



The Southern Cross



The Journal of Clan MacNeacail in Australia and New Zealand

Chief: John MacNeacail of MacNeacail and Scorrybreac

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Editor: Lisa Dillon

Luke and Kate Engaged



Kate and Luke on the Clan land, Skye, October 2004

Congratulations to Luke Nicolson and Kate Hoffman, who have announced their engagement. As the elder son of our Chief, John, and his Lady, Jenni, Luke is our Clan Tanist. Kate is the elder daughter of Jan Hoffman and Bill Kamerer of Florida, USA, and the late James Hoffman.

Luke and Kate met when surfing in Bali in 2001. Since then they've travelled extensively together in the USA and Europe.

Luke is a primary school teacher at Byron Community School and Katie works with her 'father-in-law-to-be' as a Real Estate Salesperson at Elders in Ballina. The couple plan to continue to live in Ballina. A wedding date has not yet been decided.

Incorporation of Clan MacNicol

Report from Penny Nicoll
Secretary, Clan MacNicol Australia

The long, drawn out process of becoming incorporated is still underway. We have reached the stage of getting legal advice to ensure the model rules that we will be presenting to members are the best we can do. Following the almost unanimous support (only two votes against) of our members in Queensland, New South Wales, the ACT, Tasmania, South Australia and Western Australia, Clan MacNicol Australia will be incorporated in New South Wales.

The President of the Victorian Branch, Counsellor Beth Bell, has indicated her members' vote "is tied"; therefore the incorporation is proceeding without their involvement. The Victorian Branch is incorporated in its own right and should they choose to do so, they can still become part of Clan MacNicol Australia.

Third-party Public Liability Insurance

As the third-party insurance is for Clan MacNicol Australia, the protection of this third-party public liability insurance cannot be extended to Victoria.

Balvenie Trust

The Presidents of all the branches of Clan MacNicol have been kept informed of the Balvenie Trust in the various Minutes of Committee Meetings. However it has been brought to my attention that I have not given our members an update. I do apologise.

Harman Nicholson of Atlanta gave a generous gift of money to establish the **Balvenie Trust**, and this was first referred to in the "Summary of the Inaugural Meeting of Clan MacNicol Australia" printed in the Summer 2001 *Southern Cross*. As reported, Harman's gift was to be a **legacy in his will**. However our ever-generous Harman decided to forward us the sum of \$US10,000 in 2003. His initial wish was that the Trust be established and we use the **earned interest** for the benefit of Clan MacNicol Australia, keeping in mind the needs of our New Zealand kin. Harman has subsequently indicated that he would be happy for the capital to be used if we saw a need. The committee of Clan MacNicol Australia is eager to honour the original concept of the Trust and only use the capital if it is essential to do so.

(Continued on page 2)

Victorian Branch News

Report from Branch President, Beth Bell

In May we had a very successful General Meeting with very good attendance. We were very pleased to welcome our Patron Alastair Nicholson to join us; now that he is retired he intends to take a much more active part in clan activities. His wife Lauris was unable to be with us because of another commitment.

I have attended Council of Clans of Australia Inc., meetings as our clan representative. Last year they received a grant from the Victorian Multicultural Commission. This money was used to help run functions, one of which was their annual luncheon. It was attended by about 130 people from various clans. They intend to run the same function this October, with another assisted grant. They have also received a grant to help cover their Scottish Clans Societies Membership Drive. It has yet to be decided which way this can be done best, but Clan MacNicol of Victoria will be one of its beneficiaries.

Victorian State Minister assisting the Premier on Multicultural Affairs, the Hon. John Pandazopoulos, speaking at last years luncheon, said it was very pleasing to see the Scottish community being active in our multicultural society. He said that other cultural groups had received grants in past years and as Scots made up a large number of our nation's early settlers, he was pleased to see them now receiving grants. He said that the Victorian Multicultural Commission was working closely with the Council of Clans. The membership of the Council of Clans is open to Scottish clans and Scottish societies.



Sick List

On the sick list this year have been Pam Fenwick, George Fenwick, Bert Nicholson, Lauris Nicholson and Arthur and Elizabeth Newman's daughter. All are fully recovered except for George, whose transplant surgery has not been as successful as first thought.

(Continued from page 1)

Our treasurer, Bob Nicol of Queensland, has of course met the request that this gift be invested and the money is in an interest-bearing account with the Commonwealth Bank. Whilst the committee of Clan MacNicol Australia would always entertain any suggestions made by our members as to how this money should be used, it must be realised that it is not

Calendar of Events

- Beechworth Celtic Festival*
November 11th & 12th
Phone 1300 366321
- Daylesford 54th Highland Games*
December 2nd & 3rd
Paula Weaver – 03 5348 1793
- Maryborough Highland Games*
January 2nd
Princes Park, Park Road, Maryborough
- Berwick Highland Games*
February 5th
Phone 03 9703 1469
- Ringwood Highland Games*
March 5th Jubilee Park
Phone 03 9876 4140
- Geelong Highland Gathering*
March 19th
Queens Park, Geelong

Our sympathy to Pam Fenwick, whose mother passed away earlier this year. A piper played at the funeral, which gave her a real Scottish send-off.

New Appointment

Victorian member, Dr Iain Nicolson, has recently been appointed Commissioner, First Aid Services, with St John Ambulance Australia. Dr Nicolson had previously been the organisation's State Professional Officer, and according to Chief Executive Officer, Ian Clark, he has provided "an extraordinary amount of service hours within the community".

We offer Iain our hearty congratulations for achieving this obviously well-earned position.

Quote from *The Scottish Sunday Mail*

The most frightening thing about AIDS is that it can be spread by normal sex between men and women. This is still rare in Scotland.



a "candy shop" - the money must be used judiciously. Should you wish to make any suggestion about the use of the trust money please do not hesitate to write to me as Secretary of Clan MacNicol Australia (2 Cameron Avenue, Bass Hill 2197), detailing your suggestion. However, until Clan MacNicol Australia is incorporated I would not anticipate any action would be taken.

Queensland Branch News

Report from Scott and Katrina Nicholson

Due to our Queensland President, John Nicol, working harder than any man half his age, the correspondent duties have passed to us.

