



*Reviresco  
We will rise again*

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**Commander of Clan**

**MacEwen: Sir John McEwen**

**Chair: Sean McCuin**

**Vice Chair: Ross McEwen**

**Treasurer: Dina-Lee Cabot  
McEwan**

**Secretary: Sandra McCuin**

**Editors: Ewan and Pauline  
Rowland**

**Membership Secretary: Carol  
Owens**

**Country Convenors:**

**Australia: Chris and Marilee  
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**USA: Bob and Carol Owens**

**Canada: Maggie McEwan**

**Committee Members:**

**Duncan McEwan**

**Herma Goosens**

# Clan MacEwen Society Newsletter

## Commander's Message



Thank God for Sean and Sandra! As we all struggle through these dismal and unsettling times, how much of a relief it is to know that ensconced in our ancient territory is the delightful, welcoming McCuin family and that Sean and Sandra are running the Clan society with unflagging energy and undimmed imagination, and MacEwens will always be welcome in the land our ancestors called home - in the land that we all might still call home. While most Scots Clans nowadays are powered by the diaspora we are especially fortunate to have that New World energy embodied in a Chairman whose ancestors crossed the Atlantic in the middle of the 17th century but who has decided, accompanied by his charming and learned wife and wonderful daughter, to return, not just to Scotland but to a homestead within sight of our ancient castle. Sandra is the society Secretary and she and Sean have been doing superb work together running the society and uniting the Clan. There are several reasons why our Clan is flourishing at present but the presence of Sean and Sandra in the ancestral homeland is the main one, on practical as well as on spiritual grounds.

Lang may yer lum reek, Mr and Mrs McCuin - thank you!

## Chairman's Message

**Reviresco!**

Sean McCuin

Seannachie to Sir John McEwen, Commander of Clan McEwen

Greetings Kinsmen and Women, I hope that this message finds you happy and healthy. This year has been challenging to say the least. During this festive season, I wish to express my gratitude and awe to the members of the society and Clan for your everlasting support over the past year. While we have not been able to join together as a family as planned, we have never lost our spirit. I am hoping that next year will see a return to something better and am looking forward to the gathering planned for June 2021 as well as the various Highland Games around the world. Family, Kinship and Happiness are truly what is important, and I hope that each and everyone of you have been able to have these in your life. The Clan and Society are stronger than ever and growing every day. This is a direct reflection of the Clan MacEwen spirit and our motto "Reviresco!-We Grow Strong!"



## From the Editors

Ewan and Pauline Rowland

We hope you enjoyed the September/October edition of the newsletter. It certainly was an interesting experience for us.

The newsletter is an important way for us to keep in touch with the ongoing developments and issues of the Clan. However, we recognise that there must be a wealth of untold stories and anecdotes we can present, about why and how MacEwens left Scotland to start new lives in Canada, USA, Australia and New Zealand. Each account will provide a lasting legacy for future generations of MacEwens. One of the biggest personal regrets we have is that we didn't take the time to ask more questions of our parents to learn more about their lives and therefore ourselves. The stories that you can provide will help to build a picture in modern times about the MacEwens.

Sean's message is so true because at a time when there is so much uncertainty in the world and our lives, the one thing that remains constant is the McEwen Clan and it's here to stay and grow bigger and stronger.

So, we all look forward to reading your story! Please send them to [info@clanmacewen.com](mailto:info@clanmacewen.com)

In this edition we bring you not one but two recipes so that you can indulge in a bit of excess, especially at this time of the year when we all need a bit of pleasurable distraction from the ongoing issues of the day. So, whatever restricted plans you may have for Christmas, New Year or Burns Night, don't feel guilty about giving yourself and your family a bit of a treat.

We send our warmest wishes for a healthy and happy New Year to MacEwens everywhere. Reviresco!



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## USA

**Convening a MacEwen Tent...Now How Did *THAT* Happen?!**

By Robert (Bob) L. Owens

As I look in the rearview mirror of 2020, it has been a quiet year for the Clan here in the U.S. The appearance of Covid-19 put a temporary halt to many Burns dinners, most highland games and Celtic festivals, piping and drumming competitions, and most gatherings of any other sort as well. Frankly, my bride and I did not realize just how much we enjoyed, and missed, sharing our MacEwen heritage at those events until they were suspended. It got us reminiscing about how all that started for us...

Flashback to the early 1990's during a summer vacation in the highlands of North Carolina, where we were eager to experience firsthand the famed Grandfather Mountain Highland Games (GMHG). A stop by the Scottish heritage tent helped us identify our Clan...the MacEwens! Accompanied by our daughter, son-in-law, and wee tot of a grandson, we found the MacEwen tent. There we received a warm and boisterous welcome from longtime conveners Bing and Percillia Ewen, whose family had been a staple at GMHG since the 1980's. They welcomed us as "family," offered us the hospitality of their Clan tent (you've never seen such enticing food and drink), and introduced us to MacEwens, MacKenzies, MacPhersons, MacDonalds, and yes, even a few Campbells, as well as a whole host of other Clan-convening Scots. The rest as they say is history.



