



# Clan MacNeil

## Association of Australia

Newsletter for clan members and friends.

June 2017

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- Death of clan members
- We grieve for Eilidh MacLeod and her family
- Neil McNeill diary reports from Scotland
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Michael McNeill

Thea Kenna

Simon Lennon

Death of clan members – we mourn for Peter Alfred Hoskin died 10/05/2017

William Robert Burns MacNeil Sadler died 22/04/2017

Further details for each of our clan friends are included later in this newsletter

The death of Eilidh MacLeod of Barra in the terrorist bomb attack at the concert in Manchester

#### Barra Community Grieves

The communities of Barra and Vatersay are in deep mourning with the tragic news that 14 year-old Eilidh MacLeod has lost her life and 15 year-old Laura MacIntyre has suffered serious injury in Manchester and remains in hospital. The pair of friends were in the city on Monday night, to see a pop concert, when they were sadly and unimaginably caught up in a terror attack that has shocked and distressed people from all over the world.

The horrific attack, in which suicide bomber Salman Abedi killed 22 people and left many more injured, happened just outside the Manchester Arena as crowds of people were leaving an Ariana Grande show on May 22.

Na h-Eileanan an Iar MSP Alasdair Allan said, "I cannot begin to imagine the devastating consequences this will have for her family, and can only offer my condolences, which I know will be joined by expressions of sympathy from Manchester and from around the world.

### Members and their families who have renewed their membership

During the last 6 months the following people have renewed their membership as it became due.

I thank them for their ongoing support for the Clan association.

It is most pleasing to see the ongoing support of our clan families who have continued to align themselves with our clan association.

Susan Neil

Janeen Webb

Ken & Carol McNeill

Neil McNeill

Ian McNeill

Pat Neil

Philip Nott

Alan McNeil

Keith McNeil

Carol Searcy

Richard McNeill

He continued, "Anyone who knows Barra, will have some idea of the kind of impact this is going to have on a small island community. I know people will be keeping both families in their thoughts and prayers."

MP, Angus Brendan MacNeil said, "We are all simply feeling heartbroken and thankful for kind thoughts of so many others round about us throughout the islands and beyond. I know of one £5,000 donation from an individual in Lewis who wants to remain anonymous but who has been, like so many others, touched deeply by what happened to Eilidh and what Laura has to go through."



Laura MacIntyre and Eilidh MacLeod



On arrival of the plane, Fr John Paul MacKinnon performed a blessing over the casket, which was draped in the green and white flag of Barra. A procession of six firefighters and two other groups of men relayed the coffin, at waist height, 70 yards across the sandy shallow bay to the hearse. (picture from "The Sun" newspaper)

Piper Duncan Nicholson, son of Eilidh's piping tutor Donald Patrick Nicholson, led the procession with three slow airs she had been learning. (reference Guth Bharraigh and "The Sun")

## Neil McNeill diary reports from Scotland

Over the last few years Neil has talked with me about his ambition to take time off from his work and spend about 6 months overseas, mainly renting a house in Scotland.

This ambition is now being fulfilled and Neil is currently travelling in Ireland after firstly spending time in Argyll, then flying to Nova Scotia, Canada and back to Scotland again.

He is planning to send me reports on his trip and the first two of these are attached for your reading.



Ormsary graveyard in Knapdale – gravestone of Lachlan Macneill, shepherd who died July 1823

## Seeking information on our clan tartan and where to buy tartan fabric and products

While there are a small number of retail businesses in Australia and New Zealand where a range of tartan products are available, the best source of information and product range is in Scotland.

There are a number of woollen weaving mills which specialize in tartan cloth. These are House of Edgar, Lochcarron, Strathmore Woollen Co., D C Dalgliesh, Marton Mills.

The web site addresses for these mills are as follows-

[www.houseofedgar.com](http://www.houseofedgar.com)

[www.lochcarron.co.uk](http://www.lochcarron.co.uk)

[www.strathmorewoollen.co.uk](http://www.strathmorewoollen.co.uk)

[www.dcdalgliesh.co.uk](http://www.dcdalgliesh.co.uk)

[www.martonmills.com](http://www.martonmills.com)

Scotweb is another valuable web site to seek information about tartans and where they are woven in Scotland.

Since launching in 1955 Scotweb have lead the world in marketing tartan online.

