



Clan MacNeil

Association of Australia

Newsletter for clan members and friends.

December 2014

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New Member

In the last 6 months we have not received any new members

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.

Janeen Webb & Jack Daan
Sharon McNeil
Geoff & Heather Pope
Stuart & Julie McLean
Simon & Alicia Lennon
Mairi & Rob Roy McIntosh
Bruce & Christiane McNeill
Robert & Sharon McNeil
Ian & June McNeill
Alan & Gay McNeil
Philip & Diana Nott
Duncan McNeill & Sally Thomas

Deaths

It is with much sorrow I have to tell you of the death earlier this year of Barbara Jean Neill. She has been a member of our clan association since December 2002 and has been a passionate supporter of our association and our heritage.

Barbara was the wife of Jim Neill who was the president of the Clan MacNeil Association of NSW during the period of 1954 to 1972. In this term of office Jim Neill had a personal relationship with two of our clan chiefs, Robert Lister Macneil of Barra and Ian Roderick Macneil of Barra.

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

The gathering was held between 4th and 7th August 2014.

A quick count of all the visitors in a photograph taken in the grand hall of Kisimul castle show an attendance of about 70 people from a number of global countries.

I was disappointed in not being able to go to the gathering with our Australian contingent and the reports which I have received indicated that the program of activities and the opportunity to meet new clan friends were enjoyed by all.

Our Australian representatives were –
Jean Buchanan & Ken Whiddon
Mary Surman
Christine Colbert
Bob & Lesley Neil
Thea & Suellen Kenny
Louise & Kerry Berry

Thea had only become a member of our association a short time prior to the commencement of the gathering and we had to work hard to find accommodation for Suellen and her on Barra. I asked Thea to write a couple of

paragraphs about their experiences and these are now provided below.

Public Transport

We found moving around with public transport very good. I asked at the reception desk or where ever we were for assistance. They gave us street maps and directions.

The Glasgow people were as helpful as I said previously. We took free shuttle buses to get to accommodation when we were able. After we returned from the Isle of Barra, we caught the train from Glasgow to Edinburgh.

We stayed at the Acorn hotel, Elderlie Street, Glasgow a short walking distance to Charing Cross station and 5 minutes walking time, from the shops in Sauchiehall Street. A lady there told us which station to get off in Edinburgh. We were fortunate to see the Scottish bands etc., marching along playing the bagpipes along the Royal Mile. It was also the Edinburgh festival time.



Princes Street, Edinburgh

Back in Glasgow we were walking along to the Acorn Hotel looking a bit lost apparently when a taxi driver stopped and asked if we were ok. He said hop in and I will take you to the Acorn Hotel. As we were leaving that hotel and required a taxi to our next accommodation, he took us then to the Companile hotel near the Glasgow airport. We wanted to go to Belfast and Flight Centre in Queensland couldn't help. A guest at the Acorn hotel said he was flying to Belfast with Easyjet on the Monday, so using the hotel computer we booked our fares. That was a 35 min flight and soon we were in Belfast.

From Belfast we found we could go by Ulster Bus to Dublin £41.70 for 2 fares. We stayed two nights in Dublin at the Maldron Hotel which was out of the city, so had to wait for a Green Dublin Bus to go there. That driver wasn't very friendly, he didn't help us with our luggage nor were the taxi drivers talkative unlike in Glasgow. The staff at the Maldron were quite helpful with bus timetables, although we found the times were not quite exact. A taxi into O'Connell Street and then Bus Eirann to

Limerick where Sean met us to take us to Tulla in Country Clare.

The return journey was booked from Limerick straight to Belfast. It was a very busy Sunday and a big football game was being held. There was a lot of traffic and a car accident slowed the bus. So it was a mad dash to the terminus in Dublin to catch the bus back to Belfast. Another taxi to the airport where we just managed to catch the flight to Glasgow. The buses were very comfortable and clean and the motorways very smooth in most areas. Information was well signed.

We were able to buy our bus tickets from a machine at the bus station using the credit card. So that was convenient. Of course the train journey both ways to and from Oban were good as well as the ferry to Barra as you know.

Yes we saw a lot of green countryside and running streams; stone fences and sheep with black faces. We strolled around the city streets and looked in some shops. I just loved all the beautiful flowers and hanging baskets. As I had only arranged the bookings for the clan events a short time beforehand, I felt we managed very well with what we saw.

Ronnie MacNeil in Castlebay tried to book us on a tour from Glasgow, but being the High Season everything was booked out until the 25th August, so by using Late Bookings.com we arranged accommodation, etc. ourselves. Where Sean took us in County Clare was amazing as well, and it was good to stay in his home instead of a hotel. We did a day tour to Wicklow while staying in Dublin.