Noting how much fun they had sharing their MacEwen heritage and Scottish history, we knew we had found a home away from home. When we returned to Virginia, we began the quest for all things MacEwen. There soon followed a kilt and a sash, a jacket, shoes and kilt hose, a shirt, and of course a bonnet. We scoured flea markets and garage sales for anything MacEwen (or MacEwan...many of which bottles came home empty of their original beverage)! And we signed up to convene our first MacEwen tent at a highland games event.

Thanks to many generous and sharing Clans men and women, we learned the ins and outs of setting up a fun, festive and informative MacEwen tent, and we learned what great fun and how rewarding it can be to meet and develop friendships with fellow MacEwens, no matter how they present or spell their names. We would not trade these experiences and friendships for the world!

As 2021 approaches, we have high hopes that the challenges of Covid will diminish and we will once again begin to see a full and active schedule of Scottish cultural events. If *YOU* are interested in hosting a tent and becoming involved as a convener, whether the event is large or small and whether you are an experienced old hand or an eager newcomer, we can help! Clan MacEwen has developed checklists and historical resources, materials suitable for printing and sharing, and ideas and suggestions for convening your own fun and informative Clan tent. If you are interested in representing Clan MacEwen in the U.S. you can email me at [owens@rebelscreek.com](mailto:owens@rebelscreek.com). (In any of our other regions please email [info@clanmacewen.com](mailto:info@clanmacewen.com).)

We would love to help! *Reviresco!*

## CANADA



Greetings from Canada to our fellow Clan MacEwen Society members.

We now have Canadian Society members from coast to coast - Nova Scotia to Vancouver Island. Our third coast, the Arctic, still remains a challenge.

During this extraordinary year I have been thrilled by the creativity shown by various groups. We have virtual lectures, concerts, conferences, meetings, dance evenings, half-marathons races, Highland Games and many more, all helping us to survive the challenges that we have experienced during 2020.

I am quite sure that we will all welcome the upcoming Hogmanay with hope that 2021 will see a return to non-virtual life where we can experience real Highland Games and a Clan MacEwen AGM in Kilfinan that will be as much fun as in 2019.

As the snow is starting to fall here in Ontario, I wish you safety, happiness and a great 2021.

Maggie McEwan...Canadian Convener, Clan MacEwen Society



## AUSTRALIA



It's been another quiet quarter for us down here in Australia. While COVID cases have remained low in most of the country, our governments are being understandably cautious about lifting the restrictions placed on large events to prevent further outbreaks. For the foreseeable future all of our Highland Games and Celtic Festivals will remain on hold. While there are a number who are planning for 2021 the reality seems to be that restrictions won't lift until a vaccine is readily available.

This being said life is returning closer to normal or at least to the new normal that our post COVID world will look like. A travel bubble has been created between some Australian States and New Zealand however at the moment movement is only allowed one way from New Zealand to Australia. So, if there are any of our New Zealand kin flying into Sydney and you would like to catch up for a tea or a coffee please don't hesitate to contact me via Facebook messenger and we will see if we can set something up we will have hand sanitiser at the door and facemasks to your comfort level.



As a final note I would just like to say "Nollaig Chridheil agus Bliadhna Math Ur gu sibhse agus an teaghlach agaibh!" We hope and pray that 2021 treats everyone more kindly than 2020 has.



## “Lest We Forget” Per ardua ad astra Netherlands



In my quest to visit the graves of fallen MacEwen's during WWII in the Netherlands, my next stop was Winterswijk. A town in the east of the Netherlands near the German border and the last resting place of Sergeant Douglas McEwen, age 23. He had been a bomb aimer of the Royal air force based in Wyton UK.

The war graves are part of the municipal cemetery of Winterswijk. They are situated in a special corner of this very beautiful cemetery.

A well-known German night fighter pilot, Herbert Lütje was responsible for downing the Lancaster ED334 on its way to Essen on 3 April 1943 at 23h00. A massive explosion followed because the aircraft was still loaded with fragmentation bombs. The plane crashed in a field near a farmstead in Corle/Winterswijk. The complete crew, consisting of 7 men, died in this crash. Only the two corpses of Flying officer F.A. Southon and Squadron Leader F. Flower could be identified.

Frank Flower - Squadron leader



This cemetery is part of the liberation route

### Buried in the first row

Clarence Coghill - Warrant Officer, Leslie Fieldhouse - Flight Sergeant, **Douglas McEwen** - Sergeant, Frank Routledge - Flight Sergeant and Eric Shandley - Flight Sergeant

Winterswijk was also the hometown of a woman who was in charge of the biggest Dutch resistance movement of World War II.

Helena Kuipers-Rietberg, also known as aunt Riek, the mother of all people in hiding. She helped 300.000 people in hiding, in the Netherlands during World War II. She and her husband Piet were taken captive by the SD, when they were in hiding themselves in Bennekom. They were taken to Arnhem for an interrogation by a German policeman Friedrich Enkelstroth. He could not believe that such a polite, gentle, soft hearted middle aged women was the leader of the biggest resistance organisation in the Netherlands. During her German captivity she stood out for her willpower and her belief in God. In the Nazi reports she was labelled as religious insane.



