



CLAN EWEN SOCIETY

Bulletin

NO. 8 NOVEMBER, 1982

TO THE MEMBERS OF CLAN EWEN

I thank you for the honour of electing me Chairman. I send greetings and good wishes to you wherever you are.

Scots are funny people about their own history and country. Here in Scotland, there is little interest in Scottish matters, and very few would know when St. Andrew's Day falls or what is meant to happen on January 25th. On the whole they evince very little interest in their heritage.

It is when the Scot goes overseas or get a little older or finds himself in a minority, that he begins to show an interest.

I was Minister of the Rock of Gibraltar for seven years. Being a very small community compared to the 'English' we became very active — very "SCOTCH", — played Bagpipes, danced Reels, rolled our 'R's' and wore brogues. And the 30th November and the 25th of January were dates to which we eagerly looked forward and to which we still look back with affection.

So we exist to serve you and to help you to keep in touch with your roots and with the Scottishness that is very dear and very real to all of us.

Come and see us if and when you can. You are always welcome. Unfortunately we have no vast Castle, ruined or otherwise to show you, only the site of one on a lonely rocky promontory in far Argyll in the ancestral lands of Otter, washed by the choppy blue waters of Loch Fyne, girt by the mountains that never change.

This is what unites us scattered tho' we are to a' the airts; and a proper pride in a Clan that still, as always, down the centuries, continues to 'grow green'.

Reviresco.

REV. PETER MacEWEN, Chairman

INTERNATIONAL GATHERING OF THE CLANS 1983

If you are a Scot, the International gathering of the Clans 1983 in Nova Scotia, is an event not to be missed! You'll love the tradition, the pageantry, the pride of our great Scottish heritage. The meeting of families and old friends, the affirmation of loyalties and ties that still hold true, will not soon be forgotten. Make your plans now for all your generations to participate in this stirring occasion.

For updated information about the International Gathering of the Clans 1983, please write to:

*International Gathering of the Clans,
P. O. Box 1983,
HALIFAX, Nova Scotia, B3J 2R5, Canada.*

and request to be listed for mailing.

Any further information on the gathering from any of our Canadian connections which could be printed in our next bulletin, would be appreciated.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 1982

This was held in the Isle of Skye Hotel, Perth, Scotland, on **Saturday**, 9th October 1982. The top table was suitably decorated with a length of the Clan tartan and a model of 'The Stunted Oak', the symbol in the Clan Crest, prepared by Allan Ewing. Following local publicity, a few visitors called and attended the meeting, and it was very pleasant to meet some new members and others interested in the Society.

Normal A.G.M. business was conducted: Apologies, Minutes, Secretaries' and Treasurer's Reports. The Bulletin Sub-Committee reported that production was now organised on a regular basis in the West of Scotland, and invited everyone who wished to contribute to do so through the Secretaries, who in turn will pass items to the Bulletin Secretary, Mrs. Elizabeth McEwen.

In the course of accepting the financial statements it was noted that there had been some drop in members renewing their subscriptions, but the Annual Subscription (now due) was retained at £3, (or approximate equivalent in other currencies) meantime. A draft constitution was then considered and, with slight adjustment, was approved. Copies of this constitution, and a revised membership leaflet, are soon to be issued to all members.

Following this business the Committee stood down, and formal elections were held. Changes were made in the following posts:-

Chairman	—	Rev. Peter McEwen
Vice-Chairman	—	Lt. Col. Alan Ewing

All other Office-Bearers were re-appointed as was the Society Committee, with Mr. John McEwen being added to its membership.

During the general discussions which followed amongst the twenty or so persons present, several proposals for future activities were explored. One idea which was favoured was to seek some form of sign posting or local information display at or near the old castle ruins at Kilfinan, together with location of suitable material in hotels and tourist centres.

Altogether the verdict on our day in Perth was "a very happy event".

HOW SHOULD I SPELL MY NAME?

Since taking over as Seannachie I have been asked several times the above question and there is a simple answer: keep spelling it the way you always have. However, as Scots, we are a naturally argumentative race and there will always be those who will support the McEwen or MacEwen as against the McEwan or MacEwan. Indeed as a young man I had strong feelings on the subject myself. Now however, having waded through Old Parish Records and such like documents in my Family history searches and found my own family name spelt McEwan, McEwen, McEwing, McKeown and even McCairnie, I have become much more liberally minded in such matters.

