



Clan Macfie News

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No 55

The Homecoming

May 2009

The Homecoming, which started in January, by celebrating the 250th anniversary of the birth of Robert Burns, Scotland's National poet and will continue throughout the year to end on St Andrew's Day November 30th.

Edinburgh will be the centre of Clan activities during the last weekend of July. Friday the 24th will feature a gathering of all the Clan chiefs, their advisors and other interested parties. Holyrood Park will feature spectacular Highland Games on both the Saturday and Sunday. The climax on Saturday evening will be a parade of the Clans up the Royal Mile to the Castle esplanade where a pageant will take place. To take part in these activities you are required to purchase tickets through the Homecoming Organisation.

The Gathering organisers have, however, missed out on a wonderful opportunity. Our Clan Piper, The Scottish Society President, composed a tune for the 1993 Gathering on Colonsay, its name? The Homecoming. I have written to the Gathering Organisers telling them of this tune, but so far they have not made any approach to Bob. He is well known in piping circles, in his younger days as a very successful competitor and latterly as a judge. Many of his tunes appear in the repertoire of Bands competing in competitions. He also teaches at the College of Piping in Glasgow.

I'm in trouble already

An article in Clan News 54, for our Ladies, on how to wear a sash, has earned me a mild rebuke from the Lord Lyon's Office. The original paper used for that particular piece dates back to 1985 and I attributed this to the Lyon Court, which was probably correct at that time.

However things have moved on since and all matters relating to Tartans and the correct mode of dress is now the responsibility of the Keeper of the Register of Tartans, Mr George Mackenzie who is also the Keeper of the Records of Scotland.

I made another mistake with the business name of Donald McPhee's Company in Muelhausen, Germany. The correct title is 'Kilts and More.' In an e-mail scolding me for my error Donald also asked why Clan Macfie did not have a hunting tartan?

My third mistake and the really big one, I omitted my favourite Granddaughter Ilona Jayne McFie, our only Granddaughter and mother of our Great-Grand child, from the list of grandchildren.

Tartans

I think the Macfie tartan is one of the bonniest around and wear it with pride. How many tartans do the Macfies have? Officially only one was recognised by A C (Sandy) McPhie when he was Ceann Cath and he registered it with the Lyon Court.

So what makes a Macfie tartan? There are two distinct elements to any tartan, the colour count and the thread count. In Macfie we have four colours, red, and green with over-stripes of white and yellow and a thread count of W/Y2 R24 G4 R2 G32. This makes it distinctively our tartan though MacIver comes very close and there is a reason for that. I will tell you about that some other time. There are also similarities to Bruce and Cameron setts.

There are two other tartans with Macfie connections, the Charles McPhee memorial and the Macfie funeral tartan. The late Charles McPhee of Australia, in the 1980's, engaged a Company based in Inverness, Hector Russell by name, to help design a Dress tartan. This was woven up and many of you have kilts and skirts made from this weave, but unfortunately it does not match our thread and colour count. This is surprising as Hector Russell is a long established Highland outfitter.

The other tartan was designed in 1866 for the funeral of the young wife of one of the sugar Macfies. At that time thread and colour counts of tartans had not been formalised and so it too does not match our pattern. However I have a kilt, made of Harris Tweed, in this sett and it looks smart when worn with a black jacket. Harris Tweed I hear you say! That too is another story.

The Macfie listed with the Register of Tartans comes in three shades, the Ancient, the Modern and the Weathered (Muted). The Ancient is a

representation of what the tartan would have looked like if coloured with vegetable dyes. The Modern is dyed using chemical (aniline) dyes.

There is a story connected with the Weathered tartan. While cutting peat someone uncovered an earthenware jar with cloth used as a stopper. When the cloth was opened out it was recognised as a tartan though the colours had become muted due to the acidity of the peat. Manufacturers of tartan, never people to miss a trick began to produce many tartans in the new (?) Weathered shades.

What about Donald's question regarding a Hunting tartan? Well that is yet another story

Clan Diary

2009 17-19th Jul **New Zealand.** 25th Anniversary Meeting, in Masterton, of the McPhee Clan Society of New Zealand. An interesting programme has been arranged.

9-12th Jul **U.S.A.** AGM of The MacDuffee Clan Society of America Inc., of Clan Macfie. To be held in conjunction with the)
Grandfather Mountain Highland Games, NC.
(Contact John Rosser, 611 Blair Street, Greensboro, NC,
27408. Tel: 336 275 8819

TBA Jul **U.S.A.** AGM of Coffey/Coffee Reunion Association.
(Contact Ilah Coffee Merriman, 7721 Yamini Drive, Dallas,
Texas 75230-3230)

25/26 Jul **Scotland.** International Clan Gathering and Highland Games, Edinburgh the Year of the Homecoming.
Website www.thegathering2009.com for further details.
See separate item in this Clan News.

Aug **U.S.A.** Biennial General Meeting of the Cathey Reunion Association. Date and venue to be decided. (Contact Charles Edwards, 11604 Georgetowne Drive, Knoxville, TN 37934. Tel: 865 675 5056).

02-09th Sep **Scotland.** 17th International Gathering and 10th Parliament of Clan Macfie Societies. To be held at the Nethybridge Hotel, Nethy Bridge, Scotland. See separate items in this Clan News for further details.

