



# CLAN EWEN SOCIETY

## *Bulletin*

No. 16

NOVEMBER

1986

### *MEETING MACEWENS*

I like meeting people. It would be a poor Minister, Pastor or Priest who didn't, and in the context of the Clan I do like meeting MacEwens, and you do — here, there and everywhere.

There was Miss Elizabeth MacEwen; she was on the grand tour and doing Scotland. She was trying to find out something of her family background in the time available to her and having little success. Any MacEwens she contacted usually through the telephone directory, were not helpful: they thought she was nuts. Being of the Crieff and Comrie branch of the family she made her way to Perth where I was Minister and got on to me. A little apprehensively she asked if I was interested. I was. We met and we now have a very good member in Prince Edward Island in Canada. To Elizabeth — warm greetings and memories of a brief but very happy meeting.

Then one *hears* about MacEwens. About 1938 I was travelling back from Edinburgh to Stirling in the train, having been to my 'crammer' in an effort to pass the University prelim exams. I was reading 'Ovid'. Opposite me there was a wee minister contentedly puffing a large cigar. He didn't look very Scottish. (*Scottish ministers in these days wouldn't have been seen dead in public smoking anything, let alone a fat cigar*). He wasn't! We got talking and he was interested in that I was heading for the Ministry of the Kirk. "What's your name?", he asked. "MacEwen", said I. "Well!", he said, "there are SQUADS of MacEwens over in Newfoundland, where I come from". So I hope there are still 'squads' of MacEwens over there and all members of some or other Clan association. If so — greetings.

The third meeting occurred only the other day. I entered the foyer of the Eglinton Arms Hotel in Eaglesham, near Paisley, for a bar lunch. A man I took to be the Manager came out of his office, looked straight at me and said: "Good morning Mr. MacEwen, delighted to see you". As I had only been there once before, such recognition was

fame. I had certainly never set eyes on the Manager. However I noticed that his eyes were focussing beyond me, and sure enough, there was a young man standing right behind me whom I hadn't noticed. He was the "Mr. MacEwen" in question. A most delightful young man, representing some large firm and doing business with the 'Eglinton'. He is now, I think, a member of the clan and glad to know of the existence of such an association. And to him, greetings.

Interestingly enough, there are MacEwens on the Rock of Gibraltar. I went there as Minister of the Rock in 1957 and found a wine 'bodega' almost next door to the Manse. I popped in a day or two after we arrived for a bottle of Sherry and found over the door the name 'MacEwen' emblazoned. Mr. MacEwen's father had been an Argyll, took his discharge on the Rock, married a local girl and settled down. He ran the bodega and his brother was the Curator of the Museum. So to Gibraltar MacEwens — greetings.

We need new and interested members. A large number of MacEwens simply do not know that there is a Clan Association, or that we have a recognisable spot on this earth we can claim as Clan Territory or that we even can visit the site of what was once a castle. I hope you will meet many MacEwens in your wanderings and encourage them to come and join us. I hope many more members will turn up at the A.G.Ms. The most recent one at Luss was most enjoyable. The next will be at Comrie. Also I suggest to any who have not made the trip — to go to Otter and see the site of the castle. Contact me or any of the Committee and we will be only too glad to help or even (maybe!) to accompany. It's a long way and there's a good hike of some two miles at the end of it to get to the site of the castle, but it is worth it and there is a good hotel near Otter where you can get a meal.

So Greetings, Clan.

All good wishes,            Reviresco,

*REV. PETER MACEWEN*

#### *EDITOR'S NOTES*

At our A.G.M. at Luss we had pleasure in welcoming The Rev. Professor J. S. McEwen from Aberdeen and his son Gavin as a new member. Also, a promise of an article for a future bulletin which is always good news for the Editor. Also, welcome to Mrs. Betty McEwan, from Glasgow.

