



CLAN EWEN SOCIETY
Bulletin

No. 23

APRIL 1990

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

SATURDAY 9th JUNE, 1990

at 11.30 a.m.

in KILFINAN HOTEL,

KILFINAN, ARGYLL

*FOLLOWED BY THE UNVEILING OF THE
CLAN EWEN MEMORIAL CAIRN ON THE
SITE OF MacEWEN CASTLE at 3 p.m.*

CHANGING SCOTLAND

Most of us don't like change. We like things to go on as they always have done. Change upsets and we tend to get grumpy and sigh for the good old days when everything went on in the same old way.

As a wee boy, I spent many summers with the family at Lechkine, a farm on the shores of Loch Earn in Perthshire – the traditional spot, incidentally for the burial of the MacLaren Clan. At the time and even looking back, that place was sheer heaven.

When you arrived for the annual holiday, you ran around seeking out all the dear familiar well loved things and places. There was the barn which smelt divinely of hay and where the swallows used to nest. There were the stables where Jock and Charlie, the big Clydesdales lived with the funny horsey smell. There was (as ever) a pet lamb. The burn still fussed and bubbled under the bridge which led to the fields and the white ducks bobbed and quacked there. The trains ran in a cutting behind the farm and never passed without a merry toot in a cloud of important steam and smoke which smelt of holidays and adventure. The Loch sparkled as only a Highland loch can sparkle, and all around, the great hills brooded warm in the summer sunshine clad in their purple robe of heather.

Then there were people – Mr. Anderson the farmer with a patriarchal white beard and the inevitable cap on his bald head which he used, I noted, to cool his tea which was carefully poured into the saucer. That was the custom. There was Mary, his housekeeper with rough work-worn hands and a heart of warm gold. There were those who helped around the place, kindly, with always a word for a wee boy, seemingly never ageing and whose natural tongue was the Gaelic. So, one went one's rounds and in the changelessness one found a sweet content. One's world was safely in place and was pronounced good.

It's all changed now, of course. The old farmers and the many characters around the place are long since gone. The railway is no more, not even the rails. Folk are better off now and most people have cars. Some of the farms have been incorporated into larger units and many of the old cottar houses are weekend homes. There are new people in the area from far away and the old local people with feet and family deep in the past are very thin on the ground.

In fact there is considerable concern at the number of "outsiders" taking over local farms here in Lanarkshire as elsewhere. Be that as it may, they are decent folk and take their full share in the local activities. Anyway, we Scots were incomers too. It was the Picts who were the original inhabitants and how they must have resented these incomers from Ireland.

However, today's enemies are tomorrow's friends – and they have settled down to amicable co-existence.

Change is of the essence of life. Like the tide you cannot stop it. In June while we are at the Cairn, we will no doubt be thinking of the 1400 years since the coming of the Dalriadic Scots which gave their name to this country. The MacEwen clan along with the MacLachlans and the Lammonds, seem to have come to prominence about 1200 AD, flourished for two hundred years and then, in our case, slowly dispersed. Change, change, change. So we will honour the few names which have come down to us, the names of the Chiefs – Anradan, Hugh, Ewen, Severan, Gillespie, John, Walter, Swene and with them the ordinary clansmen to whom ultimately we owe our existence.

Despite the enormous sweep of the years, one thing unites all MacEwens and that is the Place. The Lands of Otter. The homeland of the MacEwens. What we see looking around us at the Cairn is what they saw looking around them on the same spot when the castle was a fortress – the vast stretch of Loch Fyne, the sound of the waves on the seaweedy shores, the gold of the gorse and the green of the bracken and the sight of the oaks (which are still there). Like us they know the caress and the buffet of the wind, the driving rain, the blizzards of snow.

They also would know what we know, the arms of love and the comfort of hearth and home.

Despite so many changes, some good things never change.

Wherever you are, may the Clan flourish.