## Revisiting: Reichswald Forest War Cemetery Kleve Germany



As a child I had visited this cemetery many times with my own family. My father's family had suffered a lot during the war and I was brought up with first hand stories of these horrific times. My father, who also had been a soldier overseas, always visited the war graves wherever he was and we also took part in these visits. We learned valuable lessons during these visits about the sacrifices they made to give us back our freedom. We learned that freedom is a very precious gift and needs to be maintained.

On my way to an appointment in the south east of the Netherlands, I decided to take a short cut and crossed the border into Germany. Near Kleve is a wood called the Reichswald Forest, there is a beautiful road through this forest. You almost forget how bloody the fighting had been in these woods during operation Veritable. Hand to hand fights were the order of the day, the forest had turned red from all the bloodshed. The fights were as bloody as Normandy. Half way along this road you will find the war cemetery. I decided to stop and pay a visit to the cemetery, it had been a very long time since my last visit. The cemetery contains 7672 allied burials from the Second World War.



I was curious if there would be a MacEwen in this graveyard. And to my utter surprise there was one.



The 6th Airborne Division was raised in 1943 as the second of two airborne divisions formed by the British Army during World War II. They also participated in Operation Varsity, the second airborne assault over the River Rhine during the war. Operation Varsity, 24 March 1945, was the largest airborne operation in history to be conducted on a single day in one location. Launched by allied troops involving more than 16,000 paratroopers and several thousand aircrafts. Operation Varsity was part of Operation Plunder an Anglo-American-Canadian assault under Field Marshal B. Montgomery to cross the northern river Rhine and from there enter Northern Germany. Operation Varsity was meant to help the surface river assault troops secure a foothold across the Rhine River in Western Germany by landing two airborne divisions on the eastern bank of the Rhine near the village of Hamminkeln and the town of Wesel.

Overlooking all the graves, I become the little girl again who visited this cemetery with her dad and I hear my dad's voice again, telling me about the precious gift of freedom and at what cost these people played their part in securing the freedom we can enjoy to this day.

Just before I leave the graveyard I turn around and bow my head in a humble gesture to say thank you.

More detailed information: [www.tracesofwar.nl](http://www.tracesofwar.nl) / [www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org)

## 'The Silent Fields of Reichswald'

Herma's article is a poignant reminder about the horrors and futility of war. Surviving soldiers would go on to describe the Reichswald forest as a slaughterhouse, trees and buildings destroyed and recall brutal acts of violence and merciless man-on-man combat. Afterwards, Dwight Eisenhower described Operation Veritable as "One of the fiercest and most violent campaigns of the war, a bitter struggle for endurance between the Allies and the Germans." (extract from [Holland.com/operation-veritable.htm](http://Holland.com/operation-veritable.htm)).

I came across a haunting tune called 'The Silent Field of Reichswald' by Pipe Major Ray, de Lange ([www.myceolmohr.com](http://www.myceolmohr.com)) whilst looking for new pipe music to play. I recognised at the time that the title referred to a battle that took place in WW2 but not the true significance of the event. I now realise that the music refers to the rows of war graves in the cemetery visited by Herma Goosens.

### *The Iolaire - Angus MacPhail and Robert Robertson*

*Eileen Froaich, I yearn to see you  
Sing to me the island Ocean  
Through the cries of war I hear you  
Far to the west and worlds away  
From the futile fields of war*

*Island men I hear them calling  
Sing to me the island Ocean  
Killed in vain. I see them falling.  
O take me west and worlds away  
From the futile fields of war.*

*Four brutal years were unforgiving.  
Sing to me the island Ocean  
By grace of God I yet was living  
And sailing west and worlds away  
From the futile fields of war.*

*The Beasts of Holm were dark and savage.  
Sing to me the island Ocean  
Their scythe of fate would blindly ravage  
Far to the west and worlds away  
From the futile fields of war*

*New Year of peace would dawn tomorrow  
Sing to me the island Ocean  
From hope and joy to wrenching sorrow  
Far to the west and worlds away  
From the futile fields of war.*

*My lover's kiss, her arms around me  
Sing to me the island Ocean  
So near, but on the shore she found me  
Far to the west and worlds away  
From the futile fields of war.*

*The morning tide brought home our boys  
They lay among the scattered toys.  
Our tears of love and deep relief  
Became the tears of tearing grief.*

The war time stories and tributes featured in the newsletters remind us of the bravery, humility and modesty of those serving MacEwens'. I would like to share with you the words of a song by a very popular Scottish band called 'Skipinnish' and taken from their album 'The Seventh Wave'. For me it sums up the 'futility of war'.



During preparations for the jump-off of Operation Veritable, Bomber Command of the British Royal Air Force launched heavy raids against German cities in the path of the anticipated advance toward the Ruhr. The German town of Cleve was hit by RAF bombers on February 7-8 with devastating results. Scarcely a single building remained undamaged after the raid.



# These are your people

## Clan MacEwen

### By D. MacDonnell MacDonald

### Part 2

The MacEwens now scattered far and wide. Some took the road north, perhaps retracing the steps of ancestors, for there appears to have been old links between Lochaber and Cowal. These MacEwens became absorbed by the Camerons, forming a sept known as Sliochhd Eoghain and some writers go as far to state that from this migration comes the common Cameron Christian name Ewen. Among the Mackintoshes too, at a later period, the name MacEwen is to be found, usually in some legal document listing disturbers of the peace.

