



Clan Macpherson Association

(Australian Branch)



Website www.clan-macpherson.org

September 2024 Newsletter

2024 Annual Gathering and AGM

The 2024 Annual Gathering was held at Newtonmore from 2nd-5th August. Despite the threat of rain, Clan Chief Jamie led the March of the Clan onto the Eilan; a highlight of the Newtonmore Highland Games. All other activities went ahead and will be reported in full in next year's Creagh Dhubh.

New Australian Branch Chairman Pam Rhemrev carried the Australian Branch sword forming part of the escort to the Chief in the March.

As has become a pleasant custom, the Clan Chattan AGM and Dinner was held on Thursday 1st August 2024 at The Kingsmills Hotel in Inverness.

Australian Branch - New Office Bearers. Further to the advice concerning the formal change of name of the 'NSW' Branch to the 'Australian' Branch, ALL administrative arrangements have been completed, albeit with some delays imposed by ever increasing bank security procedures.

The Special General Meeting of the 'new' Branch held on 28th February 2024 did not attract nominations from other states, however a changing of the guard saw Pam Rhemrev (Duffy ACT) elected as Chairman of the Australian Branch. The resignations of Aisla McPherson (Secretary), Adam de Toth (Treasurer), Rod

Gillespie and Ian Macpherson (Committee members) facilitated the election of John L Macpherson as Secretary after stepping aside as Chairman, Don K McPherson (Treasurer), Pat Macpherson (Registrar) and David Gillies (Committee member). Brian Bailey remains as a committee member.



Incoming Branch Chairman Pam Rhemrev (nee McPherson) (left above with John L and sister Ailsa) was born in Melbourne and later lived in rural Victoria and South Australia, where she attended Highland Dance classes. Pam’s first job was in the Commonwealth Public Service; and as was usual at that time, the job lasted only until husband Bill and Pam married. Postings to the New Guinea highlands and Jakarta followed. The next posting “saw us arrive in Canberra with the first of our two children, and we have been here ever since”. Pam again started work in the Commonwealth Department of Education and retired after 28 years. In the 1980s she began an interest in genealogy. Her late father (Leo McPherson, 1923-2000) also took it up and it was his energy that turned the family data into a book with photo illustrations which he called “McPherson Ancestry”. Genealogy also involved Pam, unexpectedly, in being able to help an Indonesian family to clarify their connection to the Chief’s line of Blairgowrie Macphersons. Pam and Bill joined the Clan Macpherson Association in 2007 and took out Life Membership in 2008. They have attended four Gatherings in Badenoch, the most recent being the 2024 Gathering.



Incoming Branch Registrar

Pat Macpherson is a software engineer living in Marrickville, Sydney. He has 2 young boys in primary school and enjoys watching live music and the Sydney Swans.

Being interested in Scottish history, Pat was lucky enough to attend the Clan Gathering in 2008, including carrying the Branch sword, given the honour to be part of the rearguard for the March of

the Clan onto The Eilan. Pat also won the lucky door prize (a bottle of Dalwhinnie) at the ceilidh which was a great way to meet new friends! Pat's uncle, Paul Macpherson of Clovelly, NSW has traced the family history back to a John McPherson, a mid-18th century lead miner from the area around Strontian, south of Fort William. His grandson John MacPherson emigrated to Victoria in the 1870s, and was a grazier at Branxholme, in the Western District in Victoria. Pat is looking forward to assisting in the

maintenance of our membership records and making some wonderful new friends.

Incoming Branch Treasurer Don K McPherson who lives in Whitebridge near Newcastle, NSW, has McPherson family roots in Laggan and Gairloch from where his ancestors sailed to Australia in 1854 arriving in the Shoalhaven area. Later the family settled on the northern rivers Swan Bay near Coraki where property remains in the



family. Don's father settled in Wyong after WWII and remained there until 2001. Born in 1951, at 16 years of age Don joined the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) as an apprentice. He served in Malaysia from 1975 -77, taking his discharge from the RAAF in 1980 after serving 12 years. From 1980 to 2015 (retired) lived in Newcastle and was company director of his own air conditioning company. Since 2017 Don has served as Treasurer of the Pelican Sub-Branch of the NSW Returned Services League (RSL).



Changing the Guard at Newtonmore.

Following tradition, outgoing CMA Chairman Bonnie McPherson (Florida, USA) presented her final report before handing the Chairman's Cromag to the incoming Chairman, Angus Macpherson of Biallid. Bonnie thanked Cluny and the CMA membership for honor and privilege of serving our over 1600 members worldwide. Bonnie said, 'During my tenure, we tried some new ideas, some were successful, some were not, and some are pending. Many of you have helped me in various ways, and I want to express my gratitude to a few individuals. Former chairman Bill from Glenfarg always made time ... whenever

I called for advice. I am very thankful to (Registrar) Suzy for her thoughtful insights into the membership and their needs. I extend my thanks to (Editor) Shannon for the considerable effort she put into *Creag Dhubh* and for making it, ..., the great publication that it is. I also express my gratitude to (Webmaster) Dave Muxo for the many hours he has dedicated to keeping us all online and reminders of the importance of keeping our email boxes empty. My thanks to Robyn for stepping in as the CMA secretary at the last minute. As well as all members of the Council and VPs, this includes all the Branch Chairmen for their continuing support of me. And lastly, I thank my dear friend Annie. She has always

taken my calls, keeping me focused on the job at hand and teaching me to say no!