REVIRESCO

Peter MacEwen

NEW ROUTE TO CAIRN AT CASTLE SITE

After discussion with David Newton, Factor of the Otter Estate, a new route to the Castle Site has been suggested. The old route which entailed going through the farm of Fearnoch had problems with sheep, crops and pheasants which were better avoided. The new route is actually a Right of Way.

This route starts at Lindsaig Mill which is just down from the Kilfinan Hotel – you leave your car at the hotel and walk. It is fairly straightforward. Go through the Mill buildings till you come to a stile, over that and head down the fields and make for the beach; there are stiles and there will be sign-posts. At the beach you turn right and go straight along until you come to a gate. This leads through a very muddy

copse of oak trees, over a small headland and then directly up to the Cairn. Please wear 'sensible' shoes and stockings. Whatever the weather I suggest strong shoes, boots or wellingtons, whichever is most comfortable. I hope against hope that we shall have a lovely day for the AGM and the unveiling of the Plaque but as the last two AGMs have been held on perfect days of blue skies etc., I fear the worst. However we MacEwens are made of sterner stuff and won't be put off by rain and wind. Whatever the weather it is going to be quite a day for the Clan and we are looking forward to seeing you.

P. J. M.

THE CRUCIFIX FOUND DURING ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS AT MACEWEN'S CASTLE

Correspondence with the Assistant Keeper of Archaeology at the Glasgow Art Gallery & Museum has provided some further useful and interesting information on "the Crucifix". It is to be hoped that several readers will take the opportunity to see the Crucifix while it is on exhibition at the Art Gallery & Museum, Kelvingrove, Glasgow. The Assistant Keeper reports –

The finds from the MacEwen's Castle excavations were donated to Glasgow Museum & Art Galleries (Reg. No. A811) and all but the crucifix were published as:-

Marshall, DN 1983 Excavations at Macewen's Castle, Argyll,
in 1968-69, Glasgow Archaeological Journal,
10 (1983), 131-42.

The crucifix was the most interesting find and dates far earlier than the rest of the discoveries made. It is of copper alloy, probably a bronze, and traces of an original silvered surface remain. It is one of a number of 12th/13th century Scottish crucifixes from west and central Scotland which may have been mounted on a wall, on a processional cross or, as with one from Kilmichael Glassary, on a bell shrine or some other type of shrine. Though it was thought, when found, that the arms had been bent back by a religious group called the Jensenists who opposed figures of the Christ with arms outspread, I think this is unlikely. I would be happier with the suggestion that the piece was being used as scrap metal and that the arms had been folded before melting down. It is very difficult to establish what the crucifix was doing at MacEwen's Castle since it was unstratified and all the other discoveries made there are of a later date. The most economical explanation is that it was brought to the site long after its manufacture as scrap metal. The Crucifix was shown in the exhibition –

'Angels, Nobles & Unicorns : Art and Patronage in Medieval Scotland'
National Museum of Scotland 1982

and there is a handbook for that exhibition, going by the same title. A short note and illustration of it appears as Catalogue No. B32.

The piece will go on exhibition in the Art Gallery & Museum, Kelvingrove, certainly

OBITUARY

It is with deepest sympathy that we have to report the sudden death of our President, the Reverend Peter John MacEwen, who died on Monday 30th April, 1990.

Our sincere condolences go to his widow, Joan and family.

More details will be available in the next Bulletin.

from January 1990, and probably from Christmas 1989, as part of a new religious gallery in the south west corner of our upper floor.

Whilst its general background in medieval Scotland can be easily established, detailed comparative work is still needed before a definite publication can be presented and this is likely to be some time off.

Murdo McEwan

RENNIE McOWAN

EWEN 1

Members of the Clan Ewen and friends who collect information on the scattering of the clan in the 16th and 17th centuries when it was absorbed by the Campbells might be interested in logging a booklet called *"Deserted Settlements in Glenlednock and Strathearn"* by Elizabeth Colvin Bain.

It was originally published by Scotland's Cultural Heritage of the University of Edinburgh (High School Yards, Drummond Street, Edinburgh) at £2.95 and is now hard to get.

