

and Ian Halls.

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

During the festive season that is upon us now, there are those who are celebrating being just one year older:
December: Dorothy Nicholson, Sheona Nicoll, Sybil Hewson, Lesley Way
January: Penny Nicoll, Kerry Nicolson, Kath Nicolson, Thelma Wyatt, Beth Bell, Thelma Ashton,
February: Grace Given, Bradley McNicol, Benjamin Nicholson, Audrey Nicholson, Peter Nicholson, Ailsa Webb
and Jennifer Nicol,
Congratulations to you all; we hop you all had a great birthday.

SCOTTISH WEEK, SYDNEY 1990 was a great success with many very special moments for your clan. It was especially delightful to have Archie and Marie Nicolson from Benbecula (outer Hebrides) join us: and when Betty Nicol and Laurie MacDougall were our banner bearers at the Kirking of the Tartan.

We look forward to giving you a full a comprehensive report in the March Newsletter - along with some special photos of the more memorable moments of Scottish Week.

VALE: With sadness we record the passing of Mr AP McNicol of Torrence Park South Australia.

Visit to Skye

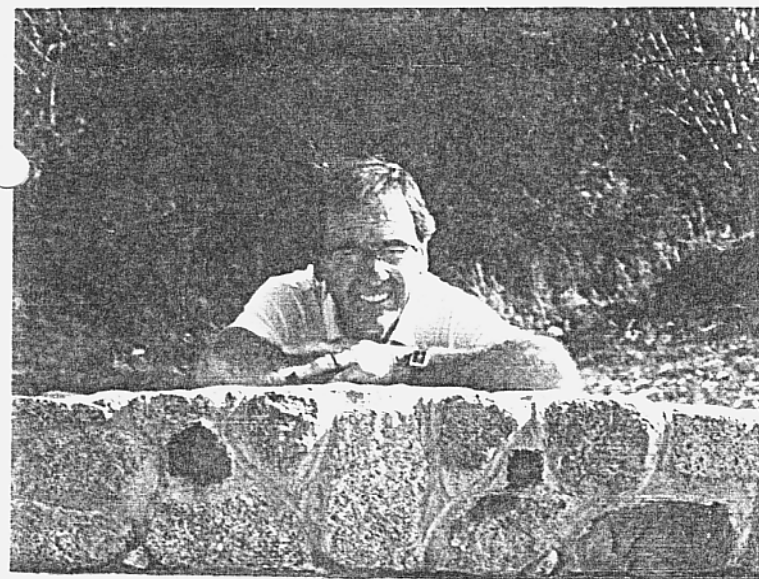
We recently returned from a trip to the UK and Europe of the which one of the highlights was a visit to the Isle of Skye to view the land of the Clan Nicolson trust at Portree. We were blessed with perfect weather for our trip to Scotland and after a glorious week in Edinburgh where the daffodils on the mound below the castle and the blossom trees along the Princes Street Gardens were in full bloom we set off for the Highlands.

Our first pilgrimage was to Culloden near Inverness where Lesley's particular interest was the memorial to the brave clansmen who fought with Prince Charlie and her ancestors the Frasers of Lovatt. After a short stay in Inverness we continued down the road along-side Loch Ness, through Len Morrison, Glen Shiel and by Loch Duich and Loch Alsh to Kyle of Lochalsh and over the sea to Skye.

The road to Portree winds along the coast with the snow capped Cullin Hills on one side and the sparkling blue water of the inner sound on the other, through green farmlands dotted with traditional white croft houses. we loved the log haired black faced sheep and the dignified highland cattle with their long horns and beautiful long brown coats.

In Portree we stayed at the very comfortable and welcoming Coillin Hills Hotel which is situated on Scurry Breac Road overlooking the town and harbour and only a short walk from the Clan Nicolson land. Great progress has been made with the land which now has paths laid down and seats placed where one can sit and take in the view across to Portree and over the water to the Isle of Raasay, truly a beautiful spot.

