



Clan MacNeil

Association of New Zealand

September 2009 Newsletter: Failte – Welcome

Welcome to the September edition, of the Clan MacNeil newsletter. Thanks to all those who have helped contribute content— keep it up.

Tartan Day Celebrations

Waikato - Bay of Plenty Clan Associations celebrated Tartan Day on The 4th July at Tauranga.

The day hosted by Clan Cameron was attended by about 100 members from Waikato, the Bay of Plenty coming from as far away as Taumaranui. Clan MacNeil attendees were Pat Duncan, Judith Bean and new member Heather Peart.

“The rain held off for a very short march from a College field across the road into the Wesley Church Hall where the function was held. After the piping in of the Banners each Clan representative was invited to speak on behalf of their Clan which I duly did passing on greetings from Clan MacNeil” said MacNeil participant Pat Duncan.

“Ted Little our usual representative to this function was unable to attend and sent his apologies. Clan Cameron Chief gave a short speech outlining the outlawing of The Tartan and its reinstatement” added Duncan.

Clans represented were; Clan Cameron, Davidson, McArthur, Wallace, Gordon, Johnston McLoughlan, Donnachaidh and Stewart.

The coffee cart did a great trade in the break before the Haggis was piped in. The Address given and attendees all participated in a wee dram (or juice) to toast the Haggis. Pot Luck lunch enjoyed by all, preceded the afternoon Ceilieh. Items from Shirley and John Bailey on the Harp and Fiddle



(accompanied by their little granddaughters).

Jessica McLachland danced having just returned from attending Homecoming Scotland with her grandfather, Dave, who also sang a selection of songs with 3 others. Attendees were all invited to join Scottish Country dancers in a Gay Gordans and finished an enjoyable day of fun and fellowship celebrating the Tartan with Aulde Lang Syne.

Tartan Day—Where does it come from?

In 1982, New York Governor Hugh Carey, and New York City Mayor Ed Koch declared July 1, 1982, as Scottish day or Tartan Day, a one-time celebration of the 200th anniversary of the Repeal of the Act of Proscription of August 12, 1747, forbidding Scots to wear tartan. Scots around the world continue to celebrate this anniversary in July.

Tartan Day is actually now held in North America on April 6, the anniversary of the Scottish Declaration of Arbroath in 1320, the first known formal Declaration of independence and "the inspirational document, according to U.S. Senate Resolution 155, 1999, upon which the American Declaration of Independence was modeled". The idea was revived in the United States and since 1998, April 6 has been officially recognized by the United States Senate as a celebration of the contribution made by generations of Scots-Americans to the foundation and prosperity of modern America.

A few words from the President

Time to put pen to paper (or fingers to the keyboard) again. How the months fly by.

Firstly I must say a big thank you and congratulations to Amanda for the great job she made of the last newsletter. It was just wonderful and I've received lots of positive feedback. Do remember it is your newsletter, so please help Amanda by sending her any family news, articles, photos, etc, which can be included.

Sadly, last month Marion and I and fellow clan members Max and Diane Daly and Judith Bean travelled to Tokoroa to attend the funeral of one of our foundation members Ted Little. Ted passed away peacefully at Waikato Hospital on 19 July after a short illness. Ted has been the backbone of our association, firstly as right hand man to our late president (his wife) Joan and since her death he has continued the great work travelling to many Highland Games and other Scottish events as well as being our newsletter editor for the last three years. He will be sorely missed as he was a wealth of knowledge and always available for advice.

On 4 July clan members Pat Duncan and Heather Peart represented Clan MacNeil at a Tartan Day in Tauranga. A great day of celebrations of all things Scottish.



Thank you to all of you who have paid your subs and taken the time to fill in the form with details of other family members who may like to join our association. Keep those subs coming in.

How good it is for the weather to be warming up and the daylight hours increasing. Here in Opunake we have had our coldest winter for many years and even had a tornado thrown in for good measure. Thankfully our property didn't suffer any damage and from the homes that did suffer damage there were no injuries to the occupants. Bye from Opunake. Keep healthy and safe.
Peter McNeil
New Zealand McNeil Association President

End of an Era...

