

CLAN EWEN SOCIETY



25th ANNIVERSARY

No. 47

Bulletin ©

MAY 2002

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Faillte

It seems like only yesterday since my wife, Irene, and myself, first went to Otter - in Cowal, but 25 years have slipped by and Clan Ewen Society has reached its Quarter Century Anniversary.

That meeting - in May 1977 - was the inaugural meeting of the newly formed Society, but the weather did not welcome us. It is, perhaps because of this that we eventually opted for the first Saturday in June as the date on which to hold our A.G.M. in Cowal.

I can remember sitting in our cars eating our picnic lunches, because of the rain and incurring the wrath of the owners of the Otter Ferry Restaurant for occupying their car park for this purpose. Their 'car park' was just a green sward in front of the restaurant which looked like common grazing and after all, that was what we were doing, was it not? Anyway, having chosen the 1st Saturday in June for subsequent A.G.M.s in Cowal, we have always been fortunate with the weather.

As I glance through the pages of our Bulletins - back to Issue No. 1 - November 1978 - I am reminded of many highlights of our progress over the years.

Firstly - at that inaugural meeting at Otter, some 40 members attended and, as we progressed, our membership built up gradually, to some 150 today, having peaked about the 225 mark in between.

I suppose the most important and memorable highlight was the erection and dedication of the Memorial Cairn to "The McEwens of Otter" at the site of Caisteal Eoghain in 1990. This was made possible by the generosity of our members, both at home and abroad.

It was to have been a joyous event but was tinged with great sadness due to the sudden and untimely death of our most respected Chairman - Peter J. He had been devoted to this project and we were now denied the honour of his unveiling this memorial.

Other notable events during the period were: Clan Ewen attended three "International Gatherings of the Clans" in Edinburgh - 1981; Glasgow - 1985, and Inverness - 1989.

I shall never forget Inverness. The Gathering was held in the Ice Rink where a wooden floor had been put down on top of the ice and the cold was intense. Imagine having to attend at a Booth for a week in those

conditions.

For reasons into which I shall not go, no subsequent "Gathering of the Clans" has been held.

Over the years we have had many enjoyable meetings, A.G.M.s and Excursions including, strangely enough, attending Annual Dances held by Clan Campbell.

Nowadays our most exciting project is to establish a Chief for Clan Ewen and this is presently on-going. I only hope that our members will give as generously for this as they did for the Cairn at the Castle.

As we go to Press I have received very sad news. One of our long serving members - John McEwen of Coatbridge - has died this week. John's wife, Betty, was for some time Editor of our *Bulletin*. Our heartfelt sympathies go out to Betty and her family at this time of their great loss.

Alan Ewing

Congratulations

John and Rachel McEwen are pleased to announce the birth of their daughter, Susanna Alice Islay, at Edinburgh, on February 18th 2002

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY!

SATURDAY 1st JUNE 2002

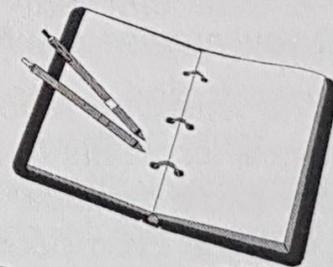
A.G.M. in Royal Marine Hotel, Hunters Quay. Commence 1330hrs. This being our 25th Anniversary, please try to attend Friday p.m. until Sunday.

SATURDAY 25TH AUG 2002

Final date for any articles which you wish to have included in the Autumn Bulletin.

SATURDAY 7TH SEPT 2002

Committee Meeting in Perth. Venue to be decided.



We have published dates of Committee Meetings in order to give Society Members an opportunity to have any items, which they wish to raise, added to the Agenda.

If you have any strong views or comments as to the running of your Society, now is your chance. In this event, please send your contribution to Eleanor, your Vice-Chairman & Secretary.