My Gaelic speaking friends assure me that the McKeown (usually referred to as the Irish spelling of the family name) version of the name is the nearest phonetically to the original Gaelic MacEoghain and as a poor simple soul who has never cottoned on to the spelling of the Gaelic language I am happy to accept their opinion. After all, it is not so long ago when most of our forebears (certainly MY forebears) had a natural diffidence about signing their name and preferred to put an "X", leaving the spelling of their name to the Minister or whatever official thought it necessary to put down. The way the official spelt it depended on how he heard it, therefore you get a wide discrepancy. To illustrate my point I recall the first time I ever heard a recording of my own voice. All my life till then I would have claimed I had been saying McEwan, but, on the tape, it came out loud and clear as McEwin and had I been listening to some one giving that as his name I would undoubtedly have recorded it as Ewin. Mind you the T.V. programmes over recent years selling McEwan's beer may well have counteracted the 'Ewin' as they pronounce the *a* quite clearly, but in pubs I still hear "Pint o' McEwins" coming out clearly.

More from Colin, later!

Gavin McEwin from South Australia has informed us that the last witch to be burned in a tar barrel in Scotland was a McEwen — Elspeth McEwen, who met her fiery fate in Kirkcudbright in 1698.

John McEwen, husband of a committee member is not at all convinced by this story. He maintains that Scotland's last witch is alive and well and living with him in Coatbridge!

A TARTAN HOTEL – IN FRANCE!

“Did the Ewans ever fight with the Donalds?” Not my question, but one raised by French hotelier Rene Drapeau as I was leaving him this summer. I had asked if he would mind if I mentioned his hotel in an item for this Newsletter, and with a Scottish wife he had learned enough to check on clan history to avoid a possible “faux pas” with his in-laws.

I have since checked with the Society Committee, and no one seems to have any knowledge of any altercation with the Donalds, so Rene can relax. His wife Margaret (nee Donald) hails from Inverurie in Aberdeenshire.

His hotel, the Marie-Stuart, is in La Roche-sur-Yon, capital of the Vendee, a Department about the middle of France’s Atlantic coast. This lies to the south of where the Loire ends in the Bay of Biscay at St.-Nazaire.

The small city has quite a history too, as La Roche was developed under decree from Napoleon who designated it the capital of the region when other towns and areas of the Vendee opposed him and his revolutionary army. The main square has an impressive statue – of Napoleon naturally – which can be seen for a very long way on approach from all the main points of the compass.

French hotels often have the reputation of just existing to provide beds for restaurant guests, and it certainly is for the restaurant and for function catering that the Marie-Stuart has earned a high reputation locally. Highland Steaks, Whisky Crepes and other Scottish sounding delicacies have pride of place in a menu that also contains many excellent, and some original, French dishes.

And the tartan? Background wall coverings are mostly of Royal Stuart, but other tartans are displayed as well, and some Scottish decorations and artefacts are hung all around the dining room. Our table was the one next to a big length of Ancient McEwan tartan of course, and there’s no prize for guessing which special Scottish export beer Rene sells, in draught as well as in cans.

Vive la France! Vive les Tartans!

D. McE

"OLD STARRY"

The father of our present Joint Secretary, Mrs. W. E. J. H. Williamson of Cove, was renowned in the Glasgow district as a popular lecturer on astronomy. The story below appeared in the 'Scots Magazine' in November 1978.

Duncan McEwan, born in Alva, Clackmannanshire, was only one of many thousands to benefit from the influence and enlightenment of those astral pioneers. Although never presumptuous enough to compare himself to those giants of astronomy, nor his work to the importance of their contribution to the science, he invested no less dedication or effort in his studies. And he invented an ingenious device which greatly assisted astronomy students to understand the complexities of astral motion and helped them to identify principal stars and constellations. As well as writing an accompanying text book for his invention, he later produced a 50,000-word publication of some astronomical significance.

From his early childhood in Strathblane until his death in Glasgow in 1942 at the age of 86, McEwan was enraptured by the starry heavens. For most of that time he was a member and leading figure of the British Astronomical Association.

Duncan's schoolmaster uncle was apparently the first person to be aware of the boy's early fascination for the sky. Since he harboured the same interest and possessed a fair basic knowledge of the subject, active encouragement for the youngster was quickly forthcoming. At night, both master and pupil would perch on the hill behind the small wooden schoolhouse and, through inexpensive telescopes, survey the inky blackness above them. They compared the brightness and colour of each star, noted the contrast in ordinary and variable (double) stars, and pondered in wonder at the realisation that the constellations they were scrutinising from afar were exactly the same as the Greeks and Egyptians saw them thousands of years before.