The clan MacNeil association extends our deepest sympathy to Ted Little's daughters Janice, Linda, Kay and Charlene and their respective families.

Both Ted and the late Joan Little were both founding and very active members of Clan MacNeil in New Zealand since its inception in 1989.

They have attended numerous events throughout New Zealand and also attended Clan MacNeil Gatherings on the Scottish Isle of Barra in 1987 and 1997 and as such were both, well known to most members of the New Zealand and wider MacNeil associations.

You will be sorely missed by all Ted.

Ted Little 5 April 1925 - 19 July 2009



Flowers of the Forest

Crocket, Jessie C.L (Jimmy)

On July 7, 2009 peacefully in Dunedin.

Dearly loved wife of the late Bert, loved mother and mother in law of Susan and Ron Ballantyne (Hawarden) loved Nana Jessie of Alison and Cameron Frith and Fiona, Mike & Craig Ballantyne. Loved sister and sister in law of the late Eila and Lou Hahn & Arthur and May McNeil.

Editor Note:

Give us your thoughts on the newsletter! Remember we would love to hear what MacNeil clan family members are up to. Please either e-mail your comments or suggestions for topics to Amanda Wilkinson at wash.wilk@xtra.co.nz or phone (09) 520 4066 or post to 36 Ventnor Road, Remuera, Auckland 1050.

A Scottish Journey South

Poem by Lily Washington, aged 11 years, Wellington

You would take a bag and wear a tag so you could board the boat.

But if the ship sank it would be hard to ever stay afloat.

*They nearly had an accident at Tristan da Cunha.
They wished they could all be, in, New Zealand, much sooner.*

*Over the seas they sailed...after a while the children wailed
"When are we going to arrive? we might not even stay alive!"*

*But when they finally reached Otago it was a giant surprise,
"What a bunch of lies!"
They found out it wasn't even their land, all there was on the shore was the sand!*

They started to cut, through the bush and often they would sit, to rest their tosh.

Well at least I am lucky not all crammed and mucky.

Anzac Day march celebrations...

The Gisborne Pipe Band proudly march in the ANZAC Parade through central Gisborne.

Among them (middle row, centre) is kinswoman, piper and Massey University student Kate Doulton (niece of Clan McNeil President Peter McNeil).



MacNeil NZ Clansmen Profile...

Our first MacNeil clansmen profile is on Paul Washington. A Christchurch based Air New Zealand engineer, who recently featured in the Air New Zealand magazine due to his 'sweet side line'— a home baking business called Tin fillers.

Paul and his wife Nicky, a trained chef, started the business in Christchurch in 2007 after endless requests for Nicky's homemade delights. They realised most families were too busy to bake but have great memories of home baking & still want it in their tins. The business has thrived ever since, with both café orders and filling family tins on a weekly basis or for special occasions or birthdays to customers from Invercargill to Auckland with classics like melting moments, caramel slice & ginger crunch.

Anyone hankering for a home baked fix to send a great gift can contact Paul and Nicky at tinfillers@xtra.co.nz or (03) 343 6351. To profile one of your family members please contact the editor!

Membership Subscriptions Due by October 31

Please if you have not got around to renewing your clan membership yet, but do intend to please do ASAP. The clan association is run purely on voluntary time and services and in doing this we are able to keep the fees low.

Your membership fees cover the costs of the newsletter mail out 3 times a year, and also go towards the organisation of the larger gatherings that are held every second year. This March the 2009 gathering was successfully held in Christchurch and in 2011 it will be in Auckland.

However, for this to continue and the continued viability of the Clan we require the continued support of members and for members to encourage extended family to join!

As clan membership renewal has not been as

strong as we would have hoped to date and we can no longer afford to continue covering past members, who have not paid their subscriptions for sometime. For those of you who have not paid your current membership by the end October 2009 (and have also not paid for 2 or more previous years) then unfortunately, we presume you no longer wish to receive communication from us and this will be your last newsletter.

For those of you who are just 'forgetful' but have intentions of renewing - we gladly attach a membership renewal and subscription form for the coming year. Please complete the form and return with your subscription payment as quickly as possible. Thanks!