It's been a very busy year so far for Queensland. Everything kicked off in April with our participation in the first ever Tartan Day at Toowoomba. Clan MacNicol was one of three Clans to attend. We had a lot of interest and signed up two new families.

Glen Innes was next on the calendar, with members from NSW and Queensland meeting for a sensational weekend.

Small Idea Becomes Big Event

A small idea kept Katrina and me busy for quite a few months, organizing the hugely successful, first ever Clan MacNicol Highland Gathering in Toowoomba on June 25th & 26th. Our Chief and his family were our honoured guests.

The weekend started off with a casual lunch at Picnic Point on the Range. Ralph Cockle (Town Crier) was there to welcome all along with a lone piper (member of the Range Highland Pipe Band). Even Channel Nine came to interview our Chief and featured the Gathering on the 6 o'clock news.



The Haggis has arrived! Scott Nicholson, the Chef and Scorrybreac look on while Bob Nicol gives an impassioned and impressive 'Address to the Haggis'.

That night, 53 members, family, friends and other interested people enjoyed a traditional ceilidh with singing, dancing, highland fare & many, many wee (and rather large) drams! The lucky door prizes and raffles consisted of various bottles of scotch, framed wooden maps of the Isle of Skye and donations from Walkers Shortbread in Scotland. The Range Highland

Pipe Band & the Johnstone Highland Dancers provided entertainment of a very high standard.



On the Sunday morning we attended a traditional Kirkin' o' the Tartan at St Johns Presbyterian Church put on especially for Clan MacNicol by Rev. Graham MacKay.

Shirt Orders

I'd like to take this opportunity to apologize for the delay in members receiving their shirts, as there were backorders of shirts and the shop closed because of a trip to Scotland. All orders have now been filled and members should be receiving them as this newsletter goes to print.

Finally, from all in Queensland, congratulations to our Tanist, Luke, and his long-time girlfriend, the sensational Katie Hoffman on their engagement.

Scott's and Katrina's own exciting news can be found on another page. They have also moved back to the Sunshine Coast and Scott hopes that his business, *Nicholson Surfboards*, will continue to grow, now that they're beside the ocean again (our Tanist owns a special "Scottish Saltire" surfboard which Scott made for him last Christmas).
Ed.

NSW Branch News

Report from Mal Nicolson, President

April

Once again Clan MacNicol was represented at ANZAC Day in Sydney, in the Scottish Act of Remembrance. We participated in the special march with the Clans and massed bands, completing the event with a march back up George Street to the Cenotaph, for the wreath laying ceremony.

May

The Glen Innes Celtic Festival was a wonderful gathering, with our Chief John MacNeacail of MacNeacail and Scorrybreac, attending. As Scottish Chief of the Day on Sunday and as the highest ranked Celtic representative there, he was in great demand for all the festivities - including receiving the Celtic Council Award for "Honoured Person" (d Urr).

June

A Bannockburn lunch was held at Scottish House on June 24, with a Powerpoint display and much discussion.

July

The 2005 AGM was held on the 9th July – a well-attended and heartening meeting. The new committee is as follows:

President	Mal Nicolson
Vice Presidents	Don Hobbs and Grant Harris
Secretary/Membership	John Nicoll
Minutes Secretary	Don Hobbs
Treasurer	Penny Nicoll
Assistant Treasurer	Ross Nicolson
Genealogy/Web Officer	Grant Harris
Committee	Arthur Nicolson, Jenny Hobbs, Helen Cobain

A special thanks to all new representatives, and especially to our new "web" officer, Grant Harris, who is working on getting us on the World Wide Web.

On 16th July, John and Penny represented the clan at the Lane Cove Tartan Day, held at the Lane Cove Shopping Centre.

August

The Toukley Highland Gathering, despite early gloomy skies, proved to be another enjoyable day. We were visited by the Robinson Family with three generations in Kilts; well done.

September

A month of celebrations: we congratulate Ian and Karen Nicoll on their marriage, and Helen Cobain and Grant Harris on the birth of their daughter, Isla (*see full reports elsewhere*).

Calendar of Events

Scottish House AGM	October 9
Combined Scottish Gathering, Castle Hill	October 30
NSW Branch Committee Meeting	November 12
Sydney Scottish Week	Nov 25 – Dec 4
<i>(many events throughout the week)</i>	
St. Andrews Day	November 30
Scottish Gathering in Hyde Park	December 4
Hogmanay (New Years Eve)	December 31

Get Well Soon



We wish Jim Nicholson of Kincumber NSW, a speedy recovery. Jim, who was so generous in his assistance with members in their family research, is having a trying time with a most distressing eye complaint and other debilitating health problems.

Best wishes, Jim



The Robinson family - three generations in kilts



Test Your Knowledge

Answers on Page 15

1. Which two main clans were involved in the infamous massacre at Glencoe?
2. In which town is Scotland's oldest university?
3. The population of the Isle of Skye is approximately 15,000. True or false?
4. Portree is the English version of the Gaelic Portaurigh. What does the name mean?

The Australian Celtic Festival Glen Innes

Thursday 28th April – Sunday 1st May 2005

Report from Mal Nicolson

The tag line for this Festival is 'There's something for everyone in Celtic Country' and this was certainly true for the 2005 Glen Innes Festival. As the site of the Australian Standing Stones, a national monument to Australia's Celtic pioneers, the Celtic festival is held each year in April/May. For those who have not experienced this festival, it is a most enjoyable and interesting celebration of all things Celtic, including music, poetry, craft, combat and athletic competition.



As Glen Innes is four hours drive from Brisbane and seven from Sydney, it is remarkable that it drew so many Clan MacNicol members from both NSW and Queensland, to be with our Chief, John MacNeacail of MacNeacail and Scorrybreac.

As the highest ranked of celtic representatives in attendance, John was in great demand for all the festivities, from the official welcome and presentation of 'Honoured Guests and Guardians of the Stones' at the Town Hall on Friday, to the Scottish Chief of the Day on Sunday, and many other activities as well.