Secretary's Report

A Committee meeting was held at the Piping Centre in Glasgow on 25th February with good attendance. Here is a summary of the Minutes of this meeting:-

- 1. There were discussions on research into crests, clans and the Muckly connection and a sub-committee was elected to pursue the matter of Bearer of Arms. Our Chairman now has a list of armigerous McEwans from Sir Crispin Agnew.*
- 2. We are happy to report that Jill Young from Michigan is coming to Scotland at the end of March and will set up a new web site for us while she is here. We are pleased to know that Janet and Colin McEwen, from New Zealand, who came to our AGM last year, are eager and willing to recruit new members in New Zealand.*
- 3. The Treasurer reported that the total funds of the Clan are down and several accounts have to be paid. Annual subs are not being paid promptly and a reminder of payment of dues would be sent out. Procedures with the Lyon Court are costly. Iain also pointed out that we are losing funds through the changing of dollars into sterling and bank charges.*
- 4. Arrangements for the AGM at The Royal Marine Hotel were well under way and Jim McEwen gave an update of the format of the celebrations for this, our 25th Anniversary*
- 5. Congratulations to John and Rachel on the birth of their baby daughter – a card was sent from the Clan.*
- 6. Next meeting 1st Saturday in September in Perth.*

Note from the Treasurer – It is proposed that, at the forthcoming AGM, subscriptions should be reviewed with special reference to overseas present currency exchange rates.

Society Manager's Report



Dear friends, as we prepare for this special celebration we must look back on the disaster of last year. Foot and mouth disease put paid to many of your travel arrangements and I know many of you were in two minds as to whether it would have been safe for you to travel to Scotland, but I have it on good authority from the brave members from New Zealand and America who made the journey, that the only inconvenience that they suffered was having to drive over an impregnated mat on the road over to the Isle of Skye and a bucket to dip your shoes in at the doorway of the Kilfinan Hotel.

This year sees the plans well ahead, hotel and entertainment are booked and letters sent out to guest speakers and all we need now is your presence. We will have many wonderful prizes at the raffle this year and it was the decision of the Clan Council to purchase a framed, hand embroidered Clan Crest & motto along with a brief history of the Clan done

in calligraphy. This will be one of the items to be auctioned at the gathering and I know Barbara and I will be putting in a serious bid to capture this treasure. Serious bids from those of you who cannot manage to be there will be accepted on confirmation of your fully paid up membership.

The bookings for the hotel have been coming in steadily so I urge you to book as early as you can to avoid disappointment.

During the winter I made several visits to the International Trade Fair in Glasgow and we will now be carrying a selection of new items in our clan stock. I hope these meet with your approval. To view some of the items of stock that we carry please log into our new personal web page on www.clanewensociety.org

Other items that Barbara and I viewed at the Fair and can be ordered is McEwen carpet, have your lounge, dining room or bedroom carpeted wall to wall in your own traditional tartan. A minimum of

30 sq metres must be purchased but if that were with one or two members this would be perfectly possible. This would be purchased through the clan from one of our stockists in Scotland.

I became the proud owner of a traditional Glasgow Basket Hilt sword at Christmas and I would recommend to any member wishing to purchase a traditional weapon be it broadsword, claymore, dirk, halberg etc etc who later might wish to form part of a clan re-enactment society, to liaise with me on this subject.

Half price tickets for the ferry crossing to Dunoon can be purchased from the Dunoon Observer Shop by post on receipt of full payment in Sterling and a stamped addressed envelope. Their e-mail address is info@dunoon-observer.co.uk and their mailing address is Dunoon Observer Shop, 219 Argyll Street, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 7NS, Scotland. Their web page is www.dunoon-observer.co.uk

Whilst most of the week-end entertainment has been arranged we do still leave some time for those of you who may be musically skilled, can recite poetry, tell stories about your life, country or whatever, or indeed if you wish to bring friends along with you to the

gathering who are talented along these lines, please do so.

A full review of the programme will be available on arrival at the hotel and as usual, we will be asking you on the Saturday evening how to improve future gatherings.

I would like to thank all our friends listed below for their tremendous support and help with our raffle at last year's gathering and hope that we might be able to call upon them this year for a further donation.

I look forward to seeing as many of you at this year's gathering and if I can be of any assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

*Yours aye,
Jim McEwen*

*Caithness Glass
Kirkintilloch Pipe Band
Ingles Buchan
T. J. Mathews
David McDade & Co.
Glenturret Distiller
Gaelic Themes
Loch Katrine
Dewars
Britannia
Bruichladdich
Woollen Mill
Royal Marine Hotel,
Dunoon*



NEW MEMBERS

The Chairman, on behalf of the Members of the Committee, welcomes the following new members who have joined since our last publication:-

