

CLAN EWEN SOCIETY



No 56

April 2011

Bulletin

Letter from the Chairman 2010

Dear Clansfolk,

Greetings to all and apologies for the lateness of this bulletin. There are many reasons for this but, in short, this has been a time of transition and no little turbulence for the Clan and the Clan Society. We are, however, coming out of it - Reviresco! - more healthy and vibrant than ever.

One of the big changes with which we must all deal is new technology. We in the Society are delighted to have on board Thor Ewing, historian and techno-whizz, as our web-master. With the world-wide-web now being the first port of call for so many enquiries, it is vital that our website be attractive, informative and functioning: and so it is - have a look for yourself: www.clanewen.org.

Among other pieces of news is the very welcome one that the Society has got together with the Otter Estate to ensure that the path to Castle Otter, our ancestral home by Kilfinan, is clear and safe and negotiable. We will pay half of what is immediately necessary for signs, styles, fencing etc and from now on make an annual contribution. This will take some funding (about £500 now and £50 a year henceforth) so we are hoping that the subscriptions will be coming in soon! Our treasurer, Rachel, and Thor, have been working to make payment easy and efficient: details can be found elsewhere in the bulletin.

Our efforts to have a Chief of the McEwen Clan appointed continue. The (relatively new) Lord Lyon is currently deciding what precise procedure will be appropriate in the case of a "scattered" Clan, as we are, for the election and investiture of a new Chief. This is undoubtedly an important matter: as was made very clear at the Clan Convention last year, while the Clans still matter tremendously, the chiefless Clans are undoubtedly thought to be of less importance than the Clans with Chiefs. The McEwen Clan is probably the largest and most important chiefless Clan: we must - we will - find a Chief!

We are considering a change in the wording of our constitution to something along these lines:

"Membership of the Clan Ewen Society is open: to anyone whose surname gives notice of probable or possible belonging to the Clan Ewen: for example, McEwen, McEwan, Ewen, Ewing, McEwing, McKeown, McKuen, Owen etc; to anyone married or related to someone with such a surname; to anyone who feels an attachment to the ancestral homelands of the Clan, Loch Fyne in particular but also Galloway, Argyllshire as a whole, Ayrshire, Perth, Berwickshire and so on; to anyone who feels an affectionate attachment to the Clan in general or to any Clansperson in particular."

If anyone has any comment on this, please get in touch.

Finally, it is with sadness that we must report the death in March of Jim McEwen, former Clan Manager of the Society. Ever ebullient, Jim gave so much time and energy to the Clan he loved. Our deepest sympathy go to Barbara and to Jim's wonderful daughters.

Please keep on getting in touch. It is always a great joy to hear of Clansfolk's doings in Scotland and elsewhere. And please keep in mind next year's AGM, at Kilfinan, the first Saturday in June, a time and place we are hoping to keep as a fixture. It should also be mentioned that the McEwens' biennial football match against the Frasers is looking good for Saturday 20th August 2011, Moniack Castle, by Beaully.

All the best to everyone and – REVIRESCO!

John McEwen.

Letter from the Editor

Firstly, let me introduce myself. I am John McEwan from Edinburgh and your Committee have given me the chance to revive the Bulletin again after a gap of about three years. I have been around the Clan Ewen Society for about 20 years mainly as a lapsed member and thought it was high time I did something for the Society. Because of the many Johns in the Society, I am known either as John B. or, as

Eleanor designated me all those years ago, Edinburgh John!

Secondly, may I take this opportunity to thank all those who contributed to this edition of the Bulletin, without you there would be no Bulletin. I have not followed the precedence set by the last edition which, being a double issue, used two numbers and have given it only one number although it covers three years. If you wish to write anything for the next issue, I will be interested to hear it. I don't have a Master Plan for the magazine, so there is no restriction as to subject. If you are interested in something, I am certain others will be also.

John McEwan

Clan Ewen Society AGM 2007

Extracts from the Minutes of Clan Ewen Society Annual General Meeting held at Renfield St Stephen's Church Centre, Glasgow on Saturday 2nd June 2007 at 2pm.

The Treasurer circulated the current statement and explained the accounts – a short discussion took place on the best way of payment from overseas to obviate bank charges and the most convenient time for payment of subscriptions. The accounts were accepted and the subscriptions to remain the same.