Others stay on in Argyll, associating themselves with the Campbells and MacDougalls. The Rev. D. Mac Nicol states that the MacEwens had free lands in Lorne for acting as bards to the families of Argyll, Breadalbane and MacDougall of Dunolly in 1572. The last of the family bards were Aime and his son Neil. An elegy on Campbell of Glenurchy was composed by Neil MacEwen in 1630. J.F. Campbell refers to a genealogy of the Argyll family in 1779 by Neil Mac Ewen "*as he received same Eachern MacEwen his father as he had the same from Arthur MacEwen his grandfather and their ancestors and predecessors sennachies and pensioners to great families who for many ages were employed to make up and keep such records in their accustomed way of Irish rhymes*". There were land deals with Campbells for parts of Ardbeg in Bute, Glenmasson, Stranlonaig, and Glentarsan in Cowal and Inverha. Crame and Garvaich on Lochfyneside. M'Ewines were ministers on Islay.

Many of the clan settled on the shores of Loch Lomond, probably before the ancient line of the Lennox earls became extinct towards the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. It is claimed that they fought on the side of Mary, Queen of Scots at the battle of Langside in 1568 and received a banner. If that is so they had to face the furious onslaught of their northern neighbours the Macfarlanes, who were fighting against the Queen because of the murder of Lord Darnley, the eldest son of the Earl of Lennox, and were in the forefront of the victorious charge in which they captured three of the Queen's standards. Nor were the MacEwens always on friendly terms with that other Loch Lomond-side clan, the Colquhouns. In 1602 proof was allowed to Colquhoun of Luss by the Privy Council to show that a number of MacGregors, Maclaughlans, MacEwens and MacNeills were men of the Earl of Argyll, and that the Earl was responsible for the depredations committed by them. That was the year of the second big raid on the lands of Luss, the third in 1603, ending in the battle of Glen Fruin.

MacEwens moved south to the Vale of Leven and Strathendrick between the mouth of the Loch and the River Clyde, and the clan name of Ewing is still associated with parts of old Dunbartonshire, stemming from the houses of Keppoch, Bonhill, Levenford and Ballikinrain and the days of merchant princes. In 1614 a charter was granted by the Duke of Lennox to William Neaubog alias Maccewin, eldest son and heir of William Mackewn alias Neaubog de Glenbog (Glenboig) Wester. The surnames of Glenboig proprietors towards the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century are given as McAne and MacEwen.

Descendants of these MacEwens who joined the Campbell of Glenurchy, formed a settlement in Perthshire around Kenmore. In the 1769 agricultural survey of Loch Tayside 21 MacEwens were recorded on land along the south shore, their names being shown as KcKeown.

Then to balance the eastward drift, there is the 18<sup>th</sup> century reckoning that there were some 200 MacEwens in Skye, and the tradition that 120 of the name from the island joined the Jacobite army in the Fortyfive. Once again in tracing the history of an Argyll clan, we come across some of the name settled in Galloway; in the case of the MacEwens, from the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century.

The western clans, the descendants of seafarers, were at home on the water – although little of that aspect of their history has survived to the present day.

There is no hint in this instance of what manner of ships and how many were used to carry the fighting men of the clan on that 150 miles passage south across the open sea between their home waters and their landfall on the shores of Loch Ryan and Rhinns of Galloway.

The traditional tale centres on a time when the Agnews of Lochnaw were in danger of being ousted from their land by one of the powerful Douglas family.

The Laird of Lochnaw was besieged in his island castle by a strong force of Douglasses. He was near surrendering to the superior strength of the enemy when the ring ranged round the shore of the island loch was attacked in the rear. Encouraged by this unexpected aid, Agnew and his men sallied out, and in the end the Douglasses were routed.

According to the story the wandering band of fighting men who had intervened in the feud so timeously were MacEwens, the remnant of a broken clan.

Where this band of warriors went after the encounter with the Douglasses is unrecorded but a MacEwen family took root in the south of Ayrshire near Girvan and flourished. Some Macewens remained in Galloway.

When the Laird of Lochnaw was once again in secure possession of his land and the hereditary office of Sheriff he rewarded the MacEwens with land, and in time they became the tenants of the farms of Knock, Maize, Achnaterach and High Mark. These Macewens had a burying place in Leswalt churchyard near Stranraer.



## 'To be, or not to be? That is the question': The Humble Haggis

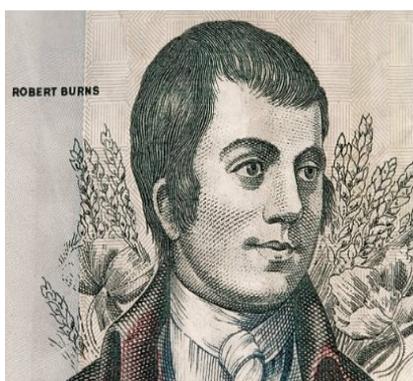
(William Shakespeare—Hamlet Act 3)

Traditionally, haggis is celebrated and eaten at a supper to remember the Scottish poet, Robert Burns. The event is now referred to, simply as Burns Night. The first night took place on 21<sup>st</sup> July 1801 on the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the poet's death. His friends decided to honour and remember him every year with a special supper at which haggis was the main dish. However, it was also to commemorate his birth which records showed took place on 25<sup>th</sup> January 1759, so Burns Night is now celebrated every year on 25<sup>th</sup> in January.

