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Scorrybreac

The Journal of Clan MacNicol in North America



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In Memoriam

Iain MacNeacail of MacNeacail and Scorrybreac

19 June 1921 – 15 October 2003

It is with heavy heart we report the passing of our much loved Chief, Iain MacNeacail of MacNeacail and Scorrybreac on Thursday 16 October 2003, having suffered a severe stroke earlier in the week. He was 83 years of age.

To his family Bobbie (Allan), John, Mac, Lisa (Dillon) and their families go

Continued on page 4

From The President

This is an exceptional time in the life of our Clan. Our beloved Chief Scorrybreac has passed on, leaving his family and all of us bereft. He was truly the father of the modern Clan, having presided over its revival and return to a glory not known for several centuries. We give thanks for the lives of Scorrybreac and Pam, for their warmth, their humanity, and their dedication to the Clan. Together, they represented us so well around the world and evoked such admiration and respect from all those they met. People of all walks of life were touched by their kindness, solicitude and good humor. They are succeeded by John and Jenni whom many of us know and who are worthy of the great legacy of their precursors.

As I take office as your Clan Society's new President, I reflect with gratitude on the many contributions of those who came before me and have decided to move on. My immediate predecessor, Bill Nicholson of Atlanta, served with intelligence, energy and personal warmth for four years as President and six years as Secretary. His predecessor, Bill G. Nicol of Springfield, Illinois was not only President for three years, but also our newsletter Editor and original Webmaster. Together, they cheerfully and ably contributed more than a decade and a half of their time to the good fortune and evident benefit of the Clan Society.

The Board of Directors has called on me to serve in this period of transition and I appreciate the opportunity of doing so. My fellow Officers and I agreed on many plans at our meeting in Williamsburg. Dan Nickell of Vienna, Virginia, our new Webmaster has re-launched our website at www.clanmacnicol.org and will be working steadily to expand it. Jacques McNicoll of Montreal, Quebec who has replaced me as Special Projects Manager is at work

planning our first ever annual gathering in Texas to be held in the late spring of 2004. Preparations for the 2004 Skye International Gathering are proceeding apace under the management of David Nicolson, Jan Nicolson and other Scottish members. We expect a major turn-out in Portree for the weekend of October 14. John, our new Chief, will lead us in a celebration of his father's life.

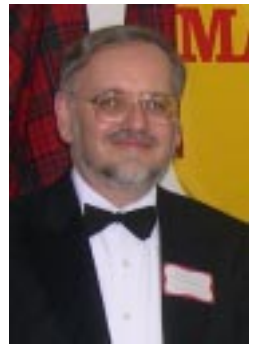
In North America, a task force has been instituted to coordinate and expand the Clan Society's representation at Highland games. Murray Nicolson, Dick Nicoll (Billerica, Massachusetts), Bill R. Nicol (Hilton Head, South Carolina), Tom and Mary Nichols (Duluth, Minnesota), Brenda and Tom Pritchard (Knoxville, Tennessee), Bruce and Louise Goodburne (Alpena, Michigan), and I have agreed to work together to identify worthwhile games, recruit volunteer for tents and booths, offer training, provide materials, and supply some funds to defray space rental costs. We look forward to interested members contacting us soon so we can plan our activities for next year.

Finally, our energetic and resourceful Commissioner for Canada, Mike Nicholson, is already planning for a major participation at a gathering of clans schedule for 2007 in Nova Scotia.

I invite any of you to contact me at: clanmacnicol@bsn1.net with whatever thought, concern, or advice regarding the Clan that you might have.

With my very best wishes,

Jeremy Nicholson
President



In This Issue

Williamsburg Games Report — 8

PEI 200th MacNicol Anniversary Celebration — 10

My First Tent Games — Gatlinburg 2003 — 14

Annual Meeting Report — 15

Next Issue: Judging a Clan Tent; An Annotated Address to the Haggis; The Prince in Sgoirebreac



In Memoriam — Iain MacNeacail of MacNeacail and Scorrybreac

our heartfelt sympathies at this sad time. We hope it will not be long before their heartache will be replaced by good memories of a very special man.

Our Chief, a quiet and distinguished man was always very giving of his time and efforts to our Clan throughout the world. In 1994 he said “I haven’t made a time and motion study, but I would estimate that ninety percent of my extensive correspondence and a good deal of my reading is connected with the Clan.

“Thinking back, I suppose I was about twelve when I was really made aware that my father was a Chief and that some day I would inherit his responsibilities. Although, he was not in a position to travel a great deal, he maintained a steady correspondence with clan members in Scotland, England, the USA, Canada and New Zealand and I was always encouraged to read the letters.”

The 21st Chief of our Clan, Scorrybreac inherited many

House [on Skye] in the early 1880s.”

Born in 1920, Scorrybreac was brought up on his father’s sheep and cattle property near Campbell Town, a small town some forty miles south of Launceston in northern Tasmania. Educated at Scotch College, Tasmania, from 1931 to 1938, he then joined the staff of a daily paper as a cadet reporter until early 1940 when he volunteered to transfer from the part time militia to the 28th Field Regiment, 9th Division Artillery, A.I.F. He remained with the regiment throughout the war and served in the Middle Eastern campaigns and later in the invasion of North Borneo.