Now when I read the "People's Friend", the Scottish magazine, and there is a travel story about South Uist or Oban or Lochboisdale, I can say I know of these places. I would like to see Martin Clunes TV series about the Islands again. Kind regards, Thea

Thanks for your story of your experiences Thea and I was particularly interested to hear of them knowing that you were going to rely everywhere on public transport.

Our other Australian representatives sent me photographs while they were staying on Barra and here are some of them.



Bob & Lesley Neil



All clan visitors at the gathering with the chief and his family in the grand hall, Kisimul castle



Our Australian representatives at the gathering – Suellen and Thea Kenny, Bob & Lesley Neil Mary Surman, Christine Colbert Ken Whiddon and Jean Buchanan (Louise & Kerry Berry missing)

Please note that there will be another world Clan MacNeil gathering on the island of Barra in 2016.

News from the Isle of Barra

Items published in the “Guth Bharraidh” weekly newsletter.

“Weather Bomb Explodes on Western Isles 12th December

Hurricane wind speeds exceeding 100mph hit the Western Isles this week in what the media are calling a “weather bomb”, which is defined as an intense low pressure system with a central pressure that falls 24 millibars in a 24-hour period.

Speeds of 104mph were recorded on Barra. A reading of 90mph was taken at Castlebay pier on Wednesday morning, with similar recordings seen elsewhere in the Western Isles. A wind speed of 144mph was recorded on the remote St Kilda islands.

Needless to say, with bad weather comes the inevitable disruptions, with schools, nurseries, libraries and sports centres and all non-emergency health appointments being cancelled in order to safeguard the travelling public.

Bin collection and other council services were also cancelled with elderly and disabled people who were needing home care also faced disruption, with carers attending priority clients only if it were safe to travel.

Wild seas whipped by the ferocious winds piled up into giant water balls as they headed towards the Western Isles coast. Waves exceeding 40 foot high crashed onto the islands’ exposed shoreline as the violent storm deepened. Thunderstorms and heavy hail also affected the islands over the past week.

Causeways interlinking islands within the Outer Hebrides were shut as waves crashing over the road links made travel to Vatersay and Eriskay hazardous. This led to the Vatersay causeway being closed by the police most of Wednesday morning. The weather also caused the flights to Barra to be cancelled, although normal service resumed yesterday, Thursday.

All island ferries were stormbound in port, waiting for the weather to subside. The MV Clansman's 15:40 Thursday sailing from Oban was delayed until 23:30. She sailed to Lochboisdale first and picked up the timetabled 06:00 sailing to Castlebay and Oban on Friday 12th December. The MV Lord of the Isles departed Lochboisdale at 21:45 last night, and arrived in Oban at 06:15 today and will pick up her scheduled run to be in Castlebay at 2.30pm this afternoon, Friday.

This should mean that there will be fresh milk and bread and supplies available on the island this morning. It was reported on social media that there was panic buying going on in Stornoway

with many shelves that should have been full of bread and milk being empty. Unfortunately in Barra this is a regular occurrence at this time of year, with ferries not sailing for days and fresh produce unable to get onto the island."

Those of you who have had the pleasure of visiting the island of Barra will appreciate how far it lies away from the mainland and how isolated the community are when fierce storms make travelling to and from the mainland impossible.



Stormy weather at Castlebay with Kisimul castle in the background

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

Tartan Day anniversary celebrated in all Australian states in early July

20th July

Scotland in the park, Logan, Queensland

27th July

A celebration of the life of Robert Burns was held at the State Library of South Australia, SA

10th August

Clan MacLeod annual luncheon in Adelaide, SA

16th August

Royal Scottish Country Dancing Society annual ball in Adelaide, SA.

26th October

Clan Donald / MacFarlane annual luncheon in Adelaide, SA.

16th November

Combined Scottish Societies and Clans annual Kirkin o' the tartan church service at St. Augustine's Anglican Church Unley, SA

30th November

St. Andrew's day anniversary church service at St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, North Adelaide, SA

6th December

Daylesford highland gathering at Victoria Park, Daylesford, Vic.

Coming events 2014

25th January

Nationwide – Burns night

Perth WA St. Andrew's Society of WA Burns supper at the Parmelia Hilton hotel.

Info: www.saintandrew.org.au

Hobart, TAS - The City of Hobart Highland Pipe Band Burns Night

Info: Niall 0418 107 175, 0418 107 175 or niall@hfcc.com.au

29th January

Kalamunda, WA - Kalamunda Scottish Country Dancing Group Burns' Night Celebration 2015 Celebrate the bard with dance and song at Jack Healey Centre

Info: Jan Pittman 08 9574 6671 or 08 9574 6671

1-28th February

Melbourne, VIC - Scots Wha Hae: 200 Years of Scottish Influence

Discover the extraordinary influence of the Scottish in Victoria, from the 19th century to the continuing influx of young Scots today at Melbourne Immigration Museum

Info: 13 11 02 or www.museumvictoria.com.au

Billy Connolly Live-High Horse Australian Tour 2015

2-3rd February At the Arts Centre. Harmer Hall. Melbourne, Vic.