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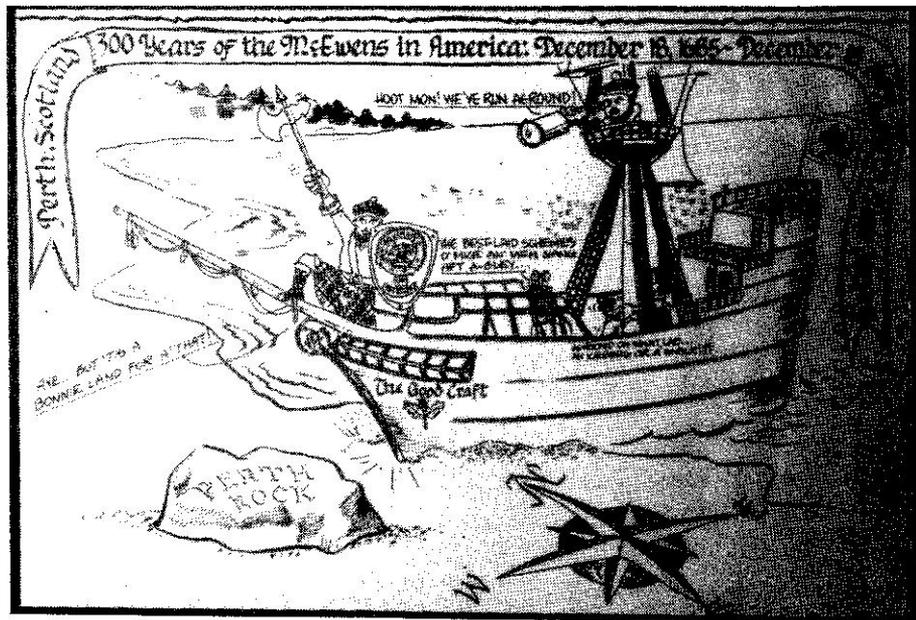
**EDITOR'S NOTES (continued)**

Hopefully, as we are publishing the time and venue of next year's A.G.M. in this and the next bulletin, members old and new will note this date, keep it free and help make 1987's meeting the best ever.

Sadly, we have two obituaries in this issue. Wallace, whom we all knew and respected and Rob from North America, equally respected by his own clan members. Two of nature's gentlemen.

Major Hugh McEwan, from California has responded to Rennie McOwan's article in the last bulletin. It never ceases to amaze me the amount of history on Scotland that comes from all parts of the globe, and you can read the first part of Major McEwan's article in this issue.

One visitor who didn't "make it to Scotland" this year was Robert C. McEwen from Grandforks, and rightly so. He was celebrating the 300th year Anniversary of Robert Henry McEwen's arrival in Perth, New Jersey on December 18th 1685. — I am letting our printer decide if your most interesting picture can be produced in this bulletin, Robert.



## *OBITUARIES*

**A. WALLACE McEWAN** — It is with deep regret that we record the death of Wallace McEwan on the 28th July, 1986.

Wallace was elected to the first committee of the Society in 1978 and over the years contributed much knowledge and acumen to us lesser mortals. He was instrumental in the make-up of the constitution. He had a quick, bright personality, was meticulous in everything he did and gave willingly of his knowledge. Latterly, Wallace resigned from the committee, but still retained his interest in and managed to attend any meeting that was arranged. His presence will always be missed by the ones who knew and liked him well.

We offer Mima the comfort of friendship. The knowledge that she and Wallace were well liked by the members of the Clan who knew them and to offer Mima condolences from us all.

**ROBERT L. McEWING** — High Commissioner of "The Yew Tree", the newsletter of the Clan MacEwan Association of North America, died of a massive heart attack on 9th July, 1986. We extend our sympathy to his many friends and family.

Having read the many tributes to 'Mac' in the "Yew Tree", this man was more Scottish than we Scots. It is 'warming' — a lovely feeling to know that Scotland is held in such high regard, knowledge and love by so many and sad to think that we have to find this knowledge from an obituary.

*E. McEwan*

## *SECRETARY'S REPORT*

The A.G.M. of the Clan Ewen Society was held on Saturday, 4th October at the Colquhoun Arms Hotel, Luss and again the gathering was blessed with a beautiful autumn day. Luss and Loch Lomond-side were at their loveliest.

Members were welcomed by the Chairman, Rev. Peter MacEwan and particularly the two gentlemen who had travelled all the way from Aberdeen. Minutes were read, approved and signed. The Secretary and the Treasurer made their reports.

It was unanimously agreed at the meeting to offer Honorary Life-membership to three of the original members — Dr. Douglas MacEwan Miss Agnes McEwan and Mrs. Ella McEwan (widow of Archie Mc-

Ewan, the original Treasurer). It was decided that the subscription remain the same at £3.00 and £5.00 for Family membership.

Other business was conducted efficiently. The present committee stood down. However, the office-bearers were all re-elected, with one exception in the general committee, Mrs. MacEwan. Joyce was elected in place of Mr. David McEwan, who indicated his desire to stand aside.

