



# Clan MacNicol

Chief: Nicolson of Scorrybreac

CLAN NEWS

SYDNEY

SEPTEMBER

1986

Dear Clanfolk,

The Chief and his Council on Thursday last offered to buy back 140 acres of our traditional clan lands on Skye for the sum of £20,000 sterling. Here's how the story unfolds - clips from the WEST HIGHLAND FREE PRESS.

13/6/86

## Outdoor centre plan for Skye beauty spot

The new owner of 140 acres of Ben Chrachig in Portree this week announced plans for an outdoor centre there.

The land, which stretches from just beyond the Coolin Hills Hotel as far as Toravaig and takes in the well-known coastal path, has been bought by Barrie Creed who currently runs the Three Rowans Restaurant at Edinbane.

He told the Free Press on Wednesday: "I would like to have an outdoor centre and hostel there - a 50-bed hostel, but not something big that would spoil the nature of the area. The coastline would also make it ideal for water-based activities."

Mr Creed recognised that the scheme could be "very sensitive". He said: "I have floated the idea with the HIBD and they like it. But I will also be discussing it with the community council and the district council, and I will be working in co-operation with these bodies and others like the NFU and the Crofters Union."

Soon after it became known that Mr. Creed had purchased the old Scorrybreac lands for development purposes, irate letters started pouring into the offices of the Skye newspaper. The following are a selection.

West... Air N.S.W.

His plans depend on selling the existing businesses run by himself and his wife Brenda, including a candlemaking enterprise, but he said: "If the community council like the idea I will push it through to the planners and after that, with HIBD help, the centre could be in operation by July next year. I am optimistic."

The footpath would remain open, Mr Creed added, and he hoped to improve and extend it.

4/7/86

### "Irredeemable Mistake"

6 Martin Crescent  
Portree

Dear Sir

It is with some concern that I read in your recent issue of the proposed development of Ben Crachaig, or Scorrybreac as it is better known locally.

While it may be questionable whether Portree needs a 50-bed hostel the idea of siting it in the middle of an area of great natural beauty would be an irredeemable mistake. Once this development has begun and the services are established - roads, telephones, electricity etc, presumably with Highland Board funding - what is then to stop the developer selling off the hill in parcels for private housing?

I had always assumed that the Scorrybreac path was a right of way. For Barry Creed to assure us he intends to leave it open implies that this decision is his to make.

I would urge the community council and those who care about the future development of Portree to resist this scheme on all fronts.

Yours faithfully

Tommy MacKenzie

WEST HIGHLAND FREE PRESS, FRIDAY, 1 AUG

## Scorry "Not The Right Spot"

48 Park  
Bernisdale

Dear Sir

In consideration of recent events surrounding Mr Barrie Creed's project to erect a hostel and folk centre on the Scorry area of Portree, I feel there are certain points which need to be raised.

Firstly, we must consider the island's total reliance on the tourist trade and the fact that Portree cries out for such a development, but the area suggested is not the place.

I am 19 years old and like many other young islanders I can appreciate the need to keep the land and beauty the island has. Unfortunately the Scorry area is the only unspoilt area left in Portree: surely we cannot let this go.

The young in Skye can also appreciate the need for Portree to have such a centre to attract tourists and for the use of locals (as both areas must be considered).

If Skye wishes to remain a tourist centre then we must attract the younger generation of holidaymakers to the island. Surely it can only be seen as pathetic that Portree lacks a youth hostel! Equally, we must aim to keep locals happy and offer them as much as we can.

Local businessmen, the district council and every interested islander should be working together and pumping support into what is a major project. One man (even one as enthusiastic and caring as Mr Creed) cannot satisfy the needs of an entire community and the tourists.

The original plan to develop a community centre in the Bayfield area of Portree seems ideal - for such a central and available area - and this should be considered again.

If such a project were to go ahead, organisation and care must be put in by everyone. Unless this happens Portree will become scattered with eyesores, if it is not already so.

I doubt if anybody involved, either Mr Creed's supporters or his opposers, are taking this lightly. But since the issue has been raised once again, let us do it properly this time and not give cause for regret later.

Similar projects in the past have met with such reactions, and most have unfortunately come to nothing.

These things cannot just happen. Even financial support from various parties and moral support from a few good-willed locals will never be

enough. This will affect everyone in Portree and its surrounding area and an effort must be made by everyone and an interest must be taken so that the happiest balance for all is achieved and the chance of the moaners rearing their heads afterwards is decreased.

It would, however, be nice to see something happening this time instead of enthusiastic little-tattle, only to lie down in suspended animation until someone else suggests the idea once again.

Yours faithfully

Charlie MacKenzie

## Public park at Ben Chrachaig?

The meeting of Portree & District Community Council at which the controversial plans for an outdoor centre on Ben Chrachaig are due to be discussed has been postponed.

4/7/86

## Locals "Must Speak Out"

4 East Park  
Portree

Dear Sir

I must support the views expressed by Ruth Wallace and Tommy MacKenzie concerning Mr Barry Creed's plan to develop Scorrybreac.

There must be many more in the village and its outskirts who are angered, as I am, about such plans. Those people must let themselves be heard and not hope that someone else will make a noise about it. These plans must never be allowed to become reality.

Scorrybreac is about the only unspoilt area left in Portree and is enjoyed as it is by local and tourist alike.

Mr Creed should not assume he can push something like this without meeting a great deal of opposition.

All too often because of their nature island people stay quiet and don't want a fuss and allow people to push past them. We must not let this happen this time.

