



CLAN EWEN SOCIETY

Bulletin

No. 10 NOVEMBER, 1983

TO ALL CLAN MEMBERS

At the time of going to press for the last Bulletin we thought we were in for a right wet year all through. Fortunately we were quite wrong and we had a gorgeous summer in Scotland, one of the hottest and sunniest for years. Back to normal now, but we will long remember the summer of '83.

In such a summer there are few places to equal Scotland for sheer beauty and often breathtaking magnificence. We Stirling MacEwens lived in sight of the 'Highland Line' which stretches from Ben Lomond right round the northern horizon almost to Perth — Ben Ledi . . . Stuc a' Chroin . . . Ben Vorlich etc. Though we saw them every day in every guise the weather could think up, they never failed to draw the eye, and to provoke a sort of '*dirl*' in the heart strings.

Sentimental — ? Of course it is sentiment that draws Scots the world over to their Clan Associations, and that is a decent and wholly commendable sentiment. But the Scot is basically canny. The hills still claim their toll of lives each year. Climbers, hikers, shepherds . . . We are not fooled by the magnificence and the grandeur. It didn't feed people in the old days and what are now great stretches of first class farm land was once undrained bog. There were the forests, there were wolves and the clansmen could be and often were brutal and often cruel. They had to be. It was a hard nation and it made hard and self-reliant men whose descendants we are.

Scotland is going through a harsh period of transition at the moment. The great heavy industries appear to be on their way out. Fishing is having dreadful problems. Unemployment is a bitter spectre in every town. And yet the vitality of the country is undeniable and some industries are flourishing. Farming is good. The hills round Biggar are covered with cattle and sheep, and the Computer industry is booming. Scotland is changing, but the Scot does not change all that much. Basically it has always been a hard country, and that makes for adaptability — and the Scot is adapting — and having a good grumble at the same time! Even the Churches — of all denominations — are having their problems.

But one thing will never change, the welcome we still love to give to '*ane and a*' who come into our midst. That is the value of the reviving clan systems. No matter who you are, clansmen or not, there will always be that welcome.

Reviresco!

REV. PETER MacEWEN

RECRUITING AT THE WORLD PIPE BAND CHAMPIONSHIP



The picture shows
our marquee
with
ALAN EWING
and
CHARLES EWEN
'on duty'.

Pursuant to a Minute of the Society at Aberfoyle, Clan Ewen took up residence temporarily at Bellahouston Park, Glasgow, scene of the World Pipe Band Championship competition on Saturday, 13th August, 1983. The object of this exercise was to 'Show the Flag' and hopefully, engender sufficient interest in those fortunate souls who are eligible to join our Society.

The day dawned bright and beautiful and continued like that to the very end. Charlie Ewen, our Treasurer, kindly allowed us the use of a small and colourful marquee, which was ideal for our purpose, and we were in business. Our stand attracted considerable attention due, in some part, to a map of Clan territories which Charlie had displayed "Out Front". This undoubtedly served its purpose. It was interesting to discover that Clan Donald had had similar thoughts to ourselves in that they, also, had taken a slightly larger marquee two down from our own.

During the course of the day we had moderate success in that a few 'new faces' - 8 in all - appeared at the display and went away, armed with enrolment forms, etc., and hopefully, thinking seriously of joining. Mrs. Sarah Ewing Sheerin of Glasgow did enrol 'on the spot' and we welcome her most cordially. Mr. John McEwan of Edinburgh, one of those who showed interest, has also joined since Bellahouston and we extend to him a warm welcome also.

Clan Ewen also had an interest in the competitions in that one of our members, Barry Ewen, Charlie's elder son, was taking part in the Grade I competition as one of the four Pipe Majors forming part of the 78th Fraser Highlanders Pipes and Drums of Canada. They achieved the distinction of being adjudged the best overseas band in their Grade.

3rd November, 1983

120 North Shore Road, Troon

Instead of "Reviresco", our particular branch of the family motto should have been "Procrastinators". After receiving an application form from a Troon McEwen, several years ago, we immediately decided this was for us. Family events, business hustles, important and unimportant reasons kept us from sitting for five minutes and completing this form.

We accidentally met a young overseas visitor who appeared interested that we had, in fact, a Clan, a Tartan and a Motto and it made us ashamed of the fact we had not joined. The Clan badge and tartan had been in our possession for many years. Now – the joining.