In 2011 we began the task of assembling the world's first complete Tartan Library. Our aim is no less than to display every known tartan pattern in every common colourway. When complete in 2012, this will mean customers will no longer just have to guess before purchase what their tartan might look like if woven in, for example, ancient colours. We'll even show the variations in appearance between wool and silk.

For further information visit their web site at – [www.scotweb.co.uk](http://www.scotweb.co.uk)

### The weaving of tartan fabric

The fabric is woven with different weights of thread and is produced in a range of different weight fabric. There are some slight thread colour differences used by mills which produce subtle differences in the finished material.

If we look at the Strathmore Mill they offer one weight material of 350 gram per metre or 11/11.5 oz. per yard suitable for use ladies and children's kilts and skirts, trousers and accessories.

They also produce a weight of 415gms per metre (13.5/14oz. per yard) at width 142cm (56 inches), and is available in over 120 authentic stock tartan designs in both Modern and Old Colours, Wilson of Bannockburn interpretations and muted colours. It is intended primarily for use as a gent's kilting material. Its hardwearing qualities, coupled with our wide range of tartan designs, also make it an ideal upholstery fabric.



Strathmore MacNeil of Barra modern  
350 gram per metre or 11 ½ oz per yard  
415-43- gram per metre or 13 oz per yard



Lochcarron heavy weight Barra modern 5000/515 grams per metre or 16 oz. per yard. Medium weight fabric is available at 400/415 grams per metre or 13 oz. per yard

Another web site which I recently discovered is [www.kiltmakers.com](http://www.kiltmakers.com)

They are located in Paisley a short distance west of Glasgow.

Houston Kiltmakers are a fourth generation family running their business with over 100 years' experience as gentleman's outfitters, highland wear & tartan specialists.

The web site offers some very useful information documents which can be downloaded. I particularly recommend the one titled "Kilts". This is a very informative document which tells you where they purchase tartan fabric for kilts, fabric weights, adjusting for size, different levels of kilt production finish and kilt pricing.

### Planning to attend the next Barra clan gathering in 2018

As you may already know our clan chief, Rory Macneil of Barra provides an invitation to all clan families to come to the island of Barra for a clan gathering every second year.

The next gathering will be held in August 2018 and our kindred association in America have arranged a package tour of Scotland which incorporates the Barra gathering.

The tour has been coordinated by Silver Skye Tours, Edinburgh. Further details can be found on their web site as follows-

[www.silverskye.co.uk](http://www.silverskye.co.uk)

If you have any questions to ask about this information then you may wish to contact Alex Hood. His email address is [mail@alexhood.scot](mailto:mail@alexhood.scot)



View from Ben Heaval overlooking Castlebay, the castle and the islands to the south

This gathering will be a wonderful experience as there will be many families for the USA as well as from other countries attending.

Please contact me if you have any questions to ask concerning the Scotland tour as well as the Barra gathering.



View of Castlebay village

## The celebration of Tartan Day anniversary

This date is the anniversary of the repeal of an Act in the British parliament on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1782.

“Listen men. This is bringing before all the Sons of the Gael, the King and Parliament of Britain have forever abolished the Act against the highland dress, which came down to the clans from the beginning of the world to the year 1746.

This must bring great joy to every Highland Heart. You are no longer bound down to the unmanly dress of the Lowlander. This is declaring to every man, young and old, simple and gentle, that they may after this put on and wear the Truis, the Little Kilt, the Coat and the striped Hose. Also the Belted Plaid, without fear of the Law of the Realm or spite of the enemies.”

The Act provided a penalty of being transported to any of His Majesty’s plantations beyond the seas, thereto remain for a period of seven years.

Australia and New Zealand celebrates Tartan Day on 1st July each year.

In America and Canada Tartan day is celebrated on 6<sup>th</sup> April which is the anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Arbroath in 1320 AD.



Seymour College mini pipe band playing at the Tartan Day concert at the Burnside Library, South Australia

## News from Barra

### Loch Eynort – growing up memories

The garden's drystone dyke

Those endless fences

The smell from the byre

Two cows - "Daisy and Lucy"

Two dogs - "Dileas and Dochas"

No inside toilet

Nor electricity

Yet, we had a telephone, because my aunt was the District Nurse. The skiff, the rowing barge, the wet meadow.