Most arrived on Friday in time for the official greetings

and welcome to the 'Honoured Guests and Guardians of the Stones' plus the presentation of Clan banners. Friday evening was a Ceilidh dinner, with a concert by the Australian Celtic Singers and a limited chance to chat and catch up with fellow clan members. Very early the next morning was the Lone Piper in the mist and the dawn service for the keen. Then the days activities got underway with the Street Parade - led of course by Clan MacNicol!

The Highland Games (those 100kg stones are BIG and heavy), market place stalls and entertainment kept all busy before the Guardians Ceremony and awards, including the Celtic Council Award for 'Honoured Person' (Duine Urramach or d Urr) which was presented to our Chief.

Saturday evening was a very enjoyable dinner for SAHC Scottish Honoured Guests, at which Margaret McKinnon (Scotland) had some very special memories and kind words about our past and present Chiefs, and a lovely song of Scorrybreac.

Sunday dawned cloudy, but after a few brief rain squalls it cleared to a wonderful day. More stalls, bands, dancing and entertainment before the Parade and Kirkin' of Tartans at which the Scorrybreac banner once again proudly led. Then on to the presentation of Scottish Recognition Ceremonies at which Our Chief John MacNeacail of MacNeacail and Scorrybreac was recognised as Chief of the Day.

We were gladdened by meeting so many others of the Clan from such diverse areas of Australia, and had a wonderful time in Celtic Country.

Next year the Glen Innes festival will be 27th April – 1st May 2006. Reserve your accommodation early as demand is very high.



Mal Nicolson, Scorrybreac, John Nicoll and Lady Scorrybreac

Great Hairy Beasties in Tasmania

The Highland Cattle of Streanshalh by Andrew Nicolson

Norman Nicolson of Streanshalh, Campbell Town, great grandfather of John, our present Chief, established a herd of Highland cattle early last century. With their exotic looks and sometimes uncertain temperament, they created widespread interest, many of their exploits passing into local folklore.

The Macquarie River where it flows between Streanshalh and Winton has never been a totally effective barrier for cattle. The kyloes (as they are still referred to in Scotland) were responsible for an occasional ripple in the otherwise firm friendship that existed between my grandfather Norman, and John Taylor of Winton, who was justifiably proud of his Hereford cattle stud.

I was often entertained by my other grandfather, John Taylor junior, recounting the apprehension he felt as he rowed his dinghy along the narrow, and also shallow, waters of the Macquarie, attended by a Highland bull, snorting and pawing the ground along the riverbank.

The wide, forward curving horns, characteristic of the breed, were responsible for the most dramatic episode ever caused by the herd. A cow charged my father and, by the greatest good fortune, missed his body and fixed her horns firmly in the railing on each side of him.



After Norman's death on 10th June 1923, most of the herd was dispersed at a clearing sale held at Streanshalh on 7th February the following year. Seven cattle, presumably the female portion of the herd, were sent to the Van Dieman's Land Company in north western Tasmania to join their existing herd. On the 7th May the bull was dispatched to E.G. Weston of York Plains. At least one of the Highlanders remained on the property, as my father's diary for 1924 records that "the yellow Highland Bull was found straying

among the heifers on the Front Run".

Until recently I had been able to find frustratingly little actual detail about a subject that has always fascinated me – the origin of the herd. As luck would have it, an elderly Mrs Gibson, on the last occasion I ever spoke with her, told me "of course Andrew, your grandfather imported a bull and two heifers from Scotland." I was delighted with this extra information, but resigned myself to the probability that I had learned all that was possible.

However, earlier this year a friend lent me a beautifully presented book on the subject of Highland cattle entitled *A Keen Eye – Fact and Folklore on Scottish Highland Cattle*, by Una Flora Cochrane. One of the leading herds described belonged to John Stewart, whose father Donald moved from Glenlyon, Perthshire in 1802 to Lewis and then Harris in the Outer Hebrides, where he continued his cattle breeding. "His son, John, born in 1825, when of age, transferred some of the stock to his own farm of Duntulm (alternatively Duntuilm) in Skye where he kept them until in 1882 he fell heir to the farm of Scorrybreck, also in Skye."

There are numerous further references to the quality of cattle bred on Scorrybreck and, interestingly, an earlier account "that the grazings at Portree and Scorrybreck, Skye, where much sought after Highland cattle were bred were, according to folklore, favoured by the selective crodh-shith (mythical sea cows)".

These details provide material for speculation that Norman's original bull and two heifers may have actually come from his family's ancestral home. Precise details are not easy to obtain after more than ninety years, but I hope to find out more from the archives of the various Tasmanian stock agents.

Another fascinating sidelight from the above is that John Stewart "in 1882 fell heir to the farm of Scorrybreck" from which it would appear that he actually owned the property that the Nicolsons held as tacksmen of Lord MacDonald. Perhaps Jan Nicolson or Caillean Maclean may be able to discover more on this subject.

The Little Big Question Section

* *Why do so many clan members have big noses?*

No-one responded to this question, so I asked our Chief and he said "Nobody nose".

* *On the possible link between the words 'tacksman' and 'taxman', no information has been found.*

New Questions

Q. Why are there so many 'Johns' in the Clan MacNicol?

Q. Why do high-ranking clansmen wear feathers in their bonnets and what do they signify?

More Weddings.....and babies too

Congratulations to Ian Nicoll and Karen Forman, who married in The Chapel, Ranelagh House, Robertson in the New South Wales' southern highlands on Saturday, 3rd September 2005. Ian is the only son of John and Penny Nicoll of Bass Hill in Sydney, and Karen is the only daughter of Graham and Francis Forman of Grafton on the north coast of NSW.



Signing the Register: Ian and Karen with their niece Jordan Worley, Rev. John Thompson, and their nephew, Brady Worley

The bodice of Karen's elegant dove grey chiffon gown was embroidered with Celtic designs, whilst Ian was resplendent in his newly acquired ancient dress MacNicol kilt. During the service Ian took pleasure in welcoming his bride into our clan by pinning a matching sash onto her gown. Their friends Andrew and Debbie Coulls enjoyed their roles as Best Man and Matron of Honour, as did Ian's niece and nephew, Jordan and Brady Worley, as flower girl and page boy. The wedding guests came from as far afield as north Queensland, Tasmania and Western Australia (as well as many from the closer states). As requested by Ian and Karen (and an indication of the couple's pleasure in their Scottish links) many wore tartan.