One or two pleasant phone calls ensued. A cheque was sent off and we eagerly awaited the first Annual General Meeting. We decided to make it a Special Weekend, a Holiday with the gathering of the McEwans, the McEwens, and all members of the Clan Ewan Society as the highlight of this.

We arrived at the Tinto Hotel in Symington to find the tartan well in evidence, friendly faces around us and a general feeling of welcome. We were indeed at a family gathering. The A.G.M. was well conducted, the business and humour blending exceedingly well. It was a special pleasure to meet an Irvine connection as this is our home town. A thrill to meet Alex and Kay who had travelled from the U.S.A.

We don't intend to see what we can get from joining the Society. It is our hope to add to the best of our ability to the excellent work already going on. Living in the heart of the Burns Country we have ample opportunities of contributing in the fund-raising side, an essential part of any Society.

Finally, in the short time the Society has been in existence, we feel a remarkable progress has been made. Long may this continue. We thank you for our welcome and wish good fortune and continued success to the Clan Ewan.

HUGH and MAE McEWAN

Everyone present was pleased to welcome two overseas visitors to the last General Meeting at Biggar, namely Alec and Catherine McEwan from Burlington, Wisconsin, U.S.A., and praised their tenacity in finding Biggar. Although most members stay on for a meal after our meetings, few ever stay overnight. Eventually we had to leave Alec and Catherine, but it was a pleasant interlude, meeting and talking to two very nice people. "Haste Ye Back".

E. McE

NOTE: A.G.M. for 1984 will be at Irvine, Ayrshire, on 6th October. More details in next issue.

SEANNACHIE'S SCRIBBLES

The beautiful summer we have had and your seannachie's well-known habit of nipping off to "Furrin pairts" every so often has held up his research into Clan History, but the advent of the long winter nights should see him delving away again into the historical mists which enshroud early Clan History.

I can however nail one of the often repeated mis-statements about the McEwans being the Clan Campbell bards. The truth of the matter is that a family of McEwans were bards to Campbell of Glenorchy and as a reward for their services were granted land at Kilchoan on Loch Melfort in Lorn. They seemed to have held that position till early in the 17th century by which time they were regarded as the Official historians of the Campbells. Incidentally in one of the Campbell Histories the same McEwans did the Campbells proud in their recital of the Campbell genealogy but more of that anon once I can use the long winter nights to dig a bit deeper into that, but it is interesting to note that Professor Ian Campbell in his book, "The Clan Campbell. What is the Clan?", states that the Bard McEwans were not kinsmen of the McEwans of Otter.



It was a great pleasure meeting up with DOROTHY FULHAGE this summer. Dorothy and her cousin Corinne were over on a fortnight's tour of Scotland and as one of our most faithful correspondents (Dorothy has Ewing forebears), it really was delightful meeting personally at last. I am sure Dorothy won't forget her trip in the back of the McEwan van after her trip to Culzean Castle. We met up again at the Inverary Highland Games, along with Charles and Matt Ewen and when we finally saw her off

at Prestwick Airport, Dorothy was still going strong, although I am sure she would be glad to get home for a well deserved rest. Come again - Dorothy.

In the same vein I missed the chance of meeting up with Airlie Szalay (or McEwin "of that ilk as her brother Gavin insists") from

Australia, but my timing was bad, Airlie, and I seemed to be in France at the wrong time. But we hope you enjoyed your trip around the Eastern Mediterranean and Israel but, next time, forget the South of England, and come on home to Scotland.

Mrs. Judy Revoy, one of our newer members who has a Ewen background would welcome correspondence from anyone with a Fyvie, Aberdeenshire background. John Ewen, the first of Judy's Ewens to go to Canada, is believed to have left Scotland for Canada in 1855, with a sister who later returned to Scotland. Her address is Box 118, Archerwill, Sask., Canada, SOE OBO and, as I said, Judy will be delighted to hear from any Ewen who thinks there might be a family connection. Meanwhile I will be trying to check up on emigration ships but it will be November before I will be getting anything definite.

Incidentally we now have reasonably complete records of McEwans/McEwens/McKeowns/McEwings from the Old Parish Records in the Mid Argyll area and this winter I hope to get similar sets for Perthshire and Galloway. Incidentally it is interesting – and this is only from an impression gained – how many Ministers seem to have Perthshire roots. Our Chairman, Peter, may have views on why Perthshire should produce so many McEwen men of the cloth as compared to Mid Argyll. I remain open-minded on the subject.