The Chairman raised the question of the International Gathering which would hopefully be held next year. Contacts would have to be made with our overseas representatives in America, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.

Clan Ewen Society AGM 2008

Extract of Minutes of Clan Ewen Society Annual General Meeting held at Renfield St Stephen's Church Centre, Glasgow on Saturday, 7th June 2008

The committee studied the Constitution and decided that whilst many of the members were informed in time of the place and time of the Annual General Meeting, not all will have had the required three weeks notice. The AGM was suspended and the committee will stay in their posts until an SGM is organised. The meeting then continued as a normal committee meeting.

Rachel McEwen told everybody about the plans for the gathering in July 2009. The committee discussed the idea of holding a gathering to co-incide with the Edinburgh Gathering. It was decided to ask membership for their opinion. Committee agreed to hire a tent for the Gathering and also agreed to find out whether other Clan Ewen Societies were preparing to attend the Gathering. Committee decided to suspend Bulletin publications and suspend membership fees for the forthcoming year.

Clan Ewen Society AGM 2009

Minutes of Annual General Meeting held at Renfield St Stephen's Church Centre, Glasgow on Saturday 6th June 2009 at 2pm.

Chairman welcomed members and was pleased to have Thor Ewing, a very supportive new member, with us.

Apologies were received from Joan McEwan, Duncan McEwan, Murdo and Jo McEwan.

Minutes of last meetings were read and discussed

Gathering Secretary reported on the final arrangements for the gathering in Edinburgh, the cost of the tent and the Parade on 25th and 26th July.

Merger The Secretary reported on the results of the voting on the merger with the Clan McEwen Society. The results were as follows:-
 Number of votes received – 70 Votes for the merger – 17
 Votes against the merger – 53, so we ratify the 'Status Quo'.

Treasurer's report As there have been problems with the Banks and the changes in treasurer, an up to date statement was not available. Rachel, however, gave an interim report on the finances of the Society.

Election of New Committee

<i>Chairman</i>	Sir John McEwen proposed Eleanor, seconded Jimmy.
<i>Vice Chairman</i>	Jimmy McEwan proposed Rachel, seconded Thor.
<i>Secretary</i>	Eleanor Williamson proposed John B (Edinburgh), seconded Charles.
<i>Membership Secretary and Treasurer</i>	Rachel proposed David, seconded Jimmy.
<i>Stuart to continue until convenient to hand over books etc.</i>	
<i>USA Correspondent</i>	Rick Ewing.
<i>Australia correspondent</i>	Ian McEwan.
<i>Committee Members</i>	David McEwan – <i>Genealogy</i> Thor Ewing – <i>Web Master</i> John B McEwan (Edinburgh) – <i>Bulletin Editor</i> Duncan McEwan

A.O.C.B. Clan McEwen (the other clan society) A discussion took place on the problems caused by this alternative society but it was agreed that our original foundation should continue as before.

Subscriptions

Subscriptions run from one AGM to the next

Single £12.00 per year

Family £20.00 per year

Paypal is now up and running on the website, and we would encourage you to pay this way.

All other types of payment should be posted to the treasurer. Cheques to be made payable to the Clanewen Society.

The Society's account details are as follows:

Bank of Scotland	Sort code 80-06-64
Account No. 00251163	Account name Clanewen Society

The Clan Gathering and Homecoming 2009

The Gathering took place in Edinburgh in 2009, part of a series of events throughout Scotland during the year to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the birth of Robert Burns. The Gathering was part of the Homecoming initiative to encourage people from all over the world with Scottish ancestry to make the journey home. The Clan Ewen Society organised a tent and put together an exhibition on the history of the Clan and the Society. We also sold clan-related merchandise and had a good time talking to lots of clansfolk, many of whom were interested in what the Clan was up to in modern times. It was lovely to meet members that we had only ever corresponded with by Email and it was great to meet new faces who we will hopefully meet again at future AGM gatherings. The website has photos of the event but for those who do not have access we have included a few of the photos below.



Preparing for the Procession:



Clansfolk manning the tent

The Clan or Clans Ewen?

