



# CLAN MACMILLAN SOCIETY ( Victoria )

## Newsletter No 6, September 1985

### 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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### FROM THE PRESIDENT

In one way the British Isles may be likened to Australia. It is hard to see how this could be so, given the yardsticks (sorry, metre-sticks) usually used for comparing different parts of the world. Such things as area, climate, latitude and position in relation to the rest of the world, provide fairly strong contrasts.

Traditionally in Australia, as one moves from the more densely populated areas of the eastern seaboard, to the sparsely settled areas of our dry and harsh interior, the warmth of hospitality, neighbourliness and friendship increases. In my experience this is also the case in the United Kingdom. The further north I travelled the more hospitable the people seemed to be - until in Scotland. Hospitality reached the stage where a total stranger, met accidentally on the street while asking directions to the Youth Hostel, who happened to have seen me win a race at the White City in London, tipped his son out of his own bed, so that I and a New Zealand friend could spend a night with his family in Edinburgh. This was on Jan. 1st 1954, and a wonderful night it was.

That was over 30 years ago, but according to reports and letters from family, relatives and friends travelling in Scotland in recent months, it has not changed since that happy time, when tourists were not quite as ubiquitous as they are now.

It would seem that people who live in parts of the world where they have to survive the harshness of extreme climates, unhospitable landscapes and isolation have their priorities straight when they place people as the most important things in their lives.

Co-operation and teamwork in wresting a living from these hostile surroundings makes for a keen appreciation and affection for ones fellows. It would seem that this characteristic has been bred into the Scots over the centuries, so that even today when modern science and technology have eased many of the difficulties of former times, their desire to make people welcome is as strong as ever.

If you are fortunate enough to be off on a trip to the U.K. in the future, be sure to spend some time in Scotland - if possible get away from the beaten track and meet the Scot in his own home. I had no doubt about the feeling of kinship which still exists in spite of the passing of time - and half a world away from which we come to them.

As you will read in the newsletter, George and Jane will be delighted to see you at Finlaystone on the Firth of the Clyde. It is good to know that our links with them are being constantly strengthened through visits from our members, and our families. May I encourage those of you who have been to Scotland recently, or are going soon, to follow the example of June Senior, and write something for us for the newsletter.

The warmth and friendliness of the Scot was shown to us on June 4th by the Reverend Alec Fraser, when he spoke to the Society on the History of Scotland, its customs and traditions. It was a delightful evening and we thank Alec for speaking to us.

We look forward to renewing friendships at the Clan Society Barbecue on Sunday October 13th at 12 Noon. The Annual General Meeting will also be held at this function - so we ask for a good attendance. Some positions on the committee will be open for re-election also, so if you feel you can contribute in some way we will be pleased to have your nomination. We shall make provision for the possibility of wet weather, so don't let the weather deter you from coming. 'Bring your own everything'. Entrance is by Morrison Street, Hawthorn, Melway Map 59, Ref. B1. Bring along your friends and any memorabilia for others to see.

Don Macmillan  
President



## TOUR OF SCOTLAND HIGHLIGHTS

### Highlights of a visit to Scotland by Max and June Senior

We were fortunate when visiting Scotland earlier this year to have the opportunity to stay 3 nights at 'Finlaystone', Langbank with George and Jane MacMillan under their new venture, that of offering bed and breakfast to visiting MacMillans or descendants.

It was a busy time at 'Finlaystone' as the gardens were open to the public. On the Saturday we were there a large number of people visited. We particularly enjoyed doing all the Woodland Walks and visiting the Nursery which covered a large area. All types of trees and plants were for sale in the Nursery and the Garden Shop. The daffodils and early rhododendrons were in full bloom in the gardens and were really a picture to see.

We were very interested to learn the history of 'Finlaystone House'. It was once the home of the Cunninghams, Earls of Glencairn, for five centuries. John Knox and Robert Burns once visited there. It is now a centre for the Clan MacMillan, being the home of its Chief, General Sir Gordon MacMillan.

Another highlight of our tour was to revisit the Isle of Arran where my great grandparents migrated from in 1863. Brochures describe Arran as 'Scotland in miniature' and it is a very beautiful island.

