



CLAN EWEN SOCIETY

Bulletin

No. 13 MAY 1985

A LOOK THROUGH A WINDOW

From THE CHAIRMAN

Bill Debenham, a relation of ours in New Zealand, came 'home' for the Big Tour just before the war. We ran him around as one is glad to do and in due course reached Loch Lomond. There it lay in all its silver magnificence with the Ben dreaming loftily in the background. At this point, Bill raised his hat, solemnly. "Why the hat-raising?" someone asked in mild amusement. "Well", said Bill, "I play in a band back home, and I've played 'By yon Bonny Banks and by yon Bonny Braes' so often it's almost coming out my ears. But I never thought I would live actually to SEE it!"

I'm sure there are very many people of Scots descent living all around the globe would like to share with Bill Debenham that view of Loch Lomond and of course many other places. But alas, they know that for many reasons they probably never will. We who live here in the midst of historic places or who look out every day over historic scenery, tend to take it all for granted. But maybe not quite.

Our particular family of MacEwens (six of us), were and are Stirling folk. We lived in a large comfortable house overlooking the King's Park and we gazed out every day at what we know here as "The Highland Line" — that range of mountains that runs from Ben Lomond in the West to roughly the Ochils in the East. And, as a kind of historical exclamation mark, jutting up in the middle foreground there is Stirling Castle. It is a magnificent sight — that string of mountains which herald the rest of the highland area far to the North and to the West. A bit threatening that barrier. The Romans, sensibly, never attempted to conquer the area.

The MacEwen men coming down for breakfast would come in, say 'Good Morning', then go over to the window and look out at the mountains. Mostly of course, it was to take in the weather, but also quite frankly, to take a look at 'the hills'. To misquote Shakespeare, but I hope you will take it kindly:

"Age cannot wither them, nor custom stale, their infinite variety".

No matter the season, we never tired of taking that look through the window each morning. A Clan Association has various functions, but one of them perhaps, is to act as a small window through which you may see something of the land we all love and which in its 'infinite variety' is ever fascinating.

For many, no doubt, only in their dreams will they 'behold the Hebrides' from where their Fathers came. But if you come, we hope that you will see your particular Loch Lomond and like Bill Debenham be able to raise your hat!

With all good wishes, Reviresco! *Rev. PETER MACEWEN*

To begin by quoting from Shakespeare, an avid Burnsian like myself, must have a reason. It's simply as follows. In the summer of 1983 a party of American visitors were in Irvine, shopping for souvenirs to take home. In 'Castle Crafts', one lady spotted a book of poems, 'Let's Recall Auld Irvine', by Mae McEwan. This was purchased.

Christmas '83 found me puzzling over a beautiful card sent simply to Mae McEwan, Irvine. All compliments to the Post Office, as I live in Troon and had only been employed at No. 10, Glasgow Vennal for six weeks, although, as an executive member of the Ayrshire Writers and Artists Society, my involvement there was much longer.

This Christmas card, which came from Harlingen in Texas, was signed Harriett Ewing Russell. She told me her family had moved to the United States near the end of the 19th century. They founded the town of Ewing in Virginia in 1890, the year Harriett was born. Her card gave no indication whatsoever as to how my poems came to be in her possession. I naturally wrote back, thanking her for the card and her reply gave me the information that her Scottish friend had bought my book of poems simply because of my name.

American ladies seem loathe to drop their maiden name. They appear to just add on their husband's. The friendship continued and in December of last year I received a letter from Harriett's daughter, Caroline, from Brownsville, Texas. In this she told me that the Scottish Society of the Rio Grande would be indeed honouring her mother at their Burns Celebrations on the 28th January, 1985. Harriett Ewing Russell would be crowned 'Heather Queen'. There would be a procession of the banners and a pipe band would also be present. I was asked if I would write a poem to commemorate this event. I was pleased to do this. Then, by air mail, arrived an invitation for me to attend Harriett's 95th birthday party. Her three daughters were to host this at the Country Club in Brownsville, Texas on the 31st January, 1985.

