



Reviresco
We will rise again

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Clan MacEwen Society Newsletter

Commander's Message



"The newspapers were warning us for weeks about a second 'Beast from the East' but when the bad weather came it proved a puppy dog. And now, Spring is here - thank God! These times are testing indeed for almost everyone but what solace and support is provided by Mother Nature. Last year, as chaos closed in, the persistent, oblivious birdsong was immensely comforting and grounding - life goes on, they seemed to be singing, this too will pass. Well, it hasn't passed yet and for all those expected to provide home-schooling to youngsters who would far rather play computer games, I heartily sympathise. But it will pass. There are signs of hope. The vaccination programme, of course, but also the snowdrops. For a Clan like ours, so in touch with nature, the yearly cycle conveys the important truth, 'Reviresco'. 'We shall rise again!'"



Chairman's Message

Reviresco!

Sean McCuin

Seannachie to Sir John McEwen, Commander of Clan MacEwen

Greetings to all Kinsmen and Women!

As I look over the Loch here in Kilfinan, my thoughts take me to the time of the ancestors. While this area can be harsh, the beauty never ceases to amaze me. We are so very lucky to have sprung from these pristine glens. I truly understand what pulls us back to this tiny hamlet in the west of Scotland. I believe we as a clan, will continue to live up to our Motto "Reviresco!" I do not believe that there is a field of expertise that a MacEwen has not excelled in or accomplished great things. The new battle cry "Còmhla!", which translates to Together!, shows how we as a clan will grow strong again. With all the new membership in the Society in the last few months, I am encouraged, that we are truly reaching our Kin both far and near. As 2021 progresses and things get back to a fairly normal way of day to day activity, I am looking forward to once again meeting as many of you as possible at the Highland Games that we as a Society attend and welcoming you to our Hamlet here in Kilfinan.

Reviresco to one and all

Yours in Service

Sean A McCuin



From the Editors

Ewan and Pauline Rowland

There is a strong theme running throughout this issue, one of hope, unity and strength. Duncan McEwan sent in this quotation that sums up the year gone and the years to come.

“When we long for life without difficulties, remind us that oaks grow strong in contrary winds and diamonds are made under pressure”

(Peter Marshall Scots-American preacher, born in Coatbridge)

Through the long dark days of winter, or for our Australian and New Zealand cousins, the warm days of Summer, the Clan Committees have been beavering away developing ideas and plans that will bring us together, ‘*Còmhla*’, in one form or another. The first of these events was the virtual Burns Night, which we thoroughly enjoyed.

This bumper issue of the newsletter is packed with examples of how people overcame adversity and moved forward. Delving into the history of Scotland and its people reminds us that our forebears didn’t just sit around with their heads in their hands waiting for things to get better, they made things happen, changing the course of history in the process. They were, and still are opportunists. The Clan’s motto ‘*Reviresco*’ has never been more apposite than in the times we face today. We look forward to hearing more accounts of how MacEwens from across the world have demonstrated the true nature of the motto. We are truly a global family! *Còmhla!*



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A New Battle Cry For Our Clan

‘Còmhla’

If you have been paying close attention to recent posts from the Clan Executive Committee on Facebook, or even in some of the regional updates in this very issue of the Clan Society Newsletter, you may have noticed that a little bit of Scottish Gaelic has begun to enter our vocabulary! The word in question is ‘Còmhla’ (IPA pronunciation kɔːLə), and what you probably aren’t aware is that in November this was chosen by Sir John to be our Clan’s Battle Cry or Slogan. Now bear with me! I know you are all eagerly wondering what it means and I promise I will tell you, but I think it may be helpful to look at slogans in general before we look at ours in particular.

First of all, you might be sitting there thinking to yourself “Scottish Gaelic! I was having enough trouble getting my tongue around the Latin of ‘Reviresco!’” But rest assured it’s not as hard as you think! In fact, if you happened to read this paragraph out loud you have in fact already started using some Gaelic without even knowing it. The word ‘slogan’ is actually a Scottish Gaelic phrase that has been squished together into a word and made its way into English. Originally it would have been ‘sluagh-ghairm’ quite literally this means “the call of the people” and this is what a battle cry is! It is our cry! It is the call that would echo through the glens to gather our Clan for war; it is the sound that would rattle our enemies in their boots as we charge towards them; it is the cry that would rally us together in the chaos of battle and it is the word by which we could tell friend from foe.

For some Clans, their slogan was the name of a place. For example, the battle cry of Clan Colqhoun is ‘Cnoc Ealachain!’ (Hill of the Black Willow). This was the traditional meeting point of the Clan and would remind them of the home they were fighting for wherever it was they found themselves. For some it was to remind them of their noble ancestry or to celebrate a great hero. For example, the MacKinnon Clan’s cry is “Cuimhnich bas Alpan” (remember the death of Alpin) and lays claim to being descended from Alpin (the father of Cined Mac Alpin first king of the Scots). Whereas the McLean’s was ‘Fear eil air son Eachainn!’ (Another for Hector!) in memory of the seven brothers who died defending Sir Hector McLean in the Inverkeithing battle of 1651. For others their slogan was almost a taunt to their enemies, for example the MacDonald’s of Clan Ranald would declare ‘Dh’ aindeoin co theireadh e!’ (Gainsay who dare). Still others would cry something about the manner in which they were going to conduct themselves in the battle to come, for example Clan MacNeil’s war cry is ‘Buaidh no Bas!’ (Victory or death). It is into this last category that I would suggest our new MacEwen slogan sits.

There are a couple of things to note when it comes to a slogan. First of all I want to make it very clear that a Slogan in no way replaces the motto of our Commander. This being said it is important to remember that we adopt ‘Reviresco’ as our motto because it is the motto of our commander which is incorporated into Sir John’s personal grant of Arms from the Lord Lyon and because there is a strong history of MacEwen Arms which bear the motto ‘Reviresco.’ This means that technically speaking ‘Reviresco’ belongs to Sir John. A Slogan is in addition to this and could be said to belong more to the Clan than to Sir John alone.

This is perhaps best shown in heraldry. A slogan can be added in addition to the personal motto of an Armiger. What does that mean? Well, it means that once Sir John is approved by the Lord Lyon as Chief of the Name and receives his new coat of arms, there will be the possibility for some members of the clan to apply for their own coat of arms. When that happens, the person will need to choose a motto. There is no particular reason for that person to select ‘Reviresco,’ rather they will choose something of personal significance to be their motto. We could also apply to have the slogan of the Clan incorporated into the arms as this is something of importance to the Clan as a whole. The exact location may differ and (*Figure 1*) is just an example of where the slogan may be placed.

For example, in the arms of The Right Honourable Godfrey James MacDonald of MacDonald, 8th Lord MacDonald, Chief of the Name and Arms of MacDonald, High Chief of Clan Donald the motto is placed above the Arms and the Slogan is incorporated into the compartment. (*Figure 2*)

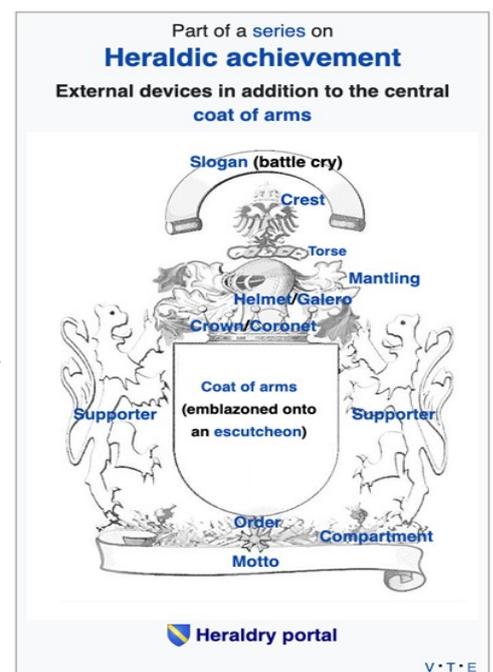


Figure 1

A New Battle Cry For Our Clan 'Còmhla'

Be thankful you are not a Cameron their slogan is an absolute mouthful! 'Chlanna nan con thigibh a so s gheibh sibh feil!' (Sons of the Hounds Come Here and Get Flesh!).