After the war, he returned to the family property and in 1946 married his beloved Pamela. Pam was born in Launceston, Tasmania and educated at Fahan School, Hobart. She enlisted in the Royal Australian Air Force in 1941 and served as a radar operator at various Australian stations.

They commenced their farming life on a War Service Settler’s block in northern Tasmania but by 1955, his father’s failing health made it imperative that they should return to manage Scorrybreac, the family property of



In 1989 Ian unveiled the Cairn built by Murdo Nicolson on our land at Ben Chracaig on the Isle of Skye.

personal treasures handed down from one generation to the next. “The oldest would be an ancient (c.14th century) single handed sword. Then, there is a delicate wine glass, and a lock of red/gold hair — the latter given, according to family tradition to the ladies of Scorrybreck House by the fugitive Prince Charles (a creditably circumstantial case can be made out for this secret visit that is not mentioned in any history of the Prince’s wanderings in the Hebrides). From the 19th century, we have brooches, dirks, sgian dubhs, a silver mounted hunting horn and a number of miniatures. Tragically, most of the old papers and letters would have been destroyed with Scorrybreck



At the unveiling with the Chief were Murray Nicolson, John Nicolson “The Skipper,” Burke Nicolson and Harman Nicolson.

some 6,000 acres.

Following his father’s death in 1962, he purchased his brother’s interest in Scorrybreac and together with Pam their property continued to produce good quality wool. They also founded a Galloway cattle stud as a side interest.

Continued on page 5



In Memoriam – Iain MacNeacail of MacNeacail and Scorrybreac

“In 1967, we suffered an attack of ‘itchy feet’ and decided to widen our horizons (and particularly those of our children) by moving to an undeveloped property some



Ian and Pam with Calum Nicolson of Borve at the Scorrybreac monument on the site of the old house on Ben Torvaig in 1989

twenty miles north west of Canberra, where our elder daughter Robin was already attending a university. We named this property ‘Kanangra’ and after having a residence built for ourselves and another for our employee, we set to work to establish pastures, to erect some miles of fencing, to bore for stock water, to bulldoze dams. Within a four-year period, we experienced two years of severe drought and a marked drop in wool and sheep prices.

“In 1973, we subdivided Kanangra into small farms and farmlets and moved into Canberra where I engaged myself in a type of freelance journalism, researching and writing the scripts for audio tape tours for the Capital, the National War Memorial, various tourist centres in New South Wales and Victoria and for most of Tasmania. At the same time, my wife busied herself with Lifeline and in the care of retarded children in a nearby institution.

“In 1975, seeking the sun, we moved north to a small ‘hobby’ farmlet in Queensland where we grew avocados and I continued with my travel journalism.

“Finally, in 1979, we made our last move when we retired to Ballina.”

Together with Pam, Scorrybreac was a member of Dune Care, an organisation dedicated to the preservation of the beach dunes. This entailed the removal of unwanted exotic plants and shrubs and the planting of a variety of suitable indigenous plants.

Whilst in Canberra Scorrybreac and Pam joined Amnesty International. When they moved north, Pam became much more active in that organisation. For a number of years she was a member of the Urgent Action section, constantly writing letters to many countries in an effort to gain the freedom of prisoners of conscience. Following her death, Scorrybreac took up his pen and continued her campaigns.

It was during this time they “found the time” to concentrate on the revival of our Clan. Under his care our Clan was being raised around the world and they began to travel extensively.

In 1987 part of our Clan ancestral land on Ben Chracraig, which was close to the home for nearly eight centuries of the MacNeacail Chiefs and their clansmen, was put on the open market. MacNicolson and Nicolson the world over formed *Urras Clann MhicNeacail* (The Clan MacNeacail Trust). It took a great effort worldwide



Pam and Ian visited Los Angeles in 1991 and met Alex and Ilka Nicolson. Alex was born on Skye and his father built the monument on Ben Torvaig.

but sufficient monies were raised and our Clan was able to purchase the 130 acres by Ben Chracraig, a most beautiful headland opposite Portree on the Isle of Skye ‘for

Continued on page 6



In Memoriam — Iain MacNeacail of MacNeacail and Scorrybreac

preservation and public enjoyment.

Following the purchase of Ben Chraicg it was decided to build a cairn on which all the names of the donors would be recorded. The cairn, was build by Murdo Nicolson from stones sent by Clan Associations all around the world. Scorrybreac at the dedication of the cairn in October 1989 said. "I regard this cairn as a memorial to my father; this because of a small stone incorporated into the face of the cairn — a stone my father (Norman Alexander Nicolson) picked up when visiting the ruins of old Scorrybreck House (in Skye) in 1917 while on furlough from the Western Front. He took it back to Australia and later had it set into the keystone of the main fireplace of our home in Tasmania. When we moved to New South Wales I took the stone with me and now 72 years later, and after a return trip of some 22,000 miles, it has been returned to Skye." This grand edifice is a draw-card for the many visitors to Skye. Murdo also used his gifted hands to build a wishing well, another highlight on our land.