Yours faithfully

Mairi Wood

# Ben Chrachaig site on offer to district council for £20,000

The man at the centre of recent controversy over the future of Ben Chrachaig has offered to sell the Portree beauty spot to Skye & Lochalsh District Council for £20,000.

Mr Barrie Creed, who withdrew his plans for a hostel and outdoor centre development on Ben Chrachaig in the face of community opposition, said that he regarded his asking price as "very fair indeed".

He paid £15,000 for the land, and has been involved in some expenditure in order to produce the scheme, which was eventually

scrapped. Mr Creed said that he has had discussions with Mr David Noble, the council's chief executive, as well as "a couple of other public bodies".

During his discussions with Mr Noble, continued Mr Creed, "I explained we had bought the thing on an overdraft and couldn't afford to hang around too long."

Skye & Lochalsh District Council have expressed an interest in principle in acquiring Ben Chrachaig, though they delayed any firmer decision until the views of Portree Community Council were established. At its last meeting, the

community council rejected the idea of development on Ben Chrachaig and agreed to ask the district council to take it into public ownership.

Mr Creed revealed that he has also been approached by a Liverpool businessman — "I think you could describe him as a speculator" — who is interested in acquiring Ben Chrachaig. They met in Skye this week and Mr Creed told the *Free Press*: "He was implying that I could pick up the telephone and he would give me an offer better than anything the council would come up with."

While Mr Creed has insisted throughout that he would prefer to

sell to a public body, in order to ensure that Ben Chrachaig was safeguarded, he said that he would be keeping the Liverpool gentleman's phone number. "If the council mess me about or aren't prepared to pay what I regard as a very fair price then this is obviously another option we would have to look at."

Since he announced that he was not proceeding with the Ben Chrachaig development, Mr Creed has received several suggestions of other sites for his proposed outdoor centre. "Different people suggested different sites, but none of them have really come up to what is required," he said.

Last Thursday I phoned Mr. Creed about 8.30a.m. Skye time. Mrs. Creed answered the telephone as her husband was still in bed. She said as far as she knew the Skye and Lochalsh District Council had met the previous evening and had most likely agreed to purchase the land. She suggested I ring back in 1½ hours by which time they would have had time to ring the Council.

I rang back in 1½ hours and Mr. Creed answered the telephone. The Council had decided by a vote of 5 to 4 not to purchase "OUR LAND".

I immediately offered Mr. Creed on behalf of the clan £20,000 sterling for the purchase of our land and our offer was accepted.

Next I telephoned Mr. John Nicolson, the retired Pier Master in Portree. John kindly gave me the address of our lawyer in Portree. He is Mr. Donald Ferguson, Christie and Ferguson solicitors, Bridge Rd., Portree Isle of Skye, Scotland. Tel. No. (0478)2991. Phoning from Australia, we don't use the first 0 in the area code.

Mr. Ferguson is now handling the purchase for us — the land will in the future be called the Scorrybread Estates.

Trust Deeds, in the name of the "Clan MacNicol Lands Trust" will be drawn up, the land will be owned by us all and managed on our behalf by Trustees.

In 1988 Sydney plays host to the International Gathering.

How is this land going to be paid for? We have \$3,700 in our Clan account. The very generous donation of \$US2,000 recently sent to our American Commissioner is, on our suggestion because of the present poor rate of exchange, still being held in America. (Murray phoned yesterday morning to say \$US750 was already on its way to Scotland.)

Joan Nix, our Treasurer, and I went along to the State Bank, and with a property of mine as security, negotiated an overdraft of \$12,000.

At the date of settlement we need to pay £5,000 cash (about \$12,000 together with £15,000 raised by way of a mortgage over the land.

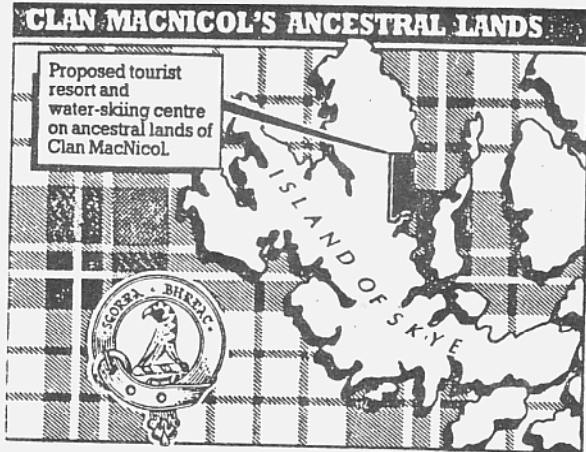
Mr. Ferguson, our lawyer, has already spoken to the Royal Bank of Scotland in Portree. It seems that they would be happy to lend us £15,000 but would like to know how we intend servicing the loan.

We shall lease the land for sheep grazing and the grazing rent will assist us to reduce the loan in Scotland.

We hope that every interested clansman and clanswoman will help us to reduce the AUSTRALIAN LOAN.

Help us by way of a donation — it doesn't matter how small the donation is, every dollar and every cent will count — — —

# No ski-ing for Skye, declares Australian clan chief



By PETER WHITE,  
Ethnic Affairs Reporter

The real estate speculators threatening one of the Scottish island of Skye's most beautiful and unspoilt stretches could not have foreseen such a determined defence of Highland honour coming from far-off Australia.

But the Australian arm of the proud Clan MacNicol is preparing to ward off plans by an English developer to set up a tourist resort and water ski-ing centre on Skye.

The proposed site just happens to be at the heart of the clan's ancient ancestral lands.