Why a haggis? Well, followers of the work of Burns will know that he wrote a poem about the dish, 'Address to the Haggis', which is read or recited as part of the ritual meal. Traditionally, at big and formal gatherings the haggis is brought to the high table in procession, accompanied by a Piper. The first cut into the dish is done with a knife by the Clan Chief or Commander. Then the first verse of Burn's poem is recited at the same time.

### Address to the Haggis

'Fair fa honest, sonsie face  
Great chiefton O' puddin' race!  
Aboon them a 'ye taky'er place,  
Painch, tripe, or thairm:  
Weel are yer wordy o' a grace  
As lang's my airm.'



### The Sassanachs Translation

'Nice seeing your honest, chub-  
by face  
Great chiefton of the sausage  
race!  
Above them all you take your  
place,

Basically, the dish is a bag, sometimes a sheep's stomach filled with offal comprised of minced liver, heart and lungs and mixed with beef or mutton suet. Oatmeal is added along with onion, pepper and spices. Then boiled.

However, food historians argue that the dish is not Scottish but an import from England, of all places. Catherine Brown, a Scottish food writer, discovered a reference showing that the haggis was around in England from 1615 and that a recipe dated from the early 1400s. You can imagine what this revelation has done among her fellow Scots who were, outraged at the thought. Voices of dissent say that 'no Sassenach could have come up with such a braw fid'. Alexander Lee the author of 'A History of Haggis', refers to an Edinburgh haggis maker who scowled, 'I didn't hear of Shakespeare writing a poem about haggis'.

Encyclopaedia Britannica point out that the dish goes back even further to Aristophanes and Homer and is thought to have been introduced by the Romans to Britain. There is archaeological evidence that Romans in fact did settle (albeit in forts) in the Lowlands of Scotland. Winding forward to the 8<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, it is thought the Vikings imported their version from Scandinavia. Alexander Lee points out that the Old Norse root 'haggva' became 'hag' which also means 'to chop' or to 'mince', or in Old Icelandic, 'hoggva' both of which mean 'to chop'. He also points out that 'hag' is also similar to the French verb 'hacker,' which is also like haggw/hoggva, a point which Walter Scott raised. Since Scotland had a strong relationship with France after 1295 (Auld Alliance), it is thought that the French may also have had a hand introducing a version of the dish.

Whatever the claim as to the real origin of the haggis, its real purpose could have been to provide a ready meal. You could think of it as the forerunner to the 'boil in a bag' ready meal, which cattle and sheep drovers carried with them on their long trek to market in Edinburgh.

With the Agricultural Revolution sweeping the country at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, offal lost its popularity in favour of other foods which became more available, so haggis went out of fashion. Not so in Scotland, because in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century there was a period of economic decline and severe famine. This was followed later by wealthy landowners forcing Scottish crofters to the margins of productive farmland. Consequently, the popularity of haggis was re-established, or it never really went away, especially with the poor.

Following the Jacobite Risings great resentment took place between the English and many Scots. Haggis was used by English satirists and politicians alike to ridicule the Scots by stating derisory comments like 'a grain, which in England is generally given to horses, but in Scotland support the people' (Samuel Johnson In his Dictionary of 1755). The denigration of the dish went further when Tobias Smollet referred to haggis as 'uncivilised' and 'the very prospect' of a 'Caledonian haggis' turned his stomach. However, I think the last word should be that of Robert Burns who turned the attacks to an advantage by making a connection between food and character. He claimed that whilst other nations had their ragout, olio or fricassees, which made men into weaklings, haggis, was the sort of food real men (and women!) were made of (A History of Haggis by Alexander Lee 2019).



## So wherever you may be on Burns Night:



Piping in the Haggis



# Slainte mahth!

(Slange var!)



Reference:

Alexander Lee: The origins of haggis are as mysterious as the Loch Ness monster. Published in History Today Vol69 issue 12 December 2019.

Catherine Brown – Scottish Food writer – Haggis Stooshie Scots or English  
Encyclopaedia Brtiannica

## MacEwen Spotlight: Elspeth Mac Ewan

By the time you read this, Halloween will have come and gone. According to the National Trust For Scotland, the name Halloween comes from a Scottish shortening of All Hallows Eve and has its roots in the Gaelic festival of Shamhain. (go to nts.org.uk for more information). Round the world on October 31<sup>st</sup>, people will have celebrated in their own way activities that appeased the dead. In Celtic tradition bonfires were lit and costumes worn to ward off the ghosts and evil spirits. Pope Gregory 111 in the 8<sup>th</sup> century decided that the festival should be used instead to honour the saints. By the Middle Ages it was thought that witches avoided detection by disguising themselves as black cats. It was a time when it was thought magic was at its most potent. So, when things went wrong, harvests failed, cattle became sick and other unexplained things happened, there had to be a reason. It was believed that the Devil used witches to do his nasty deeds.