If you would like to delve a little deeper into our ancestral language we have exclusive lessons of the Cowal and Argyle dialect of Scottish Gaelic in the members section of the website.

This being said the fact that Sir John is the leader of our Clan, and all things going well the first Chief of our Clan in over 500 years, it makes sense that he should be the one who decides what our slogan should be.

So, what does our slogan actually mean? Well quite simply put, it is the Scottish Gaelic word for 'together.' It captures the fact that while we are now a Clan separated by distance, language and culture, there is something that unites us. Something that sees us hopefully walk into the future, not fragmented and isolated, but united in purpose and tied together by our history. It is the perfect complement to our motto 'Reviresco,' We will grow stronger again, 'Còmhla!' Together.



The Right Honourable Godfrey James MacDonald of MacDonald, 8th Lord MacDonald, Chief of the Name and Arms of MacDonald, High Chief of Clan Donald. (*Figure 2*)

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USA

Bob and Carol Owens USA Commissioners



USA Regional Report

Robert (Bob) L. Owens

In our last issue I talked about what great fun and camaraderie we Scots, particularly we MacEwens, enjoy at our various highland games and festivals, and what fun Carol and I have had over the years convening various events. Sadly, we saw many of the 2020 events canceled due to the worldwide pandemic. However, I am delighted to say that it appears many of these events will be coming back even stronger in 2021! Among them are two of America's largest and most vibrant...the Grandfather Mountain Highland Games and the Stone Mountain Highland Games.

States which have already announced plans (and tentative dates) for other 2021 Games and Festivals include: Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, Montana, New Hampshire, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and Washington. I will be reaching out in the next few weeks via email to our USA members to let you know where and when events are anticipated in your area.



I will also be asking each of you if you are interested in hosting a Clan MacEwen Society tent at any of these events. Did I mention that it is a great way to introduce Clan MacEwen to your home communities, meet MacEwens from around the world, expand our Society membership, foster the bonds of friendship among the various other Clans and their representatives, and have a whale of a good time doing it? It is...and Carol and I stand ready to help with information, resource materials, and a sharing of our own experience gained over more than 30 years doing so ourselves.

Interested in learning more? Watch for an email in the near future with more information or reach out to me directly at owens@rebelscreek.com.

Report on the State of Clan MacEwen Society Membership

Carol B Owens - Membership Secretary

As Clan MacEwen continues to live up to our motto "Reviresco", we do indeed flourish and grow again. As of mid February we have 120 active dues-paying members from 12 different countries including, Australia, Canada, England, Germany, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Norway, Scotland and the United States of America.

We also have 874 MacEwen Facebook Group members, and adding more literally everyday. Clearly there is a great interest in Clan MacEwen, and thanks in part to the efforts and creativity of Sean (Seannachie to the Commander) and Ross (Vice Chair) and other members of the Management Committee and Sub Committees. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could convert some or all of the FB followers into becoming active Society members? In addition to the opportunity for a deeper level of friendship and fellowship, the increase to our Society coffers would enable the Clan to fund many worthwhile endeavours including greater participation at games events and festivals, advertising and membership in tourism promotional organisations, support of environmental projects such as planting trees (it would be great to be known as the Clan that plants trees), and charitable causes close to our hearts.

If you are getting to know or are already have a friendship with some of our FB members, please think about inviting them to consider joining the **Clan MacEwen Society**. It's a great value with wonderful benefits and it really gives members a greater say in the direction of the Society for years to come.

CANADA

Maggie McEwan Canada Commissioner



As I write this report for the Spring Clan MacEwan Newsletter I look out my window in Freelon, Ontario, and see a beautiful winter scene of snowy fields and snow laden trees – we have about 2 feet of fresh snow – it is hard to believe that Spring is just around the corner.

In August 2019 Clan MacEwan entered the world of Canadian Highland Games with a booth at Fergus. It turned out to be both fun and successful, so in 2020 we decided to extend our experience and were planning to attend three more...all in Ontario. All were cancelled due to COVID-19.

We were hoping that life would return to a form of normalcy for the 2021 Highland Games Season in Canada, but unfortunately, this does not appear to be happening. Kingsville Highland Games in June, the earliest Games that we had hoped to attend, have been cancelled as have Fergus Highland Games, our last planned Games. It is unlikely that any smaller, local Festivals will be allowed, but if they are, we will be delighted to attend.

Stay safe



Maggie McEwan...Canadian Commissioner.

The Story of the McEwens of Ormstown



The McEwens of Ormstown Quebec in the Chateauguay Valley : **By Jean McEwan Clulee**

Why a Clan Gathering?

“To cultivate relationships. To observe the evolution of a family over generations. To experience the joy of young ones growing and the sorrow of older ones leaving”. The quote is from Murray Douglas McEwan, who over 30yrs ago held the first small Clan Gathering at his home in Ospringe Ont., where business had necessitated, that they move from Mystic Que.

This event has continued every Saturday of the first full week of August, and has grown to an attendance of about 50 McEwens descended from Donald McEwan and his wife Margaret Drummond. He was baptized 5th January 1756 in Comrie Perthshire Scotland, died 1842 and buried in St Paul’s United Church-Old Burying Grounds, Ormstown, Que.

Over the years many of the descendants have travelled to Scotland to visit the McEwan Cairn on Loch Fyne at Kilfinan Argyle. They have proudly worn the kilt at weddings, birthdays and the Addressing of the Haggis. Also whilst dancing the highland in competitions as well as on golf courses or piping us proudly to the tennis court for yet another competition under Sheri’s skilful supervision.

The connection to our Scottish heritage is strong, but what binds us tightly is the wonderful yearly Clan Gathering that keeps our Canadian family strong. The family is further strengthened by the addition of the partners the McEwens have brought into the family.

Shirley brought Archie Borland to our family, a first-generation Scot arriving in Montreal at the age of 2yrs, who added a magnificent voice, filled with all the Scottish songs and a love and grounding to the family. This connection has seen us move the Clan Gathering back to Ormstown, where their son Steve raises world famous Rapid Bay Jerseys. The farm is across the Chateauguay River from the original McEwan farm, where William began the tradition of raising Jersey cattle. Each year we now enjoy from the BBQ both Jersey and the newly added Wague.

Their eldest daughter Susan (deceased) brought Bruce Mode, another highly respected dairy farmer, to our family. Their daughter Kelsey (Tim) now continues the tradition nearby.

Games and competition, with a prize table for all to choose from, is a big part of the Gathering. Scott, Martin and Jenne had been known to bike from Toronto or Montreal to get to the event, in order to prove their athletic prowess. Tennis is now gone, golf continues and we have added a Caber toss (with 3 sizes for all ages), a sheaf throw and a stone - put. May the games begin again this year!!

The Story of the McEwens of Ormstown



We six, Murray (Erin On), Shirley Borland (deceased Ormstown) Ross (Toronto) Jean Clulee (Yarmouth NS) Anne (North Palm Florida) Alton (Carmel California), are the offspring of William Tully McEwen, the youngest of 9 children (son of Duncan and grandson of Donald) and Catherine Amelia Cairns (teacher) of Hemmingford Que. We span 13 years, now ranging in age from 78 to 91.

The descendants of William and Catherine now number 6 children, 15 grandchildren, 17 great grandchildren and 13 great, great grandchildren. One of whom, (Lachlan Wayne), born at the time of this writing to our official piper Brett (and Amy) who is a grandson of Shirley. We await yet another of her grandsons expected by Candace (and John) in April.

The photo from 2018, shows the elders each carefully clutching wooden stools, that had been presented to us by Steve, on behalf of a carpenter we had met the previous year while visiting the family home. He had been repairing a barn, some of which had been removed and kindly surprised us with these stools made from the original barn wood.

We chose not to write about our distant Scottish ancestors, not because we do not know, but because Murray's youngest son Bill (William) brought to our family Andree, a teacher with a love of Genealogy. Andree, through years of work, has provided us with a fascinating look into a past we knew very little about and that we can now refer to. We wanted to tell the story of our Clan Gatherings, which we hope will enable the new generations to put faces to their ancestors.

The event is about presenting a new family member or getting up the courage to introduce a new partner to the Clan. I think it is best explained by Shirley and Arch's daughter, Julie Leduc. Whose daughter Natasha is anxiously waiting to bring her newborn son the next event.

it is best explained by Shirley and Archie's daughter, Julie Leduc, whose own daughter Natasha is anxiously waiting to bring her new born son the next event.