And by some strange twists of fate and history, the clan now has its headquarters in Australia.

Its hereditary chief, Mr Ian MacNicol of Scorrybreac, is a retired sheep farmer from the NSW town of Ballina.

Mr MacNicol, officially known as "Scorrybreac", presides over a larger number of followers than most of his fellow chiefs back home in Scotland - estimated at 25,000 worldwide - and in Australia boasts such benefits as his own pipers, sword and tartan bearers, chaplains, a bard, a clan pipe band and a clan country dancing group.

A Clan MacNicol radio program broadcasts to outback Australia.

Scorrybreac and his fighting Aussie MacNicol's have already made a name for themselves in Scotland for defending clan honour.

Earlier this year, Scottish newspapers gave wide coverage to legal moves by Mr MacNicol to stop a London solicitor of lowland descent, who reportedly "has never worn the kilt", from laying hereditary claim to the MacNicol tartan.

While the latest assault on Highland honour has a 1980s ring, its roots go back centuries into the mists of Scottish history.

According to Scorrybreac, his ancestors were originally robbed of the ownership of their lands on Skye by the more powerful MacDonald and Macleod clans in the 16th century.

Reduced to the level of virtual local managers for the MacDonalds, subsequent MacNicol chiefs and their clansmen were finally forced to abandon Skye and set sail for Australia, New Zealand and the US in the early 19th century.

Scorrybreac's ancestor arrived in Van Diemen's Land as a member of the British military, married a local girl and ended up settling in NSW.

Now Scorrybreac and his fellow clansmen and women are attempting to raise the estimated \$50,000 necessary to buy the 56 hectares on the outskirts of Portree which has recently come on to the market.

If they are successful they will not only thwart the Liverpool developer, but regain the ancestral lands they lost centuries before.

"It's a very emotional issue for us," Scorrybreac said.

"The clan is scattered around the world and having our ancestral lands on Skye will provide a real focus for us, bringing us together."

According to the clan's secretary, Mrs Rosemary Samios, the clan will set up a trust to administer the site and will erect some small "bothies" (small farm cottages) in keeping with the surroundings to provide accommodation for clan members from around the world. "We'll be redressing the wrongs of history," she said.

The Sydney Morning Herald,

Friday, September 19, 1986

**BTA**

or help us by way of sponsorship -  
\$380 will sponsor 1 acre of our land,  
\$190 will sponsor 1/2 acre of our land,  
\$100 will sponsor 1/4 acre of our land,  
\$50 will sponsor 1/8 acre of our land.

The name of every donor and the name of every sponsor will be inscribed for all time on a monument raised on the land.

The sponsorship or donation can be in your name, in the name of a child or in the memory of a loved one.

Can you imagine the thrill for a grand-child visiting Skye in future years, seeing the inscribed name of a Grand-parent who had helped to buy back the clan lands. The unveiling by Scorrybreac of this monument will be a landmark in the history of our clan.

Please send your donations or sponsorships directly to our Treasurer, Mrs. Joan Nix, P.O. Box 253, Potts Point, N.S.W. 2011. Joan will be responsible for recording all the names.

## "HAPPY NEW YEAR"

The Scottish Australian Heritage Council and Clan MacNicol will be celebrating Celtic New Year at an elegant "after church" Garden Luncheon and Celtic musicale to be attended by Lord and Lady Forres and Mike Bailey, the weather man, at historic "Wellings", 4, Woodside Avenue East, Burwood. Tickets \$15. Please ring me on 3286867 or Joan Nix on 3585619. Bring along your family and friends. Clan MacNicol's share of the proceeds will be used for our land.

Miss Del Agnew and the other owners of "Wellings" also bought back their heritage - they bought Lochnaw Castle (sounds familiar to Clan MacNicol members) and spend many months of each year in their castle in Scotland.

CLAN MACNICOL A.G.M. AND GATHERING at the British Exservices Club, 541, Kent St., Sydney at 10.30a.m. on Saturday, 29th November. The Chief will be in the Chair. Morning tea will be served. There is no

charge,

The Chief and young Scorrybreac will be attending the Sydney Scottish Games at Fairfield Showground on St. Andrew's Day, Sunday, 30th November. The Chief will arrive at the Games about mid-day, the Governor - General of Australia, wearing his kilt, will arrive at the Games at 12.30p.m., and will attend the Games luncheon in the Members' Stand. Members tickets, which include entry to the Games, free use of the Members' Bar as well as the Governor - General's luncheon, are available from Joan Nix tel.no. 3585619.

The KILTED PARADE at the Games will move forward at 2.30p.m. sharp. Kilted gentlemen and tartan skirted ladies may march in the PARADE. Lord Lauderdale, leading his Maitlands, will head the PARADE, Clan MacNicol, led by Scorrybreac, will march in 4th position.

You might have noticed when you read the S.M.H. article on page 3 that the Chief has been called MacNicol of Scorrybreac. It is no mistake. The Chief, following the advice of the late Sir Iain Moncreiffe of that Ilk, Q.C., has changed his name to MACNICOL under Australian law. (For those purchasing the Annual published by the S.A.H.C. - The Annual was already at the printers before Scorrybreac changed his name).