The date for the next A.G.M. was fixed for **SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3rd, 1987** and the venue to be **Comrie**. There being no further business, the company enjoyed afternoon tea and the usual pleasant conversations.

*E. McE. WILLIAMSON*

## **THE LINE OF THE ANCIENT CELTIC KINGS and THE FIRST TO BEAR THE NAME**

*This article and some other shorter pieces, have been contributed by –  
MAJOR HUGH McEWAN, California*

Most historians believe that the celtic people of Scotland and Ireland all come from the same stock. Unfortunately, the ancient celtic civilizations were not the type that generated good written records. However they were extremely active in the production of oral 'histories', which recounted the ancestry and great works of the various kings and leaders.

It is important for members of the Clan Ewen to realise that their descent is first accounted through these oral traditions of the ancient celtic people. Even though we became thoroughly "European" during the last few hundred years, our origin is very different from our English cousins who trace much more of their background to the Norman/European culture.

There is no absolute agreement by historians on the exact line of descent from the ancient celtic kings. There are many accounts of the old families and some of these accounts do not exactly jibe with each other. One well-known writer in the area of the celtic/gaelic culture is Ian Moncreiffe, who gives an account of the Clan Ewen's origin in his excellent book, "The Highland Clans".

**According** to Moncreiffe, the earliest recorded gaelic king is Eochu, **King of Tara**, who was living in 360 A.D. Moncreiffe traces the Clan Ewen to Eochu and also establishes ties of our clan to the royal line of Scotland. The details that Moncreiffe provides are extremely sketchy, but here is the picture he presents, starting with Niall, son of Eochu, and High King of Ireland in 400.

Following Niall are: Eogan, King of Nothern Ireland, died 465. His son Muiredach, died c. 480 (and all that follow are sons of the name preceding). Muricheartach, 512–534. Domnall, died 566 of plague. Aedh, High King of Ireland, 604–612. Maelfithig, King of Ailech, 628–630. Maelduin, King of Ailech, 671–681. Fergal, High King of Ailech, 710–722. Niall 'of the Showers', High King of Ireland, died 778. Aedh 'the Dignified', High King of Ireland, 797–819. Niall, High King of Ireland, 833–846, drowned while pursuing defeated Vikings. Aedh 'White-Hair', High King of Ireland, 862–869, married daughter of Kenneth MacAlpine, King of the Picts and Scots. Niall 'Black Knee', High King of Ireland, 916–919. Muirchertach, King of Ailech, 938–943. Domnall O'Neill, High King of Ireland, 956–980. Muirchertach O'Neill, Royal Heir of Ireland, killed in Battle 977. Plaithbertach, King of Ailech, 1004–1030 and 1033–1036. Aedh 'the Handy', King of Ailech, 1030–1033, (died young).

Up to this point, we have dealt with ancestors whose ties were to Ireland and the original celtic/gaelic families. In the 11th century, Aedh 'Anradhan', son of Aedh 'the Handy', married the heiress of Cowall and Knapdale, who was also a princess of the Scottish royal house of Argyll. This line is the family of Kenneth MacAlpine, who became the first acknowledged King of Scots.

The Clan Ewen tie to the royal line thus originates with the marriage of Aedh 'Anradhan' to the heiress of Cowall and Knapdale. Their son, Niall is relatively unknown, but his son Aedh 'the Splendid', had three sons: Dunsleve, Gillacrist and Domnall. Through Gillacrist the MacEwens are related to the MacLachlans, and through Domnall we are related to the MacNeills (both the MacNeills of Barra and the MacNeills of Gigha and Tainish). The Clans Neill, Lachlan and Ewen were a strong confederation in the 12th century, by most accounts. Through Dunsleve, the MacEwens are related to the Lamonts, with whom there was also a strong alliance. It is Eoghain, son of Dunsleve, who is the founder of the Clan Ewen. He lived in the early part of the 12th century.

Following Eoghain (Ewen) I of Ottir (Otter), we have records of Severan II of Otter, (III and IV unknown), Gillespie V (circa 1315) Ewen VI, John VII, Walter VIII and finally, Swene IX of Otter who resigned the barony of Otter to King James I in 1432.

### *IS THERE A CLAN EWEN CHIEF?*

In a word, the answer to the above is no. That, of course, is not especially good news to those of us who would like to see the Clan Ewen vigorously renewed as an active Clan.