Thor Ewing

Since the first revival of interest in clan history, around the time of King George IV's famous trip to Edinburgh resplendent in Royal Stewart kilt and pink tights, people have known of the existence of a Clan Ewen, and MacEwens, McEwans, Ewens, Ewings and all other variants of the name have looked to a common origin on the romantic shores of Loch Fyne. We have called ourselves a 'broken clan' or a 'scattered clan', or even 'children of the mist' – but that mist hides secrets indeed.

In clans with a strong and unbroken historical tradition, there is often an awareness that a name can have more than one origin, and that a shared name does not necessarily suggest a shared clan.

In the case of Clan Ewen, the official history of the clan was more-or-less entirely based on written sources as interpreted by Skene and Keltie. The situation was hardly changed by the work of R. S. T. MacEwen, because although he drew on new sources including oral testimony, he tried to understand these sources entirely in the context of the existing historical account. So, for the past two hundred years MacEwens have attempted to reconcile their own historical traditions with the book-learned history of the clan.

Unsurprisingly, those two centuries have left an indelible mark on local family traditions, and I have yet to discover a MacEwen who does not believe that his family originated in the Clan Ewen of Otter. But there is good evidence for at least two separate origins for the name, and these two other MacEwen clans must have modern descendants, even if they now think of themselves as MacEwens of Otter.

The traditions of the MacEwens of Galloway go back to the fourteenth century, when one Patrick MacEwyn is recorded as Provost of Wigtown (1331). Like the Agnews of Lochnaw, Patrick had probably come to Scotland from Ireland under the patronage of Alexander Bruce, Lord of Galloway. Galloway had been staunchly loyal to the Balliols, and Alexander wanted to replace the key men in the region with trusted

allies. Amongst them were the Agnews of Larne who were settled at Lochnaw, and seemingly also the McKeowns (or MacEoins) of Glenarm, who were given Wigtown and dubbed MacEwyn.

These McKeowns were actually descended from the Scottish Bissets, but had fled to Ireland after the murder of Patrick, Earl of Atholl, in 1242. However, they seem to have retained the old Bisset crest of a leafy oak stump and the Bisset motto *Reviresco*. Agnew tradition records their own family's ongoing alliance with the local MacEwen clan, who supported them in their struggle with Black Archibald Douglas in the late 1300's.

A more recent MacEwen clan has its origins in Clan Cameron. Indeed there might actually be two separate Cameron septs with the name, both of which originated at more-or-less the same time.

The first of these stems from the romantic figure of *an Taillear Dubh na Tuaighe*, 'The Black Tailor of the Axe', who is a hero of Clan Cameron to this day. *Taillear Dubh* was the son of the 14th chief, Ewen Beag Cameron (d.1553), and so is known by his patronymic as Donald MacEwen Cameron. He appears in sixteenth-century documents as the leader of a distinct group which is styled as 'Clan Ewen'. Donald *Taillear Dubh* MacEwen settled in Argyll on the Cowal peninsular, and it seems likely that MacEwens in this area today may be descended from his clan.

If Donald *Taillear Dubh* MacEwen is the hero of the sixteenth-century Clan Cameron, its anti-hero must be his arch-enemy Ewen MacEwen Cameron of Erracht. Ewen MacEwen was the son of the 12th chief, and he stood by while his two nephews took the chiefship. But when the 15th chief died leaving only a tiny baby as heir, he figured his turn had come and made a bid for the chiefship himself. He was opposed by *an Taillear Dubh*, who remained loyal to the infant Allan Cameron of Lochiel.

History is rarely fair, and had events followed a different course, Ewen MacEwen could well have been cast as hero with Donald MacEwen as recalcitrant villain. But it was Donald MacEwen's cause which won out, condemning the MacEwen Camerons of Erracht to the role of

treacherous outlaws. In sixteenth-century documents, the Camerons of Erracht are often described simply as MacEwens, and this is probably the name that many of their descendants bear to this day.

Other possible origins for the name MacEwen occur in Clan Dougall, Clan Donald and Clan Gregor.

But there is also confusion over the fate of Clan Ewen of Otter. Many people assume that when the old chief Swene MacEwen died in 1493, the clansmen were left 'chiefless in Cowal', and dispersed sporadically across Scotland over the intervening centuries. But this is not really a very plausible scenario.