At first the idea of attending this party was very remote indeed. On one hand, quite a lot of money involved, coupled with the fact I had committed myself to speak at various Burns Suppers. This was my head reasoning. My heart dictated that this indeed would be a very wonderful experience, so after a lot of see-saw reasoning, I decided to go to Texas. But time was my enemy. A flight to Dallas – no trouble! Brownsville, still three hundred miles south. Not quite so simple, as I learned that for the first time in countless years, many local airports in Texas were snowbound. A new passport – essential as even in these enlightened days of Women's Lib, I couldn't travel without Hugh, but he could without me! A trip to Edinburgh for a visa for this visit next on the agenda, but I found myself in the situation that the travel agent wouldn't book me without paying the flight in full and I wouldn't pay in full until I had all the details ironed out. So time did run out on me!

My congratulations were therefore conveyed over the telephone and it was wonderful to speak direct to the family. I learned that the airports were still closed and even close relatives were unable to attend. The same evening, 31st January, I sat, surrounded by my own very special branch of the Clan Ewen. My little granddaughter Mhairi, also had her birthday on the same day as Harriett so, as my heart-felt toast crossed the miles, I thought "*The heart's aye the part, aye, that makes ye right or wrang*", as Robert Burns would say, coupled with what we all say, "*East – West – Hame's Best*".

SEANNACHIE'S SCRIBBLES

One of the fringe benefits which come my way as Seannachie is my ever widening knowledge of Scottish parishes and their names. Names like Lecropt, Kilmodan, Kirkgunzeon, and Methlick – to mention but a few – have for me a certain glamour because of their unfamiliarity. Then suddenly two of our Australian members come up with ancestors from Riccarton and Dreghorn and I find those names very ordinary and commonplace. I was, of course, born in the County of Ayrshire myself.

Incidentally, Gwen Wall, one of the members referred to, who was over in Scotland recently has promised to write up for the Bulletin an account of how her Great Grandfather, Andrew McEwen, came to emigrate to Australia. I won't spoil Gwen's story by giving any detail here but I am looking forward to reading it when it appears, as it covers what was, certainly to me, a completely unknown incident in Scottish Social history.

It was, of course, a great pleasure to meet up with Gwen and her husband personally after they had been doing their very concentrated research both in Edinburgh and West Lothian before coming West to Lanarkshire and Ayrshire where Betty McEwan, our Editor, who had been born in the same area as Gwen's ancestor, was able to provide a personalised tour with all the mass of local knowledge one just doesn't turn up in books. I only wish the Society could provide such assistance to all our overseas members who make the trip to Scotland.

Peculiarly enough, just around the same time I had had a letter from Beverley Short, also from Australia, about her Great Great Grandfather, John Ewen who, like Andrew McEwen had been a miner in Lanarkshire and who appears to have emigrated to Australia around the same time. I have referred before to the fact that family names can change in spelling and it is perhaps interesting to note that while John is EWEN in the post 1855 official Register, he appears as EWING in the notice of his marriage in the Old Parochial Records in 1854. It was as simple as that and all those changes from the basic EWEN (or Ewan, Euen, or Euan) occur in most families thus, of course, leading to the marvellous variety of family names on our list of members.

David McEwan, Janina, George Street Walk, Campbeltown, Argyll would like to get in touch with any of our members who have an ancestral link in Stirlingshire, particularly in the Buchanan Parish area around the early 1800. In David's case the McEwen spelling seems fairly well established at that time but, as I keep repeating, if you have a McCowan, or a Ewing who crops up around that time in that area please drop David a line.

I have had my long awaited week in Register House in Edinburgh where I came across an old book "Traditions of the Covenanters", which contained the last testimony of the three men who were the subject of our Chairman's article in the last Bulletin. My main intention was to have a look through Perthshire Old Parochial Records, but as usual, before I had finished I had been up in Aberdeenshire, down through Stirling, over to Argyll and then down to Galloway and Kirkcudbright and certainly around the end of the 18th Century those areas would appear to be the main sources of our ancestors.

The joint testimony of Thomas Harkness, Andrew Clark and Samuel McEwan, from the Tolbooth of Edinburgh, August 5th 1684.