"Once we attended our first Clan Gathering 25 years ago, I realized it was important for our family to return to this annual event. How else would my children connect on such a personal level with the 2nd and 3rd cousins while interacting with them through sports, games and sharing a meal. It's heart-warming to see your own children chatting and laughing with great aunts and uncles, the people who were so special to you growing up. Highlights included golfers in kilts, rides in a homemade raft, a piper parading with 4 generations of McEwens following him, a mother and daughter spontaneously dancing the highland fling and the critical corn on the cob contest. This annual reunion has allowed our family to embrace our Scottish heritage and continues to make new memories for the younger generation of McEwens and those to come."



AUSTRALIA

Chris McEwan Commissioner of Oceania



By the time you are reading this, the first rounds of COVID vaccination will have finally begun in Australia. This fills our nation, but also us here at the Australian Branch of the Clan with hope for the year to come. Whereas last edition I was reporting on how unlikely it would be for Festivals and Gatherings to occur this year now I can let you know that it seems that most of the events we have attended in the past are eagerly putting together their plans for 2021. We have registered for every event that has so far made registrations available, four at last count. We are particularly looking forward to kicking things off with Bundanoon is Brigadoon on the 17th April.



It has been a cool, wet summer down here in Australia this year, a far cry from the fires of twelve months ago. I had the privilege of spending some time in fire affected areas over the summer and it is amazing the way in which the bush is coming back to life. The blackened gums with the bright green shoots up and down their trunks, whether they know it or not, are truly living up to our motto “Reviresco!” As I look at the trees I can but hope they are a metaphor for our Clan and our world. From the devastation of 2020 “Reviresco” we will grow stronger again “Còmhla!”

While for us it hasn't felt like much of a summer I find myself again looking forward to the cooler months, the festivals they bring, and the ability to once again don my McEwan Tartan without fear of heatstroke.

Slàinte mhath dhuibh,
Chris McEwan



“Lest We Forget”



Kate ter Horst
(Pict. 2gravestone)

The Angel of Arnhem Bringing light to the darkness

‘Mad with joy we walked through the garden and climb up on the roof so we can see more, grasp more of what’s happening. We can hardly believe it. Can it really be true? Is this the long-awaited end to our sorrows, falling from the sky? Does this mean freedom?’
Diary of Kate ter Horst Sept, 1944



4th Parachute Brigade on their way to Arnhem Sept 18th 1944 (Pict. Gelders archief)

On 18 September 1944 the 4th Parachute Brigade, part of the second day’s parachute landings at the Ginkel Heath near Ede were organised to take part in the Battle of Arnhem. The drop zone was defended by the 7th Kings Own Scottish Borderers. This battalion had landed north of Wolfheze on 17 September by glider. Their positions around the heath were attacked by several German units, supported by armoured vehicles. The Scots lost ground due to the fact that the heathland proved too large to be adequately defended. Just before the 4th Parachute Brigade landed, the Scots drove away the Germans from the heath with a fierce attack. About 2.000 men jumped, totally surprised, into an inferno of bullets, smoke and fire. In spite of anti-aircraft fire and problems with jumping off, 90% of the para’s landed within the drop zone. Later in the afternoon the advance towards Arnhem begins.

The soldiers wanted to conquer the Rhine bridge in Arnhem via *Utrechtseweg*, *Amsterdamseweg* and *Benedendorpsweg* in Oosterbeek. However after several days of heavy fighting, it turned out that they were outgunned by the German army. The attempted liberation failed. The *Benedendorpsweg* was one of these routes and ran right in front of the house of the Ter Horst family. The house came under heavy fire for days,



Ter Horst House in war time (Pict. Slag om Arnhem)



The house in 1945 from a photograph taken by C. van Rijn.
(Pict.: Renkum Municipal Archive)

“Lest We Forget”

Kate was just an ordinary mother of five children at the time, surviving in war time. Her husband Jan ter Horst, a resistance leader and lawyer, was in hiding at the time in Wolfheze. They lived in the Old Vicarage next to the Old Church in Oosterbeek. This was an important defence position.



*Old church at Oosterbeek at war time
(St. Vrienden van de Oude kerk O'beek)*



*Bullet hole in the Bible Old church at Oosterbeek
Pict. H.Goosens 2020*



*Old church at Oosterbeek 2020
(Pict. H. Goosens)*

Many casualties occurred as a result of the heavy fighting and therefore Captain Randall Martin asked Kate ter Horst's permission to set up a regimental aid station in their house at the Benedendorpsweg in Oosterbeek. Without a second's hesitation, she opened her door and her heart to five wounded British soldiers in September 1944. Two days later Kate ter Horst's house on the banks of the Rhine in Oosterbeek was filled with three hundred victims. During the nine days of fighting, Kate tended to about 250 wounded British paratroopers herself. All the rooms were filled with wounded soldiers. Her children stayed in the cellar with a nanny. Kate would come and go. The house was full and there wasn't space to walk and all the time it was being bombarded.

The men were glad that they were being looked after. She helped Doctor Randall Martin, comforted those who were dying and encouraged the wounded. The majority of the wounded were young often frightened men. They all tried to cope under relentless sniper fire. Orderlies were killed moving stretchers and some of the wounded were shot dead as they lay inside the house. She became a beacon for those in need. General Frank King also cared for by Kate after being shot in the leg, wrote: *'I noticed how the whole room brightened up at her arrival and how the soldiers hung on to her every word.'*



Veterans honouring Kate ter Horst (Pict. The Mirror)

The wounded British soldiers called her *The Angel of Arnhem*. She on the other hand thought anyone would have done what she did. She would say the real angels were the ones who fell from heaven, the brave men of the Airborne Division.

For nine days, the children stayed in the cellar.

'But we were not afraid. I think it was because of my mother. She radiated determination. She was deeply religious and felt safe in her house. That was because in 1941 she had seen a round rainbow above the church and the house. From that moment on she thought that nothing could happen to her. My mother meant a lot to those men. It is really extraordinary what she did during the Battle of Arnhem. But she always

said: anyone else would have opened their door to wounded soldiers. I believe that too. After all, they had come to liberate us,' says Sophie Lambrechtsen, daughter of Kate ter Horst.

When Jan ter Horst returned to Oosterbeek his wife had been evacuated with the children to the north of the country. The family returned to the Old Vicarage in 1946. Veterans and their relatives came back to thank her and her home became a living monument to them. Jan and Kate ter Horst were decorated for their deeds in 1944 by the British Ambassador in Holland, Sir John Taylor with the Honorary Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire.

Disaster struck, in 1947 her oldest son Pieter was killed by a leftover anti-tank mine by the Rhine. Kate herself died in 1992, aged 86, after a car hit her and Jan outside the Old Vicarage. She was thrown into her garden, dying in the same place as so many soldiers she had cared for. A remembrance service was held for her, in both England and the Netherlands. Jan ter Horst died 1 August 2003. He was 98 years old.

“Lest We Forget”

Her daughter Sophie, still lives in the Old Vicarage and has continued to receive British veterans, some of whom have become lifelong friends.



The 4th Parachute Brigade was disbanded on return to the UK in October 1944 and the survivors transferred to the remnants of the 1st Parachute Brigade. Of the 10.000 men from the 1st Airborne Division who took part in Operation Market Garden in September 1944, only 2.400 would make it out again after a vicious nine-day battle. The rest were killed or taken prisoner.
Coat of arms: British airborne units
(Pict. Wikipedia 1st Airborne Div.)

May be of interest:

Theirs is the Glory (available on YouTube)

This film was made just after the war. The film featured veterans who were actual participants in the battle. The original locations of the battle were used. The film was jointly produced by the J. Arthur Rank Organisation and the Army Film and Photographic Unit (AFPU).

A Bridge too Far (available on YouTube/ In the UK on Netflix)

1977 film *A Bridge too Far*. Kate narrated the opening montage in English. She is played by Livv Ulmann



John Frost Bridge /Arnhem Rhine Bridge Sept. 1944
(Pict. WW2gravestone)



John Frost Bridge /Arnhem Rhine Bridge
2020
(Pict. H.Goosens 2020)

Researched and compiled by Herma Goosens.