At the last General Meeting of the "Clan Ewen" some discussion took place on the establishment of some form of "*Clan Centre*". Suggestions varied from the purchase of a piece of land, to the leasing of some ground for a site caravan or similar type of structure. It is obvious that anything of this kind would require a good sum of money. A little money does exist in a fund for this project and recently two generous donations were received. The Society thanks the members for these donations.

The Society Committee have discussed some possibilities and are conducting an investigation "on site" as to what might be possible.

Perhaps this note will bring the "*Clan Centre*" idea to the notice of more members, as this would be a useful place for home and overseas members when visiting the Castle Ruins at Kilfinan, near Otter Ferry in Argyll.

E. WILLIAMSON, *Secretary*

NOT A GOOD McEWAN YEAR

My grandfather, Neil McEwan, was born in 1831. A year later his father John decided that now the Crinan Canal was in action, Ardrishaig at the east end of the canal would be a better place to make a living, so with his wife Mary McBrayne and one-year-old Neil, he moved there.

Naturally Neil grew up a fisherman, as did his brothers, and so some time after his marriage to Catherine McKellar in 1854, we find him, with his younger brother Dugald, owning the fishing boat, "The Racehorse". Then, in 1861, Neil and Dugald have a week at the herring fishing which must have made them both wonder if perhaps the herring fishing was really for them. I note indeed that Dugald later packed up the fishing and betook himself off to Glasgow.

Before going on with my story, I should point out that fishing methods were changing radically once the Loch Fyne realised the advantages of the Trawl net. The use of the trawl net was at the time still illegal and the Government had, the previous year, brought out an Act to make the point clear. To make their point still clearer they had also sent two of Her Majesty's steamers, the 'Jackdaw', commanded by one Lt. Henderson, R.N., and the 'Jackal', commanded by Lt. Lodder, R.N., to partol the Loch Fyne area to ensure that the Ardrishaig fishermen, and others, kept the law. So, on the night of the 4th of June, 1861, Neil and Dugald are on board the Racehorse a mile or so south of Ardrishaig doing their best to earn a living albeit with a trawl net. They would appear to have slipped up in that they did not adhere to the normal Loch Fyne custom of having a "Look-out boat" in attendance with the result that they are surprised by Lt. Henderson in the 'Jackdaw'. The Navy then proceeds to confiscate the net on the grounds that it was "A sea net mounted for trawling" and, in addition, seized the boat as well. More of this later, but the hard fact was that Neil and Dugald had lost their net and nets have never been cheap. The loss of the net was probably the reason that, two nights later, we find the bold pair again at the trawling, but this time not on the Racehorse, but crewing for their Uncle Duncan McBrayne in his pair of skiffs the "Star" and the "Weatherside". This time too they are over on the other side of the Loch near Otter Spit although I don't suppose that either was thinking much about being back in what was their ancestral territory. Their Uncle would appear to have been more experienced than his nephews as he had his look-out boat, "The Red Jacket" lying a mile or so down the loch as a precaution against what had happened two nights earlier although, on this occasion, it was not the 'Jackdaw', but the 'Jackal' with Lt. Lodder in command which was on the prowl.

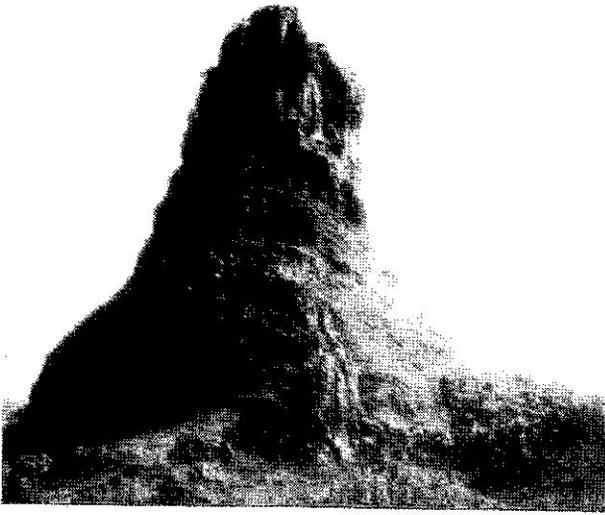
It was a fine quiet night and they were all enjoying a quiet smoke after completing hauling their net for the third time when the peace was shattered by a loud hail from the shore, the report of a rifle, and the sound of a bullet whizzing over their heads. This was followed by more shots and a period of confusion

with both boats making for the shore to find the source of the shots. They then find that Lt. Lodder had worked a "Flanker" by sending a landing party consisting of his Bosun and a Marine to spy on the honest fishermen. Seeing what they had considered illegal trawling they had fired the warning shots. By this time Neil noticed that young Peter McDougall was lying very still in the boat. At first Neil imagined that the boy was sensibly hiding from the shots, but on a closer look saw blood on his forehead. The poor lad was dead, although it took several minutes to realise this. The upshot of all this is that Neil and Dugald are called upon to appear at the High Court in Edinburgh as witnesses in the trial of the Bosun and the Marine on charges of murder, later changed to culpable homicide.