Mrs. Bain now lives at "The Limes", Ancaster Lane, Comrie, Perthshire, and it might be worth the Society's time to obtain a copy for our official records.

Glen Lednock is an extremely lovely glen running north from Comrie with broad straths in its middle section and supported large populations in past centuries of whom many were 'cleared' last century. There are now large hill farms. The river Lednock has dramatic pools and waterfalls and a modern reservoir now stands at the head of the glen where an ancient hill pass and drove route leads over to Loch Tayside.

The same surnames occur for many of the listed people in past times and various spellings of McOwan and McEwan are common and appear in 16 of 22 named sites. All this ties in with information given in the book *"In Famed Breadalbane"* by the Rev. William A. Gillies, minister of Kenmore from 1912 to 1949, long regarded as the definitive book on the area. Mr. Gillies recorded little groupings of Ewans or MacEwans along Loch Tayside and around Loch Earn and the name, or variations of it, still crops up around Crieff and Comrie.

My own theory is that as the Glen Orchy Campbells grew in power and prestige and spread eastwards from Kilchurn Castle at Loch Awe and eventually became Earls and Marquesses of Breadalbane and owned land from Loch Awe to near Aberfeldy, that little groups of Ewans or MacEwans moved eastwards under their influence. Hill passes link Loch Tay with Loch Earn and also between Loch Tay and Glen Lednock and Comrie and records of early weavers in the tartan weaving clachan at Dalginross, Comrie, had the name McEwan. I researched my own ancestry back to the late 1700s in Comrie and my name, McOwan, was often spelled McEwan and they were listed as weavers.

The name McOwan is also a Hillfoots name and I believe the McOwans/McEwans travelled from Comrie across Strathearn and the Ochils and settled in the Hillfoots villages when the weaving mills sprang up there in later centuries.

Rennie McOwan

CLAN CAIRN APPEAL

As Treasurer I wish on behalf of the Committee to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank the following members for their generous support in answering our appeal for £1,000.

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 Mr. J. A. Ewan, England
 Mr. & Mrs. C. Ewen, Scotland
 Mr. & Mrs. R. Ewen, U.S.A.
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SCOTLAND	382.83
U.S.A.	289.59
ENGLAND	99.00
CANADA	35.00
AUSTRALIA	22.00
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TOTAL	828.42

Charles Ewen, Treasurer

HISTORY OF CLAN EWEN

by the late R. S. T. MacEWEN

Our Secretary has a number of tartan covered re-prints of the above and anyone who wishes a copy, OR had previously ordered one should contact her. Cost is £15.00

I would like to welcome the following who have become **new members** :-

Mrs. E. J. Forsyth Mason, J.P., 88 Laura Street, Tarragindi, Brisbane, QLD.,
Australia.

Mr. & Mrs. Anne McEwan, 33 Kaka Street, Stoke, Nelson, New Zealand.

Mr. W. J. M. Ewing, 147b Sixth Avenue, Royston Park 5070, South Australia

Mr. J. A. Ewan, 11 Gresham Road, Anchorholme, Blackpool, Lancs.,
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LIFE MEMBERS

Miss C. E. McEwan, 2 Mansefield Place, Rothesay, Isle of Bute, Scotland, U.K.

Byron McEuen, 18a Quial Ridge Court, Owenboro, KY 42301, U.S.A.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

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Byron McEuen, 18a Quial Ridge Court, Owenboro, KY42301, U.S.A.

Mr. M. D. Bainun, M.D., 555 University Avenue, 3600 Honolulu, H.I. 96826, U.S.A.

Mr. I. F. McEwen, 4 Henley Court, Henley Drive, Southport, Merseyside, PR9
7JU, England, U.K.

A fully paid-up membership list will be supplied with our next Bulletin.

C. Ewen

**ALL CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE NEXT BULLETIN
SHOULD BE IN THE HANDS OF THE EDITOR
BY 15th SEPTEMBER 1990**

E. McEwen

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