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WW2 Gravestone
Speech Mark Rutte PM of the Netherlands



“Lest We Forget”

Throughout this series, contributors have highlighted the bravery of McEwens in the Second World War. However, it is important to recognise that there was another army of men and women whose contribution to the war effort is less well known but no less important. These people toiled to keep aeroplanes flying, vehicles moving and ships sailing. This is the account of one of those individuals, Maggie McEwan’s Grandfather.

Alexander Harvey

Before the start of WW2 my maternal Grandfather moved his family to Seven Kings, England from Gourock in Scotland. He was newly employed by the London Graving Dock and worked there for the rest of his working life.

The ship in the photo below sailed into the Graving Dock in 1942. My Grandfather, who was General Manager at that time, supervised his team to work on the ship, made it seaworthy and sent it back out to war in a very short time.....I believe within a week. For this he was awarded, I understand, the Order of the British Empire (OBE).

I found this photo after my grandfather died, it was folded 4 times and has been resurrected as best as possible. Amongst the chaos on board is a wooden notice....’BOMBING VERBOTEN’ - Bombing Forbidden – a lovely example of Naval war humour. My mother was rather vague about the history. I have done limited research. My grandfather was, indeed, General Manager at that time and he was listed in the January 4, 1943 edition of the London Gazette Supplement.

Submitted by Maggie McEwan



Meet the Chiefs - Dr. Simon Peter Carruthers of Holmains

Clan Chiefs played an important role during some of the most triumphant and turbulent times in Scotland's history. Readers may already be aware that Clan MacEwen's most recent Chief died over 500 years ago, however it may come as a surprise to learn there are still over 150 Clan Chiefs and Clan Commanders recognised by the Lord Lyon today. As part of Clan MacEwen's work to 'reintroduce' ourselves to the global Scottish and Clan community and form new friendships, we enjoy meeting with fellow Clans and learning more about their modern day Clan Chiefs, the men and women charged with carrying their family's legacy and heritage into the 21st century.

I was delighted therefore to have as our inaugural 'Meet the Chiefs' guest one of Scotland's newest Clan Chiefs, Dr Simon Peter Carruthers of Holmains, who became Chief of Clan Carruthers less than two years ago in autumn 2019.

Thank you very much Dr Carruthers for taking the time to be a part of our newsletter, could you please introduce yourself to our Members and tell us a little about Clan Carruthers.



Peter Carruthers of Holmains

Chief of the Name and Arms of Carruthers

Hello to all in the Clan MacEwen Society. I am Dr Simon Peter Carruthers of Holmains (known as Peter), Chief of the Name and Arms of Carruthers, and, therefore, Chief of Clan Carruthers. I was confirmed as Chief in October 2019.

Professionally, I am an agricultural scientist, with training also in management and theology. I have worked in agricultural research and higher education, environmental education and rural policy in the public and third sectors. Currently, I lead a Christian charity that supports the rural church. I am a co-founder and former Chairman of what is now the Farming Community Network and a member of the Royal Society of Biology.

Carruthers is a Clan and ancient Scottish family from Annandale in the Anglo-Scottish Borders. Holmains, the territorial title linked to the Chiefly line of Carruthers, is ten miles or so to the east of the Scottish town of Dumfries and our history is very much based around that south-west area of Scotland.

The Carruthers were an established and very active Clan during the height of Clan influence and culture. We were even one of the 17 Border Clans mentioned in the 'Suppression of Unruly Clans' Act of 1587, which was a piece of legislation aimed at bringing some order to those Clans who were thought to be a bit 'unruly'!

From our origins in Dumfriesshire we, like most Scottish Clans have now spread across the world with a Carruthers in every continent (save, as far as I know, Antarctica). I often liken Carruthers to the Tardis from Doctor Who: we are a lot bigger on the inside! Carruthers isn't a hugely common Scottish surname, but, there are far more of us than most people realise. And over the centuries we have had many distinguished family members, some known and some unsung. Our Clan Society is a healthy and thriving global family and growing all the time.

You became Chief of Carruthers quite recently in 2019, what do you think it means to be a Chief of a Scottish Clan in the 21st century?

Firstly, a Chief provides legitimacy and makes a clan a 'Clan'. An armigerous Clan, once it has a Chief becomes a 'noble incorporation' under Scots Law. Having a Chief confirmed by the Lord Lyon is a transition and an identity change for the whole family. The Chief enables the Clan to take its place in the large and historic Scottish Clan community.

For many Scottish families, becoming a clan is a 'bottom-up' project. What I mean by that is it is the Clan getting together and asking 'where has our Chief got to?'. This is what happened with Carruthers. A core group of people who were interested in the Clan, from across the world (and a lot of the impetus came from outside of the UK), were looking for that legitimacy and sense of identity, and started to work together to have their Chief confirmed by the Lord Lyon. I think this very similar, in fact, to Clan MacEwen's story over the last few decades.



Clan Carruthers Crest

Meet the Chiefs - Dr. Simon Peter Carruthers of Holmains

Secondly, the Chief is a leader. For me, this means first and foremost, that I am here to serve the Clan and provide a platform for it to prosper and succeed. Present-day Clan Chiefs do not, and cannot, really conform to the historic image that many people may have. Nevertheless, history and heritage do sit at the centre of all that we do. So, I have a duty to lead and work for the good of all members of the Clan. Chiefship is not about my own personal advancement or the pursuit of status for its own sake. Rather, it calls for a strong sense of responsibility and a measure of humility. I don't claim always to attain to these standards, but I do believe that I (and indeed all chiefs) should try to!

Thirdly, another thing I feel is very important, not just to Chiefship, but to Clans in general and how they exist currently, is how being part of a Clan helps people's sense of belonging. Many in 21st century western society feel a sense of 'alienation' and detachment. People want and need to belong and have origins and roots. Land and place are very important here (as both my personal experience and academic work have taught me). We can have a special relationship with land and place, with ancestral land and the history centred around it even if it is owned by someone else and far from where we actually live. For Carruthers, this is Dumfriesshire; for MacEwen's that is largely Kilfinan. There is definitely a task, therefore, for a Clan Chief and Clan Society to help connect its people with their heritage, and where possible their lands. Scots and those of Scottish heritage are almost unique in having this special connection to people, place, territory and ancestry, through the clan system.

You were made Chief following nearly two years of proceedings before The Lyon Court, including two hearings of the Lyon Court in Edinburgh, what did it feel like when you received word you had been successful, and how much work was required in order to put forward your case to become Chief?

Well, the first feeling was one of relief, which is how anyone would feel when something that was in process for that long concludes, I was relieved it was over and that we had been successful. I always knew that my family line, the Holmains line, was the senior Carruthers line, however it was only when I was approached by the late Anthony Maxwell, and our Clan Convenor Dr George Carruthers, who both encouraged me to pursue Chiefship, that the process really began.

We had two Court hearings. At the first I represented myself; at the second I was represented by Sir Crispin Agnew of Lochnaw, who is a Clan Chief in his own right.



Carruthers Clan Tartan

Carruthers had been without a Chief for more than 200 years. The last Chief of Carruthers, my fourth-great-grandfather, John Carruthers, 12th of Holmains and Kirkwood, and 8th Baron, and the last recognised head of the family, passed away in October 1809.

The process really drove home the fact that Chiefship is based entirely who you are in terms of ancestry, and not on merit or your CV. It then falls to you to give this privilege the attention it deserves.

One of the things that we Carruthers have, which isn't necessarily that common, are papers from the Holmains estate, spanning several hundred years. These were originally held by my ancestors and kept in the 'Holmains Charter Chest' but are now in the The National Records of Scotland in Edinburgh. Some of these were important in substantiating my case as well as other historical documents held in Edinburgh. And we needed to track down other historical documents also. In my case, I did not need to prove who I am, as I had all the proofs and family trees I needed back to John 12th. But we did need to join up the dots further up the line and prove that the succession was all in order.

Once the decision was made I was filled with immense gratitude to everyone who had been involved and worked so hard, but also somewhat daunted by the prospect of making it all work for the clan and my family. However, I have gained the new family of a great and growing Clan Society, including several regional commissioners, some of whom I have gotten to know online. I am especially grateful to our Convenor Dr George Carruthers for his counsel and support.