Mrs J A Ferguson,

2 Mantles Green Cottages, School Lane, Amersham, HP7 0EJ

Mr H E Ewen, 'Branxholme',

31 Muirfield Park, Gullane, East Lothian, EH31 2DY

Mr Colin MacEwan,

'Lyndale', Holt Road, North Elmham, Dereham, Norfolk, NR20 5JS

Mr David McEwen Band,

7 Hume Drive, Kylepark, Uddingston, G71 7DW

Mr David M McEwen,

25 Farnham Drive, Richmond, Nelson, New Zealand

Mrs Kelsey McEwen Alexander,

6636 North Pinewood Drive, Parker, CO 80134, U.S.A.

A Journey along the West Highland Way

The 95 mile West Highland Way was opened in 1980 as Scotland's first official long distance footpath. Despite several other such routes having been opened since then, it remains by far the most popular, and provides a great opportunity to see a broad cross section of Scotland's scenery at a leisurely pace over (usually) about one week of walking. It is generally done from south to north – starting at Milngavie on the northern outskirts of Glasgow, and progressing through increasingly spectacular views (when its not misty and raining!) to pass by Britain's highest mountain – Ben Nevis, 4,406ft., 1,344m, - and finish at Fort William. With a wide selection of accommodation along the route it is not necessary to carry full camping gear, though many people do. Indeed, there is now a service available to transport your luggage from one night's stopping point to the next – leaving you just to carry lightweight daypack requirements. If you might be feeling tempted....., have a look at the website www.west-high-

land-way.co.uk . I'd done the walk in 1986 – very end September / very beginning October. Fabulous weather throughout – amazingly. In my opinion, though, the latter part of May would probably be the best time of year, taking a whole range of factors into account.

Fast forward to 2001. Now a member of a hill running club, I was looking forward to a season of runs taking in a selection of Scotland's hills and mountains at a not too onerous pace. Good to cover a bit of distance, but take time to enjoy the views. All went to plan until late February, all of three weeks into the "running year", when Foot and Mouth (F&M) disease hit the farming community and almost all the non urban countryside was immediately declared closed and strictly out of bounds. Hill running, and indeed almost all running off road, was immediately suspended for an indefinite duration. I wondered how to spend the time that I had earmarked for such activities.

I had another look at my running club newsletter for December 2000 and read, rather more closely, an article by Jamie Thin on the West Highland Way Race 2000. Wow! I did know that a few hardy souls had been running the length of the WHW off their own initiative, but it seems that there had been an actual annual race since about 1990. Then I recalled that Kate Jenkins had also written about the event – so dug back through the back issues to June 2000. "Euphoria, Distress and Premature Ageing" headed her contribution. Golly! Both articles seemed to portray hours of unmitigated suffering with brief glimpses of unmitigated euphoria. The longest race I had ever done was the cross-country 2 Breweries hill race, 18 miles, and that had been seriously uncomfortable in the latter stages. This WHW race was 95 miles In a roundabout way I started making enquiries. Different ball game. Different pace. Just shuffle along at a bit more than walking speed. 4mph is a good walking speed – not even a run really. 4 times 24 equals 96 – should be possible to walk the distance in 24 hours. Run a bit, walk a bit, rest a bit ... average 4mph. Not a lot to ask. Hmmm.

I spoke to Bruce *Canadian Club* Hall, a running colleague who had also completed the WHW Race in 2000. He and Jamie had both finished in about 24½ hours. But hold it – Jamie is an international class athlete, and Bruce runs marathons sub 2hrs 45m. I'm nowhere near that, and have never run a marathon. "Go for it", Bruce said; "you can do it". So I contacted Dario, the WHW Race organiser, pored over the WHW race website and map, and upped my mileage to about 60-70 a week. Almost

all on road, due to F&M. First 'training run' of any real length was the 26 miles round Loch Rannoch on 3 April. That went fine. Parts of the WHW started to re-open from the F&M restrictions. I ran the last stretch of the route (Kingshouse to Fort William, 24 miles) – fine. Then Rowardennan to Beinglas and back again (27 miles) – fine. Bridge of Orchy to Fort William. Phew! Too big a bite to chew off, 35 miles, and that's only a third of the distance..... I was now doing just over 100 miles a week and starting to not enjoy it; looking forward to the one day a week off. Why am I doing this if I'm not enjoying it? I cut back down to about 60-70 a week and immediately felt fresher. Taper down in the last 3 weeks. Speak to friends who aren't really into running – "You're mad, don't be so stupid". Speak to those who have done it, and others who undertake similar adventures – "Go for it, it's incredible". I spent more time gleaning positivity from the latter group; and almost craved positivity. It came from many sources around the world. Thank you to the person who invented email!