Since our previous visit in 1978 Bob McMillan-Kay has traced our family history and published a book. We were able to visit the areas where my ancestors had once lived and worked. In small burial grounds at Whitefarland and Thundergay I found both graves of my great great grandparents and their families.

We visited the church Neil and Margaret McMillan were married in and enjoyed the scenic beauty along the coast road, looking across Kilbrannan Sound. There is something special about Arran and Brodick Castle; the gardens are world renowned and formerly the home of the Duke of Montrose. It is now under the National Trust for Scotland.

Near the old quay by the castle I noticed a plaque on the castle wall which read: 'King Edward and Queen Alexandra after their coronation first set foot on Scottish soil at this place, 26th August 1902.'

June Senior  
Clan Society Member



### ANCESTRY IN SCOTLAND

In our last newsletter I mentioned that a cousin of mine, June Senior and her husband, Max, were to spend some time in Scotland while overseas in April and May of this year.

They were able to spend three days on the Isle of Arran (off the west coast of Scotland), where my great great grandparents migrated from in 1863. From information I had researched by a professional researcher in Edinburgh some time ago, plus my own research material, I was able to establish where June was likely to find graves and former family homes, if they still existed.

Fortunately Max and June had been to Arran previously in 1978 and knew their way around. June located a lady who apparently kept the records for Arran. The lady used my book, a copy of which June lent her, to help trace any details on our ancestors. From the information in the book the lady was able to provide all the death dates of the brothers and sisters of my great great grandparents. As I already had the birth dates, the death dates she provided agreed exactly, except for one, with the ages at the time of death, proof that they were the same family. In addition to the death dates the lady supplied the names of the people they married and in some cases the names of their children. With the aid of a local map the lady was able to tell June and Max the location of small burial grounds at Whitefarland and Thundergay which possibly contained the graves of many of our ancestors. June found the graves and photographed the headstones which were obviously those of our ancestors.

The burial ground at Whitefarland was only a short distance from two farmhouses, one of which I suspect was once occupied by the McMillans. One house was in fact occupied by a lady named McMillan. June asked her if she knew any of the names in my book, but she was unable to remember, as she was quite old.

June was also able to locate and photograph a small school at Pirnmill, near Whitefarland, where the McMillan children most probably went to school and also the church in Lochranza where my great great grandparents were married in 1848.

The photographs and other information that Max and June were able to get for me are greatly appreciated and are of immense value for my next book. Combined with the information I already had, I have compiled a short history of our McMillan ancestry on Arran before my great great grandparents came to Australia. A copy of that history, along with a family tree of our Scottish ancestry on Arran, is included in this newsletter.

Bob McMillan-Kay  
Archivist and Editor



## BACK TO SCOTLAND

Another member of our society is off overseas next month, if all goes well. This time it is John A. McMillan from Geelong. He plans a three week drive through England, Scotland and Wales. While in Scotland he hopes to find time to call in on the Clan Chief at 'Finlaystone' and hopefully spend some time with George and Jane MacMillan by taking up the offer of accommodation for MacMillan descendants and our society members.

I'm sure you will join me in wishing him a successful trip and hope that he can tell us all about his trip in our next newsletter.

### CLAN SOCIETY MEMBER AWARDED TITLE

It is my pleasure to inform all members of our society that Christina McRae has been awarded the title of F.H.S. (Aust.)

On behalf of the Committee and members, I wish to congratulate Christina on achieving this honour. A copy of her notification is shown below.

★ ★ ★

Bob McMillan-Kay  
Archivist and Editor



*The Heraldry Society*

*Australian Branch*

'Botleigh Penns',  
31 Crawford Road,  
Lower Templestowe, 3107.

24th. May, 1985.

Miss Christina H. McRae, F.H.S. (Aust.)  
28 Aroona Road,  
CAULFIELD NORTH. 3161.

Dear Christina,

I am delighted to inform you that the council members of the Heraldry Society Australian Branch graciously approved the conferring of the honour on you as 'FELLOW' of the Society in recognition of your outstanding service to Heraldry and to the Society.

You are now authorised to use the letters F.H.S. (Aust.) after your name.