In normal circumstances I would have had the opportunity to travel to games and events and meet with clansmen and clanswomen. That is something I have to look forward to once we are able to travel again.

Meet the Chiefs - Dr. Simon Peter Carruthers of Holmains

In your experience - is there anything that stands out as a popular misconception about Scottish Clans?

Well, the first one is that Scottish Clans are all about Outlander, Braveheart and kilts! Of course, they are not.

On a more serious point, and Clan Carruthers is a great example of this, not all Clans are Highland Clans, they are not all Macs or Mcs, and Gaelic is not engrained in all of our histories. Carruthers is a Borders Clan and shares a distinct history and culture with the many other Borders Clans. The linguistic roots of the name Carruthers, Caer Rhydderch, are closer to Welsh than Gaelic.

Another misconception or point of confusion is often the question of who a Scottish Clan is 'for'. As with any clan, Clan Carruthers is for anyone who identifies with the Clan and acknowledges the Chief. Granted the majority of Clan members will be part of the Clan on the basis of ancestry and DNA. However our story, like that of most Clans, extend beyond that, and there are others who for whatever historical reasons have joined themselves to the Clan or been joined to it (e.g. as tenants or even slaves). They are also part of our Clan.

What do you hope 2021 and beyond holds for Clan Carruthers?

We are fortunate to have Clan Society commissioners in Canada, the United States, Australasia, Africa and Europe and I want to see the Clan Carruthers Society continue to grow and prosper and for many more Carruthers to join it and connect with each other. I hope very much that it will not be too long before we can get together again physically. Virtual has worked well during the last 12 months of restrictions and lockdowns, we do need to have some sort of gathering.

We are seeing expansion in the Society in different regions is making its own way with papers, newsletters, blogs.

On a personal note - because of the lockdown I haven't yet had anything made of our own recently registered tartan. Borders clans didn't wear kilts to the same degree Highland Clans did. They wore trousers! However, as a 'modern chief' I suspect I shall be needing both a kilt and some tartan trews!

Thank you very much indeed for taking the time to speak to us Dr Carruthers, we wish you all the very best in your new role as Chief of the Name and Arms of Carruthers, and we hope to share a dram with you at an event in the near future.

Compiled by Ross McEwen—Vice Chair

The Arms are the recognized Arms of the Chief of the Clan and Family Carruthers. Scottish Arms belong to an individual not a family. They are registered to his name and only he can bear the Arms.

The arms of Carruthers of Holmains are: 'Gules, two chevrons engrailed between three fleur de-lis Or. The crest is 'seraphim volant Proper' and the motto, '**Promptus et Fidelis**' (ready and faithful).

*Clan Carruthers Society—International www.clancarrutherssociety.org
[founded on a Royal Charter to Holmains, 1755]*



Scots on the Move - Part 1

It is estimated that one million people born in Scotland are currently living outside Scotland. This equates to around a fifth of the current population (2010 Carr and Cavanagh).

The Scots have been making a cultural, technological and economic impact round the world for going on 700 years. Chambers, writing in the Edinburgh Journal observed that Scotsmen “are probably inclined to roam abroad in quest of fortune”.

Significant levels of emigration can be traced back as far as the 14th Century with Scots pursuing economic, educational and military opportunities in France, Low Countries, Scandinavia and England. Incidentally, today the largest number of people immigrating to Scotland are from England. (National Records of Scotland). It is estimated that during the 15th Century, 10,000 Scottish soldiers served in France and peddlers were well known in Denmark. The Scots, in particular the Scots Brigade, were still involved in Europe’s wars during the mid 16th Century. Scottish merchants also traded in Poland between 1496–71. During this time frame the McEwen Clan, now a broken Clan, were also on the move from their ancestral home on the shores of Loch Fyne. They scattered far and wide with some settling round Loch Lomond, Vale of Leven, Dunbartonshire, Perthshire, Loch Tayside and on the Isle of Skye. Scots were moving all round Europe throughout the 16th and 17th Centuries, mainly in connection with wars.

As economic migrants, Scots were becoming increasingly more unpopular in some European countries to the extent that, as in Poland, a proclamation was issued to stop Scots from travelling to peddle their wares. Sounds familiar?

The 16th Century Scots were venturing as far a field as North America. By 1729 coastal areas around North Carolina were populated by Jacobites, mainly forced to emigrate following the 1715 uprising.

Journeys were both arduous and dangerous at this time. Where you went and how far you could travel was dictated by the technology of transport of the day, making North America particularly attractive and popular compared with more distant places yet to be colonised.

As the number of emigrants increased taking advantage of new sailing routes further afield, so too did philanthropic organisation in N America, Australia and New Zealand to assist Scots on their arrival.



One such emigrant was Flora MacDonald (1722-90) made infamous by her support for Charles Edward Stuart, by helping him to evade government troops after the Battle of Culloden in 1746. It is thought that she helped Charles out of sympathy for his situation. The English army eventually caught Flora and imprisoned her for three years for her role in the uprising. In 1747 she was exonerated and three years later married Alan MacDonald. In 1774 the couple and their two sons moved to Cheek’s Creek in present day Montgomery County, North Carolina. (North Carolina History Project Flora MacDonald 1722-1790). Emigrants like Flora would have travelled across the Atlantic in a ship similar to this.

Flora MacDonald wrote, (in the vernacular of the time), in 1772 to John MacKenzie of Delvine, concerning the MacDonalds’ imminent emigration to America. (Scots Abroad: Stories of Scottish Emigration).

Dear Sir

This goes by my Son Johnie who thank God tho I am missfortunat in othere respects is happy in his haveing so good a freind as you are to take him under his protection, he seemed when here to be a good natured bidable Boy, without any kind of Vice; make of him what you please and may the Blessing of the almighty attend you alongs with him which is all the retourn I am able to make for your many and repeated freindships shown to me and this family; of which there will soon be no rememberanc in this poor miserable Island, the best of its inhabitance are making ready to follow their freinds to america, while they have any thing to bring them; and among the rest we are to go, especially as we cannot promise ourselves but poverty and oppression, haveing last Spring and this time two years lost almost our whole Stock of Cattle and horseis, we lost within there three years, three hundred and twenty seven heads, so that we have hardly what will pay our Creditors which we are to let them have and begin the world again, a newe, in a othere Corner of it. Allen was to write you but he is not well with a pain in his Side this ten days past Sir I beg of you if you see any thing amiss in the Boys condut to let me know of it as some Children will stand in awe of ther parents more then any body Else, I am with my respects to you and Mrs McKenzie, Sir with esteem your most obedient humbe Servant



Flora McDonald

Kigsburgh, agust th12 1772

Scots on the Move - Part 1



Scottish mercenaries in the 1630s (Pict. Wikipedia)

The **Scots Brigade**, formed in 1586, was an infantry brigade in the army of the Dutch Republic. By the late 17th Century it included six infantry regiments and three recruited primarily from Scotland and three from England.

After the Treaty of Nonsuch in 1586, the Earl of Leicester formed the Brigade. Adding three English regiments to the three already serving Scottish regiments. The Dutch fight for independence from Spain in the Eighty Years War of 1568–1648 attracted support from Protestants across Europe, including England and Scotland. The first group were a Company of Foot, a group of 300 volunteers lead by Thomas Morgan, formed in 1572. They fought at the relief of Goes, defense of Delft, the siege of Haarlem and Middelburg and in the naval victory at the Scheldt in 1574. The Earl was not a good leader at all, it turned out as a big

disaster, nevertheless the Brigade existed in various forms throughout the war. Sir Francis Vere took over, and he was more successful than his forerunner. They worked close together with the Dutch forces under Maurice of Nassau and helped secure the independence from Spain by 1597.



Stadtholder Prince William of Orange / William III of England / William II of Scotland (Pict. Wikipedia)

The Thirty years War created multiple opportunities to serve in the armies of Protestant nations like Sweden, Norway and Denmark. Dutch service became less attractive, while the Brigade was primarily used on garrison duty. However, strong religious, economic and cultural links between Scotland and the Netherlands meant that by 1632, the Brigade contained the three Scottish and three English regiments. When the Wars of the three Kingdoms broke out in 1638, many returned home.

Uncertainty and constant changes impacted recruitment and William of Orange complained about its low morale and quality. By 1674, only 13 officers in the three nominally Scottish regiments were Scots.

