

**T**HE INTERNATIONAL CHARACTER OF OUR CLAN IS EXEMPLIFIED by the history of the Nicholsons of Atlanta, three members of whom became Nicholsons of Balvenie in Scotland.

Descendants of Duncan Nicholson who emigrated to the United States in 1790s and settled in Alabama, the Atlanta Nicholsons comprise three generations of senior executives of The Coca-Cola Company, H. Burke Sr., H. Burke Jr., C. B. Harman, John H., and H. Burke III ("Nick").

The long association with the Clan of three Nicholson brothers involved the late John H. (1927-1992), the late H. Burke Jr. (1917-2007) and the late C. B. Harman (1920-2009). Following their illustrious examples are the cousins William C ("Bill") and Jeremy D., who have served consecutively as President of the North American Clan Society.

The most significant contributions to the Clan's history by the senior members of the Atlanta Nicholsons are H. Burke Jr.'s assistance with the Chief's matriculation of full Arms with supporters (see Plate 2 in the Clan history), his founding of the Highland Clan MacNeacail Federation, and his uncovering of one of the oldest written record of a MacNicol dating to 1316 in

John Barbour's epic poem *The Bruce* composed in 1375; and in C. B. Harman's case, his funding and editorship of the Clan history book co-authored by the now Lord Lyon King of Arms, W. David H. Sellar, and the late Dr. Alasdair Maclean.

Harman is also remembered with profound gratitude in North America, Australia and Scotland as the Clan's most generous supporter.

On the international side, Burke Jr., C. B. Harman and Jeremy had along with other family members long periods of overseas residence as follows:

- Burke: Canada, the United Kingdom (during three separate periods), Brazil, Holland, Switzerland, France, and Belgium (during two separate periods)
- Harman: Canada, the United Kingdom (dur-





- ing two separate periods), Germany Brazil, and Italy (during two separate periods)
- Jeremy: Holland, Switzerland, France, Belgium (during two separate periods), the United Kingdom, Australia and Italy.

Following two decades of exhaustive genealogical research (before computer databases and DNA testing) undertaken by the three Nicholson brothers, their Scottish descendency was formally recognized by a successful application for Armorial recognition by the Lyon Court for themselves and their immediate descendants.

In 1994, H. Burke Nicholson Jr. acquired the ancient Castle of Balvenie located in Dufftown, Banffshire (northeastern Scotland between Inverness and Aberdeen) and the accompanying Barony of Balvenie.

He matriculated baronial additaments to his Arms in 1995 (see Plate 3 of the Clan history). Burke was thereby recognized in Scotland as Burke Nicholson of Balvenie.

During his tenure, Burke became deeply involved in the life of Dufftown in particular, and Scotland in general. He supported many charities in town, and was the Patron of the Dufftown Horticultural Society and the Honorary President of the Dufftown and District Games. He and his late wife Juliet visited Scotland on several occasions, often accompanied by his late brother Harman.

Burke was recognized as a member of the Convention of the Baronage of Scotland, and became with his brother Harman a Founder of the New Museum of Scotland and a major supporter of the renovation of the Thistle Chapel in Saint Giles Cathedral, both in Edinburgh.

Balvenie Castle has a long and illustrious history dating back to the late 1200s when it was built as a fortress by the "Black Comyn" Earls of Buchan. At some stage in the 1300s the lordship of Balvenie passed into the possession of the Black Douglasses, and then to the Stewarts, Earls of Atholl who remained there for 250 years and enlarged the Castle by constructing the Atholl Lodging thereby altering its aspect to that of a Renaissance residential palace. Starting in 1595, Balvenie Castle left the hand of the Stewarts and over 150 years had numerous owners until 1718 when it ceased to serve as a lordly residence and fell into physical disrepair.

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*Clan member Margaret Sessions, retired Warden of Balvenie Castle, with Jeremy (Dufftown, September 2011)*



*Niall Livingstone of Bachuil and his wife Anita with Jeremy (Isle of Lismore, September 2011)*



*Jeremy with Clan member Esther Brenner, Warden of Balvenie Castle, and her husband Peter (Dufftown, September 2011)*



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In 1929 the ruined Castle was taken into state care, but remained in private ownership. Preceding the Nicholsons of Balvenie were Alice, Countess of Athlone, the late Princess Royal, and the family of Sir Malcolm Innes of Edingight, a former Lord Lyon.

The property is currently managed by Historical Scotland, a department of the Scottish government, and is open to visitors from April through September every year.

To date there have been three Nicholsons of Balvenie: Burke from 1994 to 2007, Harman from 2007 to 2009, and Jeremy the current holder since 2009.

Starting in 2004 when his father Burke fell seriously ill, Jeremy has been an annual visitor to Scotland first on behalf of his father, then of his uncle Harman and now in his own right.

He has expanded his father's and uncle's philanthropic involvement in Dufftown, and this year became a major supporter of the Dufftown and District Pipe Band.

During his September 2011 visit to Scotland, Jeremy attended Dufftown's annual Flower Show where he presented this year's prizes to winning contestants. Two of these prizes he sponsors personally: the Juliet Nicholson of Balvenie Rose Bowl and the Nicholsons of Balvenie Trophy.

Jeremy hosted his now-traditional buffet reception at the Glenfiddich Distillery, downhill and diagonally across the street from Balvenie Castle. There were twenty-five guests this year, and the event has become significant in Dufftown's social calendar. Very much in the tradition of cheerful Clan social events, Jeremy welcomed three local members of the Clan: Margaret Sessions, Esther Bremner and Lillian Macleman.

Later during his visit, Jeremy traveled to the Isle of Lismore where he was hosted by Niall Livingstone of Bachuil and his wife Anita. Niall is Chief of Clan MacLea (Livingstone) and is holder of the Barony of Bachuil, the oldest in Scotland dating back to the sixth Century A.D. during pre-feudal Celtic times. He is also Coarb (heir or successor) of St. Moluag, hereditary Abbott of Lismore, and hereditary keeper of the *Bachuil Mor*, the great staff of St. Moluag, one of the earliest and most important Christian artifacts in Scotland.

Finally, Jeremy undertook his annual pilgrimage to Edinburgh and to the Lyon Court where he visited and lunched with respectively the Lord Lyon, David Sellar, and the Lyon Clerk, Elizabeth Roads.

While in Edinburgh he also met David Nicolson, head of the Clan MacNicol Society of Scotland (and Murray Nicolson's brother), and presided over the 2011 annual meeting of the Clan MacNicol Foundation.

Plans are already being made for a 2012 visit where Jeremy hopes to preside over the Dufftown and District Games at the end of July. 🏴󠁧󠁢󠁥󠁮󠁧󠁿

*From right to left: Clan member Lillian Macleman, retired Deputy Warden of Balvenie Castle, with Jeremy and her daughter Theresa, Warden of Huntley Castle (Dufftown, September 2011)*



*Jeremy with the Lyon Clerk, Elizabeth Roads, and the Lord Lyon, David Sellar at the Lyon Court (Edinburgh, September 2011)*