The wedding breakfast was preceded by John Nicoll's fine presentation of the 'Address to a Haggis'. The haggis was piped in by Ian's cousin Warren Hughes, and was borne, in real Scottish style, by Mal Nicolson.

The ceilidh which followed the wedding breakfast was well received by the 80 plus guests who participated in the dancing - many joining in the fun by presenting their 'specialities'. Young Amy Withnal, 6 year old grand-daughter of our well remembered member, Grace Given, gave a lovely rendition of 'Advance Australia Fair', whilst 8 year old Jordan Worley entertained us with a fine violin presentation. The

bride herself gave a special recital on her newly acquired recorder - a splendid finish to a most happy day.

We wish the happy couple every happiness for their future together. They have set up home at Bulli on the New South Wales south coast.

Summer Wedding

Saadi Allan will marry Nicole Rampelt on January 21st at Alstonville. Saadi is the only son of Bobbi and John Allan of The Channon, NSW, and Nicole is the daughter of Rudi and Inge Rampelt of Munich, Germany. The couple will continue to live in Lismore. Saadi is our Chief's nephew.

A New Member of the Clan

Wonderful news too, from Katrina and Scott Nicholson, who are now the proud parents of a son, Luke Owen. Scott writes: "he arrived three weeks early on the 21st July. Our Clan Tanist, Luke Nicolson, is his proud godfather. Luke (the short one) was taken on his first surfing trip to Ballina at just three weeks of age to meet the Scorrybreac family and his godfather. A huge thankyou to "Grumpy & Ninny"* for the beautiful pieces of Clan history that Luke received."

(* permission to use these names is granted only to wee Luke.)



Scott is a passionate member of the clan, and he and Katrina have been energetically involved during the last two years.

.....and another new member

Congratulations also to Helen Cobain and Grant Harris who are "over the moon" about the birth of their daughter, Isla Leitch MacNicol Harris, who was born at Elgin, Moray in Scotland on the 11th September. Helen and Grant travelled to Scotland for the birth of the baby (and we look forward to a photo for the next issue).



From the Chaplain's Desk

Rev. A. MacNicol L.Th., 18 Calida Street, Boondall, Qld. 4034

Dear Kinsfolk,

It will not be long until St. Andrew's Day is here - 30th November. Thinking of this reminded me of a verse from the Bible. The writer of the Letter to the Hebrews says of Abel. "He still speaks, even though he is dead" (11:4).

One morning a strange letter came to the desk of William Barclay, professor at Trinity College, Glasgow University. The letter was from a theological student in West Africa, and he was writing to a certain member of the college staff and telling him how much he had gained from his books, and asking for his advice and his help in the study of the New Testament and the work of the ministry. That may not seem a very unusual thing. But what makes it unusual was this – that the letter was addressed to James Denny, who had been dead for many years. This African student had read Denny, he had seen that Denny had taught in Glasgow, he had not realised that Denny had passed on, and he had written to thank Denny for what he had done, and to ask for his help and blessing. It means that Denny's work is still going on. Though Denny is dead, he still speaks -and that is true of the Apostle Andrew and that is true of many another.

Though the phrase, 'we're a' Jock Thomson's bairns', is commonly used in Scotland, few know its origin. In the early 1800s John Thomson was the Minister of Duddingston Kirk near Edinburgh. As well as being a fine parish minister, he was also an outstanding artist (one of his landscape paintings was recently sold for 60,000 pounds). Over the suttio door at the foot of the manse garden, John Thomson had painted the word 'Edingurgh', so that on a Monday, the day he devoted to painting, his wife could honestly say to callers, "I am sorry, my husband is in Edinburgh".

Duddingston manse became a well-known meeting place for the literary and art world of Edinburgh. Sir Walter Scott was a regular visitor. For 35 years John Thomson faithfully ministered in Duddingston. He loved his people – all of them – the gifted and the not so gifted, young and old, rich and poor. And they loved him. He would often refer to his congregation as 'my bairns'. We still use the phrase today. He is dead, yet speaks.

Every man and woman leaves something of themselves in the world. He or she still speaks, even though they are dead. Let's remember that the extent to which we care about relationships – both with God and the people He has put in our lives – will determine how much we will be missed when we pass on. If we keep this in mind and live to please God and sho love to others, we'll be missed when we depart this earthly scene.

This is the wish I always make,
The prayer I always pray;
Lord, may my life help other lives
It touches by the way.

God grant that when we leave this world we shall leave something which is still speaking of a life lived with faith in God, honesty, integrity, generosity, and loving relationships.

God bless you, yours in kinship,
Archie MacNicol

Flowers of the Forest

We're sad to record the deaths of these members of our clan.....



Daphne Nicol of Victoria died in April after a long illness. Our thoughts go to her husband Henry and family.



Bob Nicol of Armidale NSW died suddenly in late May, aged 69. Bob and his wife Meg have been great stalwarts of the clan since joining us at the opening of the Glen Innes Standing Stones in early 1992. Their daughter Joanne, who had been learning to play the bagpipes, died tragically of a brain tumour in 1995. Bob and Meg will be remembered by those members who attended The Edinburgh Tattoo in Sydney last year. We extend our sincere sympathy to Meg for yet another sad loss.



Tom McNicol of New Brighton, South Australia, died on the 6th July. Tom with his wife, Jean (both Scottish born), have been very supportive members since joining the Clan in April 1995 and attending both the Canberra and Melbourne Clan Gatherings. We extend our sincere sympathies to Jean and son Christopher (member from ACT) his wife, Valerie and their sons Callum, Andrew and Cameron.

Greetings from the Chief



Dear Fellow Clansmen,

As I write this, the date is 12th October, and on this day last year, Jenni and I were travelling from Edinburgh to Skye for last year's International Clan Gathering. This, of course, means that our next international gathering in Dunedin, New Zealand, is now less than 12 months away. For those of you who haven't yet had the opportunity to attend an international gathering, this is a wonderful opportunity to enjoy a New Zealand holiday and meet up with Clansmen from all over the world.