Hugh Mackay (1640-1692), re-established the Brigade as an elite unit in 1670, recruiting from Scotland and England. He was killed at Steenkerke (BE) in 1692.

After the Wars of the Three Kingdoms, British monarchs also used the Brigade to create a pool of trained officers, who could be called on when needed. The War of the Spanish Succession led to restrictions on Dutch recruitment in Scotland and was halted entirely in 1709. They were re-imposed after the Jacobite Rising of 1745, due to concern that rebels might use it to escape. The right to recruit in Scotland was finally ended in 1757.

The costs of participation in the 1701-1714 War of the Spanish Succession marked the decline of the Dutch Republic as a Great Power. After 1714, the Brigade was reduced to three regiments and primarily used to garrison the Barrier forts. It was dissolved in 1782. Many officers were British, but the vast majority were Dutch-born. It became regiments 22, 23 and 24 of the regular Dutch army and after 1784 ceased to be a separate unit. Its traditions and battle honors were continued by the 94th Foot, a regiment raised in 1794 for service in India.

Lieutenant General Sir Thomas Bradford became Colonel of the 94th Foot. In 1881, when it became part of the Connaught Rangers. The regimental colours can now be seen in St Giles in Edinburgh with copies in the Netherlands as well.

Over the years many ex-soldiers settled in the Netherlands, including Hugh Mackay, whose son, nephews and grandsons all served with the Brigade. This branch ultimately became hereditary Chiefs of Clan Mackay and continue to hold the titles of Lord Reay in the Scottish peerage and Lord of Ophemert and Zennewijnen in the Netherlands.

Other less distinguished descendants included Dutch Colonial Army Captain Rudolf MacLeod (a descendant of the Gesto branch of the MacLeods of Skye), who in 1895 became the husband of Mata Hari, when she responded to his advertisement for a wife.

Captain John Porteous, was the son of a citizen of Edinburgh, who should have learned the trade of a tailor but decided to roam the world. He served in the corps long maintained in the service of the States of Holland and called the Scotch Dutch. But in the end returned to Edinburgh again.

Researched and presented by Herma Goosens



Lieutenant General Sir Thomas Bradford (Pict. Wikipedia)

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Prince Maurice of Orange dismissing the mercenaries in Neude Square in Utrecht on 31 July 1618. (Pict. Wikipedia)



General Hugh MacKay 1619 (Pict. Wikipedia)

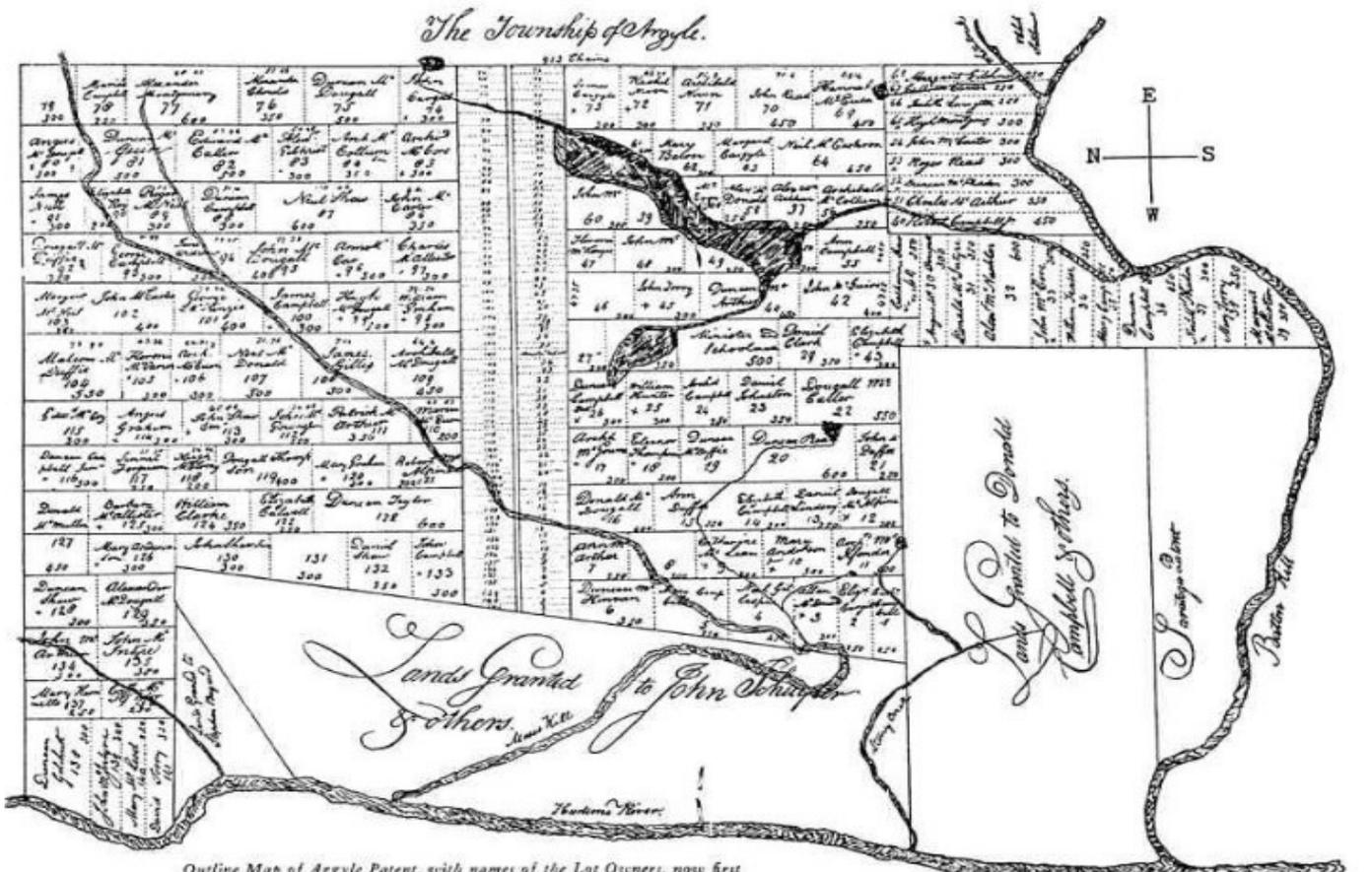
Scots on the Move - Part 1

Other than persecution and soldiering, Scots were willing to risk everything to build a new life in a new country. Many were forced to leave Scotland either to seek employment or attracted by the opportunity to have a piece of their own land. As a Highland farmer it was difficult to make a decent living from land that was heavy and wet and where the weather restricted the crops that could be grown.

Archibald McEuen sailed with his family from Islay to New York with Captain Lachlan Campbell, who was responsible for taking numerous families from Islay from 1738-1740. The group of Argyllshire families belonging to the Presbyterian Church ‘came to consider with favour an offer made by the Provincial Governor of the New York Colony to Captain Campbell, of the Island of Islay, their ancient dwelling place of the Lord of the Isles’. The Scots and Irish were welcomed by the colonial governor because, they ‘were a hardy, independent and high-principled people, accustomed to carry arms, they were the type of immigrant who could be depended upon to furnish a degree of protection from the French and Indians to the communities farther to the south’ (*History of the Somonauk Church 1928*). Campbell enticed nearly 200 Highland Scots to sail to New York believing they would own fertile land. Archibald took his family to North America so as to claim his piece of land under the scheme called the Argyle Patent. Under this scheme 1,000 acres were available for each person. It stated that “the quality of land each is to have, the location to be balloted for by the person or his agent, the tract to form a township forever to be named Argyle.” By the time these settlers arrived the provincial authorities had changed their plans and failed to keep their part of the contract. Also, Captain Campbell misrepresented his intentions to the Highlanders. His application to the New York Authorities for 30,000 acres much of which he was to own and manage. His plan was for the immigrants to become tenants on his land instead of freeholders. The change of contract left Captain Campbell ruined by the expense he incurred and it is said that he died of a broken heart. Many of the Highlanders had sold nearly all their possessions to pay for the journey.