The core of the clan was its chiefs and warriors. This warrior elite is bound together through family alliances, and they are more interested in the honour, status and social cohesion of their kinship group than they are in the land. When warriors were granted estates by the clan chief, their loyalty remained to their clan and to their chief – to the real source of their wealth and status. If their chief went, they followed. So, when the MacEwens lost the barony of Otter they wouldn't stay on as tenant farmers under a new baron (who would never be able to rely on their loyalty in any case), they would go and find a more honourable position elsewhere even if this entails loss of wealth.

Any who stayed behind were tacksmen and tenants, whose ancestors had probably lived in the area long before the MacEwens arrived. Their loyalty was to the land, and they will have been as happy to live under Campbell rule as MacEwen. It is largely the descendants of these local farmers that we are likely to discover in Cowal today, while the descendants of the clan itself have long since moved on. But these farmers will have readily adopted the clan names of their new rulers, and are more likely to appear today as Campbells, Lamonts and MacLachlans than as MacEwens.

According to a tradition recorded by R. S. T. MacEwen, the MacEwens sought the protection of the Earl of Lennox in the fifteenth century under their own chief. So, it would seem that Swene MacEwen was succeeded by a new chief, who led his clan to a new homeland around Loch Lomond and Dumbartonshire in the Earldom of Lennox.

Although it is certain that Swene MacEwen died without a legitimate son, this does not mean that the chiefship remained vacant. Whilst he had signed away the barony of Otter, he had not signed away the chiefship of the clan. A chief in Swene's position could appoint a 'tanist' from among his male kindred who would succeed him as heir after his death. A charter of Swene MacEwen dated 1431 names 'John, son of William MacEwen' as witness. This John MacEwen probably represents another line of descent from the clan's founder (he might have been Swene's uncle or cousin), and either he or his sons would have been likely heirs to the chiefship by tanistry.

Up until now, it has been to the Otter clan alone that MacEwens have looked for their ancestral roots. This was the only clan listed in the books, and we didn't simply know that there *were* any other possible roots, so we all assumed that we were descendants of a single clan. As a result, family traditions have apparently been adapted to fit with the official history. Perhaps, it is too late now to undo this process and to uncover traditions that have not been overwritten by the myth of descent from Clan Ewen of Otter.

Nevertheless, I hope that the members of Clan Ewen today can embrace this broader history, and that some might be able to re-explore their heritage in the light of possible alternative origins, adding new richness to the tapestry of MacEwen history.

Thor Ewing is the author of New Notes on Clan Ewen, which is available via the society website or directly from the author.

Alex McEwen

(reproduced with permission from The Herald)

Alex McEwen, who died on December 4th 2008, aged 73, was a pioneer who paved the way for America's love affair with Scottish folk music. Back in the mid-1950s, 20 years before groups such as Battlefield Band, Silly Wizard and Ossian made commuting across the Atlantic part of the professional Scottish folk musician's life, and before even Jean Redpath exported her talents, McEwen and his older brother, Rory,

were wooing audiences in New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco and playing their Scots ballads to as many as 40 million television viewers.

They even recorded for the Smithsonian's Folkways label and on one particularly notable occasion McEwen was able to call on Bob Dylan as his accompanist in a Greenwich Village folk club. McEwen, who later became a familiar figure with Rory on the BBC's *Tonight* programme and through his own Scottish Television series, *Alex Awhile*, was born in Marchmont House in Berwickshire, one of Conservative politician Sir John McEwen and Lady Bridget McEwen's seven children. He was educated at Eton, where Rory was three years above him, and the brothers developed a love of jazz and country blues as well as learning Scottish ballads and folk songs, accompanying themselves on guitars.

After McEwen completed his national service with the Cameron Highlanders, the brothers set off on an American adventure in 1955, looking to see and hear as many as possible of their musical heroes who were still performing. Arriving in New York, they stayed with Alice Astor, whose daughter Romana would later marry Rory, and hit the clubs and bars. Many of their heroes, including Pete Seeger, were caught up in the McCarthy-era performance ban for their perceived un-American activities, but being from Scotland, McEwen and Rory were able to play anywhere—and they did, including entertaining at weddings and parties and playing venues where they passed a hat round the audience.