Although star-gazing was Duncan's most enjoyable pastime in his youth, it was hardly a remunerative undertaking. Serious thought had to be given to his future. In his early twenties he decided to go to Canada to seek his fortune. He spent several hard-working years there, but the call of his homeland never quite left him and he returned, none the richer but wiser and more worldly. He married an Edinburgh girl, who later died tragically, leaving him to rear five young children on his own. He met his second wife in Dundee during his travels for a confectionery firm and from there the family moved to Cults in Aberdeenshire.

Duncan McEwan was in his 40's when, along with his wife and children, he went to live in Glasgow in the early 1900's. During the preceding years, thoughts of the night sky had never been far from his mind and he continued his exhaustive studies at every available opportunity. After lengthy consideration, he decided to attempt to capitalise on his extensive astronomical knowledge by writing a book. In preparation, he enrolled as a research student at Glasgow University.

"His reputation as an authoritative astronomer and gifted lecturer gradually spread throughout Scotland and he was invited to countless meetings as guest speaker".

While collating material at the university for his impending book, McEwan happily accepted the numerous invitations which came his way to lecture to younger and less knowledgeable students. It was during a series of these lectures in the summer of 1907 that he stumbled upon the idea of constructing a unique and brilliantly simple apparatus to illustrate and simplify the teachings of astronomy. He called it an Umbrella Star Map. This is how he explained its function:-

"Several methods have been employed to bring the starry sphere into a tabulated form, to show by means of maps or diagrams the principal features of the evening sky. It is obvious that the more directly the natural view of the heavens can be artificially reproduced, the easier it will be to identify the positions of the stars. The interior of an umbrella fulfils this condition in a very simple way, by preserving the true relative positions of the observer and his field of view; and it not only affords scope for projecting the star map on a comparatively large scale, but it obviates the necessity of turning over the leaves of a book, by presenting the whole vault of the heavens in one view, taking it all in at a glance".

Duncan McEwan lived a full and constructive life. He started the first service flats in Glasgow and soon became known in the city for dividing large houses. He also took a lease of the very beautiful mansion, Garscadden House, and Mrs. Williamson and her family enjoyed many years of happiness there. Later, he bought the house of Bellcairn at Cove. At the age of 62 he took his first driving lesson and within a few weeks was an accomplished motorist. He was still driving 20 years later.

In his book *The Umbrella Star Map or Guide to the Starry Heavens* there is a wonderful piece of poetry, and the last verse ends thus:-

*Yet I know not how you shine, With that radiance so divine,
But that All-Creating Might, Gave the word "Let there be light".*

"Incidentally, my daughter and I are anxious to contact anyone who may be in possession of an Umbrella Map. I understand there was quite a large number of them manufactured before the outbreak of the First War, which halted production".

MARATHON MACS

Of the 5071 who completed the Glasgow Marathon on 17th October 1982, at least 14 were easily identified as having names associated with those in our clan society (10 McEwan, 3 Ewing and 1 McEwen). This is better than the number we might have expected from the number of names in the Glasgow Telephone Directory, where there are less than 2½ pages with these names out of a total of 1104 pages.

What do all these statistics prove? Merely that our clan names were kept well to the fore in this big national event.

Mind you, some other clans or names may have done a little better proportionally, but not by much. From a first glance however it looks as though the MacDonalds were more enthusiastic finishers than the Campbells — or maybe they just didn't want to be caught napping by the Campbells while they were resting!

OFFICE BEARERS 1982 — 83

Chairman:

Rev. Peter J. McEwen,
Lindsaylands Cottage,
Biggar, Lanarkshire
TEL: 20471

Vice-Chairman:

Lt. Col. Alan Ewing,
Balgowan, Garngaber Road,
Lenzie, Glasgow
TEL: 3525

Secretaries:

Mrs. W. E. J. H. & Miss E. Williamson
Bellcairn Cottage,
Cove, By Helensburgh G84 ONX

TREASURER'S REPORT FOR YEAR ENDING

8th OCTOBER 1982

INCOME

INCOME			
Balance forward	—	Deposit Account	£168.82
" "	—	Clan Centre Account	23.29
Subscriptions (66)			227.30
Sale of Clan ties, scarves and badges			39.50
Donations			20.44
			<u>£479.35</u>

EXPENDITURE

Printing of Bulletins No. 6 & 7	99.00
Postage	97.14
Room Hire for Meetings	25.30
Sundries	<u>16.90</u>

238.34

BALANCE

Cash at Bank Deposit Account	168.82
" " " Clan Centre Account	23.29
" " " Current Account	28.90
Cash on Hand	<u>20.00</u>