To pile on the agony while they are waiting to go through to Edinburgh, where incidentally they are referred to as 'Lawless men', the Procurator Fiscal in Inverary sets the wheels of the Law in motion anent the earlier Racehorse incident and the Deputy Sheriff is pleased to grant warrant to summon the said Neil and Dugald McEwan to appear at Inverary Sheriff Court on the 23rd of July - exactly one week after they were due at the High Court in Edinburgh. It must have been quite a week in Ardrishaig, but I find comfort in the fact that when the Sheriff Officer calls with the summons, neither Neil nor Dugald can be found, with the result that the summons for Neil is served on his wife Catherine McKellar, while Dugald's is served on Mary McBrayne, his mother. It is, I feel, proof of the solidarity of a fishing village that in Ardrishaig, which then had a population of barely 400, the Sheriff Officer could trace neither man.

Came the 23rd and Cunningham Graham, the Deputy Sheriff, throws out their plea of "Not Guilty", fines them each £10 and since no cash was available from the McEwan household, grants a warrant for recovery of the same penalty by poinding of their goods and summary sale thereby and, in addition orders the forfeiture of the net with half the proceeds of the sale going to Lt. Henderson. In addition, he grants warrant for the said Neil McEwan and Dugald McEwan to be detained in the prison at Inverary until such return had been reported.

On the 26th, the Sheriff, on learning that security had been found, grants warrant to the Keeper of the Prison at Inverary for the immediate release of the said Neil and Dugald. There is rather a neat finish to this family story. Following the spell in Inverary prison, the 'Racehorse' changes its name to the 'Catherine McKellar' and Neil becomes a respectable citizen. (At least there is no record of his being caught again) and indeed on his death certificate is mention of his having been the Church Officer. Mark you there are those who said that he had it coming to him as a result of an incident earlier the same year. The story goes that Neil had been sailing between Tarbert and Ardrishaig on a trip which took him close inshore past the house of an old lady well known to the Ardrishaig fishermen as a witch. In a fit of hardihood Neil had hailed the house in question and in a loud voice called, "I defy you" whereupon his mast snapped and fell over the side of the skiff. Born as I was only a few miles from "Alloway's Auld Haunted Kirk" I was brought up with a proper respect for witches and cannot help agreeing that there was some connection between that particular incident and Neil's consequent troubles.



*THE
LEGEND
OF SKYE'S
CASTLE
EWEN*

The Island of Skye is the most famous of the Hebrides, famous for its wild mountains, its colours and its mild and misty climate. Still, somewhat primitive in parts, it has become increasingly popular as a holiday resort, especially since car ferries have made it part of a through route to the Outer Islands. With this in mind Martha and I decided to plan a short holiday to North and South Uist and Benbecula. The maps were brought out and our route planned to take us the short sea route of two and a half hours from Uig in Skye to Lochmaddy in North Uist. Imagine our surprise when looking at the map (Bartholomews half inch of Skye and Torridon) we noted a small black dot in Glen Uig with the name Castle Ewen. **THIS WE HAD TO SEE.** We knew of only one Castle Ewen, that at Otter Ferry in Argyll.

It was a beautiful day in late June as we travelled along the two and a half mile single track road, with passing places, in search of Castle Ewen. At the end of the road having failed to find a Castle we decided to do what all Scots do when stumped, make use of our Guid Scots Tongue. At an old Croft we introduced ourselves to a dear old lady of 92 years, a Mrs. McNab who was born and raised in the glen.

We enquired about the Castle and she replied in Gaelic, 'Caistel Eoghan', and then in English, "Oh yes, it's not a Castle, it's a rock. You can see it from here". There it was, a large volcanic rock and when viewed from a distance not unlike an old Castle. It was called Caistel Eoghan after her grandfather, Ewen Campbell, who used to climb on the rock.