In about 1985, my parents purchased a little cottage in Ballina where they lived until their deaths. Many Clansmen called to visit when passing through Ballina. Jenni and I purchased the cottage from my father's estate and have spent most of this year building a new home on the site, the old cottage being re-located to another site and now enjoying a new life as a respite centre for people with disabilities. We have finally moved into the new house and look forward to Clan members visiting on their way through Ballina.



Two personal events have taken place within the Clan since the last newsletter, both of which give Jenni and I great joy. Many of you have met Luke, our son and Clan taniist, and his beautiful partner, Kate Hoffman. It is now official – they have announced their engagement although a wedding date is yet to be announced, there being some logistical difficulties with one family in Australia and the other in Florida, USA.

Scott and Katrina Nicholson are now the very proud parents of Luke Owen Nicholson, one of our youngest Clan members! He has already paid a courtesy visit and we look forward to seeing more of him.

I would like to wish all our Clan members a joyous and peaceful Christmas and New Year and fervently hope that 2006 will bring more peace to the world.

Scurrybreac

Scurrybreac (John Nicolson) can be contacted at P.O. Box 1172, Ballina 2478 or by email to scurrybreac@netspace.net.au

CEUD MILE FAILTE A Hundred Thousand Welcomes to New Members

Judith (Judy) and John Fearne	Glen Alpine, NSW
John Nicol	Singleton, NSW
Margo Pye	Rasmussen, Queensland
Marion and Darrell Williams	Brisbane, Queensland
Helen and Ken Bourne	Brisbane, Queensland
Elizabeth & Errol Ryan	Brisbane, Queensland
Brian Nicholson	Toowoomba, Queensland
Peter McNicol	Toowoomba, Queensland
Lycia Service	Toowoomba, Queensland

*The clan also warmly welcomes any new members
whose names may have been inadvertently omitted from this list.*



Birthdays - Hip, hip, hooray!



Happy birthday to **Jack Nicholson** of Dunedin, who turned 87 in April. This wish is half a year late, so we wish you a happy and healthy six months until the next one!



The next edition may not be out before the birthday of our Chief on March 20th, so Happy Birthday John, who is one of the beautiful Pisceans (see below).

Note: We are wishing John a happy birthday now because the next edition of *The Southern Cross* may not be out until just after March 20th. Our chief is the only person who will receive a mention without sending official notification to the editor.

The Magical, Mystical Musings of Moonshine (our Clan Astrologer & Crystal Ball Gazer)

I feel that several clan members are having a special birthday in the next six months (or have recently celebrated one) and divine that they will send the information and photos to the editor of *The Southern Cross* for inclusion in the next edition. I also predict that someone is going to celebrate a birthday on or near a river or the ocean - or will have a bath on their birthday.

I inadvertently omitted **Gemini** from the previous list, and apologise to all those Geminis who have been unable to function properly without my advice.

Gemini the twin: A twin, astrologically speaking, is a well-balanced person. This means that you're often very good dancers, but not necessarily that you can dance a reel; you Geminis will know what I mean. Remember, not all the cloves in the apple pie are whole.

And now we continue the year.....

Scorpio the scorpion: When you have a purpose, you achieve a lot. Sometimes your purpose needs tuning though. You're a bit like the old Fergie tractor - you'll keep going, no matter what, but a bit of a tune-up could work wonders. Knit socks for next winter.

Sagittarius the archer: You're trying too hard to be everything to everybody and you're as taut as the string of your bow. Hand cream will help. Also, remember to water the garden - especially during summer. Don't ever keep a diary.

Capricorn the goat: you're so practical you're scary, and yet you can also be a procrastinator. Don't worry so much about mistakes - yours or other people's. Remember - a mistake today is a grape tomorrow. A sea voyage is indicated - but if you can't manage that, lie on a lilo in a pool.

Pisces the fish: If only our world leaders were all Pisceans, what a wonderful world it would be - such loving, beautiful people. Not the most practical though, and if married to Capricorns, can drive them crazy with their dreaminess. Pisceans should always read instructions - and eat more chocolate.

Aquarius the water carrier: You do 'good works' Aquarius, and people admire you for it; but do you even know where the vacuum cleaner is kept? After all, your home is your castle and it has corners. Jigsaw puzzles have many pieces.

I did warn you that you would get it all again if you didn't send birthday news!



Bits and Pieces



Belated but important news from Eileen and Jack Nicholson of Dunedin - they celebrated their Diamond Wedding Anniversary on March 9th. They were happily surprised by the arrival of all the New Zealand family, as well as three adults and a great-granddaughter, Mia, from Western Australia. Eileen writes: "it was a very happy occasion. A very nice congratulatory letter arrived from Jeremy Nicholson; also one from the Queen, the Governor General and the Prime Minister. Murray and Barbara started the day off with a beautiful floral arrangement arriving first thing, and our local mayor also sent a handsome bouquet - great fun".

The Dunedin Team
See the back page for details of the 2006 Clan Gathering in Dunedin, New Zealand



Dunedin Clan Members at a Mid-Winter Dinner

Back: Melissa Henderson, Glenda Gibbons, Jack Nicholson, Eric Maffey, Jenny Maffey, Bruce Nicholson, Doug Heenan and Lyn Nicholson

Front: Nona Ritchie, Eileen Nicholson (nursing her great-granddaughter, Poppy Henderson, 2 months), Mairi White, Gwen Heenan and Jenny Morgan

Why did you join the clan and what keeps you interested?

You may think the answer to this question is obvious, but your reasons may be very different to those of another clan member. Do you like the sense of having a link with your ancestors; a sort of historical continuity? Is it like an extended family to you? Is the feeling of belonging to a small community, something that modern society no longer provides? The Editor invites short responses of no more than 300 words. If possible, send a photo of yourself to go with your letter.

A young Scottish lad and lass were sitting on a low stone wall, holding hands and gazing out over the loch. For several minutes they sat silently. Then finally the girl looked at the boy and said, "A penny for your thoughts, Angus."

"Well, uh, I was thinkin'...perhaps it's aboot time for a wee kiss." The girl blushed, then leaned over and kissed him lightly on the cheek. He blushed and the two turned once again to gaze out over the loch.