To help raise funds for the ongoing upkeep involved on Ben Chraicg, Scorrybreac donated a family heirloom, a Davidson Dirk as a prize in an international raffle. All our Clan members appreciated the donation but even more so members of Clan Davidson in Australia — appropriately a member of that clan won it!

The greatest highlight of 1988 was the recognition by the Lord Lyon of our Chief as the only Chief of our Highland Clan thus ending the challenge mounted by Lord Carnock some years earlier. It had been a long, drawn out battle that Iain MacNeacail of MacNeacail and Scorrybreac, his charming wife Pam and his family had had to endure. Whilst they must have drawn some comfort from the worldwide support extended to Scorrybreac, those of us who followed this case will know of the heart-ache and anxieties our Chief had to endure. It was, therefore, all the more rewarding for us to be able to cry "Hail to the Chief!"

In May 1992 there was a Dedication on the Isle of Skye to mark the birthplace of Christianity in Britain and the place of 28 Nicolson Chief's burial sites known locally as St. Columba's Isle. It had been restored under the care and direction of Dr. Alisdair Maclean. This dedication was attended by the Nicholson Pipe Band from America, a strong contingent of Clans folk from America and Canada, and indeed the world.

The same year the Scorrybreac Woodlands Planting Scheme for Ben Chraicg was undertaken and again the Clan members donated monies. Regrettably the weather on Skye is not as co-operative as our members and the reforestation of our land is an ongoing challenge.

Together Scorrybreac and Pam travelled extensively in eastern Australia and were Guests of Honour at Sydney Scottish Week on many occasions, and at the Bundanoon Highland Gathering in April 1995.

Much of their time was involved with the Clan, travelling on many overseas trips (despite Pam's dislike of flying), often to Highland Gatherings, including four in the United States and one in Canada and a visit to New Zealand. They made seven trips to Skye for Clan Meetings and Ceilidhs, indeed at the time of her passing, Pam and



In 1997 Ian and his son were in Skye for the dedication of a seat at Battery Point on Ben Chraicg in memory of Ian's late wife Pam.

Scorrybreac were anticipating their next trip to Skye.

Sadly Scorrybreac's beloved Pam passed away on Saturday, 3rd June, 1995. He sorely missed his soul mate, her delicious sense of humour, her keen sense of the ridiculous, which meant there had always been much laughter in their life together.

Following gentle persuasion from his family, in

Continued on page 7



In Memoriam – Iain MacNeacail of MacNeacail and Scorrybreac

November 1995 Scorrybreac travelled to Skye, this time accompanied by his son John Nicolson Younger of Scorrybreac and daughter-in-law Jenni, and elder daughter Bobbi Allan. In many ways it was a bittersweet trip but it gave him the opportunity to introduce his family to many more clan officers and members from Scotland, USA, Canada, England and Germany. Needless to say, his family was entranced by Skye and greatly appreciated the hospitality accorded them everywhere. It was a charmed beginning to Scorrybreac's solo life as Chief of our Clan.

Scorrybreac attended various events with the members of the Queensland Branch; the Australasian Clan Gathering in Canberra in October 1996 and a Clan Gathering in Perth, WA on 13th September, 1997.

Two weeks later he flew to Scotland. It was during this latter tour he met up with old friends; paid a visit to the Lyon Clerk at the Court of the Lord Lyon; and enjoyed lunch with David Sellar of the University of Edinburgh who had spent much time in researching and compiling the history of our clan in the West Highlands and Islands.

Our Clan was quickly moving forward and it was with pride all Clan MacNicol Members were told "The Chief of Clan MacNicol, Iain MacNeacail of MacNeacail and Scorrybreac, has announced that the Highland Clan MacNeacail Federation has been formed and that a Grant of Arms has been made to the Federation, under Letters Patent dated 6 January 1997, by the Lord Lyon King of Arms." It was a momentous occasion that gave him great pleasure.

He felt great pride on learning our Highland Clan MacNeacail Federation had been accepted as a "Founder" of the new Scottish Museum thanks to a most generous donation made to the Museum on behalf of our Clan Federation by Burke Nicholson of Balvenie and Harman Nicholson of Atlanta, Georgia, USA. Scorrybreac and his son John Nicolson Younger of Scorrybreac, together with Burke and his wife Juliet attended the "Founders Weekend" which proved to be a very grand event, thoroughly

enjoyed by all.

From Edinburgh he travelled 'home again' to Skye, to the warm hospitality of Jan and Effie Nicolson, meeting up with the many close friends, the extended family, which make up Clan MacNicol. Here too he again met up with his friend Dr. Alasdair Maclean the co-author of our much respected clan history book.

In 1998 there was another well-deserved further recognition of the heraldic and Scorrybreac's Chiefly status with the following announcement "We are very pleased to announce that by his warrant of 28 May 1998, the Lord Lyon King of Arms has approved a grant to Iain MacNeacail of MacNeacail and Scorrybreac of Supporters a Plant Badge and a Pinsel. He has also approved a Change of Motto."

