



# CLAN MACMILLAN SOCIETY (Australia)

NEWSLETTER NO 25, MARCH 1992

## MACMILLAN

CREST BADGE : *A dexter and a sinister hand brandishing a two-handed sword, proper.*  
MOTTO : *Miseris succurrere disco*  
(*I learn to succour the distressed*).  
GAELIC NAME : *MacGhille-Mhaolain.*

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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings to all members and I trust 1992 has started well for you. It has been a very quiet period Clanwise since our last Newsletter in November. We greatly enjoyed hearing from our Clan Chief George and his wife Jane, and I have included their greetings and news. We will again be attending the Ringwood Highland Gathering on Sunday, 29th March. Details are included in this Newsletter. This is always a very well attended gathering, with a full programme to entertain all the family. We will have a tent, in the area set aside for the Clans, so do come along and see our display and say hello. I know from your letters some members have not been well. Our special greetings to you and we sincerely hope you are feeling much better. Hoping to say hello to members who attend the Ringwood gathering.

Kindest regards, June Senior.

## NEWS FROM OUR CLAN CHIEF

### *Advent 1991.*

*This year, which has brought many a dramatic turn of fortune, especially in the U.S.S.R. and the Near East, has brought us, too, some pretty vigorous troughs and crests.*

*In April, Ma went off on a long-prepared southern holiday, and had a very serious scald on her first night away. She died a week later amid the best possible care and attention. Her family motto - 'Do well and doubt not' - struck us all as a pretty accurate description of her life. Our failure to acknowledge the many kind letters written by friends does not indicate our ingratitude but our inundation. Meanwhile, our sincere thanks.*

*Readers with long memories may recall the thatch-roofed folly we built in the garden. Thanks to a vandal, it lit up a January night sky. It now has a less spectacular (we regret, and hope) felt roof.*

*Our plan for a tea-room in the walled garden is still little more than a plan, due to Planning technicalities. Its garden setting in the shape of a ringed Celtic cross, is, however, developing well. Family wags have dubbed it Brick Henge.*

*In this year's Celtic Craft Fair, organised by one of last year's participants, storytellers and musicians featured prominently. After that, we were off to Canada, for the Clan tour. The final bonus was a five-day pause among our Toronto friends, some of whom we'd not seen for at least a quarter-century. Inevitably, perhaps, after so long a separation, joy and sorrow were never far apart. Hence the verse on the back of this card*

Finlaystone, Langbank,  
Renfrewshire, Scotland.  
PA14 6TJ

Tel. 047 554 285



Armorial Bearings of MacMillan of MacMillan and Knap

with best wishes  
for Christmas  
and the New Year

from  
*George*  
and *Jane*

*News within*

*This year's frontispiece (my so-called 'Heraldic Achievements') may seem a bit un-Christmas-like. But, if you look very carefully, you should see a sprig of holly, which happens to be the Clan MacMillan cap-badge.*

*We chose this device because this has been a particularly clannish year. It began with our usual D.I.Y. Burns Supper - quite fitting, since we know Burns drank, even if he didn't sleep, here.*

*In mid-summer we pitched a marquee in the garden for our International Gathering, which included a banquet, a pageant, a barbecue and a Sunday service under the John Knox tree.*

*The Clan Centre, which had been in the planning stage for some time, was opened by Jane with the aid of a pipe band and some very junior clan members. Ahead is the huge task of filling it with interesting exhibits and information, and finding someone with the time and skill to operate the genealogical computer.*

*At the end of August we had a wonderful tour of the Maritime Provinces of Canada (New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and Cape Breton Island), when we must have met easily six hundred MacMillans/McMullens and one Blue. What might have been a pretty demanding programme was made easy, interesting and enjoyable by the thoughtfulness, warmth and generosity of our hosts and hostesses.*

*Now that Glasgow Airport is open to trans-Atlantic traffic, we have had several very welcome visits from migrant MacMillans. We hope the trend will continue.*

*We have danced to the music of time,  
Our intricate steps interweaving  
To melodies often sublime;  
But now some of the guests must be  
leaving.*

*Some vanish without a 'goodbye';  
Some linger to savour our kisses,  
Then juke through the curtain, while I  
Stand wishing I had their addresses.*

*What lies at the back of that curtain  
None knows till the threshold is  
crossed.*