Like many a Scot, Mrs. McNab had travelled widely, having spent many years abroad as a missionary spreading the word of the gospel among people many of whom were cannibals.

C.E.

ACCOUNTS FOR FINANCIAL YEAR ENDING 7th OCTOBER, 1983

INCOME

Subscriptions (105)	£361.58
Sale of Clan Ties, Scarves, etc.	46.00
Donations	22.97
Jewellery donated by Martha Ewen raised	20.40
Interest on Deposit Account	11.20
Interest on Clan Centre Account	1.53
	<u>£463.68</u>

EXPENDITURE

Printing of two Bulletins and Constitution	£150.00
Postage	94.29
Room hire for A.G.M. and Committee meetings	27.00
Hire of site for Booth at Glasgow Highland Games	23.00
Sundries, (includes cost of tartan for Clan sign)	17.99
Advert in Scots Magazine	4.60
Surplus for Year	146.80
	<u>£463.68</u>

TRADING ACCOUNT

Opening Stock	£104.51	Sales	£ 43.50
Profit	<u>18.00</u>	Closing Stock	<u>79.01</u>
	<u>£122.51</u>		<u>£122.51</u>

BALANCE SHEET

<i>LIABILITIES</i>		<i>ASSETS</i>	
General Fund at 7/10/83	£468.16	Closing Stock	£ 79.01
		Deposit Account	230.02
		Clan Centre Account	25.82
		Current Account	120.91
		Cash on Hand	12.40
	<u>£468.16</u>		<u>£468.16</u>

Signed CHARLES EWEN, Hon. Treasurer IAN McEWAN, Hon Auditor

MEMBERSHIP

Number of Members on roll—116. Number paid up—105. New Members—23. The Committee are delighted at the increase in membership from 66 to 105 and at the A.G.M. it was agreed to hold the single subscription at £3.00 and to introduce a family subscription of £5.00.

ANCESTRAL ANTICS

According to most historians the Barony of Otter, in Loch Fyne was finally transferred from the McEwans to the Earl of Argyll in 1513 and thereafter the McEwans were scattered far and wide. Maybe so, but in 1539 I am delighted to find a Duncan McEwan, with others being "put to the horn", outlawed, at Tarbet Cross, some seven miles across the Loch from the Otter area for displaying, in rather a robust way, his disapproval of King James V granting lands in the same area to the same Earl of Argyll. Incidentally the outlawing of Duncan does not seem to have worried him overmuch as while you could outlaw a man quite easily by having his name read out at Tarbet Cross you still had to catch him before the King's Justice could be carried out. I am glad to report that there is no record of the same Duncan ever being caught.

The first handing over of the Otter lands occurs in 1432 when Swenne, son of Ewen, resigns the Banony of Otter to James I, but again we find another Duncan McEwan some forty years later resigning lands at Kilmichael, some twenty miles from Tarbet which ultimately finish up again in Campbell hands.

The Duncan McEwans seem to have been hard to keep down or, indeed, to keep far away from Otter, as in 1792 another Duncan McEwan appears as the ferryman at Otter and another Duncan McEwan appears as the last ferryman at Otter. I have not yet ascertained the exact date of the Ferry going out of commission but it occurred probably mid 19th century.

In the late 17th century a number of McEwans from Mid Argyll are having to forfeit their goods as a penalty for coming out with the Duke of Argyll in his abortive Monmouth rebellion in 1685. They had of course no choice as Argyll was by then THE landowner, so while it is sad to read of Neil McEwin from near Lochgair, just across the Loch from Otter, having his 9 cows and 3 horses being forfeited, at least Neil's head stayed on his shoulders unlike that of the noble Duke who was executed as his reward for choosing the wrong side. At the same period Donald McEwing of Glassary got away with it by claiming that he had been a "Pressed" man!

I like Donald as it is pleasant to come across a "Fly" member of the Clan who gets away with it by blaming the Campbells, AND being believed!

Cheques should be made payable to CLAN EWEN SOCIETY, crossed and forwarded to:-

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

CLAN EWEN SOCIETY

SUBSCRIPTION FORM

SESSION 1983/84

Member's Name

Address

AMOUNT OF SUBSCRIPTION: £3 – MEMBER: £5 – FAMILY
*or equal in foreign currency
Cheque or P/O crossed please*

CLAN EWEN SOCIETY

Received from

the sum of

being amount of subscription for session 1982/1983.

SECRETARY

DETACH AT DOTTED LINE