I wish to offer you my personal congratulations and to thank you for all that you have done for Heraldry.

A suitable certificate will be presented to you on an appropriate occasion in the near future.

Yours sincerely,

Joseph P. Morton. (F.H.S. (Aust.))  
Hon. Secretary.



Special Note: Bill Gibson, from the House of Scotland, or possibly a representative, will try to attend our Barbecue with a selection of MacMillan and Scottish items from the shop.

Telephone: (03) 80 5151.



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115 WHITEHORSE ROAD,  
BALWYN/DEEPDENE, 3103, VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA.

## FROM THE SECRETARY

I received a letter from Nancy MacMillan of Cottlesbridge stating that Campbell MacMillan passed away 6th November 1984. The Clan Society expresses its belated sympathy to the immediate family.

### THE LIFE OF ANGUS McMILLAN (Cont.)

Ewen MacMillan had known for some years that the farm at Glenbrittle was too small for such a large family.

Further west in the Hebrides were the islands of North and South Uist. To the south lay the Island of Barra about 25 square miles in area. Today Barra has a population of about 2000 people (mainly agricultural smallholders) who are mainly Roman Catholics, in common with most of the Southern Hebrides. Barra derives its name from St. Bar of Finbarr of Cork. At the Port of Castlebay is the majestic Kiessimiel Castle, built in 1427 on a rock in the bay, and recently restored as the home of The Macneil. Barra is noted for its superb stretches of untrodden sands. It is about 50 miles from Skye. The crossing must have been a major undertaking to the MacMillan family.

The family moved to a much larger home and the farm was able to take sheep and cattle and grow larger crops. However financially they were little better off. Angus and his brothers occasionally received a gift of a calf, but Ewen was unable to pay wages.

They wanted for little, but Angus realised that he would not be able to support a wife and family on the island. Two brothers had left and a third was making plans. Angus believed that he too must leave. An incident took place which virtually made up his mind. It illustrates the rather harsh conditions at this time.

The rocky shores of Barra Island had claimed many ships from America. The winter had been particularly stormy, the gales lasting for days, and Ewen was forced to hand-feed his stock and keep them confined. Angus never forgot one morning when he was forced to crawl on hands and knees from the house to the barn; if he stood upright, he would have been blown to the ground.

Norman (a brother) had made his way to the beach to gather sea-weed for manure, when to his amazement he saw a ship, sails furled, close to the rocks. Lashed by wind and rain, he drove the cart back to the farm. Ewen and his sons hastily returned to the shore with carts and ropes. By this time the ship - one of the Cunard passenger fleet - had struck close enough for the farmer and his sons to see the confusion aboard. Angus and Norman clambered over the slippery rocks until they were close enough to grasp ropes thrown from the ship, which was caught fast in the rocks. The boys joined their own ropes, and hands numbed and wet with spray, a line was rigged to the beach.

At intervals along the line were Ewen and his sons, while the crew sent to safety women and children and later men. Jolting over the rough track, the carts brought people to the farm where Marion was ready with tea. As the storm abated they were able to accommodate the women and children in the house and out-buildings, while the men were directed to the other farms on the island.

Despite the distress, Angus experienced a thrill at his unexpected contact with the outside world. He watched people who were completely different to the Highlanders of Skye and Barra. When the passengers left, Angus was left with a desire to see something of the world himself.

(to be continued) Taken from the book by Kenneth Cox 'Angus MacMillan Pathfinder' with his permission.

Steven MacMillan  
Secretary



### MACMILLAN CLAN MOTTO

Yet another translation of our clan motto has appeared, this time from the Clan Chief himself. Three translations were mentioned in our last newsletter. This one appeared in a letter from the Clan Chief in an article in the Newsletter of the Clan MacMillan Society of North America, which I received recently. It read: Miseris succurrere disco (I study to help the distressed)

### NEWSLETTER ITEMS

Come on all you clan society members. I know some of you have stories and items of interest that would be of interest to other members, because I've heard some of them. So why not write them down and send them to me for inclusion in our next newsletter. Let's not have all the newsletter items come from committee members. We would like to see you, the members, contribute as much as possible to our newsletter.

Bob MacMillan-Kay  
Archivist and Editor