## Clan Donald Centre

For an idyllic stay in the beautiful Isle of Skye, pamper yourselves in one of our luxuriously appointed suites. Situated above the magnificently restored Stables at the Clan Donald Centre, these suites are fully equipped for gracious living and dining. Nearby you can enjoy the freedom of the historic Clan Donald Centre, its award winning museum exhibition, extensive gardens, nature trails and splendid 'Taste of Scotland' restaurant.

enquiries contact:  
Clan Donald Centre, Sleat,  
Isle of Skye IV45 8RS  
Telephone: 04714 305/227  
Telex: 75442 DONALD G

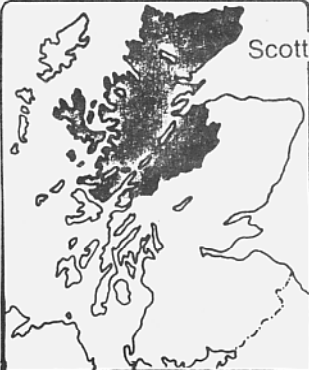


Scottish Travellers Club of Australia

Telephone (02) 27 2782

3rd Floor, Wingello House, Angel Place,  
Sydney 2000, Australia.

Isle of Skye and South West  
Ross Tourist Board  
Tourist Information Centre,  
Portree, Isle of Skye, IV51 9BZ.  
Tel: Portree (0478) 2137



Ian Nicolson (Isle of Man), who alerted us to the possibility of purchasing Scorrybreac Estate, also mentions we might consider building a Clan MacNicol Centre on or near our land, a more modest version of the Clan MacDonald Centre shown on this page.

## First Woman Named To High Position By The Lord Lyon

A woman has been named to one of the senior positions in the Court of the Lord Lyon, a "first" in the 400-year history of the ancient Scottish court of heraldry. Mrs. Elizabeth Roads, former secretary to the Lord Lyon, has been appointed Clerk to the Court.

Mrs. Roads points out, in a *Glasgow Herald* interview that she is "only following family tradition." She is descended from one of the most famous of the Lord Lyons of the 17th century, Sir James Balfour of Denmylne—"several great-grandfathers ago." Mrs. Roads herself is a Bruce; her late father was Col. James Bruce of the Royal Scots.

She was born in Germany while her father was serving with his regiment. She acquired a linguistic secretarial course at Cambridge, worked in an Edinburgh law office, took a fine arts course at the Victoria and Albert Museum, and worked at evaluating arts objects for Christie's of London before becoming secretary to the Lord Lyon in 1975.

"New appointments bring new problems," she says—and she already has one which no previous Lyon clerk has had to deal with. She will require time off in September to have a baby. Her first priority after that will be to find a nannie so that she can return to work.

### ON THE MATTER OF OUR TARTANS:

Mr. Bruce Kerr, Q.C., of Edinburgh, represented us at the Lyon Court in regard to Lord Carnock's claim to our tartans. The Lord Lyon King of Arms has given both parties time to "adjust answers". I think this really means time for the new Lyon Clerk and Keeper of the Records to have her baby.

I have just remembered that this newsletter goes to a number of clansmen in the U.K. Anyone in the U.K. wishing to donate to our Land Appeal, should send their donation directly to our lawyer on Skye (see page 2 for address), cheques should be made out to Clan MacNicol.

May I thank Ian of Isle of Man most sincerely for urging us on to buy Scorrybreac Estate, may I thank Scorrybreac for inspiring us with the hope of such a possibility, and finally, I thank my late father, Alexander Nicolson, who always said there was no such word as can't.

Yours age,  
Rochman



A CLAN  
MACNICOL  
SPONSOR.



# Australian clan MacNicol may soon be the new lairds of Ben Chrachaig

The owner of the valued Portree beauty-spot of Ben Chrachaig said this week that he was "hopeful" of reaching agreement with the Australian branch of the Clan MacNicol Society who are negotiating to buy the 140-acre site.

Mr Barrie Creed of Edinbane told the *Free Press* on Wednesday: "It is in the hands of the solicitors. There are one or two details to be sorted out, but it may be that the land will belong to a clan trust by early November."

And Mr Creed added that should a deal not be agreed with the Clan MacNicol "there is another local community organisation showing an interest in the site".

The proposal by the Clan MacNicol to acquire Ben Chrachaig was revealed last Thursday at a meeting of Portree Community Council.

Clan secretary Mrs Rosemary Nicolson Samios wrote to the community council from Sydney. She said the clan were keen to acquire Ben Chrachaig — "the heart of Scorrybreac, the ancient lands of

get together socially, and members range from emigrants of only a few years like myself to those whose families left Scotland many generations ago.

We called our society Clan MacNicol to distinguish ourselves from any society which the English Lord Carnock, who was recently recognised by the Lord Lyon King of Arms in Edinburgh to be Chief of Clan Nicolson, may wish to set up. Our Chief is an Australian, Ian Nicolson of Scorrybreac, whose family goes back directly through many generations on Skye. He has a strong interest in the history and culture of the Nicolsons on Skye, and spent several weeks last year in Portree.

We have found that the concept of buying a piece of land which has a close association with Scorrybreac, and preserving it for the common good of the people of the area, has strong emotional appeal to the emigrant Scots.

Some of their families were dispossessed and evicted many years ago, and there is a sense that in a small way they can regain a part of their lost heritage. It can form a link in friendship from overseas with the people of Skye, and ensure that the recreational use of this beauty spot can be kept forever.