I grew up in the Isle of Man, a place where myths, magic and legends were deeply ingrained in the culture. Witches were feared and those accused of being a witch were dealt with extremely harshly. There is a hill in the middle of the island where those found guilty of being a witch were put inside a barrel into which spikes were thrust and then rolled down the hill.

The persecution of women accused of being witches is well documented and recorded at the time as if it were something to be proud of.

More than 300 people (mainly women) were burned or drowned by ducking (doused). Scotland holds the dubious reputation of having been Europe's biggest persecutor of witches. The first trial took place in 1590 and presided over by King James VI and according to Kelly Mullen, writing in the Daily Record, the last Scottish witch trial resulting in a gaol sentence took place as recently as 1944. Neil MacKay, writing in The Herald in 2019, wrote that the Scottish witch trials was a time 'when our nation went mad'. Between the 1500s and 1600s Scotland was gripped by a cultural madness which exhibited itself in butchery, cruelty and organised mass murder. In the 1600s the population of Scotland was 800,000 and 4000 people, mostly women, were tortured and executed by the Kirk. If you were an outsider, eccentric, suffered from mental illness or disfigurement or had healing powers, you were most likely to be accused of being a witch. So, if your community experienced an unexplained misfortune, all you had to do was point the finger at someone, call them a witch and their fate was sealed.



Witch burning



Elspeth's Grave at Balmaclellan

This is the fate that befell Elspeth McEwan, the last witch to have been executed in Kirkcudbright, South West Scotland on August 24<sup>th</sup>, 1698. She was burned to death, 300 years ago at Silvercraigs, a hillside overlooking Kirkcudbright. She lived at Bogla in Balmadella Parish and was said to be an honest woman with an innocent nature.. It was also said of her by her contemporaries that she was possessed of a, 'superior education'.

She was accused of cursing neighbours' cattle and of stealing them too. Her accusers said that in her home she possessed a peg dowed into the 'kipplefoot', or part of the roof beam, from which she used to draw milk on demand. Also, she was accused of being able to coax chickens to lay during hard times and tame wild animals.

The Beadle was summoned by the priest of the Kirk to fetch Elspeth to the manse. On approaching the hill behind the manse, the horse became tormented and sweat blood. Ever since, the place carried the name 'Bluidy Brae'. Yet more proof!

After examination and torture, Elspeth was sent to Kirkcudbright and imprisoned in the Tolbooth, described as a vile place in which to be incarcerated and therefore testament to her character to have survived it for two years. It is recorded that she begged the Gaolers to end her life and suffering and the only way therefore, was to confess. The form of her execution was first to be strangled and then burned. Eye witness records held in The Stewartry Museum in Kirkcudbright, show the costs involved of the execution as being "peits to burn Elspeth with" to the "one pint of aill to William Kirk (executioner) qn (when) she was burning".

Elspeth MacEwan has found her place in Scottish history.

### References:

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*Daily Record*: Kelly Mullen 11/2012 – updated 24/10/2013

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*Everything You Need To Know About Scotland's Historic Witch Hunts* : Alexander Crow—Nov' 2017

## Christmas in Scotland

In normal times, Christmas in Scotland is like other Western countries in so much as there are carols, decorated homes, feasting, giving of presents indoor trees and wreaths.

However, it was not always so. Christmas in Scotland only became a public holiday in 1958 and Boxing Day also became a holiday but not until 1974.

Christmas festivities were abolished in 1640 by the Parliament of Scotland. The Church of Scotland (Presbyterian Church) frowned upon anything relating to Roman Catholicism. Therefore, Yule vacations were made illegal. Oliver Cromwell imposed a ban on Christmas, but was eventually repealed in 1686, but lasted in Scotland for almost a further 400 years.

The Christmas ban helped to bring Hogmanay into prominence and today Edinburgh stages the world's biggest and most famous Hogmanay street parties, with live music, poetry and bonfires and a little bit of drinking.

Historians show that there are strong similarities between the Christian festival and the Pagan festival which celebrated the birthday of the Sun on December 25<sup>th</sup>. The Romans also celebrated over several days in early December to honour the god Saturn, now commonly referred to as Saturnalia. The Roman writer Seneca reported, "It is now the month of December when the greatest part of the city is in bustle....Loose reins are given to public discipline, everywhere you may hear the sound of great preperatus". During this time houses were decked out in greenery and gifts were exchanged. Decades later Pope Julius 1 officially established the same date as Christ's birth day thereby appropriating the existing pagan festival as a key Christian date.

Vikings, who by settling in Scotland made an impact on Scotland's developing culture by introducing the 'Yule' festival which took part in midwinter. They too lit fires, feasted and probably drank too much, all to encourage optimism and good luck in the depths of winter. (The Pagan Roots of Christmas – Sky History)

The Scots have their own customs, some of which survive today. The burning of a rowan twig done as a way of getting rid of any bad feelings between friends and family. First Footing, which today is mainly associated with New Year was originally a Christmas Day event. The first person across the threshold would take with them a piece of coal, whisky, salt and bread. Another gift carried by the First Footer was a 'Black Bun' a rich cake containing raisins, currants, almonds, citrus peel, allspice, ginger, cinnamon and topped with pastry.

