band championship
at Knox Grammar School, Hornsby, NSW
<http://www.knox.nsw.edu.au/latest-news/knox-to-host-pipe-band-championships>

Oct 8

Canberra Highland gathering at Kambah Oval

Oct 7- 9

Clan MacNeil Association national gathering at
Canberra – details Toni McNeill

Oct 30

Annual luncheon hosted by Clan Donald, clan
MacFarlane and Clan MacNeil in Adelaide, SA

Nov 13

Kirking o' the Tartan service at St. Augustine's
Anglican Church, Unley Road, Unley, SA

Nov 30

St. Andrew's day anniversary celebrations

Alissa Nolan appointed as the clan genealogist for the Clan MacNeil Association of the USA

I was delighted to read in the Spring / Summer
edition of "The Galley" of Alissa's appointment as
genealogist for the Clan MacNeil association of
America.

When I first joined the Clan MacNeil Association of
America some years ago I read articles printed in
"The Galley" and written by Cora McNeill Begg on
case studies of family genealogy most interesting.
Cora had collected information from clan
association members over a number of years and had
a large collection of the ancestry of many families.

Cora retired a few years ago and it became an urgent
matter to decide what should happen to all the
family genealogy records held in filing cabinets.

Alissa plans to digitalize all the records and scan
letters and other papers so that there will be a strong
and reliable data base for use in the future.

She is keen to work with us and to share information
so this will strengthen our ability to have a better
access to records in Canada and the USA.



A recent family luncheon – all members of the Clan
MacNeil Association of Australia – from front left and
clockwise John McNeil, Peter McNeil, Ann McNeil, Mary
McNeil, Joy McNeil, Julie McLean (McNeil), Stuart
McLean and Rod McNeil

I apologise for the lateness of sending this newsletter
to you. I entered hospital on 11th June for an
operation and did not really get back to normal until
early July. I am still in the recovery phase and hope
that this will not interfere with my attendance and
enjoyment at the Barra world clan gathering in
August.

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

John McNeil