At the time the Chief's old Standard, his chiefly Headquarters Flag, four yards in length, was modified to include the Plant Badge, a bramble in flower Proper (Proper means in natural colour), and our motto was changed from *Generositate non Ferocitate* to *Meminisse sed Providere (Remember, but Look Ahead)*. Again the generosity of

Burke Nicholson of Balvenie came to the fore and our Clan was presented with the newly granted Pinsel, a four and one-half feet length and two feet high flag, which show the Chief's Crest (a Hawk's Head) and within a circlet his Motto and chiefly title, as well as his Plant Badge.

Sadly, Scorrybreac's health began to fail and he was not well enough to continue his travels. It was both Scorrybreac's and our Clan's great fortune that John Nicolson Younger of Scorrybreac and his charming wife Jenni were willing to represent Scorrybreac on many occasions including the Clan MacNicol International Gatherings in Atlanta, USA; Melbourne, Australia; Skye, Scotland and California, USA.

Early 1999 Scorrybreac received his first copy of the Clan History Book "*The Highland Clan of MacNeacail (MacNicol), a History of Nicolsons of Scorrybreac*," which had been financed and painstakingly edited by Harman

Continued on page 13



Iain and Pam at a rainy New Hampshire Highland Games in 1991 with Dick Nicoll.



Williamsburg Games Report

Murray Nicolson

The Williamsburg Scottish Festival and Celtic Celebration was held on Saturday September 27th, and Clan MacNicol was the Honored Clan. The Games were held just over a week after Hurricane Isabel had caused great devastation in the Tidewater area of Virginia, and it is greatly to the credit to the President of the Games, Howard Topp and his committee that the Games were able to go ahead in very difficult circumstances.

The weekend celebrations began on Thursday evening September 25th with a reception for clan members at the home of John and Marsha Gillis in Gloucester VA. Just getting to their home in a huge coach was an adven-

ture; close to their home, the coach could only make some of the turns with great difficulty, culminating with it bogging down in the soft turf as it tried to turn around. With the power lines down, the home was lit with an emergency generator, with the electrician practically leaving by the back door as the guests arrived by the front! It was a lively and very enjoyable evening, and we were all appreciative of the Gillis's wonderful hospitality.

The Friday was taken up with clan meetings and then the formal buffet reception of the Williamsburg Festival. The day of the Games themselves was beautiful, and our clan tent was well-staffed by the 34 clan members who attended; we



Feathers flying — John Gillis, Murray Nicolson and Jeremy Nicholson.

were by far the largest clan. Jeremy Nicholson had put in tremendous effort beforehand to ensure that we made this great showing. Tom and Mary Nichols came from Duluth, Dick and Carol Nicoll from

Continued on page 9



Clan MacNicol was by far the largest contingent — and the loudest when it came to shouting out the clan war-cry.



Massachusetts, Brenda and Tom Pritchard from Tennessee, Bruce and Louise Goodburne from Michigan — and the largest travelling group were from Quebec, including Jacques and Sylvie McNicoll, Carmelle McNicoll and Mario Lemelin, and Claude and Rosanne McNicoll.



Bruce and Louise Goodburne

The Chief's High Commissioner was Honored Guest of the Games, and had to perform the opening ceremony. He didn't know beforehand that prior to the opening, he would have to consume 5 malt whiskies in a row from a travelling band of whisky enthusiasts, a daunting challenge only shortly after breakfast. He survived, aided



"Trial by whisky" — the clan High Commissioner samples five malt whiskies in succession and remains standing.

by a substantial intake of waffles from the local pancake house which turned out to provide a highly effective



Brenda Nicholson, Holly Nicholson Sites, Tom Pritchard, Brock and Colleen Nicholson

absorbent stomach lining!

Our clan tent was well-furnished with clan materials provided by Dick and Carol Nicoll, and by Brenda and Tom Nichols, and well-staffed by clan members themselves not averse to helping out with the whisky tasting as an addition to or even as replacement for breakfast or lunch. In the evening we had an informal dinner at the Best Western Hotel, with quite surprising wine found for us from

Continued on page 10



Tom Nichols ("This cup can't be empty already?"), Mary Nichols and Andrea di Montegnacco.



Jeremy Nicholson, Kelly Nichols and Letham Burns



La Famille McNicoll de Québec: Claude and Roseanne McNicoll, Carmelle McNicoll and Mario Lemelin, Murray and Barbara Nicolson, Sylvie and Jacques McNicoll.



Barbara Nicolson and Marsha Gillis





Prince Edward Island

Selkirk Highland Settlers 200th Anniversary Celebrations of Clan MacNicol (Nicolson of Scorrybreac)

Michael Nicholson

Two hundred years ago, in 1803, many Clan MacNicol/Nicolson folk gathered together for the last time at Loch Portree on the Isle of Skye in Scotland. Many of them were about to take ship on the Polly, one of three ships carrying Lord Selkirk's Highland settlers to Prince Edward Island, in what would eventually become Canada. The ship set sail with over 100 Nicolson folk in July and arrived in Orwell Bay, P.E.I. on Sunday, August the 7th, 1803. Many of the Nicolson emigrants were of note within the clan, such as John Nicolson of Stenscholl in Skye who was the tacksman (major tenant of the area), as well as other Nicolson men who held the rank of daoin'-uaise (pronounced: doenya oo-ashla), which is to say they were the noble gentlemen of the clan.