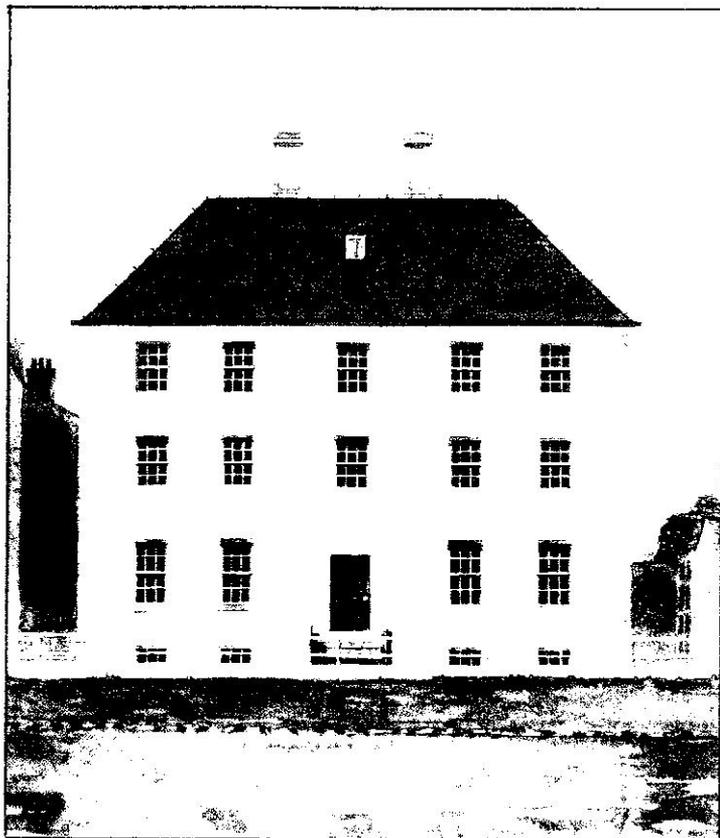
"Dear friends and relations whatsoever we think it fit to acquaint you that we bless the Lord that ever we were ordained to give a public testimony, who are so great sinners. Blessed be He that we were born to bear witness for Him, and blessed be the Lord Jesus Christ that ordained the Gospel and the truth of it which He sealed with his own blood; and many a worthy Christian gone before us has sealed them. We were questioned for not owning the king's authority. We answered that we owned all authority that is allowed by the Word of God sealed by Christ's blood. Now, our dear friends, we entreat you to stand to the truth, and especially all ye who are our own relations and all that love and wait for the coming of Christ. He will come and not tarry and reward everyone according to his deeds in the body. We bless the Lord that we are not a bit discouraged but content to lay down our life with cheerfulness, and boldness, and courage and if we had a hundred lives we would willingly quit with them all for the truth of Christ. Good news! Christ is no worse than he promised. Now we take our leave of all our friends and acquaintances and declare we are heartily content with our lot and that he has brought us hither to witness for Him and His truth. We leave our testament against Popery, and all other false doctrines that is not according to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments which is the only word of God. Dear friends, be valiant for God, for He is as good as His promises. Him that overcometh He will make a pillar in His temple. Our time is short, and we have little to spare, having got our sentence at one of the clock this afternoon, and are to die at five this day; and so we will say no more, but farewell to all our friends and relations, and welcome Heaven, and Christ, and the cross for Christ's sake.

SIGNED Thomas Harkness Andrew Clark Samuel McEwan"

The above testimony was taken from "Traditions of the Covenanters", a copy of which I found in the Library of Register House in Edinburgh. Samuel is said to be from Glencairn while Andrew Clark was a smith at Leadhills. According to the book, all three men were taken while asleep in fields in the Parish of Closeburn and sent to Edinburgh without delay. They arrived in Edinburgh at One in the afternoon and by Five o'clock had been executed. Justice was, indeed, summary in the "Killing Times".

Balnain House

International Appeal



FOREWORD

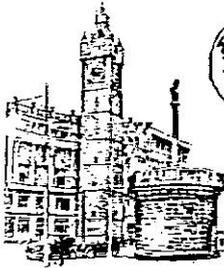
As chairman of the Balnain Trustees, it is my privilege to give a brief foreword to this, our International Appeal brochure.

In the restored Balnain House, Inverness, we will create a superb 'Home for Highland Music'; music with a very special place in the hearts of all who love Scotland and her rich heritage.

I commend this unique project to your generosity, confident that it is one of truly international significance.

Robin MacEwen

Chairman, The Balnain Trust



INTERNATIONAL
GATHERING 1985.