6- 12th February At Sydney Opera House, Concert Hall, Sydney, NSW

18th February At WIN Entertainment Centre, Wollongong, NSW

19th February At the Royal Theatre, Canberra, ACT

21st February At Allphones Arena, Sydney, NSW

22nd February At Newcastle Entertainment Centre, Newcastle, NSW

24-27th February At Concert Hall, QPAC, Brisbane, Qld

2nd March At Gold Coast Convention & Exhibition Centre, Gold Coast, Qld

5th March At Derwent Entertainment Centre, Hobart, Tas.

7th March At Adelaide Entertainment Centre, Adelaide, SA

10 -11th March At Perth Arena, Perth. WA



14th February

Scots Day Out - Bendigo

A free community event at Rosalind Park, Bendigo, Vic,

10am-4pm with pipe bands, Scottish dancers, Clans, stalls and much more

www.scotsdayout.com



15th February

Mount Barker, SA - Mount Barker Highland Gathering.

A new venue at Keith Stephenson Park with pipe bands, Clans, stalls, Scottish dancers and more.

www.gathering.mtbarkerscots.org

1 – 31st March

Melbourne, VIC - Scots Wha Hae: 200 Years of Scottish Influence

Discover the extraordinary influence of the Scottish in Victoria, from the 19th century to the continuing influx of young Scots today at Melbourne Immigration Museum.



1st March

Geelong Highland Gathering at Waurn Ponds, Vic.

At Deakin University Campus, 75 Pigdon's Rd. with pipe bands, Scottish activities, stalls and more.

www.geelonghighlandgathering.org.au

14th March

Granville, NSW - Scottish House Australia Genealogy Afternoon.

At Town Hall, Carlton St. Keynote address by social historian Ray Thorburn OAM "Assisted Immigrants-Scots & Others"

Booking form www.scottishhouse.org.au



29th March

Ringwood East, VIC - Ringwood Highland Games.

A full day of pipe bands, Scottish dancers, stalls and more at East Ringwood Sports Ground, Mt Dandenong Rd.

sue.m.macleod@hotmail.com

29th March

Brisbane, QLD - Brisbane Boys College 4th Annual Highland Gathering.

At Brisbane Boys College with pipe bands, dancers, Scottish stalls.

0400 953 126 or www.facebook.com/pages/Highland-Gathering/1492478321017792

1 – 30th April

Melbourne, VIC - Scots Wha Hae: 200 Years of Scottish Influence

Discover the extraordinary influence of the Scottish in Victoria, from the 19th century to the continuing influx of young Scots today at Melbourne Immigration Museum.

www.museumvictoria.com.au



3-4th April

Maclean Highland Gathering at Maclean, NSW
The wee Scottish town in Australia is nestled along the banks of the Clarence River enjoy pipe bands, Scottish dancing, stalls and more.

www.macleanhIGHLANDGATHERING.COM.AU



11th April

Bundanoon, NSW - Brigadoon-The Bundanoon Highland Gathering.

Australia's largest Scottish event with pipe bands, Scottish dance displays, strong men, Clan village, Scottish stalls and much more. A fantastic family day in the NSW Southern Highlands.

www.brigadoon.net.au

30th April – 3rd May

Glen Innes, NSW - The Australian Celtic Festival Spread over 4 days, highlights include music and dance at multiple stages and venues, displays and workshops, storytelling and poetry, clan gatherings, parade, strongmen, living history displays, massed bands and more.

www.australiancelticfestival.com

28-31st May

Wingham, NSW - 11th Bonnie Wingham Scottish Festival.

Presented by Manning Valley Historical Society with a variety of events including Highland Games and market at Wingham Central Park Saturday 9:00am to 4:00pm. This year's clan of honour is Clan Donald.

www.manninghistorical.org

5-8th June

Portarlington, VIC - The National Celtic Festival.

Enjoy a packed program of world-class musical acts from Friday night through to Monday afternoon. A full long weekend of Celtic events.

www.nationalcelticfestival.com

4th July

Aberdeen, NSW - Aberdeen Highland Games At Jefferson Park with pipe bands, clans, Highland and Country Dancing, Tartan Warriors and more-a fantastic Scottish family day out.

www.aberdeenhIGHLANDGAMES.COM

Rod Stewart the Hits-Live Catch the entertainer Rod Stewart across Australia with all his hits

21st March – Perth arena, Perth, WA

24-25th March -Rod Laver arena, Melbourne, Vic

28th March – Hanging Rock, Macedon, Vic

29th March –Adelaide Entertainment Centre, Adelaide, SA

1st April – Qantas Credit Union Arena, Sydney, NSW

5th April- Hunter Valley, Hope Estate, NSW

7th April – Brisbane Entertainment Centre, Brisbane, Qld

McNeill families who lived on the island of Mull – where did they come from and where did they migrate to?