In fact, our Nicolson clan forefathers were of such influence on these settlers that Lord Selkirk noted in his diary that "The two or three places where a little improvement had been made by the stragglers, as well as the remains of the old French clearing at Pinette...made a few choice situations — one of these I gave to Donald Nicolson: and two others to Stenscholl (i.e. John Nicolson) & Roderick Mackenzie, whom I considered as the Chief persons of the two divisions of which the settlers were

compose — the Skye & Ross-shire people." Selkirk also noted the fact that our clan forefathers desired to remain together. "From the social clannish disposition of the Highlanders it was impossible almost to take a

small number." Two centuries later — to the day — of the arrival of our Highland forefathers, the descendants of these Nicolsons gathered at Selkirk Provincial Park, Orwell Bay, P.E.I. for the 200th Anniversary Celebrations.


The events started on Thursday, August the 7th, 2003 with a re-enactment of the arrival of the Selkirk Highland Settlers at Orwell Bay. Several actors in period costume rowed ashore in traditional Dory boats and reenacted the original landing. The actors then proceeded from the Bayshore up to the main stage at Selkirk Provincial Park where Celtic entertainers from Prince Edward Island and the Isle of Skye began the opening ceremonies. Entertainment then ensued with Highland step dancing, fiddling, piping and Harp music. A Celtic Gaelic Bard among the

Continued on page 11



Williamsburg Games Report *Continued from page 9*

an adjacent gas station by Kelly's friend Letham Burns! We thanked Jeremy Nicholson for his excellent organization

of the weekend – and look forward to many more such clan gatherings. 



The clan Vice-President/Treasurer (and wife Carol) help out with the whisky tasting)



Inside our clan tent — Mary and Tom Nichols, Murray and Barbara Nicolson, Dick Nicoll.



Prince Edward Island *Continued from page 12*

entertainers recounted the events leading up to the emigration and the harsh treatment which the Highlanders had received, as well as many other reasons for their emigration, while English translation took place. Dick and Carol Nicoll set up the clan tent in Selkirk Provincial Park and received several visitors while braving the persistent rain.

The main event for our clan took place the evening of



Dick Nicoll (left) and Cailean Maclean from the Isle of Skye (right).

Friday, August the 8th at the Belfast Recreational Centre, where our Chief had visited the PEI Nicholson's in 1987, and which is down the road from Selkirk Provincial Park where the Nicolsons arrived two hundred years ago. Here we held a Clan MacNicol/Nicholson Ceilidh which was attended by more than 120 Nicolsons. The event was a tremendous success and we were honoured by the presence of the current Lord Selkirk from Scotland, James Douglas-Hamilton, and eight of his party from the Scottish Parliament. The evening started with the piping in of the head table and some welcoming remarks from our P.E.I. Commissioner Wilfred Nicholson. We then proceeded with the time-honoured tradition of the piping in of what can only be described as the worlds best Haggis, prepared by our very own Andrew Nicholson, Head Chef for the Lieutenant Governor of P.E.I. Jacques McNicoll then performed the Burns address to the Haggis, wonderfully weaving his French Canadian accent into the lowland Scots dialect while waving above his head a real claymore for anyone who might dare insult Scotland's national dish...or his French accent for that matter!

While the clan settled down to dinner, Canadian National Clan Commissioner Michael Nicholson gave a speech on Scottish clanship and our clan's history while bearing witness to the generosity of Lord Selkirk's forebearer who helped our clansmen settle in this new land. Jeremy Nicholson then read a letter from our Chief Iain

MacNeacail of MacNeacail and Scorrybreac, which was specifically addressed to all the P.E.I. Nicholson's present. Lord Selkirk addressed the clan as well, which was followed by the entertainment. Piper Ian MacInnis from the P.E.I. College of Piping then performed an awe inspiring rendition of the Pipe tune 'Nicolson of Scorrybreac'. After that Angus Nicolson, from the Isle of Skye in Scotland and the Under 18 National Scottish Bagpipe Champion, played a medley of bagpipe tunes. The speed and dexterity of his finger movements cannot be sufficiently accounted for in words; one had to see it to believe it was possible to play the pipes like that! Suffice it to say Angus was amazing! The clan was then entertained by the Gaelic singing of Cape Bretoner Jeff MacDonald who performed two of our ancient gaelic clan songs; Oran Mor Sgoirebreac and S'gann gun dirich mi chaoidh. Jeff had all of us learn the chorus and sing along while SKYE TV from the Isle of Skye filmed the event. Finally, it was time to dance and the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society performed a demonstration of Scottish country dancing and even named a new dance in honour of our clan. The evening rounded out with the Celtic music of Fiddler Roy Johnston and Steve Charette who played many Highland songs and a lively rendition of 'Rise up for Charlie' while singer Jeff



MacDonald jumped in and sang. A great time was had by all and the evening was regarded as a success!