GLASGOW WELCOMES YOU

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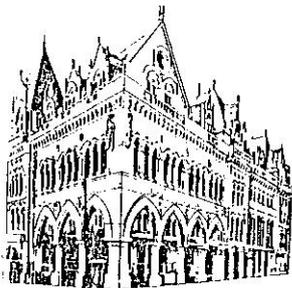
Sat. May 25TH

1 9 8 5.
7-30 - 11-45pm.



With The
AMAZING
SPOOTISKERRY
CEILIDH BAND



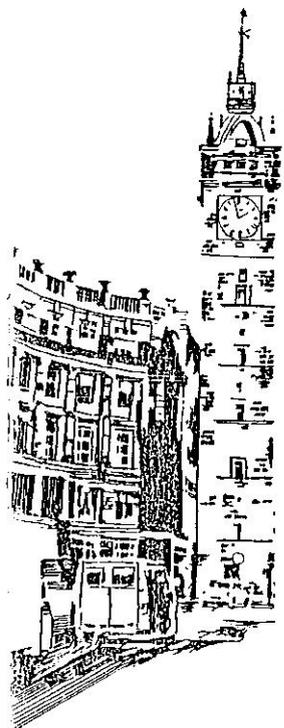


INTERNATIONAL
GATHERING
GLASGOW 1985.



Clan Ewen Society
Welcomes Visitors
at this Exhibition

to the
Clan Booth



LETTER FROM RENNIE McOWAN

Seannachies in modern times tend to be unseen, but their stories and researches are just as important as ever they were and perhaps more so as Clan traditions and details can get lost over the centuries.

Some members wanted to know exactly when the Clan Ewen ceased to exist as an entity and took on or had to take on, Campbell overlordship and when they spread in pockets to other parts of Scotland.

In researching the male line of my own ancestry I was intrigued by the 'colony' of McEwans (or similar names) around Muthill, Comrie and Crieff, and I too, had a similar query which I put to our hard-working and expert Seannachie, Colin McEwan, of Cumbernauld.

Back came some fascinating detail which might well interest other people as well as myself, and I was particularly interested to know whether any McEwans had joined Colkitto MacDonald's men when they ravaged Argyll in 1645 and later, as did the Lamonts and MacLachlans who later had to pay dearly for such rash judgement.

Colin states that by the 17th century, the MacEwans had ceased to exist as a Clan, capable of putting men into the field as a McEwan unit. The Perthshire McEwans may have come originally from the Loch Awe area through the link with the Campbells of Glenorchy.

The old parochial registers of Kenmore parish include references to a family of McKewenes in the late 17th century who, Colin states, must have been a sore thorn in the flesh of the minister and elders with Sabbath breaking, drunkenness and fornication being reported regularly. When I mentioned this to a cousin as an interesting anecdote from the family past, he sourly said: "*Some things never change*".

Colin has been examining accounts of the slaughter of the Dunaverty Garrison, in Kintyre, by Leslie's men in 1647. After the Restoration, the McDougalls brought an action against the Marquis of Argyll and others concerned in the massacre and list "*the names of the men who was murdered at Dounavertie in Kyntyre*". This list of 90 names includes a number of men named as McEwine, alias McDougall. With Ewen being the popular McDougall name Colin has no real reason, he says, for thinking that the men in question were not McDougalls in the modern sense, but he has been finding McEwans

in the area between Loch Awe and Craignish who were evidently men of a certain standing even in the time of the Otterbranch. Craignish is McDougall territory and the McEwans who were bards to the Glenorchy (or Breadalbane) Campells were also bards to the McDougalls of Dunollie. The lands given by Glenorchy were actually in Lorne and it is amusing to find that when the Campbells refer to the Bardic McEwans they are referred to as *joculatores*, whereas when one of the same McEwans name crops up in a McDougall land deal as a witness, he is referred to as *poeta*. Colin says he is tempted to translate *joculatores* as comic singers and, certainly, the genealogy the McEwans turned out for the Campbells indicates that the same McEwans made full use of poetic licence.

There is an account of a McEwan who, around the beginning of the 17th century, was factor for a Campbell in Oronsay and who got his come-uppance from Angus, who was half-brother to the famous Alastair MacColla, (Colkitto MacDonald). Angus learned that McEwan (Domhnall Ballach) had seized some poor woman's cow as tribute on Colonsay, tracked him down and had him shot. In the account of all this there is a remark to the effect that, after the shooting, Angus wrote to the authorities demanding a more acceptable factor and got one.