The cairn is now in place and lists the names of Clan members from all over the world. We felt we were



Bill Nicol at the Cairn on Skye

really lucky to be able to call this our own little piece of Scotland.

Lesley and Bill Nicol

News From the North Island

We take pleasure in printing extracts from a long letter received from Counsellor Harry Nicoll of Whaketane

Dulcie is descended from a Benjamin Baker who was up in the Far North of the North Island from the early 1830s. He learned the Maori language and spoke it fluently, so that at the time of the signing of the treaty of Waitangi he was an official interpreter for both races.

Prior to this he was a signatory along with about 200 others, to a petition to King William IV, seeking protection for the Colony, from Great Britain. This was in 1837.

During the first week in June a gathering was held at Waitangi of the Descendants of the European Witnesses to the Signing of the Treaty. Because of this Ben Baker, Dulcie and I were invited to attend and participate along with over 150 other descendants of other witnesses.

It turned out to be a most interesting and informative weekend, and I am sure that many of us left there with a much different understanding of all that was meant by those who had been associated with the signing of these historic documents. I personally was more impressed by one particular person who delivered a talk about the conditions that prevailed prior to the signing; and also the background to the reasons for the petition to King William IV prior to the 1840 treaty....

All aspects of the treaty and the conditions in those times, were taken care of and thoroughly discussed, a most balanced programme which covered many points of view. I thought then that it was a gathering which should have been attended by many who are making the headlines with their personal point of view, and are causing many others much concern about the differences in the colour of the skin of the two races here.

In perusing some of the documents there on display, I found out that in 1837, a R.W. NICKELL (signed) the Petition to King William. No further details were given, as to address or profession.

I also discovered that in HOKIANGA, on the West Coast, in about 1835, there was a shipbuilder, JOHN NICHOLSON who came over from HOBART. I later met a descendant of his and I am hoping to receive more information about him from her..... (name ELMABURNS)

I also met ROSALIE NICHOLSON there. She is wife of PAUL from STIRLING, and I have corresponded with her previously.

During one afternoon period we three had a Clan Meeting, and we were able to exchange Clan information; though I think it was a case of me giving them more than I received.

Remember, sometime ago, when I advertised for letters etc for you; and later I sent you some letter etc which I had received. In amongst these were two letter written by a JAMES NICHOLSON of OKAIHAU, to his relations in NOVA SCOTIA (1887). Well, I had with me the phone no. of one of his relations in Whangarei, and along with three other with Clan connections we again had a Clan afternoon together. Two of these I had

corresponded with previously, so it was great to be able to meet and get to know each other, as well as to be able to discuss Clan affairs. We were able to exchange quite an amount of information.

And so came to an end a week that had proved to be most profitable as far as Clan matters were concerned.....

Speaking about JAMES NICHOLSON, he evidently left Okaihau and lived in Waihi about 60km north of Tauranga.

Enclosed is a copy of his obituary; when you realise his background and lack of formal education, and just what he was able to accomplish by his own efforts, its simply amazing!!!

James was one of a family of 9 living, whose parents Angus Nicholson and Mary McInnes, of the Isle of Skye, were married in Nova Scotia in 1849. Angus was the son of Alexander Nicholson and Jessie Peterson, of either Skye or Harris.

Don, whom I met in Whangarei, is a great Grand-son of Angus who came out to Waipu from Nova Scotia in the "Gertrude".

I wend down from Whangarie to Waipu to see the "House of Memories" and also to meet the caretaker, and also the Secty. of the Cadedonian Society there, to discuss the idea of holding a "Gathering of the Clans" in conjunction with their annual Highland Games.

I was able to assist the caretaker, and in return received much information from her. The Secty. informed me that they had tried to arrange the Gathering of the Clans, but had not received sufficient support; but it turned out that she had approached the Scottish and Caledonian Societies, and not the Clans.....

Clan MacNicol now has an invitation to erect a Clan Tent at their Games, either next year or in the future...