### For the pastry

300g/10½oz [plain flour](#)

75g/3oz [lard](#), cubed

75g/3oz [butter](#), cubed

pinch [salt](#)

½ tsp [baking powder](#)

1 free-range [egg](#), beaten, for glazing

### For the filling

200g/7oz [plain flour](#)

300g/10½oz [raisins](#)

300g/10½oz [currants](#)

½ tsp [ground ginger](#)

½ tsp ground [cinnamon](#)

½ tsp ground [allspice](#)

½ tsp [mixed spice](#)

¼ tsp ground [black pepper](#)

100g/3½oz dark muscovado [sugar](#)

100g/3½oz mixed [peel](#), chopped

½ tsp [bicarbonate of soda](#)

½ tsp [bicarbonate of soda](#)

2 tbsp [whisky](#)

1 free-range [egg](#)

3 tbsp [buttermilk](#)

### Method

1. Sift the flour in to a bowl and rub in the lard and butter until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs. Add the salt, baking powder and 4 tablespoons of cold water and mix to a soft dough.
2. Preheat the oven to 180C/350F/ Gas 4 (Fan 160C).
3. For the filling, mix the ingredients together in a large bowl.
4. Line a 900g/2lb loaf tin with baking parchment. On a lightly floured surface, roll out two thirds of the pastry to a rectangle large enough to line the tin. Drape into the tin, pressing down to compress.
5. Rollout threequarters of the remaining pastry to a rectangle large enough to cover the tin. Dampen the edges of the pastry with water and press the pastry lid on top to seal. Trim the edges and crimp using the tines of a fork. Rollout the remaining pastry, along with any trimmings, and use to make a bow to decorate the top, then attach with a little water.
6. Glaze with beaten egg and bake for 2 hours. Remove from the oven to cool in the tin before turning out.



## Boerenkool Met Worst

### Dutch good fortune food: Farmers Cabbage with smoked sausage

Dutch winter dish “*Boerenkool met worst*” the good luck food to symbolise good fortune in the year ahead. In my family it is tradition to eat Kale (Farmers cabbage) with smoked sausage on the first of January as a good luck food. It is easy to prepare and even yummiier when you prepare it in advance. Use a big pot, preferable a Dutch oven to prepare this dish.



### Ingredients

3.3 lb./1,5 kg floury potatoes  
 3 tbsp. butter  
 1.6 lb./750 g. Curly kale  
 2 cups / 475 ml milk  
 Dash of salt  
 Dash of pepper  
 1 Vegetable cube  
 Dash of wine vinegar (optional)

Wash and peel the potatoes and cut into similarly sized pieces for even cooking. Wash the kale and cut the leaves of the stems and chop them into small pieces.

Cover the potatoes in water and add the vegetable cube, put the kale on top of it. Boil the potatoes for 20 minutes or until they are soft. After 10 minutes put the smoked sausage on top of the kale, the steam and heat will bring it up to the necessary internal temperature. Put the lid on the pot again.

If you do not use smoked sausage, then prepare your sausages as usual. (*Vegetarian sausages are an alternative option*).

Remove the sausage and drain and steam the potatoes and kale dry before you make the mash. Make sure all the excess water is gone. I prefer to separate the kale from the potatoes and make a mash first before adding the kale. I put the kale in a colander and press it gently until all the excess water has gone. Make sure the potatoes are steamed dry before you make the mash.

In the meantime warm the milk on the stove or in the microwave.

Mash the potatoes and add the warm milk and butter to the potatoes to make a fluffy mash. (If you want to make it a healthier option, just use some of the cooking liquid instead.) Season to taste with salt, pepper and (optional: add a little dash of wine vinegar.) Be aware the vegetable cube also adds to the flavour.

Mix the cooked kale gently through the cooked mashed potato mixture.

Top with slices of the (smoked) sausage and serve hot with your favourite mustard, piccalilli or gravy. Dutch style: accompanied by onions Amsterdam style and pickles.

***Smakelijk eten!***

**I wish you all happy holidays but above all a healthy 2021!**

**May times change for the better!**

***Herma Goosens***

## Membership Information

Hello everyone,

Thank you for taking the time to read (and we hope enjoy!) this latest edition of our Society Newsletter. I write to you from the very chilly but beautifully moonlit Scottish Capital of Edinburgh, while our restaurants and pubs, many of our shops and businesses are still closed due to the pandemic restrictions, this ancient city has lost none of its mysterious and enchanting charm.

2020 has been a distressing and challenging ordeal for everyone, ever more so for those who have been directly affected by the pandemic or the colossal disruption caused by the measures taken to tackle and temper the virus. It is remarkable to think given all that has happened this year that it was only last year when many of us stood on that bright and beautiful June summer's day (we don't get too many of them here in Scotland!) standing among the ancient stone foundations of the now ruinous Castle MacEwen. Overlooking the beautiful Kilfinan Bay we enjoyed the largest gathering of MacEwens in recorded history and experienced what was a first for our Clan, a unified single effort to come together and celebrate our shared history with many travelling from as far as New Zealand, Australia, Canada, the United States and Europe to be there. That extraordinary weekend will undoubtedly live on in the minds of all of us who were there and it was an extremely difficult decision, regardless of how logical it was, to cancel the 2020 Kilfinan gathering earlier this year, however we all know that we shall meet again as soon as we are able, and it will be a very memorable occasion indeed.