01.00 hrs, 23 June, saw Jo (my wife, and lead supporter) and I arrive at Milngavie Railway Station. The car park bustling with people who all seemed to know each other, armed with professionally kitted out combies and transit vans; micro sized burn bags; stretching and warm ups. I felt very humble. What am I doing here amongst this crowd of "professionals"? The handout 'goodie' bag included WHW Race t-shirt. Grey for those doing the event, orange for supporters. I put on my club running vest, which reminded me that I was here for business – not just another training run. Pinned on my number, 25, same as my house number. Should be able to remember that. Shook hands with someone called Ian, from Troon. He'd done 22½ hours last year. Crumbs! Two hours faster than Jamie and Bruce. Better not try and keep up with him or I'll soon blow up. Think positive, remember all the advice soaked in from those who've done it.

02.00 hrs. Bang. We were off, trotting leisurely beside Allander Water in the darkness. Head torches bouncing up and down; most folk lost in their own thoughts. Lots of people in front of me. A few behind. Folk in front stopped. "....., we're lost, I think it's over there". We ran across a golf course, only 8 of us now, then through Allander Water. Someone fell in. I look up. 5 had gone. 3 left. Ian (Troon) thought he knew the way. 10 minutes later we were back on track. We caught up with the back markers shortly before Carbeth. Not an auspicious start at all, but I hadn't fallen into the river, I was feeling great and it was just starting to get light.



GATHERING OUTSIDE KILFINAN CHURCH

I resisted the (very strong) temptation to up the pace. Just tuck in with those bobbing along in front.

We crossed the road at Dumgoyne (7½ miles). What support! Everyone's back-up team seemed to be there, lining the sides of the trail. I met up with Ian again; he was going well. My planning and recceing were proving invaluable. I had run the whole 95 miles in training (albeit in 4 separate stages) so knew exactly where I was. Out on to the road at Gartness. "Well done, you're looking good", a complete stranger said. Somehow I resisted the urge to run up the hills.

Met up with Jo again just before Drymen (12 miles). She'd been getting tips and advice from seasoned campaign support team member, Jim Robertson, who had done the race 10 times so he should know what he was talking about. On through the checkpoint, more huge support. Up the very gentle incline – running, not walking, I must admit. I was passing through Kilmarnock and Buchanan Parishes, where McEwans certainly had a presence historically, but this was really Clan Buchanan country. Strange that Clan Buchanan should have a Buchanan Parish, but there is no McEwan Parish..... Trotted along with Marc, from Belgium, who was going at a good steady pace. His English was minimal. Good. I didn't really want to talk. Conic Hill. Walk up. Definitely. No problem. Down to midge infested Balmaha, by Loch Lomond, in about 20th position. What tremendous support from everyone! Is this what it's like to be a superstar? Fell in again with Marc. His pace was great. I knew exactly where to go – we made a good duo. Rowardennan in 4 hrs 59 mins (11th position) – almost an hour ahead of the 4mph schedule. Major battery recharging, and off again with Marc. Walk the up, run the flat/down. He looked like he'd done hundreds of these kind of events.

Inversnaid, still on Loch Lomondside, and just about to move into MacGregor territory - 35 miles; Jo's sister there with very welcome sustenance. I'd never run further than this before. Marc told me to go on ahead. This was the rough underfoot patch. Why don't I feel tired? I wonder how many are ahead? We'd passed several after Rowardennan. Maybe I was going too fast. Couldn't really see any distance ahead, but passed a couple of others and hit the Beinglas/Inverarnan (41 miles) checkpoint in 6th place. What on earth am I doing up here in this kind of position? Jean-Paul from South Africa was also receiving tender care from his support team. He looked really fit; I tagged along behind him – but I suddenly felt lead in my legs. At Carmyle Cottage (45 miles) I was

not happy at all. Still not even half way. Jean-Paul strode up the hill ahead of me, and started to recede in the distance. Walk the up, run the flat. For the first time I broke this "rule" and walked the flat. Jean-Paul disappeared over the far horizon. I managed not to stop despite the legs seizing up. Exactly half way, and shuffling along tramp like fashion. Another 47½ miles of this ...? But only one person overtook me. I shuffled down to the road at Ewich. Food, drink, support, TV crew filming me eating. Why was he poking this vast camera thing about four inches from my face? It took my mind off feeling sorry for myself. I set off, better try running, I'm being filmed; hey! Legs feel OK now. Bit tired but back in reasonable rhythm.