Archibald McEuen arrived between 1738 and 1740 but didn’t get his piece of land until the 1760s after Campbell’s sons had successfully secured 47,450 acres in the township of Argyle and hence the Argyle Patent. Unfortunately, Archibald McEuen was dead by 1763 leaving a son and daughter and never got to live on the property he was granted. Between 1738 and 1740 groups of Scottish Presbyterian families from Argyllshire totalling 472 were brought to the New World by invitation of the Governor of New York Colony. The offer was that every adult would get 1,000 acres and each child to get 500 acres and their passage was paid. Although the contract was not kept, a large number of ‘colonists’ managed to secure a grant of 47,500 acres in the township of Argyle and in parts of Fort Edward, Salem in Washington County, New York.

Listed in the ‘Settlement of Scotch Highlanders in America Chapter 7, Captain Lachlan Campbell’s New York Colony’, are the lots and acreages families could obtain. The list shows those McEuens with their plot-lot number and acreage.

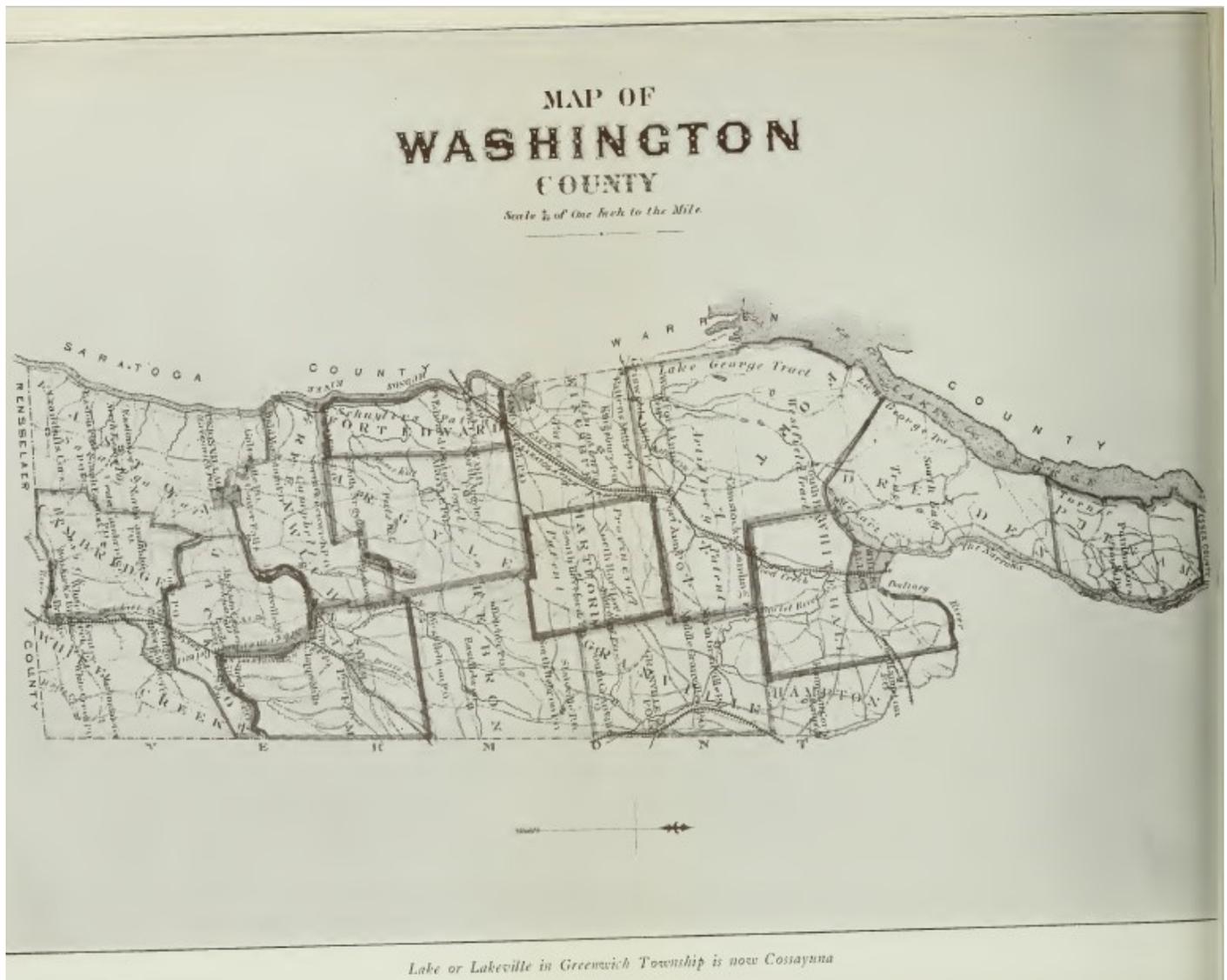


Scots on the Move - Part 1

Name	Lot Number	Acres
Archibald McEuen	59	300
John	59	500
Marion	110	200
Hamish	69	400

A close inspection of the above map showing the lots, names and acreages would indicate that Archibald McEuen's family were unlucky at securing their pieces of land in the Argyle Patent scheme in Washington County. However, a petition document to the Authorities listing the names of hopefuls showed Archibald and Malcom McEuen as requesting 2000 acres each but their names were now listed as Arch' McEowen and Malcollm McEowen. It was common for names to be misspelt by officials when taking verbal instructions and it is therefore difficult to confirm if these are the same people.

Not all families were successful in getting grants and it is said that some of the unlucky families then left to join the 'Expedition to Cuba'.



Reference: History of the Somonauk Church nr Sandwich De Kalb County Illinois by Jennie M Patten and Andrew Graham 1928.

Scots on the Move - Part 1

Captain Lachlan Campbell received 'all possible respect and kindness from the government', who proposed an old Fort Anna 'to be repaired, to cover the new settlers from the French Indians'. At the same time the 'people of New York proposed to maintain the people already brought'.

Memorandum of passengers who left Islay in 1738, 1739 and 1740

Passengers arriving in New York from Islay 1738, 1739 and 1740

July 1738: 33 Families, 42 Passengers and 177 Persons.

Duncan McEuen , Janet (wife), and son and daughter to Hugh McEuen
 Mary McEuen
 Mary McEuen daughter to John McEuen

June 1739: 42 Families, 24 Singles and 193 People

Malcolm McEuen
 Archibald McEuen and Janet McDougall his wife
 John McEuen, and Ann Johnston his wife and son Malcolm
 Catharine McEuen wife of Dougal Carmichael and children Janet, Mary, Neil and Catherine
 Merran McEuen with her daughter
 James McEuen moved to Boston

November 1740

James McEuen

End of Part 1

Researched and compiled by Ewan Rowland

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Spotlight on - McEwan

You will recall that in the December issue of the newsletter (Volume 3, Issue 2), there was a piece about Elspeth McEwan who was the last witch to be executed in Kirkcubright on August 24th 1698. She was burned to death and was described as having 'a superior education'. Now centuries on, we have a better understanding of the motives that drove people to do horrible acts of violence against women, based on ignorance, fear and superstition. Thankfully, today we have a greater knowledge and understanding of the world around us and therefore, can appreciate the skills, knowledge and understanding that Elspeth and other persecuted women faced just because they had a 'superior education' of the environment in which they lived. They used their knowledge and skills to benefit others. Four hundred years on, and we can boast of having our own Kilfinan witch, Dina-Lee McEwan.

Buidseachan

(Witches or Sorceresses)

Many people are aware of the "Burning Times." What were they? How did we get to a point where innocent people were persecuted out of fear? Through a series of articles, it is my hope that I can shed some light on this subject. I mean to honor Elspeth MacEwan and the many who were persecuted.

Some of you know me and some don't. My name is Dina-Lee McEwan and I am a Second Degree Priestess of the Cabot Tradition out of Salem, Massachusetts. I am also a healer, an Empath, an herbalist, a lover of Nature, a gardener, seeker of truth....in short, I am a Witch. This means I choose to live my life in harmony with all living things. Some call it a religion and it is recognized as such. I don't refer to Paganism (and all its many forms) as a religion.

So, let's get back to the above-mentioned questions....

The "Burning Times" were a time in our history where women and men were persecuted because they were perceived as having a pact with the Devil. The irony here is that Witches (and Pagans as a whole) don't believe in the Devil. So, how did we get to the "Burning Times?"