*But of this we can almost be certain -  
That nothing of value is lost.*

## VISIT TO THE ISLE OF MULL

Committee member Elizabeth Petras has very kindly written an account of her brief trip to the Isle of Mull last year:-

Last year I had reason to be in Scotland for a few days. I was there over a long weekend (the Monday being the Glasgow Fair) which enabled me to visit a few places. Both my parents are of Scottish origin, so I had hoped to make a fleeting visit to the areas that their families had left when they emigrated to Australia. My mother's family were McCallums and they had come to Australia in 1853 from Glenfalloch on Loch Lomond. My father's family were McMillans and they had come to Australia on the New Zealander from Oskamull on the Isle of Mull in 1853. They disembarked at Portland and the ship went on to Sydney. It has been told to me that when the ship returned to Portland from Sydney, the crew deserted and all went to the goldfields and the ship was sunk in Portland harbour. My great grandfather, John McMillan, who had travelled out with his parents and brother and sister, married a Flora McDonald from Skye, and he settled at Branxholme near Hamilton.

The limited time did not allow me to visit both Loch Lomond and Mull, so I chose on this occasion, to visit Mull. I had no relatives to visit, at least no-one that I knew. I was simply looking forward to absorbing the atmosphere and seeing if the Highlands of Scotland were as beautiful in reality as the pictures in my mind from the many novels and books that I had read.

When I arrived in Glasgow on the Friday night, I arranged to go by train the following morning to Oban and then on by ferry to Craignure on Mull, and by bus to Tobermory. As it was summer, I was fortunate to find accommodation at such short notice. However, the only remaining accommodation was at Tobermory. I realised that this was some distance from Oskamull, but I was not too concerned. Mull is quite a large island and with only a short time, I realised that I wouldn't be able to see too much.

As I travelled north from Glasgow on the train, following the map closely and trying to take in every valuable moment as the scenery flashed by, I had a sense that as I looked out one side and marvelled at the view, I was missing a wonderful view on the other side.

I was only in Oban for a short time as the ferry was soon to leave. As I boarded the ferry I began to feel very excited, as if I was on an expedition of discovery. In a sense I was. As the ferry travelled to Craignure on Mull and then, as I travelled on the bus to Tobermory, I again followed the map closely looking for landmarks.

The village of Tobermory is beautiful. A friend who has recently visited Norway has commented to me that there are many fishing villages in Norway which resemble Tobermory. The influence of the Vikings in Scotland is interesting and told in a fascinating way in a book called "A Northern Commonwealth; Scotland and Norway" by Gordon Donaldson. During the remainder of Saturday I wandered around Tobermory and thoroughly enjoyed just being there. I bought an audio tape called "Runrig sing Gaelic; the first legendary recording" and whenever I listen to it now I can clearly visualise Mull where I first listened to the tape. Runrig is a group from Skye and the music varies from ballads in English and in Gaelic, to "rock and roll" all with a definite Scottish air about them.

I looked in the telephone book for Mull and discovered that there are no McMillan's currently listed. This surprised me and yet perhaps it is not surprising when one remembers the clearances, the movement of people around the islands and the mass emigration of people to North America, Australia and New Zealand. If I had had more time I would have prepared more thoroughly for my visit and would have searched records, graveyards etc. However, my visit was only fleeting and it was more the atmosphere that I wanted to experience than to commence a search for facts.

On the Sunday I rented the car belonging to the man who owned the bed and breakfast where I was staying. He took me for a short instructional drive to show me how to deal with the narrow roads and the passing ways. I headed off across the island to the area known as Oskamull.

When I arrived at the area that I decided must be Oskamull, I parked the car near the place where the ferry crosses over to Ulva. As I left the car, a man called to me from the only other parked car. He asked me if I was wanting the ferry and I explained that I didn't and that I was simply taking in the surround countryside, which I imagined to be Oskamull. He confirmed I was correct and asked me why I was interested. I explained that I was from Australia, with no

## VISIT TO THE ISLE OF MULL (CONTINUED)

further information than the place name and the fact that my father's family had left Scotland from Oskamull and come to Australia in 1853. He told me that he was a local farmer and that there were no McMillans in the area any more. We pondered on that for some time and then he drove me to an old caravan on his property where an old man in his late 80's, named Lachie, was living. The farmer said that he was sure that if there had been any McMillans in somewhat recent time, then Lachie would know. Lachie was very interested to meet me and talk about the district. But he didn't know of any McMillans either. He recommended that I might go to a home around the Loch where a Mr McLean lived and he was sure that he might know some more. I was glad to have met these two men who certainly exhibited, as had the people in Tobermory, the friendship and hospitality that I had imagined would have existed in the Highlands. I didn't have time to visit Mr McLean on this occasion and although I hadn't made any direct connections or links, I certainly felt as if my visit had been most worthwhile.