The following day, August 9th, events for the anniversary celebrations reverted back to Selkirk Provincial Park, where the P.E.I. Highland Games were taking place and where a Kilted Golf classic was commencing at the Belfast Highland Greens Ocean Side Golf course. Several exhibition tents were set up with artifacts and information on the three ships on which the Selkirk Settlers came over; the Polly, the Oughton and the Dykes. The morning saw

Continued on page 12



Prince Edward Island *Continued from page 13*

speeches given in the clan genealogy tent on each of the clans which came over with Lord Selkirk. Michael Nicholson, our Canadian National Commissioner, gave an informative speech about the Nicolsons of Scorrybreac from Skye.

A Selkirk Settler Celebrations newspaper was printed which gave information about events taking place at the celebrations, history articles about the Selkirk Settlers, and a brief mention of the 1878 gathering of the clans which also took place on P.E.I.: In 1878 at this gathering of the clans a Highland Stone throwing competition was held with a \$10 first prize going to Malcolm MacLeod for a throw of 32 ft. 9 ins., a \$5 second prize to Alex Nicholson for a throw of 31 ft. 11 ins. And a \$2 third prize to William MacInnis for his toss of 31 ft. 5 ins.

At 10:30 a.m. a great many Nicols, Nicolsons and MacNicolos gathered at the clan tent, hosted faithfully by Dick and Carol Nicoll, and were led by Piper Angus Nicolson from Skye down to the original landing site of the Selkirk Settlers on the shores of Orwell Bay. Once at the landing site the history article about the arrival epic of the Selkirk Settlers, printed in our July 2001



Scorrybreac newsletter, was read to all present recounting the arrival of the Polly and the subsequent events which Lord Selkirk documented in his diary. Following the reading, the assembled

clan descendants were led back to the entrance of the Selkirk Provincial Park by piper Angus Nicolson, where the unveiling of a clan plaque took place. P.E.I. Commissioner Wilfred Nicholson read the Gaelic inscription on the plaque followed by a reading of the English translation by Dr. Mary Nicholson-Ross, who is the direct lineal descendant of our clans tacksman John Nicolson of Stenscholl (who came over on the Polly). Once the inscription reading was done, Mary and Wilfred cut the ceremonial rope and pulled off the covering for all to see our new clan memorial. Canadian National Clan Commissioner Michael Nicholson then opened up a new bottle of Talisker Whisky from the Isle of Skye and gave a drink to all the assembled clan descendants. The toast to their forefathers and the taste of the ancient homelands was evidently well appreciated, as everyone came back quickly for seconds and the bottle was emptied in record time!

Sunday saw the closing ceremonies take place and the clan MacNicol/Nicolson gathered for our last rendezvous as a clan at a Christian service held in the historic Church of Scotland on the grounds of



Jeremy Nicholson, Lord Selkirk and Wilfred Nicholson

Selkirk Provincial Park. Angus Nicolson played Amazing Grace on the bagpipes and the Lord's Prayer was spoken in Gaelic so that the clan descendants could hear what a church service would have been like for their forefathers, since all the Selkirk Settlers who came over from the Isle of Skye spoke only Gaelic when they arrived.

Despite the continuous rain, all the events were considered a success. Clan MacNicol owes a great debt of gratitude to our P.E.I. Commissioner Wilfred Nicholson and his wife Carol, who together did the lion's share of the organizing for all events. We were glad to find Nicholsons on the Island who were so aware of their ancestors and who remembered the Chief's 1987 visit with fondness. We even found Nicholson Selkirk descendants on the Island in charge of maintaining the Celtic arts...like David Nicholson, the head of the P.E.I. School of Piping. He attended all events for the clan at the celebrations.



Jacques McNicoll, Michael Nicolson and Angus Nicolson. Angus Nicolson was given a Toronto Maple Leafs jersey with the #1 on the back which said: "Nicolson #1 MacNicol Piper." He also received a Canadian hockey puck signed by all the Nicolsons from PEI and a Montreal Canadiens hockey puck from Jacques McNicoll.

Our Clan MacNicol/Nicolson Cairn and Plaque is a beautiful sight. Made of beautiful Island Red Stone, the Bronze Plaque affixed to it is

tastefully done with both Gaelic and English inscriptions

Continued on page 13



In Memoriam — Iain MacNeacail of MacNeacail and Scorrybreac

Nicholson of Atlanta, USA. Much to the delight of Scorrybreac, Harman's generosity resulted in the book being given to all members of the Clan throughout the world. All members shared in Scorrybreac's pride of knowing we hold a well researched, documented history of our ancient Clan in our hands.

In 2000 Scorrybreac was pleased to learn of the formation of a committee in Scotland to oversee the more widespread implementation and involvement of the Clan in Scotland and the continued support for the upkeep of the Clan land at Ben Chracaig.

Time was taking its toll on our Chief, and much to his delight people turned the tide and began coming to him. He had always had many visitors, and they were always assured of a warm welcome and great hospitality. His pleasure in having even more visitors was evident. The Queenslanders in particular travelled down to Ballina for lunch for an early Christmas celebration in 2000. It was a delightful interlude, a chance for Scorrybreac to catch up on all the family news of each and everyone there.

2001 saw the establishment of the steering committee for Clan MacNicol Australia and representatives of all the branches in Australia travelled to Ballina for the inaugural meeting.