After a few weeks in New York, they set off for the south with friends, taking in New Orleans and driving over to El Paso, Santa Fe and Cripple Creek where they secured their first professional gig, playing twice a day in a bar. From there they headed for San Francisco, Los Angeles and back to New York, by which time they were reaching the attention of record producers and television executives. They recorded two LPs, *Great Scottish Ballads* and *Scottish Songs and Ballads*, for the prestigious Folkways label and were invited to appear for two consecutive nights on the *Ed Sullivan Show* (on which the Beatles later made their breakthrough) and the *Arthur Godfrey Show*, where they

reached an audience of 40 million and returned for a further two appearances.

Such was their impact that they had to get used to being recognised in the streets and mobbed for autographs. After Rory returned to the UK, McEwen stayed on in New York, learning Delta blues guitar first-hand from the Rev Gary Davis in Harlem. He then followed Rory and joined the BBC's nightly news and current affairs programme *Tonight*, where Rory was performing topical calypsos, specially written on the day with Bernard Levin. The brothers then became popular guests on London's folk and blues club scene, including the Ballads and Blues Club, where they played alongside Alexis Korner and Long John Baldry.

In 1960, McEwen married Princess Cecilia of Weikersham, an Austrian with family connections to Queen Victoria, and the McEwens' social group expanded to include model Jean Shrimpton, actors Terence Stamp, James and Edward Fox, and Beatle George Harrison as well as Bob Dylan and old friends including Princess Margaret.

Professionally, things remained on the up, too, with performances at the Edinburgh Festival, leading to recordings with Joan Baez's future brother-in-law, Richard Farina and his then wife the iconic Texan folk singer, Carolyn Hester (on the EP *Four for Fun*), and alongside jazz musicians George Melly, Sandy Brown and Al Fairweather on *Plain Song & All That Jazz*.

When Rory decided to concentrate on painting in 1962, McEwen continued as a singer and guitarist hosting *Alex Awhile* for STV, on which he featured blues, American and British folk music and calypso, until he, too, retired from the music business.

He joined John Menzies in 1965 and rose to personnel director, became an art dealer and farmer and devoted much time to fishing. Publicly, however, his contribution to music is perhaps his greatest legacy, being cited as an influence and inspiration by Billy Connolly, Van Morrison and many others. He is survived by his wife, Cecilia, his daughter, Sophie, sons Alexander and Hugo, and five grandchildren.

Clan Items for Sale

Note:- as some of these items are in very short supply, prospective purchasers are advised to contact the Treasurer in advance of ordering.

Aprons, plastic, <i>Scottie dogs</i>	£4.50	Mugs, <i>clan, Reviresco, fine bone</i>	£5.00
Badge, <i>clan, Reviresco, gold colour</i>	£5.00	Napkins, <i>clan, Reviresco, (set of 4)</i>	£20.00
Badge, <i>clan, Reviresco, felt</i>	£5.00	Paper Weight, <i>clan, Reviresco</i>	£5.00
Baseball Caps, <i>Scotland var. colours</i>	£4.00	Pens, <i>ballpoint, tartans</i>	£1.00
Book, <i>Collins, Clans & Tartans</i>	£4.00	Photo Album, <i>large, silver, 72 prints</i>	£15.00
Book, <i>RST MacEwen, History of the Clan Ewen, (tartan cloth cover)</i>	£26.00	Photo Frames, <i>small, silver, 2"x3"</i>	£8.00
Book Marks, <i>Leather, Scottish motif</i>	£1.20	Post Cards, <i>clan, pack of 3</i>	£0.50
Boxer Shorts, <i>small adult, mixed tartans</i>	£4.00	Sculptures/Figurines, <i>clansman, Jacobite</i>	£9.00
Brooch, <i>cairn gorm</i>	£25.00	Sgian Dubh, <i>silver, decorative</i>	£13.50
Chopping Board, <i>clan, Reviresco</i>	£10.00	Sgian Dubh, <i>silver, decorative, imperfect</i>	£5.00
Chopping Board, <i>fishing flies</i>	£8.00	Sgian Dubh, <i>gold colour decorative</i>	£20.00
Coasters, <i>fishing flies, set of 6</i>	£7.00	Stoned Items, <i>pins, brooches</i>	£8.00
Cufflinks, <i>clan, Reviresco</i>	£10.00	Table Mats, <i>clan, Reviresco, (set of 6)</i>	£22.00
Cufflinks, <i>tartan</i>	£5.00	Tammy, <i>ancient</i>	£12.00
Fridge Magnets, <i>clan, Reviresco</i>	£3.00	Tea Towels, <i>Scottish Map, Glasgow, Songs, Haste ye Back.</i>	£3.00
Fridge Magnets, <i>metal, saltire</i>	£1.50	Teaspoons, <i>clan, Reviresco</i>	£3.00
Fridge Magnets, <i>metal, thistle</i>	£1.50	Tie, <i>modern tartan</i>	£6.50
Handbag, <i>ladies', velour</i>	£25.00	Tie, <i>navy, clan, Reviresco</i>	£8.00
Handkerchiefs, <i>men's and ladies'</i>	£2.15	Towels, <i>small, golfing, Scotland</i>	£3.00
Ink Stamp & Pad, <i>clan, Reviresco</i>	£8.00	Towels, <i>small, golfing, St Andrews Old Course green, blue</i>	£4.50
Key Fobs, <i>clan, Reviresco, clear</i>	£2.00	Waistcoat, <i>ancient tartan, child's</i>	£27.50
Key Fobs, <i>metal, lion rampant</i>	£2.20	Wall Plaque/Shield, <i>clan, Riveresco ancient and modern tartans</i>	£20.00
Key Fobs, <i>metal, thistle</i>	£2.20		
Kilt Pins, <i>clan</i>	£10.00		
Letter Knife with Stand, <i>replica Broadsword</i>	£6.00		