Waipu is a long way from Whakatane, (thats by NZ distances) to lug a trailer with equipment etc... so it would need co-operation from the "MacNicol's" up there to assist with a tent and table etc.... Don has made the offer so we will get-together at a later date to discuss just what is needed.

So, it looks like Clan MacNicol is called upon to make the first step again; having already done it for Hawkes Bay, and Tauranga, and now Waipu...."

The Victorian Report

The Victorian MacNicol Clan Gathering was held at South Melbourne Citizens' and Police Club Centre on Sunday November 18th and was a great success. Approximately 100 people attended, their ages ranging from under 1 year old to over 80.

Our Chief, Iain MacNeacail, of MacNeacail and Scorrybreac, and his wife Pam were in attendance. They came all the way from Ballina, New South Wales. Our Patron, the Hon Alastair Nicholson, was unable to attend owing to a prior engagement, and apologies were received from other members.

People connected to the Clan came from as far away as HumptyDoo (near Darwin), Wodonga, Stawell, Echuca, Sale, and many suburbs and outer areas of Melbourne.

This was our first clan gathering since our branch was only formed in February. A BBQ lunch was enjoyed by all. Dr Iain Nicholson from Sale was MC Beth Bell welcomed our Chief and everyone else. Scorrybreac gave a very interesting talk on the function of the Clan and on the four different tartans.

Quite a lot of people in attendance joined up. We are obtaining records of family ancestors so we can establish family connections.

Thelma Ashton

Secretary, Clan MacNicol, Victoria.

Queensland

The Kirkin O' the Tartan was held in Brisbane at St. Stephens on Sunday the 25th Nov. 1990, and was attended by the following Clans: Agnew, Armstrong, Cameron, Campbell, Davidson, Douglas, Drummond, Ferguson, Forysth, Henderson, Hume, Jardine, MacDonald, MacFie, MacGillivray MacNicol, Wallace, Gordon and MacEwan. Special guests were Dr Roulston the Moderator of the Uniting Church (Qld Synod) and John Sinclair of the Presbyterian Church. A memorial plaque to the memory of the late Fr Gerry Nichol was also dedicated at the service. This plaque is to be placed in "Damascus", the special Alcohol Unit which was founded by Fr. Gerry, and which has just moved into a new wing at the "Holy Spirit Hospital" in Brisbane.

The Celebrants were the Rev. Fr. F. Monaghan, Rev.

Fr Paul MacLachlan. Also present was the Rev. Fr. William MacPherson Ross. Bill Nichol came all the way from Toowoomba for the day and Bob Nicol of Kenmore was wearing his new Kilt. (Looked great Bob).

After the service, a large group went to the British pub in the Winter Garden Mall for lunch. This year, the Kirkin service has hosted by Clan MacNicol, and I report the day as a great success.

St Andrew's Dinner

was held in Brisbane at the Crest Hotel on Friday night 30th Nov 1990. This year, 522 men attended the dinner. Our clan was very well represented by: Bob Nicol (in new Kilt) Robert Nicol, Wylie Nicol, Graham Nicoll and his son Angus Nicoll (Angus was presented as a Younger Clansman to the Gov of Qld by a very proud Dad), Reg McNicol. (From the Gold Coast), Col. Dr Peter Nicoll, James Nicholson and his son Phillip Nicholson (both from the Gold Coast), Robert Nicoll and Peter Nicol. Special guest members of our Clan included Leon Pervial (Presented to the Gov. by Peter Nicol), Craig Percival, Don Lewis, George March & Wylie Scott. We also had the pleasure of having on our table Dr John Henderson of Fordell, Chief of Clan Henderson, Alex (Sandy) McPhie, Clan Commander of Clan MacFie, and Ron Douglas Esq. (Arm. of Clan Douglas). It was great night and a great table. My thanks to all.