It was wonderful to spend a day wandering around some of the island. I could have driven more quickly, covering more miles and visited Iona and perhaps, in some ways, I regret that I was so close and yet I didn't go there. Somehow Mull does not seem the place to rush through. Apart from the reality of the roads being narrow and quite difficult to drive on, there is an aura of timelessness which takes away the urgency to rush. It is a place to spend time relaxing and enjoy sitting, watching, talking and just taking it all in.

The next day I walked around Tobermory and out along a very pretty track to the lighthouse. The house where the lighthouse keeper used to live is now the home of a man and his two dogs. Someone told me that he is an author. The garden of the house is well planted with vegetables. He must be quite self sufficient in that respect.

On the walk to the lighthouse, my other walks around Tobermory and on the drive around the island, I was interested to see the green and lush growth. In parts it looks almost sub-tropical. Of course there were the rugged and rocky hills, the heather on the lower rolling hills and the rocky edges of the lochs and waterways. In particular, the area around Oskamull evoked memories of Victoria and I was interested to consider how my relatives must have experienced some sense of familiarity when they arrived in Australia.

The books that I have read on the Highlands have always evoked certain images for me and they were all there on Mull. Our families must have mourned deeply leaving their magnificent countryside. But I believe, for those who arrived well and fit, the countryside in Australia would not have been a disappointment. I've read the accounts of the clearances and the mass emigration of crofters displaced because of the introduction of sheep farming and the changing priorities of the landowners, but I had never really felt the impact until I wandered around Mull.

I bought a fantastic book when I was in Glasgow. It is called "The Life & Death of St Kilda" by Tom Steel. It is a wonderful and yet tragic story of St Kilda, the most remote island in the Hebrides. It tells of the life of the people on the island of St Kilda and how their life and their very existence finally breaks down and how the remaining 36 residents had to be evacuated to the mainland in 1930. The book evokes images which must have been common throughout the Hebrides, although some of the experiences of those who lived on St Kilda were unique.

When I was in Glasgow I bought a number of historical books on Scotland and was interested to consider, as was proposed in one book, that the version of Scottish history that is often presented to us is an English account of Scottish history, seen through the perspective of English history. These Scottish history books are far from being boring historical tracts and make for very interesting reading both from a personal and a general historical perspective.

Thank you very much Elizabeth for sharing with our members your wonderful trip to Mull. I hope they enjoy it as much as I have.

June Senior- Editor.

### SOCIETY FEES DUE NOW

Our annual Society fees of \$5.00 are due. A reminder will be included in this Newsletter to those who have not paid. It would be appreciated if you would take a few minutes NOW and send your subscription to our Treasurer Bruce McMillan (address on page 1). In doing so you will save me a lot of time not having to add reminder notices, and our financial situation will be healthier to cover the cost of Newsletter printing and the increased postal charges. Ed. June Senior.

### HELP WANTED

We have not had any queries of late re members wishing to trace their ancestors. Does this mean they have all been found? - or rather that past inquiries have not met with any success.

Our Newsletter goes to the Genealogical Society of Victoria in Melbourne and the Australian Institute of Genealogical Studies in Hartwell now so our Newsletter is more widely read.

If you feel like re-submitting any enquiry we will certainly print it for you.

If anyone who has compiled their MacMillan family history would care to send it to me I would be happy to include it in our Newsletter. I am sure our members would enjoy sharing your story.

### CORRESPONDENCE

Many thanks to members who have written and sent their subscriptions. Your letters and comments are very much appreciated. Ed. June Senior

### COMING EVENTS

Ringwood Highland Gathering, Jubilee Park Ringwood on Sunday 29th MARCH '92

The Genealogical Society of Victoria's Scottish Ancestry Group are holding a "History Genealogy Day" on Sunday 28th June 1992 at the Glen Waverley Primary School, C/r Springvale & Waverley Roads, Glen Waverley from 10 a.m - 4 p.m. It is being held on the nearest Sunday to the "International Day of the Tartan". There will be a small charge to cover costs.