Minutes passed and the girl spoke again. "Another penny for your thoughts, Angus."

"Well, uh, I was thinkin' perhaps it's noo time aboot time for a wee cuddle." The girl blushed, then leaned over and cuddled him for a few seconds. He blushed, and the two turned once again to gaze out over the loch.

After a while, she again said, "Another penny for your thoughts, Angus."

"Well, uh, I was thinkin' perhaps it's aboot time you let me put my hand on your leg." The girl blushed, then took his hand and put it on her knee. He blushed and the two turned once again to gaze out over the loch before the girl spoke again.

"Another penny for your thoughts, Angus."

The young man glanced down with a furled brow. "Well noo," he said, "my thoughts are a wee bit more serious this time."

"Really?" said the lass in a whisper, filled with anticipation. "Aye," said the lad, nodding.

The girl looked away in shyness, began to blush, and bit her lip in anticipation of the ultimate request.

Then he said, "Dae ye nae think it's aboot time ye paid me the first three pennies?"

A Scottish pessimist is a man who feels bad when he feels good
for fear he'll feel worse when he feels better.

Skye Calendar Available!

The Scorrybreac Calendar 2006

While on a visit to our Clan lands near Portree on the Isle of Skye this summer, Murray Nicolson, Clan Commissioner, learned that the children at Portree Primary School had undertaken two projects on our land at Ben Chracaig. One was to produce a little nature guide to the land, which was being sold in local stores for £1.50. The other was to take photographs and illustrate a 2006 calendar that would be sold locally for £6.50 (see sample page opposite). He met their teacher, Harriet Forrest, and discussed how the Clan might offer this calendar to its members in a way that would involve the children and help the school.

As a result of Murray's efforts, the calendar is now available. The children will mail them directly to each person who places an order, and in the process improve their knowledge of many different countries.

This souvenir wall calendar of our Clan lands at Scorrybreac would make an excellent Christmas present. Please cut out or copy the order form opposite and post it, along with your cheque, to the address supplied. Note the closing date for orders (we have to give the children enough time to get them to us for Christmas). The calendar is spiral-bound, 18 x 25 centimetres in size, and professionally printed.

From Nature Study to Calendar

by Harriet Forrest, Portree Primary School

In August 2005 I thought that it would be wonderful to take my class of nine year olds from Portree Primary School around the walk at Scorrybreac each month for a year. I felt that the benefit of making a study over the year would be to generate interest in their local environment. By focusing on different



elements of Scorrybreac each month, the class would develop a deep appreciation of our magnificent heritage. In order for the children to form interests while on the walk and receive expert knowledge and advice, I asked three ecologists to join us. Sarah is a Highland Council Ranger while Rob (my husband) and James have both taught and are experienced ecologists. Each month had a different local focus: habitats and biodiversity, colour, mammals, history and archaeology, geology, mapping, song birds, seashore, insects, fresh water and flowers. Different experts from the Isle of Skye led many of the excursions and we were accompanied by a local photographer (Richard Smith).

To focus our explorations the class decided to make both a calendar and an activity book. We all learned as we progressed about the process of taking an idea

and developing a product. The standards had to be high, which was motivating, and hidden talents emerged. We visited the designers and the printers, which was fascinating, and finally, after many decisions as to layout and content, have ended up with the finished activity book and calendar. The calendar includes Richard's photographs as well as art work, and poetry and prose written by the class.

The pupils have all benefited enormously: they now have a wide appreciation of the history and biodiversity of a special piece of land on their doorstep. Whether their interest be geology, botany, archaeology, mapping or zoology, their experiences will allow them to delight in the landscape through which they pass.

I hope that you might share some of our pleasures by enjoying the calendar. The children will continue to expand their horizons by marking on a map where you live when posting the calendars to you. They will then learn something about the special diversity of the MacNicol Clan.

What did you say?

Jim Nicol, from Sydney, says his mother, who came to Australia in 1923 from Kirkintilloch (near Glasgow), had many "funny sayings". "Some", he writes, "are not suitable for general exhibition, but with five children brought up in the depression years they were most effective." Here are two that are suitable:

"A gang fit's aye gittin."

Translation: A person with a limp or such always seems to get about.

"It's nae loss whit a fren gits."

Translation: It's never a loss what you give to a friend.

I will be pleased to receive more of these Scottish sayings
– Editor.



ORDER FORM
for 2006 Scorrybreac Calendar from the Isle of Skye

Please have the children in Portree send me a copy of their 2006 Calendar.

I enclose a cheque for \$25.00
 (payable to **Clan MacNicol Australia.**)

Name _____

Address _____

City/town _____ Postcode _____

Post to The Secretary,
 Penny Nicoll,
 2 Cameron Avenue,
 Bass Hill, NSW 2197.

YOUR ORDER MUST BE RECEIVED BY NOV. 18th
HAVE YOU ENCLOSED YOUR CHEQUE?

BERT NICHOLSON WEARS THE TARTAN AT THE JAKARTA HIGHLAND GAMES

*Bert is the Leader of the Scottish Veterans of Victoria Australia ex Seaforth, 2 Para, & RAMC.
 His son lives in Jakarta, so he is a regular visitor to the city.*

I had the privilege of attending the 28th annual Jakarta Highland Games in June. The first event was a Scottish dinner and concert the night before, which was opened by a surprise guest – Lois Weatherup, the reigning Miss Scotland.

During the concert we were entertained by a variety of accomplished Indonesian and Scottish performers. Then the second surprise of the evening came, when in marched the massed Pipes and Drums, led by Drum Major of the Singapore Pipes and Drums - a dramatic end to a wonderful concert.

The following morning, with several thousand people in attendance, and kilts and tartan to be seen everywhere, the Games opened with a group of parachutists landing in the centre of the field. This was followed by all the usual contests – sporting, dancing and piping. Many of the contestants in the 'heavy' events such as caber tossing, came from other countries. Yes, even Scotland.

A novel addition to a Highland Games were the helicopter flights that continued throughout the day.

All this activity was surrounded by tents supplying food and drink - most of it was free, including the beer! The beer, I was told, was supplied by the big Highlander pub in Jakarta.

Two main events finished the day. The first was a dance contest, in which five teams had to dance the 51st Highland Division reel - a comedy worth watching.