That wonderful weekend last year at Kilfinan was made possible by the Clan MacEwen Society, the not for profit community of Clansmen and women from all over the world who provide the essential support which enables Clan MacEwen to grow and thrive, and to again take our place in the wider clan community after so many centuries of absence.

Over the last six years our Clan and Society have truly come alive, from achieving a recognised Commander in Sir John R.H McEwen, an Executive Committee and Leadership, a new Society website, an ever-growing presence on social media, new relationships with other clans, our own line of Clan MacEwen merchandise items and, prior to the pandemic, a growing attendance at games and events all over the world, a unified single group of men and women who all share a common history, culture, and family. However we want to do more, and as we see for the first time in history a concerted effort to grow Clan MacEwen and as we push ever further with our campaign to have a new Chief, the Society's ability to keep up with our progress and provide a meaningful offer in exchange for Member's support is essential.

That is why after many months of much discussion, we are very happy to be announcing our new Society Membership aimed at taking our Society, and therefore our Clan, prosperously into the years ahead. Our new push to increase our Society Membership will enable us to take full advantage of the events and games which will take place when the world returns to right, and it will, it gives us the platform to create new content for Members, deliver digital online lectures, and ensure that we do all we can to give Clan MacEwen the return it, and we, deserve.

The principal changes which will take place are that Members will receive their own Clan MacEwen Society Membership Certificate and Membership pin badge, a say in the running of the Society, access to the exclusive Member's area on our website, discounted rates at our online Clan Store, stay fully up to date with all that is going on regarding the campaign for Chiefship, as well as having the opportunity to engage much more with each other and develop this wonderful new community of MacEwens all over the world. Members will have continued access to our Newsletter publications and digital content which we will soon be producing including online lectures and talks about all aspects of Clan culture, Scottish culture and, well, whatever topics our Membership would like to see! Society Membership will also secure you a vote at the Annual General Meeting so you will have your say in the governance and key decisions of the Society, and your Membership fee will help enable the Clan to grow, appear at games, develop new ideas, and when the time comes, help us secure our first Chief to be installed for more than 500 years.

The Clan MacEwen Society is a not for profit body, while the Clan and Society are separate bodies they are inextricably bound together in their shared aim to push Clan MacEwen into an increasingly healthier, bolder and stronger position in the global clan community. The vast majority of Scottish Clans have their own Societies which work also as not for profit groups that administer Clan's attendance at events, games, and act as local territorial hubs for information relating to the Clan, shared learning, and in our case, progressing the case for Chiefship. Unlike the majority of clans, we operate only one globally overarching Society, this is the expressed wish of our Clan Commander and Leadership and brings with it many advantages and means our entire international network work together in a unified way for the good of the Clan at every opportunity.

While our Facebook page, twitter and instagram continue to grow – it is our Society Membership that really makes the difference, and it is that community which we look to pay special attention to for the years to come. The Clan MacEwen Society you are a Member of, and we sincerely hope you will choose to continue being a Member of, is the only Clan MacEwen Society officially recognised and sanctioned by the Clan Commander. We hope to use the Society to engage with local charity work, have a hand in important environmental initiatives, provide educational opportunities and much more. No one takes any payment or salary, all the Members of the Clan and Society leadership pay their annual membership (including the Commander himself) as the common aim is one we can all benefit from.

## Membership Information Continued

The new Membership is now live on our website so when your own Membership comes up for its annual renewal you will receive an email from our wonderful Membership Secretary Carol Owens (USA) to ask that you rejoin under the new arrangements, and we can get to work making sure you receive your certificate, badge, and other important information. In the meantime if you have any questions whatsoever to do with what I have detailed above, or any other aspect of the Society or Clan, I would love to hear from you and you are very welcome to write to me directly at [ross@clanmacewen.com](mailto:ross@clanmacewen.com). We are all playing a vital role in our Clan's history, and I often say we are indeed writing MacEwen history right now, and there's certainly a lot to do!...we hope you will come with us on this journey, which belongs to all of us.

Take care, thank you for being a part of the Society, greetings from Bonny Scotland, and we sincerely hope you and your loved ones stay as safe and healthy as possible.

REVIRESCO

Ross M. McEwen  
Vice-Chairman, Clan MacEwen Society



*The certificate is A4 size*



*The lapel pin is 25mm or 1inch diameter*



## The Clan Shop

New Arrival



For those special gifts for all occasions visit [www.clanmacewen.com](http://www.clanmacewen.com)

Buying from the clan shop helps to fund our events.

There is a special discount for registered members.

### Clan Crest Hand Towel Set of 3

The range of products is growing and includes items of clothing, jewellery, hats, shawls and items to go with your kilt.

New Arrival



### Clan Crest Fleece Gilet



### Clan Crest Fleece

New Arrival



### Clan Crest Tote Bag