The day will be advertised as widely as possible. If you are interested you could always contact me nearer the date for further details. June Senior

### CLAN MACMILLAN SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND

We have received Newsletter No.1 from the Clan MacMillan Society of N.Z. formed by Mrs. Margaret Pool, who writes:-

When it was suggested at the Clan Gathering to me that I could start up a branch of the Clan in New Zealand, I just laughed and said "we'll see", but the idea buzzed around in my head and I thought, why not, we are part of Scotland and its history. There are branches in Canada, Australia, U.S.A, so there should be one in New Zealand too as a lot of Scots immigrated here (and still continue to do so) including many MacMillans and they are part of New Zealand's early history.

The Clan Chief, George MacMillan of Knap and his wife Jane and sons, Arthur and Malcolm are extremely interested in the clan and its peoples from all over the world and offer encouragement and support. Their best wishes are conveyed to you through this letter and they are pleased a New Zealand branch has finally come into existence.

Through these newsletters I hope to foster friendships between Clan members here and overseas. I was a little disappointed at the small response to my various advertisements but I am sure with your help this will grow. I also find it difficult sometimes to realise not everyone shares my enthusiasm about MacMillans.

Congratulations Margaret on establishing the MacMillan Clan in New Zealand. We wish you every success and will enjoy exchanging Newsletters and giving our members news of your Clan.

# 26th ANNUAL RINGWOOD HIGHLAND CARNIVAL

9th Annual Gathering of Clans and Societies

★  
Aust Commonwealth Highland Dancing Championships

★  
Victorian Highland Pipe Band Championships

★  
Country Dancing

★  
Vic. Axemen's Assoc Woodchopping Championships

★  
Victorian Scottish Heavy Games Championships

★  
NON-STOP ENTERTAINMENT 8.00 a.m. - 5.00 p.m.

SUNDAY 29th MARCH, 1992

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GATES OPEN 8.00 a.m.

## THE ISLE OF ARRAN

Browsing through several books I have on The Isle of Arran I thought you might like to share some of the items I found interesting. There are some lovely photos of the Island but as these are in colour I am unable to use them in the Newsletter.

The Isle of Arran is one of the world's classic geological locations and more students of the subject visit our small island than anywhere else. The Kings cave is a sea cave formed about 6000 yrs ago when the sea level was higher than now. The cliffs above were formed, like those running around much of the island, about 10,000 yrs ago during the final cold phase of the last glacial period. The local rock is Permian desert sandstone about 250 million years old.

Arran is very rich in prehistoric sites of many descriptions, but of outstanding interest are the sites of Neolithic (new Stone Age) and Early Bronze Age. The chambered tombs of the Neolithic are famous, these were constructed of huge megalithic stone slabs which was covered by a great cairn of stones. Early Bronze Age monuments are commonly a circle of standing stones and also of isolated standing stones, often of enormous size.

On Machrie Moor there is a group of no fewer than seven circles, now much ruined but still containing uprights of staggering proportions.

As you will see from the above map, the main road around the island is about 56 miles. There are two lesser roads across the island. Each village has its own particular charm and all except Shiskine, nestle close to the shore.

"There is perhaps no part of the Western Hebrides more remarkable for the sublimity of its bird haunts than Arran. The towering peaks of Goatfell and Ben Ghnuis-homes of the Eagle and Ptarmigan-can nowhere be exceeded for grandeur and magnificence" -Flattering words indeed and uttered by no less an authority than Robert Gray, the 19th century ornithologist and author of the much quoted *Birds of the West of Scotland* (1871).

Thankfully both the Golden Eagle and the Ptarmigan still inhabit the hills in the island, but even away from the 'towering peaks' the wildlife is equally exciting no matter what the time of the year. Stags roar from the corries and glens in the Autumn months and dewy eyed seals bob like corks in the island bays and inlets at all seasons. Whether ornithologist, or botanist Arran's rich variety of habitat hides a host of natural gems.