In the years prior to the "Burning Times", our ancestors were drawn to "Alba." Her mystical charm and majickal spirits are what drew me to her. Through storytelling, herbal knowledge, fairy lore (this list can get lengthy), our ancestors built a strong foundation to help build community and their commitment to Spirit and Nature. All of this accomplished and passed on orally. It is documented by followers of St. Columba "that the druids lived and worked with the kings and queens of Scotland." (Meiklejohn-Free)

I'll leave you with this my favorite description of Highland Witches:

"Witches weren't just the healers, herbalists, and seers but also the social workers, psychologists, and midwives. Witches were the glue that held the clans, villages, and communities together." (Meiklejohn-Free)

Until next time, The Witch of Kilifinan.



Kilfinan Hotel - A Bright New Future

In the heartland of Clan McEwen on the side of Loch Fyne, a short walk from the site of the McEwen castle, is the Kilfinan Hotel. This is familiar to McEwens as the gathering place for the Society's meetings. Recently it was taken over by new owners Helena and Chris and here is their account of how it came to be.



Please tell us a little about yourselves and where you came from

We both had careers in university operations for about decade and met whilst working at Glasgow University. Very soon after getting together we started talking about wanting to move to the West Coast, but joked that there wasn't a lot of call for our talents and experience out that way.

We moved to London for a few years and enjoyed our time there, although the dream of moving to back to Scotland, the West Coast specifically, was always in the back of our minds. In the Summer of 2019 we started actively looking at ways to achieve the move, recognising that we would be starting something completely new.

How did you find out about Kilfinan and the hotel?

Like a lot of things these days, we found the Hotel on the internet. We knew the general areas that we would like to live in, but we cast the net wide looking for the perfect place. There were about 20 potential opportunities we sat down to go through in detail, but only the Kilfinan and one other place made the 'We want to see this' list. We were lucky enough to manage our first viewing in mid February 2020, just before the first lockdown, and we fell in love.

Why choose a sleepy hamlet in the middle of nowhere?

As well as looking for a business to take on and develop, we wanted a home to settle down in. Whilst working and living in cities, we have always loved being able to head out to the countryside or coast, whether that be weekends exploring the West coast and islands when we lived in Glasgow, the Kent coast from London, or holidays to Devon or Jersey.

We were very much about long walks, beautiful views, great seafood and a good local tippie to make the perfect adventure. It was important to us to find that in our home too. Kilfinan, and the wider area, offer those things in spades.

The sense of community was also a strong attraction. Moving around for work can mean that you don't often get to meet, never mind know your neighbours.

What are your plans for the hotel?

The Kilfinan seems to have the ability to make people fall in love with it and we want to share that talent with as many people as possible. We want to build on the reputation of a warm welcome and traditional hospitality, offering a seasonal menu showcasing as much local produce as possible. We'll reflect that in the bar with the best local whisky, gin and beer. We also want to bring in some 'grown up' non-alcoholic drinks, there's so many good options now.

What is your most interesting find so far when you have been cleaning and sorting out the hotel?

There's the old Bell's Whisky bottle, found it in the cellar, it lives in the bar now for all to see. The 1903 guest book is amazing, in fact all the guest books are. We've had people contact us to tell us when their parents or grandparents stayed and been able to find their entries. The top of the list so far might be the 1980s re-modelling and development plans. We found the architects drawings and reports and enjoying going over them. I'm sure there will be more as we keep going.

Will you still be a dog friendly hotel?

Absolutely. Dog beds have already been picked and we're working on a little welcome pack for our four-legged guests. We want a dog of our own as well, that's part of the dream. We couldn't bring a dog in to our lives before, we were out at work all day, living in flats, but now we have the space, the commute takes no time at all and the work place is very pro dogs!



Kilfinan Hotel - A Bright New Future

What is your favourite hotel story or memory that has been shared with you?

It's been amazing hearing people's tales of their time at the hotel and we've been lucky enough to see some fantastic photos on Facebook. Whether it be weddings, clan gatherings, birthdays, a getaway or stories from people who have worked here over the years, there are a lot of people who loved their time at the Kilfinan. It would be difficult to choose a favourite, but maybe that will get easier as we make a few memories of our own?

What is your favourite thing about the hotel?

That it feels like home. It did from the first moment we came to see it.

Are you still open for Clan MacEwen to descend upon the hotel and take it over a few times a year?!

Yes! We're really looking forward to it! It's great that MacEwens now come to see where the MacEwens of old lived and to connect with other people from around the world who share that history. We recently found a copy of the Clan Ewen Society Bulletin from November 1997, with a letter from France, and talking about new members from the UK, all over the USA, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. We also found a copy of the Glasgow Archaeological Journal from 1983 about excavations at the castle site, which is really interesting to read.

What excites you most about this new chapter in your life?

The dog. Haha. Everything really, we're building a whole new life in one of the most beautiful places in the world. It's amazing and maybe just a little bit scary.

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We wish Helena and Chris all the very best with their new venture and life at the Kilfinan Hotel and we look forward to meeting them in better times!



Bramble Crumble Recipe

by Sandra McCuin

As the winner of a fun poll recently on the Clan Society Facebook, this humble crumble was chosen to be our unofficial Clan dessert. Every household has their own twist on this family favourite, to add oats or not add oats, that is the question, serve with whisky laced cream, lashings of custard or creamy ice cream, to add spice to the fruit or ginger to the crumble, the choice is yours.

Like all good comfort food classic recipes, the secret is in its simplicity and use of the best quality ingredients you can find. Our family likes simple plain flavours so our crumble is about as plain as you can get. This dessert really lets nature's harvest shine, most of us have fond memories of picking hedgerow fruits on a crisp autumn morning. I certainly enjoyed doing this last autumn with my daughter on a lazy Sunday morning whilst walking the dogs through the ancestral homeland, foraging our shiny jewel coloured fruit almost exploding ready to burst right into our basket. Whilst reminiscing of memories of me doing this when I was her age with my mum and nan, I am filled with a sense of pure satisfaction and joy at being able to pass on this basic joy of picking wild fruit to my daughter whilst listening to the birds sing hoping that she may pass it on to her family someday. The foraging part is half the fun of this dessert, but note to self, must pick more this year and freeze some!



So, as I bring myself back from my daydream, I am going to share with you my favourite bramble crumble recipe, the one we made and indulged in on that day last autumn. No need to get pen and paper out, no need for measuring cups, the size of your crumble is dictated by the amount of brambles you picked (not enough – just add a diced apple or two!). Simply bathe your little jewels from your walk in a bowl of water whilst you find your well-loved casserole dish or oven friendly bowl, you know the one with the odd chip or bit of baked on stain that simply will not wash off, the one that shows its' years of being loved in each bump, scratch and dent as it was handed down the family, and smear its insides with a knob of butter.

Preheat your oven to medium, whilst you enlist the hands of any wee'un that helped you pick the brambles from earlier, to get good and messy by dumping a generous handful of plain/all purpose flour into a mixing bowl, one handful of flour per family member usually does the trick, we like lots of crumble so we add one or two more for good luck!

Here's the good messy bit, add some knobs of butter and lightly squidge the butter and flour together making sure those hands are good and messy, and if the odd bit of flour goes astray on the odd nose or forehead, go ahead and add a bit more and make it a masterpiece!

When you have what looks like breadcrumbs or lumpy sand sprinkle on a couple handfuls of brown sugar and swish it all together making lovely patterns in the mixture with your fingers (no brown sugar, no problem, just use white – this is no fuss family cooking).

Time to see if your brambles are all finished with their bath and nice and clean, so lift them out and let them rest in the family favourite bowl and bed them down with a sprinkling of sugar and a dusting of cornflour/cornstarch to make any juices thick and creamy.

Add your crumbly sand mixture to the top to resemble a soft beach and whilst your little one washes their gloriously messy hands, pop your crumble into the oven for a nap of about 45 minutes until your sandy beach is golden brown.



The next bit is really quite hard, leave it for 15 minutes to cool slightly, just enough time to make some homemade custard or get some creamy ice cream out to soften to go with your warm hug in a bowl.

Then dish it out and see it disappear faster than you can say bumble bees mumble we love a humble bramble crumble!

See, told you it was easy, the hardest part to remember is the most important ingredients are family, love and time.

According to Marilee McEwan (Australia) this dish is now the official Clan MacEwen dessert. She says it's a big hit with her family.