The population of Mull in 1821 was 10,612 and this had reduced to 5,624 in 1881.

A separate research paper is attached for your reading.

Grannie Mac

When I was a wee lassie -

I wrote with a pencil because pens had sharp nibs and messy ink, even though some people used blotting paper to mop up the excess. There was no such thing as a ball point pen or felt pen but we did have crayons. Pencils also had another use due to the graphite, which can be used as a lubricant. When the front door key was getting hard to put into the lock and hard to turn, Dad scraped some graphite from a pencil into the keyhole. He also rubbed the pencil all over the groove of the key. And it worked very well. So grab your pencil and write this one down before it gets used up lubricating all your locks!

Yours aye – Grannie Mac.

Reference Clan MacFarlane's Lantern newsletter Dec. 2014

The global migration of Scottish culture and traditions

In October my wife, Joy and I travelled to Japan for a 10 day holiday. This was my third visit to Japan but was the first for Joy.

The people of Japan have a very strong culture and over the years western traders have found it difficult to establish businesses there.

Japanese people like to live in their own country and do not largely settle elsewhere.

As a visitor it soon becomes apparent that we were the foreigners and we saw very few non-Japanese people other than tourist.

Japanese people are very welcoming of tourists and we felt quite comfortable in walking in Tokyo and Kyoto cities in spite of there being no signage outside of the railway stations and trains in English.

As you may remember I have participated in Scottish country dancing for about 10 years. In a conversation with my teacher, Jean Lumsden about our planned trip to Japan, she mentioned that she had a friend in Japan who was examined in St. Andrews, Scotland as a teacher for Scottish Country Dancing at the same time as Jean was there. Kaoru Oyama is no longer teaching but still participating in Scottish country dancing.

I sent an email message to the Tokyo branch secretary of the Royal Scottish Country Dancing Society and received an invitation to dance with the Scottish Blue Bell club during my stay in Tokyo. I communicated with Mrs. Masako Okada Naioh (Marchan) and regrettably I was not able to join her on the evening nominated due to another commitment.

Marchan left a lovely gift carry bag for me at our hotel and I have suggested that our Scottish dancing group in Adelaide would like the

Scottish Blue Bell dancing club to become a sister relation to us.

If you wish to look at further information about Scottish country dancing in Japan then follow the web site link –

<http://www.ne.jp/asahi/rscds/tokai/top-en.htm>

There are 16 groups practicing Scottish country dancing in Japan involving many people both ex patriate families as well as Japanese national families.

Scottish traditions are well supported in Japan and there is a St. Andrews Society which organizes events such as a highland games gathering.

The 32nd Japan Scottish Highland Games - Sunday 5th October 2014
The Saint Andrew Society of Yokohama and Tokyo is delighted to announce that the 32nd Japan Scottish Highland Games will take place on Sunday 5th October at the Kanda University of International Studies in Makuhari.

Follow the web site link for more information –
www.st-andrewssociety.com/jshg_access_en



Joy, Andrew and John McNeil at Shinagawa railway station, Tokyo



Shibuya street pedestrian crossing in Tokyo, busiest in the world

Our kindred friends in America

The recent Fall / winter edition of the “Galley” magazine has surpassed its past high standard with interesting articles and beautiful pictures. Vicki Corporan, the editor is to be congratulated on bringing together some great contributions to the magazine and I give her my personal thanks for including my two contributions.

It was great to read about Joanna Johnson who was judged 2nd in the US national Scottish fiddling championship and Gwyneth Neal Reilly who was a recipient of a scholarship from the Clan MacNeil and achieved 2nd place in the regional Scottish fiddling competition.

My good friend, Gwen McNeill who is the webmaster for the Clan MacNeil of America wrote a beautiful article on the Clan MacNeil gathering in Barra and their associated tour of Scotland. Thanks for the great pictures, Gwen.

The Clan MacNeil of America at their annual genreal meeting granted me a “MacNeil Order of Merit” award for the contributions which I have made over a number of years. This was a great honour and I appreciate the recognition which I have received with this award.

Bob Neill, president of the Clan MacNeil association of America and his wife Carol are planning a holiday in Australia and New Zealand in 2015. This is wonderful news and we look forward to meeting Bob and Carol. We hope that we can hold a clan lucheon or dinner with them to enable some of you to meet them.

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

John McNeil