Counsellor Peter Nicol

A Soldier's Letter Home (Part 2)

The concluding half of a letter written by Captain Norman Nicolson of Scorrybreac to his family in Tasmania in 1917.

Alan and I thought we would like to get horses, if we could, and ride around some of the hills and farms, and bethought ourselves of Mr Sinclair who was also staying at the Royal. However, he said that his friend Mr Campbell was more in touch with the folk round Portree. Campbell was staying at another hotel called the Caledonian and thither the three of us went where we found him reading a newspaper. We put our problem to him whereupon he called in a sonsy lassie, daughter of the place, and they spoke in Gaelic. Afterwards he told us that she had said that MacDonald of the Home Farm might have one. The Home Farm being quite near, Campbell said he would go up with us and see MacDonald whom he knew well and who was "a ferry fine man". We walked out of the township up a little hill, passing on the way a crowd of boys playing football and we couldn't help remarking what a fine looking lot they were. It sounded strange to hear them all clamouring in Gaelic. A quarter of a mile took us to the Home Farm which we approached through beautifully grassed little paddocks grazing black faced ewes and lambs and fine big dairy cows - Durhams this time.

It was nice to sniff the smell of sheep and cattle again - so much nicer than powder or gas. The farm was much like one of the older places in Tasmania, big strong stone farm buildings and a solid two storied stone farmhouse, white and fresh looking standing in a well kept garden with big trees surrounding. We walked up a gravel drive and Campbell knocked at the door which was presently opened by a huge boy in a Norfolk suit and woollen stockings - a "shooting suit" which we found most of the better off farmers wore up there. He and Campbell greeted each other in the usual Gaelic and we were introduced. Nothing would do but we must go in the sitting or drawing room - a room filled with fine old furniture. Alister, the son, was sixteen and his mother didn't look much older - a very pretty woman with masses of black hair and a beautiful complexion, and very jolly with it. Bye and bye another big lad, Angus, came in, only 14 and nearly six feet as well, one of the finest looking boys I have ever seen. Their father was not at home, being absent on the Mainland engaged in valuing stock. In Scotland when a place is sold, or a lease changed, there is seldom a clearing sale. Instead, valuers are chosen who assess everything thing at a valuation and this MacDonald is reckoned to be one of the best up there. His family told us he was often away on these jobs, Mrs MacDonald insisted on giving us supper consisting of tea scones and cakes, and we had a great old yarn, the boys anxious for information

about Australia, and we to know about Skye.. When Campbell introduced us Alister said "Yes, they are good Highland names whateffer", and they were interested to know why we had come to Skye, Alister was able to tell us much about Scorrabreck which is a big property of 40,000 acres, running from the sea back into the mountains. Their own property ran 3,000 sheep and a lot of cattle and he said he would show us round if we came another day. Campbell it appears, is a large cattle dealer and a keen man with a Scotsman's reverence for the Church. He wanted to hire the MacDonalds' motor the next day to go to the north of the island buying stirks. However, Mrs MacDonald said it was promised to "The Meenister". Campbell said, "Could the Meenister no walk?" (However, in the end it was Campbell who walked for we saw him next day trudging up the mountain with a boy and a knowing looking sheep dog). The got talking about "Meenisters", Campbell and Mrs MacDonald, and Campbell said, "Last sawbath he had sat under a Meenister who had preachit a grand sairman, aya, it had made a great impression upon him," and Mrs MacDonald said, as quick as anything, "Then you'll not be buying any more stirks?" The old chap only grinned and said, "And why for no -eh?" She teased him, but he liked it. We were unable to get horses from them for just then they had none. However, while we were talking a man came to see Campbell and he and Alister went out while we stayed talking to the very entertaining Mrs MacDonald and her son Angus. Presently, Alister came back and said there was a man outside who had a horse we might get so I went out and found Campbell talking to a huge man with a red beard - also a Campbell dealer from the Mainland. He said he had a horse he had bought that day that perhaps might suit me and that he had him at the Royal's stables. I could inspect him the next day and take him if I wished. I thought I'd better find out what the charge would be so I mentioned something about it and he said, "I was not for hiring him, it was a loan just to oblige you," I think I hurt his feeling somehow and tried to cover up my mistake as well as I could by thanking him very much. The two Campbells then went off and Alan and I then went back to the house and stayed there till 11.30 before walking back to the Royal. In that far northern place it still wasn't quite dark. In the smoking room we found the Red Campbell, Sinclair and another man whose name I forget, but he was a Skyeman. We talked to them till after 1a.m. As at the MacDonalds' they wanted to know about things at the Front and out in Australia, and we, all about Skye. The Skyeman was a quiet, shy, soft spoken chap and it was a good while before we got him going. He started to quote some of Sheriff Nicolson's poetry on Skye (you will see a lot of it in that book, "The Misty Isle of Skye") He was good at it and we persuaded him to keep going. I thought I'd heard good recitations before but nothing like the way this quiet man reeled it off. He must have been poet himself and he and Sheriff Nicolson must have greatly loved Skye and it's life. I could have listened to him all night. He finished up by bursting into Gaelic which was beyond us but very much appreciated by Campbell and Sinclair.