In my quest for information, I have received very prompt replies to letters I have sent to various authorities in Scotland. These replies paint a very clear picture. Let us begin by explaining that every book we have consulted (see article on Reference Books) says that the Clan Ewen had its ninth and last chief in the mid 1400's when Swene MacEwen died and the Clan holdings at Otter Ferry passed to the Campbells. After that, Clan Ewen members followed other chiefs, as described in last issue's article on the subject.

In Scotland, a person (man or woman) is acknowledged as chief of a clan, officially, when the Lord Lyon so designates according to the laws of heraldry. When we wrote to the Court of the Lord Lyon to inquire about MacEwen chiefs, we were told by the Lyon Clerk, Malcolm Innes of Edingight, that no heir to the chiefship is known. He suggests that we might try advertising to see if an heir comes forward. But, the Clerk says, "It may be, however, that the heir has been totally lost if he now exists".

As a further inquiry, I wrote to the Standing Council of Scottish Chiefs, which is the official organisation of the Clan Chiefs. Their representative, Mr. Strang-Steel, tells us — "So far as I am aware, there is no-one of the name McEwen who is eligible for membership of the Standing Council nor, I should add, am I aware of any claimant to the Chief-ship. I understand that at one time this was claimed by the McEwens of Muckley, but I do not know whether there is still a representative of that branch of the family".

Another source I tried is the Duke of Argyll, who is the Chief of the Campbells. Many, if not most, of the MacEwens followed the Camp-

bells when our Clan dispersed, so I thought their chief might have some old records that could be of use to us. The Duke replied that he was passing my inquiry on to Sir Iain Moncreiffe of that Ilk, who is the world's foremost authority on Clan history. Further, the Duke says that, "I am sorry to pass the buck, but I really have no knowledge of this matter and would not like to give you information that is not of the most constructive kind. May I extend my heartiest good wishes on the formation of the Clan Ewen in North America".

So, the Clan Ewen is probably without a clear-cut candidate for chief. There is a process for having a chief recognised by the Lord Lyon, but I am told that this procedure is a complex, lengthy and costly one. As such, it would probably have to wait until our organisation is quite large and well-funded.

As convener of the Clan Ewen of North America, I will continue to try to track down information by corresponding with the appropriate authorities in Scotland.

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### REFERENCE BOOKS

*There are many books on Scottish history and the history of individual clans. The following are excellent books usually available in public libraries:*

"The Tartans of the Clans and Families of Scotland" —  
by Sir Thomas Innes of Learney.

"The Highland Clans" — by Iain Moncreiffe of that Ilk.

"Clans and Tartans of Scotland" — by Robert Bain.

"Scottish Clans and Tartans" — by Ian Grimble

"Highland Heritage" — by Grace Campbell.

"Clans, Septs and Regiments of the Scottish Highlands" —  
by Frand Adam, revised by Sir Thomas Innes of Learney.

## *"CASTLE" MACEWEN*

Some of the popular books on clan history speak of a Castle MacEwen located on the former clan lands at Otter Ferry. The term "castle" should be used only in the loosest sense.

The Cowal Archaeological Society excavated the site of Caisteal Mhic Eoghain in 1968 and 1969. The site has been officially registered as NR 916796. The 'castle' was located on a promontory, and was actually two different dwellings. The first was an Iron Age structure consisting of a wooden palisade around the promontory encircling wattle and daub huts. The second facility consisted of a timber laced stone wall on top of the earlier stockade. The huts of this period appear to have been larger and more solidly constructed.

The excavations of the site tend to confirm the tradition that this part of Otter Ferry was the seat of the Clan Ewen before the 14th century.

## *THE CLAN LOSES GROUND*

In this continuation of the history of the Clan Ewen, we will pick up the account at the point where Swene IX, the last chief, resigned the barony of Otter to King James I in 1432. James re-granted the title to Swene, but he also gave a portion of the lands to Celestine Campbell, who was the son and heir of Duncan Campbell of Lochow.

After Swene's death, the King confirmed the grant of the barony of Otter to Archibald, Earl of Argyll. The lands of Otter remained in the hands of one branch of the Campbells or another, apparently, until the nineteenth century, when Campbell McPherson sold it to Col. Burnley Campbell, who then sold it to Major Macrae-Gilstrap, whose grandson is now in possession.

The present settlement at Otter Ferry is described as a hamlet consisting of about a dozen houses which are well scattered. There is a sub-post office and a licensed restaurant was recently opened. The school was closed a few years ago.