The more one digs, the more of interest that is found. It's good that seannachies are still with us.

RENNIE McOWAN

THE REAGAN CONNECTION

While President and Mrs. Reagan were visiting Ballyporeen, the origin of the President's roots in Ireland, Hugh Peskett of Burke's Peerage was asked by Mrs. Reagan if he could track down the President's Scottish connection. What Mr. Peskett found out has brought national attention to a family in the village of Carradale near the Mull of Kintyre.

Flora Blue has been notified by Burke's that she is a fourth cousin of the President. Mrs. Blue and the President share an ancestor who was the last whisky bootlegger to leave Kintyre and emigrate to the United States.

Burke's research shows that the President's maternal grandfather, Thomas Wilson, was the son of a weaver from Paisley, and Jane Blue, a Highland lass from Kintyre in Argyll.

The Daily Record.

EDITOR'S NOTES

The A.G.M. Sub-Committee met on Saturday, March 16th in the Ewington Hotel, Glasgow.

The two important dates this year are:-

INTERNATIONAL GATHERING 1985

*SATURDAY, 25th MAY – UNTIL
SATURDAY, 1st JUNE*

We will have a booth in the McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow during this week. Please come along and meet various members, who will be manning the booth throughout the week. We welcome visitors and friends to the Ceilidhs, Exhibitions, Country Dancing and Choir concerts taking place at various venues in the City and especially to the "Clan Booth".

A. G. M. 5th OCTOBER, 1985

THE BLACK BULL HOTEL, KILLEARN

One of our earliest meetings was held here. It was a beautiful afternoon and later a conducted tour of the Kirk, which was decorated for the Harvest Festival made it a very memorable one, thanks to our late Secretary, Mrs. Williamson.

Killearn is not far from Glasgow, a pleasant journey in a beautiful part of the country. Please come.

BALNAIN HOUSE INTERNATIONAL APPEAL

Donations are urgently required by the above. A home for Highland music, Balnain House in Inverness, has been restored for such.

Appeal Director

Michael J. Fraser
Albyn House, 37 Union Street,
INVERNESS

Treasurer

Ian A. Gordon, C.A.
13 Lombard Street,
INVERNESS

We ourselves will help anyone wanting further information on Balnain House.

WORLD PIPE BAND COMPETITION

The date this year is 17th August and will be held in Strathclyde Park, Motherwell, ten minutes from Glasgow on M74 route. This is a beautiful park with plenty to do and see. Anyone with a caravan can book in to the Caravan Site in the park, which has all modern conveniencies and they are at the beginning of the beautiful Clyde valley.

WHAT'S ON IN GLASGOW?

You can now have all the information of the What's, Where's and When's by ringing this number – 248 - 4000 (*041 first if you are outwith the city*). This is the telephone number of The Greater Glasgow Tourist Board operating 24 hours daily.

Rennie McOwan has written to me after he had a reply to an earlier letter which I had forwarded to Colin our seannachie to answer. Rennie says he was fascinated by Colin's reply as I am sure anyone would be who had written or been in touch with Colin.

I am glad to say I read the Scots magazine for April before replying to Rennie to let him know I had included his article in this Bulletin – I was equally fascinated by Rennie's stories therein.

Please keep in touch. You may contact any members of the Committee at any time – names and addresses are again on the last page of this issue. Let us have your comments or articles for future Bulletins.

YOUR EDITOR

THE 1745

I have had the odd query about what part the Clan played in Prince Charlie's attempt to win back the throne in 1745 – which so nearly succeeded. The answer is that as a Clan, we played no part, but individual McEwans/Ewens had a share in it.

A list of "people concerned in the Rebellion 1745/46" contains the following three names. They are described as follows:-

John McEwan	Residenter	DUNKELD	Carried arms but now lurking.
Donald McEwan	Mason	DUNKELD	
James McEwan	Son of shoemaker	STIRLING	Accepted a commission with the rebels. Present whereabouts unknown.

This is of course just the information from a very hurried cursory look at a list which came my way when I was looking for something else. I will check more fully later.

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