The annual clan membership fees are only:

- **\$20 per person, per year**
- **\$30 per family (living at the same address) per year**

Aims of the Association

The association aims to promote unity and fellowship amongst the kinsfolk of Clan MacNeil and all Septs.

The association in all ways seeks to revive and preserve the Scottish heritage of Clan MacNeil in New Zealand.

Waltz in Matilda...

As the Australian TV advertising campaign bluntly puts it "where the bloody hell are ya?"

While these are obviously not the exact words of our esteemed MacNeil kinsfolk counterparts in Australia. New Zealand clan McNeil members are encouraged to join them in their Australian 6th National McNeil Clan Gathering at Beechworth, NE Victoria (3 hours driver from Melbourne) from November 6-8 2009.

The gathering will also be held at the same time as the Beechworth Celtic Gathering, which will provide some wonderful entertainment for all who attend.

Any one wishing to find out more information or attend this wonderful event please contact John McNeil (Australian President)
kisimul@chariot.net.au, 0061 8 833 83858

Membership Competition

In the last newsletter as part of this year's subscription request we asked you to update your contact details (e.g. **email addresses**) and ran a competition for you to provide the names and details of anyone you think might be interested in joining the association.

Thanks to all members who provided names of prospective members and went in the draw to win a **\$50 petrol voucher**. The winner of the petrol voucher is ...

A W (Andy) Higgins of Hamilton.

Clan MacNeil NZ going online...

We are thrilled to announce that Clan MacNeil New Zealand will have its own website up and running by Christmas 2009. Huge thanks to Douglas Ateremu McNeil and James McNeil for this. This will be a work in progress website but something we hope to build on over **the coming months**.

Feedback and ideas for website content to Amanda Wilkinson wash.wilk@xtra.co.nz

Upcoming Events- 2009 and Beyond...

The following events may be of interest to Clan New Zealand members:

Sept 18- 20	Whisky Galore Festival in Barra, Homecoming Scotland 2009
October 3	The Annual Combined Clans Day will this year be held in Huntly, Sat 3rd October, hosted by Clan Cameron.
October 24-25	NZ Championship Open Solo Piping , Canterbury
November 6-8	Australian National McNeil Clan Gathering. Beechworth, NE Victoria
November 28	Auckland Highland Games AKL, Three Kings Domain, Mt Eden, Piping, dancing sheaf tossing . Free Entry!
November 28	Wellington Provincial Highland Gathering - Games Day
November 30	St Andrew's Day (the patron saint of Scotland)
January 1	Highland Games. Waipu, Calendonian Park
January 30	Turakina, Highland Games www.turakinahighlandgames.co.nz
February 14	Paeroa Highland Games & Tattoo, Paeroa Domain, Hamilton

If you are considering a journey 'home ' to Barra now is the time to start planning. The next Worldwide MacNeil Clan Gathering in Barra will be in 2010.

Homecoming Scotland Gathering—2009

Thousands came together from around the world- this July to celebrate their heritage at the great homecoming opening weekend, at Holyrood Park, Edinburgh. The event exceeded all expectations, attracting 47,000 clansmen including New Zealander & Clan MacNiels own Pat Duncan.

It was an historic occasion, opened by Prince Charles, not only marking the 250th birthday of its favourite son Robbie Burns, but significantly as the first time an assembly of the clans was held in Holyrood Park, since Bonnie Prince Charlie assembled there himself! However on that occasion the castle shut its gates and fired off its cannon at the Jacobite Army.

Members of the oldest (Earl of Elgin & Kincardine) and legendary Scottish families, eg descendants of Robert the Bruce & Rob Roy, were represented. Many pilgrims were also taking DNA tests at the event to prove their heritage and connections. Over 125 clans were represented and it was the first time in recorded history that more than 100 of Scotland's Clan Chiefs had assembled in once place and the first time since Sir Walter Scott Royal Pageant in 1822, that so many clans have been together in Edinburgh.

Pat Duncan like thousands of others had built her trip to Scotland around this event and her trip to Barra.