Approaching Tyndrum. Major battery recharge point. 53 miles. Only 42 to go and no-one had overtaken me, so maybe I wasn't going too badly. I'm now 9th. Wonder where Ian is? Much boosted by the rest of the support team arriving at Tyndrum – Les, Stuart & John - and walk briskly up towards the bealach. Hey this is great. I'm feeling fine and we're coming to the long fast stretch down to Auch. I pass a walking wounded who looks all in. How come I feel so good? Through the wee tunnel under the railway line; "Come on Murdo!" Wow! Can't remember her name (sorry!) but I know she'd been on one of Nigel's journey runs with me. Get to thinking about journey runs and Nigel's positive advice. Can see for miles ahead. No-one. Down to Auch. Feel great. Along under Beinn Dorain. What a magnificent peak! Memories of a heatwave hike up there in 1997. Adrian (of Run & Become fame) passes me. I thought I was going OK, but he just recedes into the distance ahead; mind you if he did sub 20 hours last year, he's probably just starting to up the pace for the last 35 miles. But, hey! Almost two-thirds of the way and feeling not bad at all. I notice a train heading south out of Bridge of Orchy. Unknown to me, 2 friends are on board and are yelling support at me through the hermetically sealed windows.

Bridge of Orchy checkpoint, 9th, and an hour ahead of schedule. Jo joins me for the leg over to Victoria Bridge. Caledonian Challenge (CC) runners/walkers start coming from the other direction. They step aside to let us past. Support and encouragement from everyone. Clapping even. And I'm only going a bit faster than walking pace – I thought this was meant to be a 'race'. Huge marquees and a helicopter at Inveroran. Pit stop for the Caledonian Challengers. Tents out on the grass near Victoria Bridge – what a great campsite. Sun shining. Ben Starav pointing up towards the heavens. Brief pit stop at Victoria Bridge and Allan Douglas

shuffles past me. Campbell territory, now. No one else going our way, but more and more CC's coming in the opposite direction. Rannoch Moor. All the worst stories about Rannoch Moor came flooding back. "It goes on forever". "I suddenly died". "Bleak spot" etc etc. Yes, it was indeed all of those things, but apart from seeing Allan occasionally there was no one at all going in our direction for miles ahead of me or miles behind.

Met up with Les who had come back from Blackrock Cottage to chum me; up to the cairn and 69 miles and the first sight of Kingshouse. Then I died ... Another 26 miles of shuffling along – I should finish within the cut-off point of 35 hours, but I felt awful. A friend from the running club appeared out of nowhere. "We're camping in Glen Etive; I thought I'd come to see how you're doing" she announced. "Great" I replied – feeling anything but. We walked down to Kingshouse – easy gentle downhill gradient, and we were walking ... in a race! But no-one passed us. I slumped, fatigued. Hilary took my photo – thanks! She made mother hen noises of optimism and encouragement. Everyone seemed so upbeat. I shuffled off with Stuart as support – he being full of beans and desperate to get some serious running in. We walked along the tarmac – he seemed to be getting a bit impatient, but there was nothing I could do about it. Leg muscles felt as hard as Lewisian Gneiss. I look down Glen-coe – yes, I suppose it really did look pretty impressive. MacDonald land, and scene of the infamous massacre in 1692. Let's try trotting a bit. Hey! This is OK! Caledonian Challengers stepping aside, clapping, cheering. We were running. There was no pain. We bounded along. I felt great - but how come, after 73 miles?

Met the rest of the support team at Altnafeadh. They were anxious looking – not surprising considering the wreck they had been dealing with three miles earlier. I bounded past and up the Devil's Staircase. No problem. Hundreds and hundreds more CCs coming the other way (1,280 in all). Down, down, down to sea level at Kinlochleven, the abandoned aluminium works, the black pipes, Mamore Lodge in the far distance. Checkpoint at "midge city" Kinlochleven (9th and two hours ahead of schedule), and into Clan Cameron lands. A brief stop; Allan Douglas had passed through just ten minutes earlier. How come he wasn't hours ahead after my Armageddon performance around Kingshouse? Up comfortably through the trees and emerging to the long, long track of the Lairigmor stretching away into the horizon, before it continues on again beyond the next horizon. Run. Great. I stride along – support team Les and Stuart

have problems keeping up with me! We approach and pass someone I (wrongly) assume to be Allan Douglas.