His body was letting him down, and at times he would be frustrated that his memory was not quite "up to scratch" on odd occasions, and his hearing made

telephone conversation a little amusing at times. This said, usually his brain was in top gear, his keen interest in everything around him, in everyone emotionally near and dear to him — the people he loved and loved him span the world — was unabated.

We have not only lost a Chief we have lost a treasured friend, a linchpin that held together a widespread clan in warm kinship, caring and understanding.

The word gentleman is often casually used, but whenever we think of Scorrybreac we are indeed thinking of a gentle man. That gentleness never failed him, his physical and moral strength has been evident in his service to his country and to the wider community within Australia and throughout the world; his mental and emotional strength is unquestioned as he negotiated the many trials and tribulations that accompanied the challenge to his position as our Chief; in victory he was gracious.

Above all he was a devoted family man, his love for and pride in his family was always evident. He was a devoted husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather — he rejoiced in their successes felt for them in sorrows but most important of all he always, always listened to and loved them.

Contributed by Penny Nicoll, with thanks to Robin Mahon of the USA for the first-person texts recorded in her report published in 1994.



Prince Edward Island *Continued from page 12*

and images of the clan plant badge (the white trailing azalea) and the clan symbol (the red Hawks head). It should be noted here that several Nicholson men on the Island built the concrete base and participated in the erection of the stone cairn for no fee, also donating the necessary materials free of charge to build the monument. We encourage all Clan

MacNicol descendants to visit our commemorative monument when on a vacation in P.E.I. A visit to Orwell Bay and Selkirk Provincial Park, which incidently is right beside Nicholson industries, and the adjacent ocean side Belfast Highland Greens golf course, is also a must for those wishing to come into contact with their Highland history.



A point to ponder

We live in a decadent era. Young people no longer respect their parents. They are rude, impatient and have no self-control. They take no notice of the wisdom and experience of their elders. This will cause the disappearance of the human race and an end of civilization

Inscription on an Egyptian tomb of 4000 B.C.



My First Games Tent — Gatlinburg 2003

Brenda Nicholson Pritchard

This past May 17 and 18 I had my first-ever experience of “manning” a tent at a Highland Games event. This was our second experience at any participation. (Three years ago Tom and I guarded the “west Cheaters’ Gate” at the Gatlinburg Highland Festival and Games for our local Knoxville Scottish Society. But this is the subject of another

picture, we did have a little sun with the over-cast skies.

An interesting group of visitors stopped to inspect our display. A trifold poster with photos of other Highland Games, places in Scotland, and Clan officers

and other members was popular with parents and their school-age children. Pictures of our Chief marching at a Games in New England brought a long visit and conversation from another clan’s officer, who travels around the country to as many Games as possible. He remembered that particular Games

and our chief! “I was there, I remember your chief marching,” he declared.

We had other interesting visitors—one from Ireland who could not teach me to pronounce MacNicol in Gaelic. He could not understand why I said the Clan was small. He said he’d been to Skye and there are Nicolsons “everywhere” there. Other visitors to the MacNicol tent were from California, Vermont, Ohio, Texas, Georgia, the Carolinas, as well as East Tennessee. Another clan member from Knoxville,



Clan members Joan Nicoll Riedl and Brenda Nicholson Pritchard. Prospective members are Robin Harrill and Doug (Nichols) Harrill.

and our chief! “I was there, I remember your chief marching,” he declared.

First, many thanks to Murray and Barbara Nicolson and Bill and Maura Nicholson for providing banners, written material on the Clan, and much helpful advice. All of this help was much appreciated and contributed to the success of my last-minute plans to set up a tent. With violent thunderstorms and tornados moving through the East Tennessee area adding to the drama, Tom and I decorated our rented tent. As can be seen in the



Small and proud Clan MacNicol in the Parade of the Clans.

Joan Nicoll Riedl (a former tent representative herself) helped at the tent on Saturday the 17th. Sponsoring the tent was a lot of fun. We made new acquaintances and (hopefully) some new Clan members.



Clan MacNicol Society of North America 2003 Annual Meeting

Jeremy Nicholson elected new Clan Society President

The Annual Meetings of the Society took place on Friday September 26th in Williamsburg. Here is a short summary of the transactions.

Elections

- Jeremy Nicholson of Atlanta was elected as the new Society President. He succeeds Bill Nicholson, who was thanked for his years in the roles of President, Secretary and Board member.
- Dick Nicoll was elected into the new position of Vice-President. Dick will also continue as Treasurer.
- Jeremy will be taking over the role also of Membership Secretary. He succeeds Pam Nicoll, who was thanked for her many years in this position. Pam continues as the Clerk of the Society.
- Jacques McNicoll takes over the position of Special Projects Manager from Jeremy, and Jacques will also be our Quebec Commissioner.
- Michael Nicholson of Ottawa was elected as Commissioner for Canada, and Bill R. Nicol of Hilton Head was elected as Secretary.
- Dan Nickell of Vienna, VA took on the new position of Webmaster.
- John G. Gillis of Ware Neck, VA continues as our legal counsel.
- The position of National Games Commissioner remains open.
- In profound gratitude for his exceptional generosity over many years to the Clan Society, Harman Nicholson was awarded a Lifetime Membership.