## *THE SCATTERING OF THE CLAN EWEN*

After the death of Swene, the last chief, and the loss of the MacEwen lands, the clan became pretty well scattered. Some stayed in and around Otter Ferry and became affiliated with the Campbells as followers of the Earl of Argyll. Some of the clan dispersed westward, where the name is still well represented in the Highlands and the Islands, especially Skye.

The MacEwens who stayed in Argyll gained the most fame. They became the hereditary poets and bards of the Campbells. The "seanachies" were honoured and important members of Celtic system, so this was an obvious distinction for the Clan Ewen.

Many clansmen moved east and south. One large group settled in Dunbartonshire on the shores of Loch Lomond and are known as the Lennox sept for their allegiance to the Duke of Lennox. This sept became landholders and were reputed to have won their colours fighting for Queen Mary at the battle of Langside.

Another group of MacEwens fought on the side of the Laird of Lochnaw in Galloway (mid fifteenth century) and were rewarded with tenantry of four farms in the region. Their occupation of the area is documented through 1900.

The author Keltie has written much on the MacEwens of Lochaber who have long been associated with the Camerons. Keltie believes the clan may have originated in Lochaber. If so, the clan would be ancient indeed, because they had settled in Otter Ferry by 1222.

By the eighteenth century, MacEwens were scattered throughout Scotland and many had begun immigrating to the American continent. Among those remaining in Scotland were five who fought for Prince Charlie at Culloden. One was known to be from Perth, two from Stirling and one from Dundee. This is documented in the records of the Scottish Historical Society.

CLAN EWEN SOCIETY FINANCIAL YEAR ENDING 3rd OCTOBER, 1986

<i>Income</i>	£	£
Subscriptions (23D, 40s.)	235.00	
Donations	99.35	
Interest on Bank Accounts	21.61	
Sale of Clan Equipment	9.60	
Expenditure over Income	<u>27.59</u>	<u>393.15</u>

*Expenditure*

Printing of Two Bulletins and Cards	215.00	
Postage	92.61	
Hire of Meeting Rooms	34.10	
Purchase of Christmas Cards	20.00	
Subscription to Association of Clan & Kindred Societies	10.00	
Sundries	<u>21.44</u>	<u>393.15</u>

*Trading Account*

	£		£
Opening Stock	98.52	Closing Stock	82.27
Profit	2.02	Sales	9.60
		Xmas Cards dispatched to Members with Bulletin 14 (13 packets). Cost	<u>8.67</u>
	<u>100.54</u>		<u>100.54</u>

*Assets*

Closing Stock	82.27	
Deposit Account	376.68	
Clan Centre Account	109.05	
Current Account (True Balance)	30.82	
Cash on Hand	<u>8.00</u>	<u>606.82</u>

*Membership* — Members on Roll 150

(Signed) CHARLES EWEN

*Auditor's Report*

4th October, 1986

I have today examined the Books and Accounts of the Clan Ewen Society and have found all in order and Expenditure receipts submitted. (Signed) Ian McEwan

*From the Treasurer*

One thing that is overdue is another reminder that the Annual Subscriptions are payable during October each year. I am always mentioning the number of Members who forget to pay and fail to mention the large number who pay more than their share each year; but for them we would be in the red each year. Please accept our sincere thanks. If you have forgotten, please renew your Membership. We need new Members, but we must keep our older Members. (Some have not paid since 1983).

## NEW MEMBERS

*May we take this opportunity to welcome the following who have become Members since we published the Membership Roll in Bulletin No. 15.*

### U. S. A.

Mr. and Mrs. R. G. Ewen, 8815 23rd Avenue N., Golden Valley, Minnesota. 55427

Mrs. Christina Blankenship, P.O. Box 244, Webb City, Mo., 64870

### ENGLAND

Dr. and Mrs. G. M. McEwan, Pont Cairn, Battery Park, Polruan, by Fowey, Cornwall PL23 1PQ

### SCOTLAND

Mr. and Mrs. A. G. M. McEwan, 6 Magdala Crescent, Edinburgh, EH12 5BE

Mr. and Mrs. G. McEwen, 94 Desswood Place, Aberdeen AB2 4DQ

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

SATURDAY 3rd OCTOBER 1987

at 2 p.m. with Afternoon Tea at 4 p.m.

I N

ROYAL HOTEL

COMRIE

TAYSIDE