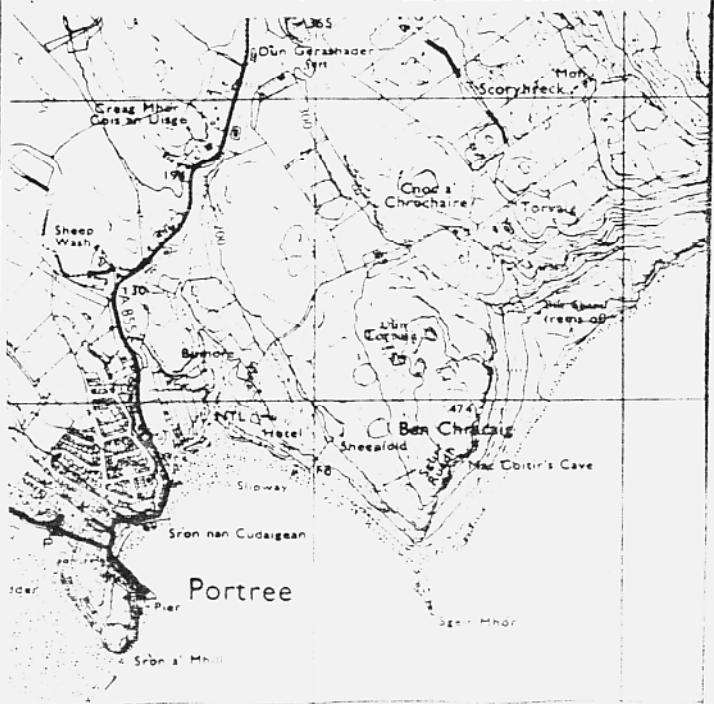
We are actively engaged in raising donations, large and small, from clans-people around the world, and with strong local representation amongst the trustees are sure that all can benefit from the acquisition.

Yours faithfully

A Murray Nicolson

Right: W.H.F.P. 7/11/86. Below: A small map showing Scorrybreac Estate. Can you work out the boundaries from Murray's newsletter extract.

MAP OF PORTREE, Skye, and surrounds.



## A Message From Ben Chrachaig "Lairds-Elect"

3/410 Edgecliff Road  
Woollahra  
Sydney, NSW 2025  
Australia

Dear Sir

We recently received in Australia a news clip from the *West Highland Free Press* entitled "Australian Clan MacNicol may soon be the new lairds of Ben Chrachaig".

Although the Australian branch of Clan MacNicol made the initial approach to Mr Barrie Creed regarding the purchase of Ben Chrachaig, it is our kinsmen worldwide — including those on Skye and elsewhere in the Hebrides — who will contribute towards the purchase of this land.

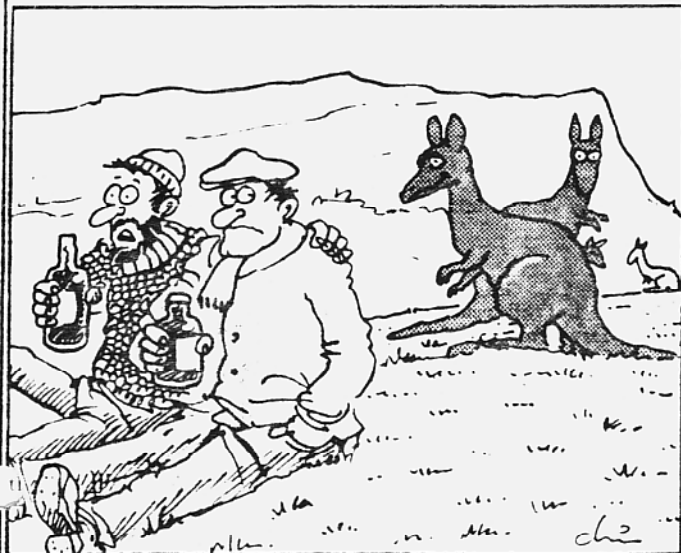
Trustees from around the world will be appointed to the future Clan MacNicol Lands Trust. We are very happy to entrust the day-to-day management of our future lands to the Vice-Chairman of Trustees, Mr Calum Nicolson, Borne, by Portree, and Trustees Mr William Nicolson, Ollach, Braes; Mr Archie Nicolson, Coolin Hills Hotel, Portree; Mr Malcolm Nicolson, 4 Heatherfield, by Portree; and Mr John Nicolson, 14 Kitson Crescent, Portree. Mr Donald Ferguson of Christie and Ferguson is the Clan's solicitor and is acting for us in this matter.

Iain MacNeacail Sgorrabreac, our hereditary Clan Chief and Chairman of the Trustees, who uses the Gaelic form of his name (which seemed to cause 'The Scotsman' reporter who telephoned us from Scotland considerable difficulty), hopes that the Trustees will also consider using the Gaelic form for "Clan MacNicol Lands Trust".

We hope that the people of Skye are happy that the new lairds of Ben Chrachaig are to be Clan MacNicol and we wish them continued enjoyment of this famous beauty spot.

Yours faithfully

Mrs R Nicolson Samios  
Ban-runaire Clann MhicNeacail



"Funny how the rabbits seem bigger since Chernobyl..."

Clan MacNicol". And she added that a trust would be established to ensure that any improvements to the area would be in keeping with the wishes of their Skye kinsmen.

The hereditary clan chief is Mr Ian MacNicol, a retired sheep farmer living at Ballina, New South Wales. He said the clan had become interested after cuttings from the *Free Press* reached them in Australia.

The £20,000 needed to buy the land, said Mr MacNicol, would be raised by the clan from their 25,000 members throughout the world. At most, the only development would be perhaps a few cottages as accommodation for clansmen and others.

In an article in the 'Sydney Morning Herald' — written by 'Ethnic Affairs Reporter' Peter White — Mrs Samios is quoted as saying that by reclaiming their ancestral lands the clan would be 'redeeming the wrongs of history'.