The second was a spectacular fire ceremony that we could copy here at the Ringwood Games. A very roughly built boat, 2 to 3 metres in length and flying a large tartan flag, was positioned in the middle of the field. All men wearing a kilt were handed a 2 metre bamboo pole with cloth soaked in oil at one end, which was then lit. Led by the massed pipes and drums, the large group of kilted men marched around the field, then formed a circle around the boat, and as the pipes and drums played *The Flowers of Scotland*, the boat was set alight. This was followed by an exciting fireworks display, which ended a very entertaining weekend.



Chieftain of the Jakarta Games, Susan Whistler, with Miss Scotland, Lois Weatherup



Susan Whistler and Bert Nicholson

Family Histories

The Hunter-Nicol Family

Andrew Hunter Nicol was born on 1st March, 1829, in Leslie, Scotland, where his father was the Minister for the Scots "Kirk on the Green". His mother, Eliza Hunter, was a close relative of the famous Hunter family in Scotland which produced two prominent medical people. One was Dr William Hunter, Obstetrician to Queen Anne and founder of the Hunterian Museum at Glasgow University; the other was John Hunter, surgeon and founder of the Museum at the College of Surgeons in London.

Andrew and his brother William sailed from Leigh on the 7th May, 1849, to Port Phillip, Australia. At first, Andrew was a pilot at Gelibrand Point for the sum of 8/6d a year.

William did not stay in Australia, dying in New Zealand in 1855.

Andrew, after a period at Gelibrand Point, went to the Victorian gold fields, and along with his cousins, discovered some gold. He married Ellen Lewis, an Irish lass who had migrated in 1853 and who went into service with her brother-in-law in Geelong. Andrew and Ellen's first two children, James and John, were born there in 1858 and 1860 respectively. Andrew and Ellen were then attracted to the new state of Queensland, and travelled there by the paddle steamer "Shamrock". Their third son, William, was born at Melangol, north Queensland in September 1861.

The family moved around a lot during the ensuing years as Andrew established himself in the farming and dairying industries. Four more children were born – Charles in November 1864 in Gladstone, Lewis in 1867 at Bowen, Eliza in September 1869 at MacKay and Margaret in August 1872 at Bowen.

Andrew was a pioneer in the attempt to establish a cotton-growing industry in North Queensland. His father-in-law owned a cotton mill in Scotland; the American Civil War would have had diminished his cotton supplies and it appears that Andrew and others were attempting to supply that demand. He finally settled in Bowen where his occupation was in transporting goods; he plied the route from Bowen to Muttaborra in Central Queensland. During his later years he and Ellen lived on a property they named "Leslie". They both died in 1911.

Of their children, James, William and Lewis all married daughters of George Hayward, and James and William carried on their father's transport business. William eventually took up a grazing property called "Hillview" near Muttaborra, which remained in the family until 1951.

Many of the descendants of William and Ellen remained on the land, with interests in the sugar, wool and wheat industries. Queensland members, John and Bob Nicol, along with Judy Nicol's late husband, Bob, are all descended from this family.

The Isle of Arran Nicol Branch

This story begins in Arran, a small kidney-shaped island off the coast of Scotland, west of Ayrshire. This picturesque mountainous island covers an area of approximately 160 square miles.

James Nicol, born in 1774, married Ann Love in 1799. They farmed 14 acres at Kilbride Farm, Bennan, and had eight children, including Alexander, who was born in January 1813.

Alexander and his older brother, John, moved to Ayrshire and worked in the Skeldon Woollen Mills. The remainder of the children appear to have remained on Arran.

Alexander married Christina Wyllie in Dalrymple, near Ayr on 12th June, 1845. Two sons, **Daniel** and **James** and a daughter, **Christina**, were born to the couple. In 1854 Alexander and his family sailed for Australia on board the "Genghis Khan", arriving in Brisbane in August. They settled at Kangaroo Point where they ran a small dairy farm. Two more sons were born in Brisbane – **Archibald** in 1860, and **Alexander** in 1864. Alexander (snr.) died in 1884 and Christina in 1905.

Their eldest son, Daniel, a carpenter, married Anna Bailey in Brisbane in 1873. Anna died childless in 1883. Daniel married Clara Anne Forman the following year. They had four children – Anna, Daniel, Alexander and Isabel. Daniel died at Corinda, Brisbane, in 1927.

His brother, James, had also married in 1873 - Fanny O'Hara in Maryborough - and they had ten children, two of whom died in infancy. A son, James, died aged 19 years, during a rugby match.

Christina, married Verdon Hinchcliffe in 1872, and lived at Veresdale until she died in 1926.

Archibald married Violet Roberts in Allora in 1888 and moved to Carina with his wife and four children in the late 1890s. He too was a carpenter but later established a dairy farm at Carina. He died in 1939.

Youngest son, Alexander, married Helen Tait Murray in Veresdale in 1887 and they had five children. Helen died in 1902. Alexander later married Agnes Jane Petersen and they had three children. Alexander operated a hansom cab outside South Brisbane Railway Station for many years, and later, with the introduction of motorised transport, he had a fruit run in the same area. He died in 1930. *This history was written some years ago and details of descendants lost. Information welcome.*

Connections

by Margo Pye, Rasmussen, Queensland

One thing that always impressed me about my Scottish grandparents was the way they kept up family connections. My grandmother, Sarah Aitken Tait, came from Ballantrae. My grandfather, David Hosie, who is my link to the MacNicol Clan, was born at Trottick, near Dundee. Throughout their lives they corresponded with family in Scotland and elsewhere. Letters, photographs, postcards and cards for birthdays and Christmas were exchanged. New additions or other significant events were duly reported, and so, regardless of distance, the family stayed closely knit.

More imposing than Queen Victoria

As well as their 'clanishness', something else that intrigued me about my grandparents was the selection of pictures that hung on their walls. We hear a lot about Victorian patriarchal dominance, but in the home of these two people who grew up in Victorian times, it was noticeably absent. No stern moustached Victorian gentleman glared down on them. Instead, Robbie Burns was depicted on a plaque and on a calendar, and Queen Victoria, with her "no amused" expression, surveyed the scene. In pride of place, however, and surrounded by an enormous frame, was an almost life-size depiction of a serious, gentle-looking young woman. This was my great-grandmother, Margaret Nicoll. Was it simply a sign of a son's great love for his mother (she'd died the year before he left "the old country")? Whatever the reason, Margaret Nicoll was given the place of honour. Beside her, even Victoria paled.