2010 23-24th Jan Clan Macfie Society Burns Supper, Bishops Stortford, England

TBA **Sweden.** Triennial General Meeting of the Thorburn-Macfie Family Society. Details to be notified in due course.

TBA **Australia.** Biennial General Meeting of the Macfie Clan Society of Australia. Details to be notified in due course

TBA **Canada** Biennial General Meeting of the Clan Macfie Society in Canada. Detail to be notified in due course

A new Poet Laureate

In 1668 Charles II appointed John Dryden to be the first Poet Laureate. Since then a long list of very notable poets have held the position. On Friday the 2nd of May the appointment of a new Laureate was made public.

The new peoples poet is **Carol Ann Duffy**, the first Scot, the first woman and mother to hold the post. Born in the Gorbals District of Glasgow she comes from working class stock. The family moved to England when she was five.

“ At 53, Duffy is indisputably one of the finest poets of her generation, dubbed by some as a ‘superstar.’ Her poems are taught in schools, her books sell well and she is sought after for readings and festivals. She has an OBE and is professor of contemporary poetry at Manchester University.”

Carol Ann has made it clear she will not be simply writing Royal poetry. She said that poetry is all about looking at the ordinary and transforming it. I have sent a letter of congratulation via the secretary of the Clan Macfie Society, who happens to be a Duffy.

The Mountain Climber.

In the Drakensburg Mountains of South Africa there is a mountain called the Giants Castle. Near the base of the mountain is a memorial bench with a plaque, which has the following sentiment engraved.

“Climb the mountain get their good tidings,
Nature’s sunshine flows into the trees,
The winds will blow their freshness on you
And the storms within give you their energy,
While cares will drop off like autumn leaves”

The dedication is to Justin McFie, a climber, who died at a young age,

Does anyone know who Justin Macfie was and the circumstances of his death?

The Teaghlach Wood

Your roots in Scotland

The Gathering 2009 is aiming to help plant 10,000 trees to commemorate Scotland's greatest ever international gathering of the clans.

The Teaghlach Wood is situated near the beautiful village of Comrie, in Highland Perthshire, Scotland which lies on the banks of the River Earn nestled on the edge of the Scottish Highlands. The wood aims to play its part in restoring Scotland's landscape back to its traditional woodland state. Teaghlach, in Gaelic, means family.

All of the trees planted in the wood will be traditional woodland varieties such as oak, birch, ash, beech and rowan. Buying a tree for the wood will not only bring traditional broadleaf species back to the heart of Scotland, but also regenerate wildlife habitats and combat climate change. As the woodland matures we hope that it will become a place that will be enjoyed by many generations to come.

You can leave a living and lasting legacy by planting some trees as part of Teaghlach Wood for as little as £10 and you will receive a presentation certificate.

Why not make your connection with Scotland a permanent one by helping us create a special part of history!

To find out more, please log on to <http://www.teaghlachwood.com/plant-some-trees>

Clan Magazines on Line

It is on my mind to have the Clan Macfie News put up on the web, but there is too much happening at the moment. However, the Clan Macfie Society of America has already done so with their magazine "The Newsbeat" and The Clan Macfie Society in Canada are also about to launch the 'Torch' on the web. What a wonderful way of getting others who may have no knowledge of the Clan and Societies and their organisation interested in our activities._

Sweden 2007

Twelve members of the Clan Macfie Society, including Fiona and myself, travelled to Sweden to attend the triennial Meeting of the Thorburn-Macfie Family Society. We were made most welcome and had a wonderful time. The

venue was at a beautiful lakeside area, which was very peaceful with large open grass areas and lots of lovely walks. Thorburns and Macfies of all ages were present, but what I found significant was the number of young people who were taking part, from toddlers to teenagers to young adults. Seeing all these young people reminded me of 1993 when we had the Great Gathering on Colonsay and the number of young people who had attended.

Where have they all gone? How do we get them to return? The Canadians have just launched 'the Macfie Society in Canada Facebook Group.' In the latest issue of the 'Torch' they say "We invite any of our Society, along with their extended family members and acquaintances already on facebook to join our Group Page for interesting news and social networking with other Macfies from across Canada. I am sure they would not be offended if you wished to join in the fun or even steal their idea and open your own Society's facebook.

I am keen to get some young blood involved in the Clan in all its aspects and this may be one way of generating interest.

The Highland Wildlife Park

The visitor park where I work has been in existence since 1972. It was then dedicated to animals that live or had lived in Scotland.

The park was privately owned, but has been taken over by the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland, who also control Edinburgh Zoo. The park continues to show some animals with a Scottish connection, but there are also many from various parts of the world.

The collection is now for animals that live at high altitudes and high latitudes.

At the moment our star attraction is our two Amur Tigers, Sasha and Zuri, the largest of the tiger family.

Once known as the Amur tiger, they are so few in numbers they are confined to the Amur region of Siberia. This region while considerably colder in winter is similar in habitat to what we have in the Park.



In March we had some heavy snowfalls and the tigers were behaving like cubs rolling in the snow and chasing each other around their enclosure. Sasha delivered three cubs two weeks ago, but they will not be on show for a further two or three weeks.