"The Royal Mile March in Edinburgh was incredible" said Pat, *"the thousand of pipers in their kilts and the sounds of the bagpipes was really something."* For many pilgrims it was their first trip to their ancestral homeland and the event truly marked a resurgence in Scottish national pride in Scotland itself. While their had been a decline in the popularity of traditional Scottish games & heritage within Scotland, the opposite is true around the world, New Zealand events included.



Scottish Flag ; The Saltire ; St Andrew 's Cross

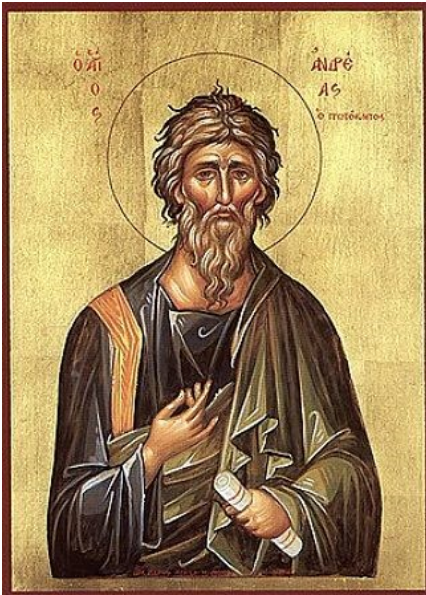
The traditional flag of Scotland dates back to the 9th century, and is in fact, the oldest national flag still in modern use. It is also known as the Saltire or the Saint Andrew's Cross.

The flag features a white Saltire, or crux decussate (X-shaped cross) representing the cross of the Christian martyr Saint Andrew, patron saint of Scotland.



St Andrew Patron St of Scotland

In 832 AD Angus MacFergus the High King of Alba was defending his land with his army of soldiers against an English invasion. Thinking that they were facing a superior force King Angus began to pray. He thought



his prayers had been answered when he saw an X shaped cross or St Andrews cross in the clouds (on the blue sky) and promised that if they won the day with Saint Andrew's help he would be adopted as Scotland's patron saint.

The Scots won the battle and from that day the Saltire became the flag of Scotland and the emblem of the Scottish people & St Andrew their patron Saint. By 1286 the seal of Scotland bore the crucified image of St Andrew and the Saltire appeared in coin by about 1350. By 1385 an Act of Parliament bade that any Scot's soldier invading England would wear a white St Andrew's cross. This led to many Chieftains adopting the Saltire to their family arms and standards. By 1500 the Saltire started to appear on flags at sea and on the land. In 1542 the Royal Arms of James V featured the Saltire. The Saltire became the national flag whilst at sea in 1606 which also saw the first Union flag combining the St George's and St Andrew's flag.

However in the UK, prior to 2008 only the Union Jack Flag could be flown, if the building had only one flagpole— even on St Andrews Day, in Scotland! The Scottish Parliament complained that Scotland was

the only country in the world that could not fly its national flag on its national day and then last year, yes 2008!! UK ministers finally announced the lifting of restrictions on flag flying that had been in force since 1924. Scottish public buildings are now permitted to fly the Saltire whenever they want and at half-mast to mark the death of a notable person, pupil, teacher or local figure, rather than by special order from the Queen. The decision to give the Saltire equal status was welcomed by all Scots and of course all others with common sense!

St Andrews Day & the National Scottish day is November 30

Why the Clan Tartan?

A tartan is a pattern consisting of criss crossed horizontal and vertical bands in multiple colors. Tartans originated in woven cloth & were historically associated with a tartan cloth slung over the shoulder or a blanket. People most likely wore a pattern of tartan in colours common to the district & plant dyes available in the area they lived in (weavers had their favorite patterns in different areas), and could therefore be identified as being from that area if they travelled outside their district.

In the modern era, specific tartans have become associated with Scottish clans or institutions who are associated in some way with a Scottish (or other Celtic) heritage.

Clan specific tartans are a relatively recent innovation, due to renewed interest in Scottish heritage in the early 1800s, when the laws against the wearing of kilts and tartans were lifted.