Away to a far land

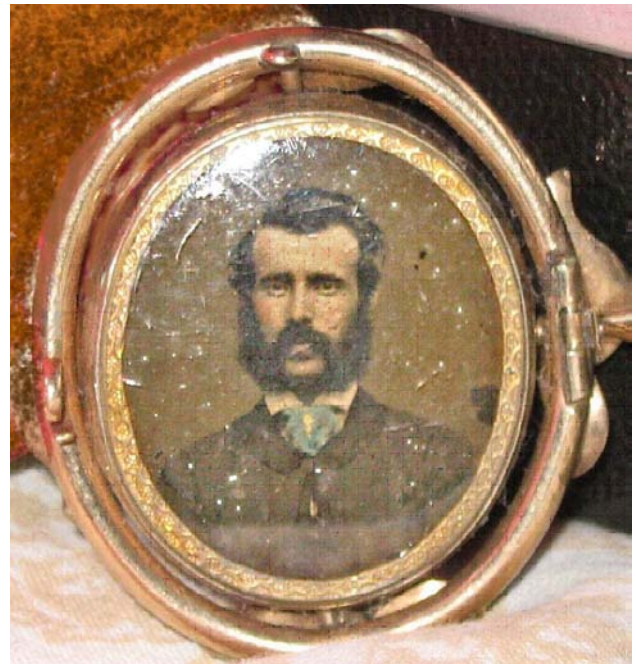
Margaret was the daughter of John Nicoll, mason, and Jean Allan, whose family were crofters of Carmyllie. Margaret was born in Forfar in 1846 and died on 29th December, 1905, in Arbroath, which is not all that far from where she was born. One could be forgiven for thinking she had not ventured far in her fifty-nine years. Her life, however, had an unusual twist. A family story which I often heard told was that young Margaret "went to America to teach hand-weaving". There she married James Hosie from Dundee, and event that took place in Blackstone, Massachusetts in 1869. The young couple must have returned to Scotland fairly soon afterwards because their first child, James, was born in Dundee in 1871. James and Margaret had five more children: Alexander, David, Marian, John and Thomas. The two eldest boys, James and "Sandy", remained in Scotland. David came to Australia and Marian, John and Tom all went to Canada. For some reason, I do not remember hearing anything about James and Sandy. Although I

have many letters and cards, some dating back pre-1900, there are none from these two. From others in Canada, Scotland and England, however, there was regular communication. After my grandparents died, younger members of the Dundee and Ballantrae families kept in touch.

John Nicoll in Australia

Marian outlived her husband and all her siblings and she continued to write to my mother. She even sent some of her treasures: a beautifully crocheted white tablecloth with matching napkins made and given to her by friends when she was leaving Scotland, and also a gold brooch. Perhaps she hoped that the brooch might somehow close a circle long broken. It contained a photo of a man who was, Marian wrote, "the first John Nicoll to come to Australia" (her "first John Nicoll" probably meant the first in her family, not the first ever).

By the time the photo arrived in North Queensland there was no-one left who had any idea who that



might be. Not long afterwards, in 1971, Marian died at the age of ninety-three. My mother is still going strong at ninety-four and it would be wonderful if we could solve this family mystery for her at last.

If there is anyone out there who has seen a likeness of the man in the photo, or who knows of a connection to John Nicoll who married Jean (or Jane) Allan in Forfar, Angus, Scotland on 9 January 1831 I would love to hear from you.

Quiz Answers (from page 4)

1. The MacDonalds and the Campbells.
2. St. Andrews
3. False. In 2001 the population was approx. 8,000.
4. It means King's Port. It was called Kiltraglen until 1540 when King James V visited the town.

Clan Gathering 2006

September 28 – October 1, Dunedin, New Zealand

Arrangements for the Gathering are well underway. For information, please contact Eric or Jenny Maffey by email – eric.maffey@xtra.co.nz or mail: P.O. Box 5132, Moray Place, Dunedin 9031, or Jack and Eileen Nicholson by post at 14A Market Street, Dunedin, NZ.— Ph. 64 3455 4399.

The venue for the Gathering is still uncertain as the hotel that had been booked has since been put up for sale and is therefore not taking bookings that are such a long way in advance. However, full details will be available for the next edition of *The Southern Cross*.

Dunedin, a very attractive city of approximately 113,000 people, has strong links with Scotland, and is often called 'the Edinburgh of the South'. It's situated on the Otago Harbour, with the Otago Peninsula just beyond – a place of steep green hills and spectacular harbour and ocean views.

Amongst the many things to see and do in and around Dunedin are penguin, seal and albatross colonies, Larnach Castle, wildlife tours, harbour cruises, a brewery tour, Cadbury's Chocolate Factory and the Taieri Gorge Railway (after the Gathering, of course, there's the rest of the island to see as well).

There are many choices of accommodation in and around this picturesque city. Contact Eric, Jenny, Eileen or Jack, or go to www.tourism.net.nz/region/dunedin/accommodation.

Editor's Notes

ARTICLES FROM YOU TO ME: If you send me an email (especially an attachment) or a computer disc, I'll be very happy – it saves such a lot of typing. However, I sympathise with all the technophobes who are still out there (as I used to be one) so please keep sending me your contributions by mail if you don't have a computer – typed if you can, as I can then scan them into my computer. However, **I would rather receive handwriting than no writing!**

PHOTOS: These can be emailed as attachments, but not too large please. If you send a real photo, please send the original where possible, with a self-addressed envelope - I'll scan them into the computer and post them straight back to you.

DEADLINES: I am pleased to receive articles, information and photos at any time between now and the deadline. Send anything you think may be of interest to other clan members (including jokes), and I will print it if there's enough space. If you're sending something from another publication, please include all details so that the source can be fully acknowledged. I cannot publish it if it's marked as Copyright.

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