We threw open our windows as high as they would go when we went up to our clean and tidy bedroom, and sank down into lovely clean sheets. I did not know anything more till 9.30am next morning. NO one can imagine what a luxury such a sleep was after lousy dirty blankets on any sort of bed from Mother Earth to stone floors. I think Alan had been awake for some time but was too lazy to look at his watch. We had the breakfast room to ourselves but no one was put out because we were late. Before, when he was in Skye, Alan had travelled 17 miles across to the western shore of the Island to Duvegan Castle - the Highland home of the Chief of the Clan McLeod. Here, he got in touch with a man named Hector Mackenzie, the Factor, or Manager, of the Dunvegan property. Mackenzie had married a Miss Tolmie, a New Zealand girl and a cousin of Norman Tolmie who used to be at Dalness and therefore some sort of cousin to both Alan and myself. Also living with them was an old Miss Tolmie, an aunt of Norman's there again that afternoon. In the morning we started to walk down to Scorrabreck which property comes right up to Portree on the north, I knew pretty well where it was from what I'd read and from the photos uncle Willie took. We asked our way of some people and I was right. Scorrabreck now belongs to Lord MacDonald.

It was a hot and very muggy morning and we walked first to Scorrabreck Shooting Lodge - a fine building in a clump of firs, let generally to southern tenants. Here it was that we made our first enquiries, but there was only a woman caretaker there who wasn't as bright or as obliging as most of the people up here. She told us that "Leddy" MacDonald had had the shooting lodge built about 25 years ago and that Scorrabreck House was down by the "watter" near a "wee brig" that we had crossed on our way. Passing on the way a fine old garden within a stone wall, we came to the "hoose by the watter" and the occupant, another woman, told us this place had been built about 80 years ago (which was about the time the old place was burnt and our people lost Scorrabreck) and that for a long while it had been the residence of those who leased Scorrabreck (you should have the photo of this place amongst those that Uncle Willie took). We went inside and had a look round. She told us she leased only the house and kept boarders. She had prospered before the war, but for a long time now, times had been bad and few people now came to Skye. She was the mother of three sons and they all were in the Seaforth Highlanders. One was killed at Festubert in 1915, one was missing and the other badly wounded. I am afraid there were many such cases in Skye. Most of the young men were in the mess-up, the Ministers in Portree alone, had to break the news of 26 boys being killed. The old lady told us we would find the site of old Scorrabreck House a mile and a half further on, but we did not have time to go and locate it since we had to return to the hotel to arrange for a motor to take us over to Dunvegan. But while we were at lunch, the hot muggy day gave way to a thunderstorm and it poured and continued to pour until 4pm. We had to put off our trip to Dunvegan, but after the rain cleared we got the car and went for a run 20 miles