INTERNATIONAL GATHERING 1988

W.H.F.P. 31/10/86  
and above a clip  
from the W.H.F.P.  
earlier in Oct.  
1986.

## Rallying The Clan

Clan MacNicol  
Chief: Nicolson of Scorrybreac  
60 Revolutionary Road  
Concord, Mass 01742  
USA

Dear Sir

I write as Commissioner in North America of the Clan MacNicol society, which has an interest in raising funds to purchase the Beinn Chrachaig property.

There are many clan societies in North America and Australasia, many of them much larger than our recently founded and growing group. They provide a focus for people to

# Clan MacNicol set to take over as the new lairds of Ben Chrachaig

The 140-acre site on Ben Chrachaig in Portree, which was at the centre of a controversy earlier this year, is set to change hands this month.

Plans to establish an outdoor centre and hostel on the well-known beauty spot were announced in June by Mr Barrie Creed, who runs the Three Rowans restaurant at Edinbane. But there were strong protests from members of the public and from Portree community council, who wanted the area left undeveloped.

In the face of such opposition Mr Creed abandoned his proposals and put the land on the market. A call from the community council for Skye & Lochalsh District Council to acquire the land for possible

designation as a countryside park was turned down on the grounds of lack of funds.

The Australian branch of the Clan MacNicol then entered the debate. Clan chief Mr Ian Nicolson — a retired sheep farmer living near Sydney — began negotiating with Mr Creed and proposed the establishment of a Clan MacNicol Lands Trust to take responsibility for the site, described as part of the clan's ancestral homeland.

This week Portree solicitors Christie and Ferguson, acting on behalf of the Clan MacNicol, confirmed that they expected the deal to be completed soon, with a hand-over date early in January.

Mr Donald Ferguson said it would take some time to formally establish the trust. He thought the clan chief

would probably visit Skye in the summer to have a meeting with local trustees to decide what to do with the site. Mr Ferguson added: "I would think they won't do anything too dramatic that will upset the local population."

The clan society have already indicated that they are unlikely to undertake any developments on Ben Chrachaig apart from the possible construction of a few cottages as accommodation for visiting clan members and others.

Portree community council chairman D A Morrison said this week that he had had no official word of

the takeover. He would have preferred the land to go into the ownership of the district council, however.

"It would have been more secure then," said Mr Morrison. "The Clan MacNicol may be okay, but in years to come they might break up and we would be back in the same position. There will always be some form of local government here, so it would have been better under district council ownership."

He added that the community council would now try to keep the Clan MacNicol to their original commitment not to develop the area.

## TEACHER'S

The following is from Murray's U.S. A. newsletter -

The land itself begins at the north eastern edge of the town of Portree, just beyond the Coolin Hills Hotel. It goes up over Ben Crachaig and Ben Torvaig to the north, includes the peninsula of Sgeir Mhor, and the sea cliffs which include MacCoitar's Cave. There is a description of the land in "The Misty Isle of Skye", by J.A. MacCulloch, first published in 1905: "Opposite, on the north side, are the frowning headlands of Creag Mhor or the Beal and Ben Crachaig, basaltic precipices, runs down to the sea. Far up on the later a black slit denotes the entrance to a narrow and lofty cave, the Piper's Cave, which tradition says runs through the Island and emerges again at Loch Bradale. Another name for it and an older one is MacCoitar's Cave. Mac was a briand in ancient times, who sallied forth from this dark and damp dwelling place to plunder the neighbourhood, and then returned with the spoil. On the beach below is a bolder which a Raasay man threw at his wife. It missed her, but with such violence was it thrown that it flew across the sound and fell here! Such tales do the fishermen tell each other as they go sailing out into the Sound.....

A little beyond are the crumbling stones of one of those tiny Celtic

churches, rude in architecture, in which the voice of praise has long been silent, and where the too luxurious vegetation girdles the long-forgotten graves,.... Above this old churchyard is a narrow glen down which a burn trickles to the sea. It terminates in the precipitous flank of the cliff, over which the water dashes, through masses of birch and hazel, forming a cool, shadowy grotto with deep recesses where lurk asplenia and holly-fern in plenty. All around are thick clumps of fern and bracken, beds of yellow primroses, blue violets, white anemone while the air is scented with their perfumes and the aromatic odour of the bracken. Overhead is the black frowning cliff, looking as if it would suddenly dash itself downwards. Beyond is the ruined heap of Dun Torvaig, and near by the gable of the ancient house of Scurrybreck. Somewhere here Prince Charles hid from his pursuers after having crossed to Skye from Raasay, beyond the Sound. Far below are the ruined church, the green meadow, the rolling sea. In front is Creag Mhor rising skywards; across the water is Raasay and the steep flanks of Ben Tianavaig, and in the far distance Ben Alligin looks down upon the glories of Loch Torridon....."

Do you like it ? Yours aye,

*Ross*

## WEST HIGHLAND FREE PRESS,

FRIDAY, 24 APRIL 1987

CalMac area manager Alistair Nicolson said on Wednesday: "The problem is that the men at Kyleakin are not giving the same flexibility as they did last year, because they are dissatisfied with the wage offer. We were asking them to postpone their break to get the second boat out when we saw the traffic building up but they have not given us that flexibility."

Mr Nicolson admitted that negotiations had been stalemated but would now be resumed. "The company are prepared to talk to the men now about wages and conditions, and hopefully an early meeting will be arranged."