All the above items are available from The Treasurer and are subject to postage and packing charges

A Little More Family History

When I read Paul's family history in the last Bulletin (No 54/55 of April 2007) two locations jumped out of the page at me. They were Auchtergaven and Caputh, Perthshire. I have had my researches into my own family tree greatly augmented by my cousin who has delved into the past with much more enthusiasm and success than I have managed to raise.

My great, great, great, great grandfather, Alexander, was born in 1780 in Little Dunkeld, Perthshire. He had three sons, the eldest of whom, another Alexander, was born at Five Mile House, Auchtergaven in 1805, and was married, again at Auchtergaven in 1831. The rest of the family, two boys, Thomas and John, and a girl, Janet, were all born later, between 1814 and 1820 at Little Dunkeld. My great, great great grandfather, Thomas was married to a Caputh girl, Margaret Jane Henry in Caputh in 1838.

After having five children up to 1847 in Caputh, the family moved Eastwards, the sixth child, Andrew, being born in 1849 in Kinloch, between Coupar Angus and Alyth, before the family again moved Eastwards to have a further twin boys in 1854 in St Cyrus on the coast and lastly a boy and a girl at Craig by Montrose in 1856 and 1859.

I started this article to see if my family and Paul's had been in Auchtergaven and Caputh at the same time, to surmise whether they could have ever met but I now feel that the timings are too far out. All I have had to go on were the relative birth dates of each family. Paul's starts at Auchtergaven with Andrew in 1845, my family seem to have quit Auchtergaven between 1805 and 1814. I have no records of Paul's family before 1845 so it may well be that they were living in Auchtergaven for quite a number of years before 1845 in which case it would have seemed logical that two branches of the same family would have known each other living in the same small place. I can only assume the size of Auchtergaven as being miniscule as I cannot find it on a half decent road map of Perthshire. Even the small hamlet of Caputh is prominently marked.

John McEwan (Edinburgh)

Reviresco

With autumn's cool my leaves are turning brown
Soon winter's wind will tear my branches down
Yet spring returns with longer days, and then,
Ere summer comes, I will grow green again.

Where gorse and birch above the shore entwine
A rocky headland looks across Loch Fyne
Where once a castle stood, mere stones remain
The trunk of oak may ne'er grow green again.

My seed is scattered, and carried on the breeze
Across our land, and farther, o'er the seas
Dispersed, disbanded, like a broken chain
Lost in the mist to ne'er grow green again.

But roots run deep, they cannot be destroyed
The blood is strong, it fills the empty void
Those faithful few, their motto not in vain,
One day Clann Éoghainn will yet grow green again.

Alasdair McEwen
May 2010



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