Keep running. Watch the uneven loose stones underfoot, walk the steep uphill bits. Bound down the long gentle descent to hugely welcome refreshment at midge infested Lundavra. Demolish tins of mandarins, rice pudding and fruit salad in quick succession.

Then set off, and die again ... Only 7 miles to go – this is where John Donnelly had pulled out last year. I thought long and hard about that. Legs seize up again; every step gave a jarring pain but it was one step nearer 'the end'. 'The End'. Hey! I'd now done about 90 miles. Only 5 to go! Bit dark and gloomy, but no need for the torches – if we run a bit we could finish before midnight, so I've done the whole thing in the one calendar day. That had a nice ring to it. The pain went. Run down. Run on the flat. Even run on bits of the up. Out of the forest, and into the (relative) daylight – with the lights of Fort William way below and the bulk of Ben Nevis towering above. Gosh! But no time to stop. Hit the forest track running, and keep running. Bill *Ancient Mariner* Gauld appears from nowhere out of the gloom. He's just driven across from St Andrews to chum me in the last couple of miles. Isn't that great of him? We meet Jo at the forest car park. Photo. Road running, the last mile, the roundabout, on a bit, the Leisure Centre, and that's it! Jean-Paul is there, still looking strong (but now seated!) and Sharon, the first lady, and Allan D. We all embrace and it's all very emotional. Jo is ecstatic. Celebrations..... three cups of tea and a micro-sized whisky!

The (Glasgow) Herald newspaper had run an article on the event the previous day entitled "Doug Gillon applauds the eccentric spirits who face Scotland's toughest challenge". And I'd done it! And somehow I'd finished in 8th position from 57 starters, and 2½ hours under my 24 hour 'target'. But I stay very humble in the knowledge that the actual running was only a small (albeit essential) component of our success. The planning, the mental approach/attitude, the support team, and so many other factors all have to fall into place for it to succeed– so I'm very conscious that I owe lots of thanks to lots of people who made it all come to fruition. "Thank you!" As Kate had written in her article, it really is a mind-out-of-the-body experience. I now know what she means.

Will I be doing it again in 2002????

Murdo McEwan

CLAN EWAN

When Lady Diana Spencer became engaged to Prince Charles, a number of folk asked, "who is she?" Debretts investigated and found her to be of the line of the Ewans - the oldest Royal line in Europe, indeed, she had more Royal Blood in her little finger than all the Windsors. It was also discovered that she was "cousinly" to Humphrey Bogart and George Washington, among others. My own McEwan line, through my Mother, has so far been researched to Duncan McEwan, (married to Liliias Allan) born about 1700. Nothing remarkable!

My family tradition declines the YEW TREE as our origin. The Lord Lyon was in error! EWAN comes from HUGH or AODH, a very early pre-christian Irish King - from whom come some 147 different spellings - Keagan, Reagan, Euan, and Owen etc .

Aodh had a large boar and walked from Carlingford Lough (Eastern Ireland) to Sligo Bay (Western Ireland) with a pocket full of acorns and leading his boar. But, the pocket had a hole, the acorns spilled out and were crushed into the ground by his boots and the pig (as they do!) dug them out, leaving big holes. These are now filled with water and form the Lochs (Loughs) bounding Ulster from the rest of Ireland. To this day this line of lochs is known as the Pig's Dyke!

A grizzly note to end with - Elspeth McEwan was the last Witch to be put to death in Scotland, executed in Kirkcudbright in 1698! Robert D McArthur, FSA Scot, Oifig nan Seanachaidh (Office of the Seannachie)

2001 Clan Ewen Gathering

Our interest in the Clan Ewen Gathering had its origins through surfing the Internet, searching for McEwen history and information for our family tree. Through contacts we received a copy of the Clan Bulletin and joined the Clan.

The May 2001 Bulletin contained a report from Malcolm McEwen of the 1999 Clan Ewen Society Gathering plus information on the next Annual Gathering to take place in 2001. As we would be in Britain at that time, we were able to take the opportunity of attending the gathering to meet fellow clans people and trace our ancestral roots in Largs, Greenock and Aberdeen.