Granny, squirting milk whilst doing the cows, sheep seaweed,

jumping ditches, going to the well, carrying the peats to the side of the house.

Visiting the neighbours.

Walking to the bridge to catch the bus to the chapel

Climbing "Beinn Mor"

Watching the mute swans on the lochan

Taking the shortcut to Bornish

On the back path

Listening to my Daddy

Playing jigs on his chanter.

Lighting the "Tilly lamps"

Listening to stories

Singing old songs

Saying your prayers before bedtime.

*Allan Roderick Morrison*

### Where is Loch Eynort?

South Uist is the second largest of the islands in the Western Isles, measuring some 22 miles north to south and 7 miles from east to west. The geography is divided into a series of north-south strips, each running the length of the island.

The pattern is only broken by the deep intrusion into the eastern coast of three sea lochs, from north to south Loch Skipport (Sgiopoint), Loch Eynort (Aineort), and Loch Boisdale (Baghasdail). East Coast settlement is largely confined to the heads of these three lochs.



## Barraich Shine at Star-Studded National Gaelic Film Awards

Scottish stars turned out in Glasgow on Friday, 17th February to present awards at the ninth annual National Gaelic Film ceremony. FilmG is MGALBA's (the Gaelic Media Service) prestigious Gaelic screen talent awards, which this year attracted a record number of entries and was streamed live to audiences around the world.

The ceremony was held at The Old Fruit market, Glasgow and hosted by Fiona MacKenzie, face of BBC ALBA, and Niall Iain Macdonald, TV & radio presenter. Live entertainment on the night was courtesy of four-piece band, INYAL, fresh from performances at Celtic Connections and The Highland Annual.

The quality of film entries this year was exceptional making it a very tough decision for judges. Uilleam MacDhùghaill from Barra received the Best Performance award from young actor Lewis MacDougall for his role in Eilean an Dòchais, a drama set in Mingulay in 1907 dealing with the struggle for land.

The award for Best Performance in the Open Category went to Hannah McKirdy, who is currently studying in Sabhal Mòr Ostaig and has Barra connections, for her role in Cheating our Language.

Well done to both of them and all involved in their films.

## Scottish community events we have attended



Mary Surman, Judy Macdonald and Lachie Macdonald at the Glen Innes Celtic Festival 2017



Sing Australiana choir at the Bendigo Scots Day Out with Michael McNeill standing on the rear right position



City of Brisbane pipe band at Glen Innes Celtic Festival, NSW 2017, wearing MacNeil of Barra tartan kilts



Rhonda Lark winner of the Shortbread competition at the Bendigo Scots Day Out 2017



Clan MacNeil luncheon at the RACV Club, Melbourne from the right – John Whiddon, Jean Buchanan, Barbara, Alyson and Richard McNeil, Graeme & Robyn McNeill



Graeme McNeil at the Clan MacNeil luncheon At the RACV Club, Melbourne

## Coming events

**28 – 31 July**

### International highland dancing festival at Gosford, NSW

A spectacular 4 day event on the NSW Central Coast. Held Annually in July Pre-Premier Aggregates, Champion Challenges, Pre-Champs, 10 age Championships. Info: 0437 677 166 or [www.cchdi.org.au](http://www.cchdi.org.au).

**7 Aug – 25 September**

### Learn Scottish Country dancing for beginners – The Rocks, Sydney, NSW

This course is for new dancers who wish to learn steps and basic dance formations that are the building blocks of Scottish Country dancing. You will be introduced to Jigs and Reels and will learn a

series of lively, beginner friendly dances. Info: [www.sotr.org.au/beginner](http://www.sotr.org.au/beginner)

## **12 August**

The Melbourne Scottish Fiddle Club presents

### **Untamed Ceilidh 2017**

At Northcote Uniting Church Hall

253 High St Northcote

Saturday 12th August 017, 7:30pm

Book at

[www.trybooking.com/293014](http://www.trybooking.com/293014)

## **16 September**

Clans on the Coast Celtic Festival

Tomaree No1 Sports Ground Nelson Bay

commencing at 8.30am

## **7 October**

Canberra highland gathering

Kambah Oval, Kett Street, Kambah

commencing at 10.00 am

## **30 November**

St. Andrew's day anniversary

## Clan MacNeil DNA Ancestry update report

Alex Buchanan, who administers this project together with Vince MacNeil of Nova Scotia has provided the following report.