Membership

Jeremy reported that membership includes 155 members who have paid in 2003 and a further 93 who paid in 2002 who are considered current. We've dropped from the membership rolls people who haven't paid a subscription since 2001 or earlier. In taking over the position of acting Membership Secretary, Jeremy is making a membership drive a high priority.

Treasurer

Dick Nicoll presented financial reports for the year to date. Membership income has totalled \$3715 from the USA and about \$800US from Canada. Newsletter costs have totalled \$4,090 so far this year (although this includes an overprinting of the newsletter that we are going to use for publicity and recruitment). Because newsletter costs are exceeding membership income on an annual basis, rather than decrease the quality of the current newsletter or its size, we decided for the time being to reduce the frequency to three per year instead of four, perhaps increasing the size of these issues. We have received a major donation during the year which has helped keep the clan finances solvent.



Games activities

Without a Games Commissioner to coordinate these activities, we are not sure how many Games we were represented at during the last year – we do know these included Stone Mountain, Phoenix, Williamsburg, Alma MI, Concord NH, Gatlinburg, Maxville Ontario and Prince Edward Island. After discussion, we formed a task force consisting of Murray, Jeremy, Dick, Bill R. Nicol, Brenda Pritchard, Bruce Goodburne and Tom Nichols to coordinate the 2004 games activities. Any clan member interested in volunteering for this important position should contact Jeremy Nicholson.

New Website

Dan Nickell has volunteered to take over the Clan's Website to make it more timely and interesting. He began immediately after the meeting. It is still a work in progress, but can be viewed at www.clanmacnicol.org. There is also a Canadian Website at www.clanmacnicolcanada.com. At some time it may be a cost-saving by combining the two sites, or installing them both on the same server.

Scholarship Fund

It was agreed as a goal to establish a modest scholarship fund to help young persons learn more about the clan and its peoples. Donations could be solicited through our Scorrybreac Fund, which is a tax-deductible organization, as part of the annual membership dues solicitation.



Flower of The Forest

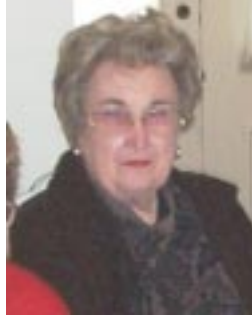
Lenore Bland Brown-Nichol (1928-2003)

We are sad to announce the passing on September 16th of Lenore Nichol, the beloved wife of Albert Nichol, who is the talented artist that has produced cover pictures in the last four issues of Scorrybreac. Lenore was born in Everett, Washington in 1928, and moved with her parents to Paris, Texas in 1936. In 1947 she married her first husband, Earl D. Brown and they lived in Fort Worth for many years, where Lenore was a teacher. After her husband's death in 1996, she married Albert C. Nichol and they found pleasure in travelling, especially to England and Scotland.


Genealogy was one of her favorite hobbies. Many clan members who were on the Queen Mary in July 2002 will remember her as a happy soul-mate to Albert, whom he often referred to as "Miss Daisy." Albert wrote the following tribute to Lenore for us.

At the first gathering of the clans Lenore visited, she

came away having joined four clans. Any clan with an ancestral name she joined to learn more of her heritage. That was in 1997, the year we married.



The following spring, we toured the UK and she enjoyed the Lake District in England for that is Bland country. We were "married" again at Gretna Green and she came home charmed with Scotland and wanted to return someday. Lenore and I attended the international MacNicol gathering on the Queen Mary where she met more of our clansmen.

We had known each other from school days and got to enjoy six great years of fun and travel after our first spouses passed away. While still on the "low road" we did not get to return to Scotland. She is now on the "high road" and can visit Bland county and all of Scotland as often as she wants. 

Albert Nichol, September 2003

Clan MacNeacail Society of Scotland International Gathering in Scotland October 2004

The next International Gathering to be held at Portree, Isle of Skye, Scotland from 14th to 16th October 2004. This follows the last very successful gathering in 2000, which was attended by over 50 visitors from overseas. We have heard from the Society in Scotland that although planning is at an early stage, it is hoped to include all or some of the following activities in the programme:

- A formal gathering at the Cairn on the Clan lands on Ben Chraicg
- Ceilidh at the Cuillin Hills Hotel on Friday 15 October
 - A visit to the Gaelic College – Sabhal Mor Ostaig
 - A visit to the Clan Donald Centre at Armadale
 - A trip to the island of Raasay
 - A visit to the Talisker whisky distillery
 - A walk in the Skye hill country

The meeting will be attended by John MacNeacail of MacNeacail and Scorrybreac and his wife Jenni from Australia, and other clan members from around the world. Further details will be published in the next issue of your newsletter, but if you are considering a trip to Scotland next year, keep these dates in mind.

It would be helpful to the organizers if you could indicate your interest in attending; other details will be sent in due course [Spring 2004] to those who respond.

Please write to Mrs. Carol Nicolson, Meikle Camoquhill Farm, Balfon, Stirlingshire, Scotland G63 0QW. Her Email address is acmnicolson@fsmail.net