Through email we made contact with Jim and Barbara McEwen and arranged to meet at Gourock where Jim had organised ferry tickets for us. We initially felt trepidation having travelled 12,000 miles to come for the weekend not knowing anybody but we were warmly welcomed into the fold.

The Friday night fun quiz was good fun and soon had us mixing and mingling. Saturday morning was informal with the opportunity to go for a walk or mix and chat before the AGM at 1.30pm. Following the AGM, Duncan McEwen gave a wonderful slide presentation of the picturesque countryside of Scotland that we thoroughly enjoyed. We enjoyed meeting with Murdo McEwan, the Clan Genealogist, who was very helpful in advising us how to research and access information while we were in Scotland. He also maintains the Society's archive of various family genealogy charts.

Following Dinner, a Civic Reception, with three local Councillors, was held and there was a very happy group going into the Ceilidh afterwards. The Councillors joined us for a great night of dancing and fun. Mike (from Virginia, U.S.A.) Sir John McEwen and myself picked Miss Clan Ewen who wore the tiara and coveted sash. The women had a great time competing for this title and we all enjoyed the champagne that went with the title of Miss Clan Ewen.

Following breakfast on Sunday, we made our way in a convoy to the church at Kilfinan for the Clan Gathering service and the blessing of the Clan banner. We could not go to the Cairn of Castle Ewen because of "foot and mouth" restrictions so, instead opted for the hotel next door for a cup of tea, disinfecting our shoes before entering.

After this, a group of us went for an informal lunch and drinks at the Otter Ferry on the Loch waterfront.

A fitting end to a wonderful weekend, and for us the trip of a lifetime. We both felt that this is what we came to Scotland for, to find our roots and where our ancestors came from. To eat and drink on the shores of the Loch, near where they fished, swam, lived and died was very moving. Thanks for that.

Was it worth the cost of coming from New Zealand to Scotland to attend and see where we belong? As Malcolm McEwan in 1999 said - Yes, it is worth it! To feel as part of the unknown family and to be there. Proud to be Clan Members,

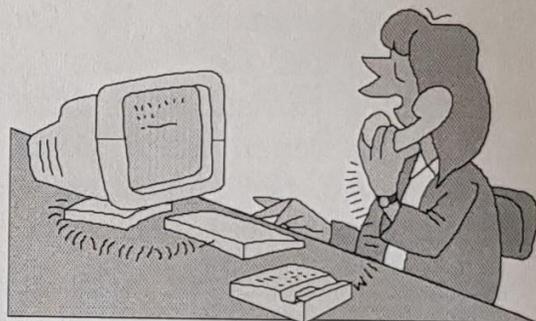
Colin and Janet McEwen, Masterton, New Zealand, "Balblair", State Highway, 2.

Crarae Gardens, Argyll

We have had the wonderful news that the 'Crarae in Crisis Appeal' target has been met and the future of these beautiful gardens is secure. All those who donated and were determined to save this unique garden are thrilled to know that The National Trust for Scotland will be returning Crarae to its former spectacular state.

I wonder if any of our Clansmen know that, in a small corner of the lower gardens, there is a tiny Clan Garden where the local area Clans are represented. The McEwans are there with a little oak tree planted beside the Clan Crest. This tree will, I hope, grow to maturity in height and spread as we would also wish the Clan Members to grow. If any of our Clan have not been to Crarae, then I recommend a visit – opening hopefully about May.

Eleanor Williamson



Editor's Letter

Hello fellow Members -

I took over as Editor from Colin Davies this year. It is quite a daunting task to step into his shoes as he has been Bulletin Editor since 1996. Thank you Colin for all your kind and encouraging words.

My first task is to ask each and every Member to consider sending me a small article for inclusion in one of our future **Bulletins**; it could be about yourself, your family or anything that you think other Clan members would find interesting. My first year as a Society member was 1999 and I wrote a small article about our Grandfather, Major Wm. Hugh Ewen, who was one of Scotland's pioneer aviators. Perhaps you have an interesting family member you could write about – maybe you found some skeletons when researching your ancestors! Let us know.

I would like to add that, last year, Donald Ewing from Australia made a very special contribution to aid the Society's fundraising in the shape of a beautiful Trinket Box, hand crafted and signed by Robert Miller of Mel-

bourne, Australia. Matt Ewen, wife of our former Email Service Correspondent was the lucky winner.

Look forward to hearing from you and I sincerely hope that 2002 is a happier year for everyone.

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