### **The I1a McNeills of Kintyre DNA marker group**

For the next few months we will be focusing on the I1a McNeills of Kintyre, those who are believed to descend from Torquil McNeill, Constable of Castle Sween, in Knapdale. The earliest surviving records for this line of McNeills are charters that record the holding of land, beginning in 1464. This is the lineage that became well known as the McNeills of Gigha and Taynish.

The good news is that one of the I1a McNeill participants has tested BigY, a test that discovers SNP-markers. If enough I1a McNeills will test for these newly found McNeill markers it will allow us to reconstruct the descent and branching pattern of the descendants of this well documented early McNeill lineage. We are on a quest to test the SNP-markers of as many I1a McNeills as possible.

In more recent historical times almost all the known branches of this clan lived in the peninsula of Kintyre and its offshore islands to the west, notably Gigha and Colonsay. We are fortunate that two descendants of these known branches are testing SNPs at the moment, their results will be the bench-marks against which others can compare. If you are an I1a McNeill. Please consider a SNP test, it will help to piece together the tree of the Gigha and Taynish Clan.

## Neil McNeill diary report from Scotland

The diary report from Neil is attached to this newsletter as it is better presented as a full A4 page format.

## A profile of Peter Hoskin and Bill MacNeill Sadler

### Flowers of the forest



### Peter Alfred Hoskin



I regret to tell you that Peter died on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2017 and we offer our condolences to Sue, their children and grandchildren.

Peter & Suzanne Hoskin joined the Clan MacNeil Association of Australia on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2006, or a little over 11 years ago.

Peter always took an interest in the Clan MacNeil and helped me on a couple of occasions in manning the clan information tent at the Mount Barker highland gathering. The picture above shows Peter

and Suzanne with her sister Valerie Walters, Valerie's daughter Jessica and Jessica's son Angus.

### William Robert Burns MacNeil-Sadler

Bill regrettably died on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2017 after a period of illness. We send our condolences to his partner Cynthia Waddle and his family.

Bill joined the Clan MacNeil Association of Australia with his wife Elaine on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2002, soon after the revival of membership to the association. He was always a passionate member and took a personal interest in all matters relating to the clan and the association. Bill was the only person whom I knew who wore kilts of both MacNeil of Barra and McNeill of Colonsay tartans.

Bill and Elaine joined with us at a number of Australian national clan gatherings and there is a picture below which shows Bill with Mairi MacIntosh and myself at the Naracoorte clan gathering in 2003.

Another picture shows Bill with Trevor Powell and myself at the beginning of a Tartan Day march through the city of Adelaide in 2008



Scottish community march in the city of Adelaide for Tartan Day – Bill MacNeil Sadler with John McNeil and Trevor Powell 2008



Mairi MacIntosh, John McNeil and Bill MacNeil Sadler at Naracoorte clan gathering 2003

In 2006 we held an Australian national clan gathering at Glenelg, a suburb of Adelaide. Bill & Elaine kindly invited us to their home in Brighton for a barbecue luncheon and the picture below shows those of us who

attended the lunch. Bill is shown sitting in the front row at the left and Elaine is in the front row on the right.



I now have a small number of Clan MacNeil of Barra tartan rosettes available for sale. I can supply these at a price of \$15.00 plus the cost of postage

Joy & I send our very best wishes to all of our clan families and friends.

*John McNeil*



Bill MacNeil Sadler, Cynthia Waddle and Beth (McNeil) Price at the Mittagong clan gathering 2012

Following the death of Elaine, Bill came to our Australian national clan gathering with his partner, Cynthia Waddle. Bill and Cynthia shared a number of common interests including dancing and jazz. Some of you may ponder about Bill's second and third Christian names. He changed his registered name to include the name of Robert Burns, the famous Scottish poet as they both share the same birth date and Bill loved the poetry of Robert Burns.

I attended a number of Robert Burns supper evenings on 25<sup>th</sup> January with Bill where we celebrated both the birthday of Robert Burns and of Bill MacNeil Sadler.

Bill was a member of the Royal Caledonian Society of South Australia. He was also for some years the secretary of the Clan MacNeil Association of Australia.