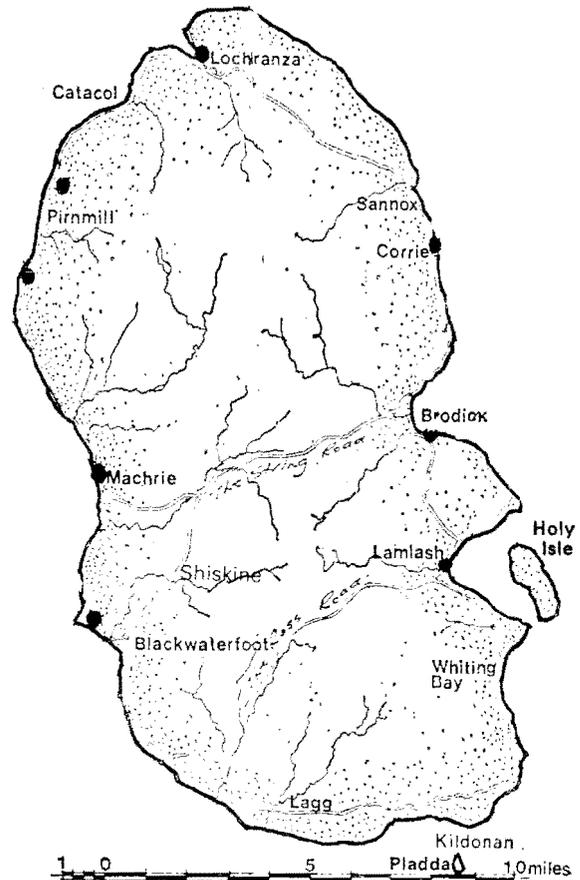
Brodick Castle, now in the care of the National Trust for Scotland, is the island's treasure chest of history.

Former seat of the Dukes of Hamilton, its contents include many fine examples of silver, porcelain, paintings and trophies.

The Castle has magnificent gardens, famed for its Rhododendron collection and 7,300 acres of mountainous territory including the island's most famous peak Goatfell (2866 ft).

Among the many fine trees are rare Arran whitebeams, they are native to the island and found nowhere else in the world.

The birdlife is rich and varied and includes the golden eagle and the peregrine falcon. During the day buzzards and sparrowhawks may be seen, while around dusk the barn owls patrol for any unwary small mammals.



## ANGUS MCMILLAN -PATHFINDER

McMillan left Ensay to meet his friend Dr. Alexander Arbuckle and Tom Macalister who were on the homestead with cattle from the Murrumbidgee. Arbuckle was a graduate of the University of Glasgow who had landed in Sydney in 1839, a year after McMillan. He was a friend of Lachlan Macalister and the two were partners in various pastoral activities. Angus and him because of common interest also became friends.

Arbuckle was in September 1840 farming a station on the Tambo, south of Ensay. He and Tom Macalister had reached the Omeo Road with cattle from the Murrumbidgee. When McMillan joined them on the Tambo run, he told Arbuckle he wanted to start his own run but had difficulty raising the capital. Arbuckle said he would try and assist him.

Angus continued to clear the road a tedious and time consuming task with only an axe.

On October 10, 1840, his party was again on the Avon and Angus was more convinced than ever that this was the district in which he wished to settle. McMillan was ignored by Lachlan Macalister. On this occasion his nephew, Colin Macalister had received instructions to reach the coast.

On the journey, Dr. Arbuckle and Cobone Johnny and two assigned convicts joined them. They came to within twenty miles of the inlet when Macalister again ordered a return.

Disappointed at the outcome of the journey, McMillan once more turned back confident that had he been in charge, he would have reached the sea within a day.

Up to this time, the natives had given little trouble. The Party had kept an eye open but they had been unable to make friends with them. At night they took it in turns to guard against attacks but the natives kept a distance.

At Clifton Morass, on the return trip, their luck ran out. A war party of about eighty natives attacked Arbuckle and McMillan and immediately they wheeled their horses to meet the blacks, who had reached within sixty metres. Spears flew but no-one was hit. McMillan fired both barrels, but no native fell. Later when they were on more friendly terms, the blacks told McMillan they thought the report of his gun came from the nostrils of the horses.

McMillan sensed a new threat to his plans. A party, as large as their attackers, could with ease wipe out a station and make off with the stock.

Arriving back on the Tambo, McMillan heard with alarm that the men he had left at Ensay had been attacked and were anxiously waiting his return. The natives were driven off. McMillan immediately became concerned for the cattle they had left on the Avon. They therefore returned to the animals.

On 22nd December, the blacks massed and attacked. With their war paint in patterns on their faces and bodies, they made a fearsome sight as they ran towards the spears and yelling their war-cry.

To be continued.....



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