241.01

£479.35

TRADING ACCOUNT

Opening Stock	£128.01	Sales	£ 39.50
Purchases	0.00	Closing Stock	104.51
Profit	<u>16.00</u>		
	<u>£144.01</u>		<u>£144.01</u>

Ian McEwan, Auditor

Charles Ewen, Treasurer

MEMBERSHIP

Number of members on roll	173
Number of members paid up	66
New members enrolled during year	11

At the Annual General Meeting on 9th October, 1982, it was agreed to hold the Subscription at £3.00 and to again distribute this Bulletin to all members on the roll. It is regretted, however, that due to escalating costs, especially in overseas postage, future Bulletins in 1983 will be despatched to paid-up members only.

LETTER FROM CANADA

Below is an excerpt from a letter received from Dr. Alex. C. McEwen, of Ottawa:

"My plans to take the family on vacation to Scotland this summer were frustrated when the s.s. Uganda, which was to have taken us to Dundee, was requisitioned as a hospital ship for the Falklands operations, thereby obliging us to cancel our arrangements. I myself did manage to visit Edinburgh for a few days at the end of June and I then took the opportunity to go to Kilfinan and see the castle site where I was shown over by a local resident. An account of the excavation made there about 1968-9 is awaiting publication and may appear next year; I have been promised a copy.

I stayed overnight at Kilfinan, in the Old Manse, and spent some time talking to local people and looking around the church-yard. I found the grave of my great-great-grandmother, Annabella McEwen, who was born in 1780, together with the graves of a few other relations, but was unable to go back any further in time.

During a later visit to an archaeological site near Dunoon I was told that the Kilfinan church may be deconsecrated and sold, which would indeed be a pity. As you probably know, the former Free Church at Kilfinan is now occupied as a private house.

I was told that a history of Kilfinan and a separate history of Otter Estate are being written by two historians. I don't have their names or any other details but if anyone has any further information perhaps they would let me know."

The Clan Society historian would also be pleased to receive details.

ROOTS CENTRE

Dr. McEwen and possibly others may be interested to know that a computer programme will be available soon in the West of Scotland, which has been compiled from old Shipping records and will give sailing dates, names and possibly destinations of people who left Scotland, in the last century.

The Roots Centre will be sited in The Stirling Library, Glasgow and will be operational from April 1983.

E. McE.

LETTERS FROM U.S.A.

A letter from Mr. Gordon H. Ewen of Winnetka, Illinois, mentions that he knows of two other clan towns in the U.S.A., namely Ewen, Michigan (46°5'N, 89°4'W) and Port Ewen, New York (41°9'N, 74°0'W).

Ewen Michigan, is a tiny place of a few hundred people in the iron ore country of Michigan's upper peninsula. It is 45 miles east of Ironwood and 25 miles south of Lake Superior. There have to be a few Scots in the area as the nearest village is Bruce Crossing.

Port Ewen is on the west bank of the Hudson River about 90 miles north of New York City and less than 10 miles from Franklin Roosevelt's Hyde Park. Port Ewen, population 2,600 is contiguous to the city of Kingston.

Mr. Ewen also says that his three trips to Scotland in the last decade have coincided with the Walker Cup Matches. He was a member of the Executive Committee of the U.S. Gold Association and is also an overseas member of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club, St. Andrews.

An interesting note has come from Ann Decker, who is the Aide to Representative McEwan of the Florida House of Representatives in Tallahassee. Mr. McEwan was born in Orange County, Florida and is the son of Dr. Duncan Tracy McEwan, an Orlando physician. His professional associations include membership of the American Bar Association, the District of Columbia Bar, the Florida Bar and the Orange County Bar Association. His political activities include a former persidency of the Rollins College Young Democrats (1958-59) and, presently of the Orange County Young Republicans. He is also a member of other Republican organisations and has served as Campaign Manager. He has numerous civic and other affiliations and figures in 'Who's Who in American Law' and 'Who's Who in American Politics'.

Postal Remittances to:

*Mrs. W. E. J. H. Williamson, Belcairn Cottage,
COVE, By Helensburgh, G84 0NX*

CLAN EWEN SOCIETY

SUBSCRIPTION FORM

SESSION 1982/83

Member's Name

Address

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AMOUNT OF SUBSCRIPTION: £3 EACH MEMBER
or equal in foreign currency
Cheque or P/O crossed

CLAN EWEN SOCIETY

Received from

the sum of

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SECRETARY

DETACH AT DOTTED LINE