He said traffic had been "very, very heavy" over the past few days, and there had been a general

increase in passengers and traffic on Kyle-Kyleakin since the roll-on/roll-off service started on the Western Isles route. Up till 11th April, the number of passengers on the Kyle-Kyleakin service was up 20 per cent, cars up 10 per cent and commercial vehicles up 11 per cent.



"There's a work-to-rule on the new bridge — one vehicle at a time"

FRIDAY, 7 AUGUST 1987

## Sleat Road

Tigh-na-mara  
Broadford

Dear Sir,

Anyone who has the dubious privilege of driving along the Broadford to Armadale road can see that the road is totally inadequate for the volume of traffic that has to use it.

Indeed, it is bad enough during the winter, let alone when the Mallaig car ferry is operating, when it is not unusual to be held up the whole 15 miles by drivers who don't know about single-track roads.

When I enquired of a roads department official as to why on earth the Staffin road was being done before the Armadale one I was told that the late Lord Macdonald used his influence to have the Sleat road improved to its present level prematurely, so that it would just have to take its place at the back of the queue. Does this therefore mean that the Elgol, Glendale, Waternish and even Kylerhea roads will all be double-track before Sleat is upgraded?

If so, I suggest that a different set of priorities is adopted by the Highland Regional Council to put right what is clearly a policy of utter stupidity.

Yours faithfully,

M.O.H. Scott

about single-track roads, which are trying to miss a roll-on vehicle, please tell us before next year.

WEST HIGHLAND FREE PRESS, FRIDAY, 17 JULY

## BEN CHRACHAIG SAGA LATEST

The Ben Chrachaig saga continues... This week a call was made for the Clan MacNicol to withdraw statements made

earlier this year about the negotiations between themselves and Mr Barrie Creed over the purchase of the Portree beauty spot.

As already reported in the Free Press, Mr Creed is taking action against the clan society in a bid to obtain interest on the purchase price, which he claims is due because of alleged delays in concluding the deal. And in a statement issued this week he said: "Acting on the advice of our solicitor we have called upon the Clan MacNicol and their solicitor, Mr Donald Ferguson (of Portree law firm Christie and Ferguson), to retract certain statements made in the April Clan newsletter."

Mr Creed added that he had written to the Law Society of Scotland about this and other matters.

Mr Ferguson was not available for comment on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, the clansfolk were gathering this week for a meeting in Portree on Saturday called by the interim trustees for Ben Chrachaig. The trustees have issued an invitation to "all Clan MacNicol members" to attend the meeting in the Royal Hotel.

**BTA**

In the last newsletter I promised to publish those names which will be inscribed on the Honors and Sponsors Memorial to be erected on Ben Chrachaig.

HERE THEY ARE:

AUSTRALIA

Iain MacNeacail Scourybreac  
Rosemary J. Napier Samios

Pat Towner

Barbara Bray

Alison Green

Mrs. M. Brewer

James D.M. Nicolson

John and Penny Nicoll

Bruce and Beryl Clifford

Sinclair Nicholson

Roslyn Nicholson

Grace Booth

D.A. Green

F. Nicol

M.A. and M.J. Nicol

Mrs. K. Nicolson

Laura MacNicol

Reginald A.D. Nicolson

R.D. Nicolson

Rev. A. and Mrs. H. MacNicol

Scourybreac on behalf of anonymous donor

John Nicolson, yr. of Scourybreac

Robert and Helen Nicol

Peter and Dorothy Nicoll

Alan Nicolson

James, Philip and Robert Nicholson

Isobel B. Nicol

Ivan C.T. Nicol

Lionel and Joan Nix

Winston and Susan Nicholl and family

W.A. Nichol

J. MacL. and J.N. Easton

John Nicholson

Ewan and Betty Nichols

Stephen Reed

The Estate of the late A.D. Nicolson

Alan A. Nicolson

Lisa J. Gillon

Robin Allan

B.D. MacNicol

Grace Given

Roy Lachlan Nicolson

Arthur W. Nicolson

Jim and Sheila Crawford and family

Queensland clansmen

Ross B. Nicolson

John Wilson MacNicol

John Thomas MacNicol

Ian A. Nicholson and family

P.G. Alexander

Milton James Nicolson Samios

Geoff McNicol

Commander Ian Nicholson

Mr. and Mrs. E. Williams

Mrs. I. Wyatt

A.W. Burns

Lachlan James Nicolson

A.P. MacNicol

Tracy Leigh Nicol

Rev. Father Gerard J. Nichol

Elizabeth (Beth) Bell

Scottish Australian Heritage Council

IF ANY NAMES HAVE BEEN ACCIDENTALLY OMITTED, IF

THERE ARE ANY SPELLING ERRORS, OR, IF YOU WISH YOUR FULL NAME USED FOR BETTER IDENTIFICATION BY YOUR DESCENDANTS, PLEASE INFORM THE TREASURER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

# JV Jansvans

UNIT 6, PORTREE INDUSTRIAL ESTATE

## CANADA

Florie M. Nichol, Alberta.  
Clan MacNicol Branch Quebec.

## ENGLAND

Air Commodore A.A.N. Nicholson, Hampshire.  
Aonghus MacNeacail, London.  
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Carnock, London.  
Bryan Nicholson of Taransay, Newcastle.

## ISLE OF MAN

Iain F. Nicholson, Port St. Mary.

## NEW ZEALAND

Harry and Dulcie Nicoll, Whakatane.

Jack Nicholson, Dunedin.

## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Mr. Paul and Linda Badell, California.  
Rene and Delane Blondeau, Arizona.  
Harry and Margaret Nicholson, Ohio.  
John and Harman Nicholson, Georgia.  
Alex. M. Nicolson, California.  
A. Murray Nicolson, Massachusetts.  
Forrester I. Nicolson, Massachusetts.  
Carson C. St. John, Indiana.  
Donald E. Buffum, New York.  
James F. Cook, Mississippi.  
Merry Jayne McMichael, Ohio.  
Walter and Sherry MacNicol, New Jersey.  
Mrs. Leo Goodman-Galamuth, Illinois.  
Dan H. Nicolson, Virginia.  
Nancy R. Nicolson, Texas.  
Harry Nicolson, California.  
Alexander Nickell St. John, Indiana.  
Bradley Tabbert, Ohio.

## SCOTLAND

Calum Nicolson, Berve.  
Mrs. Margaret Hume, Edinburgh.  
Gard John Nicolson, by Portree.  
Aonghus MacNeacail, Edinburgh.

The Treasurer, Mrs. Joan Nix, 1/34 Sinclair St., Wollstonecraft, N.S.W. 2065 (please note new address), has informed me that up until the final quote for the memorial is accepted she will be only too happy to receive further donations.

The Chief has very kindly thanked many of the people involved in the purchase of Ben Chraicig (a modern clan wonder). I would like to mention 3 very important unsung people who are responsible for our success.

Every single contribution is very important, but the hardest task with such a project is making the decision to launch it, shouldering the full financial and moral responsibility should it fail.

Ian Nicolson, Isle of Man, drew our attention to the possibility of perhaps purchasing Ben Chraicig. The Chief liked the idea but felt it was an impossible dream; I felt it was possible; He suggested I telephone Murray Nicolson in America and ask if the Americans would consider being responsible for an Appeal to purchase Ben Chraicig; Murray liked the idea but said the Americans couldn't take on such a responsibility and suggested we do something about it in Australia.

It was my decision alone to launch the Appeal and also my responsibility alone should the Appeal fail. (At the time of launching the Appeal I lodged enough script at the bank to more than cover the full purchase price).

There were some dark hours along the way when a number of people lost faith in me, in the Appeal and in Ben Chraicig, but the following three people assured its success.

Alexander Nicolson, late of Nairobi, was the 3rd son of a tenant farmer and as a young man left for the colonies to make his fortune. On the way from Inver-

ness to London he was hungry, bought what he thought was a rosy apple, bit into it and then threw it away for it was a tomato and he had never seen one before.

He became a successful businessman; a French wine buff; a violinist; a fantastic shot (from deer to elephants); a fisherman of repute (from trout to marlin); a great traveller; a thoroughly cultured Highland gentleman. He had a social conscience and christened his daughter with the name of Napier - after that Commission so that she, too would never forget.

He taught his 2 sons and only daughter the meaning of determination, initiative and courage, he only recognised success. By late father, as my sole parent, for I remember not my very beautiful and fun loving mother who was killed in an accident, has been the single greatest influence in my life.

Heather Campbell Szabo, my dearest friend, who told me to launch the Appeal myself and who during the bad times fortified my courage and during the good times laughed with me. Heather's a great "gatherer of people" and without her 64 guests, Clan MacNicol's fundraising functions would have been a disaster.

When I made the decision to launch the Appeal, advisers in a number of countries suggested I should instruct an Edinburgh or London lawyer to purchase Ben Chraicig.

It was my sole decision and female intuition (from a list of Highland and Island lawyers) to instruct Mr. Donald Ferguson, a Portree lawyer, for I felt I may need the wise counsel of a Highlander, one of my own kind.

I rang Mr. Donald Ferguson from Australia and instructed him to purchase Ben Chraicig on the Clan's behalf. He knew me not but accepted the instructions without doubt and when I said I would forward him immediately 25% of the purchase price to show my good faith, he replied it was unnecessary to forward any money until the time of settlement for 'my word was my honour'.

Here was a lawyer who was willing to stake his professional reputation in the belief that an unknown lady 12 thousand or is it 15 thousand miles away would honour her word. How could I ever fail such a special lawyer and such a trust. His trust gave me breathing space to launch the Appeal in the 1986 September newsletter.

THESE THREE PEOPLE MADE THE PURCHASE OF BEN CHRAICIG POSSIBLE. IT IS WITH GRATITUDE THAT I PUBLICLY THANK AND REMEMBER THEM LEST CLAN MACNICOL FORGET.

It is tentatively suggested that Saturday, 30 July 1988 be set down as the date of the Urras Clan MacNeacail General Meeting in Portree, Isle of Skye, subject to the Clan's solicitor's availability.

30 July falls within the Lewis Carnival fortnight, about a week before the Skye Highland Games and a week after such activities as Dist Week. Those who will be travelling a great distance to attend our meeting will have the opportunity of attending all these other activities.

I had the kindest letter from Major Ian C.O. Nicolson Struat, M.C., E.D., one of the owners of the Skeabost House Hotel, who pointed out he too was a Nicolson.

Clan MacNicol A.G.M. in Sydney is on Saturday 5 December at 10am at The Pitt Club, 49, Market St., Sydney. Take the train to Town Hall, walk underground through the Queen Victoria Building and you're right there.

Phone Winston Nicholl (046) 571351 about the evening ceilidh on 5 December, the Chief and Lady Scorrybreac will be there.

At last we have a Clan Convenor in Western Australia, Mr. R.D. Nicholson, barrister, of P.O. Box 3111, Perth Bay Street East, Western Australia.

I look forward to seeing some of you during Scottish Week.

Yours in kinship,

*Handwritten signature: R. D. Nicholson*