I know that our association is in good hands under the very able leadership of Angus Macpherson. I stand ready to help Angus in any way that I can.'

Subsequent to the handover, Angus provided a short CV which is reproduced on the next page, as well as his hopes for the CMA during his 3-year tenure. As required by the CMA Constitution, when the Chairman resides within the UK, it is traditional that the vice chairman is elected from overseas branches. In 2024, the incoming vice chairman is Derek Macpherson of Malawi.

New Council officers elected at the AGM include as Secretary Joyce Cattanach (Scotland) and Treasurer Annie Le-Roy Lewis (Scotland). Officers continuing included Registrar Suzy Macpherson (England) and Webmaster Dave Muxo (Texas USA). On the nomination of the Chief, outgoing Chairman Bonnie McPherson was appointed an Honorary Vice President of the CMA Council.

2024 Bonnie Wingham Scottish Festival - CANCELLED

Clan Macpherson tent

Saturday 1st June @ Central Park Wingham

For more details go to <https://www.bonniewingham.com>

Contact Sarah Taylor (0423 581 184) or David Macpherson (0490 354 234)

The future of the 2025 Festival is in doubt at present.



Branch Swords. Some years ago, the CMA Council bought a number of Scottish swords to be carried in the March of the Clan by representatives of local and overseas branches. The deployment is two bearers escorting the Chief and his standard while the remainder bring up the rear.



Incoming CMA Chairman Angus Macpherson is the son of the late Sir Tommy and Jean Macpherson of, successively, Speyville, Balavil, Craig Dhu and Biallid. He has been a member of the Clan Macpherson Association and attended annual gatherings almost since birth. Angus served on the Committee of the Scotland and Northern Ireland branch for over 20 years and has been a member for almost 30 years of the Museum Advisory Committee (MAC) as well as a Trustee and Convenor of the Clan Macpherson Museum Trust.

Achievements of his period as Convenor included the negative impacts of Covid and the necessity of replacing the leaking roof of the Museum.

He is married to Valerie, who is Treasurer of the Clan Macpherson Museum Trust and the Sir William and Lady Sheila Endowment Fund. Their children are Tom, married to Alex, Lochy, Fiona, married to Robbie, and Alasdair and grandchildren are Francesca and Angus.

Angus has three priorities for his tenure as Chairman:

1. To support the Museum, which is the jewel in the crown of the Association. It cannot and should not be seen in isolation of the Association and requires the assistance of the Association.
2. To visit and support as many branches of the Association as possible. Angus and Valerie are very conscious that so many members of the Association make so much effort to come to Badenoch and would wish to reciprocate those efforts; not as an imposition on branches but as a means of helping them in their work.
3. The Association means family to Angus but he wishes to find out what those whom are members of the Association worldwide are wishing from this family and implementing that if it is feasible.



Incoming Vice Chairman Derek Macpherson was born in Namitete, Malawi at a Mission Hospital in 1970. He grew up on the family farm and attended school at St Andrew's College in Grahamstown, South Africa. In 1993 he completed his university degree in Rangeland Science at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg. Derek has worked in Mozambique and Tanzania in the wildlife industry, both in the anti-poaching field and as a professional hunter. He married Shannon (Editor of *Creag Dhubh*) in 1998. They have two daughters, Morgan, who will begin university in January

studying disaster management, and Meren who is doing her pilots licence and is a Level 1 Rotax aircraft engineer mechanic.

In 2009, Derek started an aviation business and now flies aerial surveys for the wildlife and tobacco industries in Central East Africa. He is also a qualified aircraft maintenance technician and services aircraft regionally.

Derek and his family are Life members of the CMA. He has served as the Africa Branch Chairman since 2014 and looks forward to his new role as Vice Chairman of the CMA.

For the Genealogist - More Scottish Church Court Records.

(Courtesy Scottish Australian Heritage Council Winter 2024 Newsletter)

Published by *ScotlandsPeople* on 25th June 2024 nearly 4,000 new volumes of records from the Church of Scotland, equating to around 290,000 digital images, have been added to the *ScotlandsPeople* website. This release complements the upload of kirk session minute books and accounts in 2021 and is the latest instalment in an ongoing programme of making church records available online.

This new upload, including over 3,000 kirk session records, also provides online access to records of presbyteries, synods and the

General Assembly, all of which have been made available on *ScotlandsPeople* for the first time and are ready to be explored. Covering almost 350 years of Scottish history, from the 1560s to 1900, digital images of a vast array of church court records can now be searched and viewed for free. Images can be saved at a cost of two credits per image. Available records include minute books, accounts and cash books, communion rolls, seat rents, poor relief and education records, as well as a wide variety of other records created by church courts.

Unlike other genealogical records on *ScotlandsPeople*, church court records are not indexed by name. Instead, you can browse the volumes using the Virtual Volumes search by reference number, the name of the kirk session or other court, or by place name. It is now possible to undertake a keyword search from the volume search page. Try using terms such as 'school', 'diary', or 'poor', to return matching results.

These records can help to unlock a treasure trove of information for anyone researching church, family, local or social history.

Details about the lives of ordinary Scots are captured through kirk session minutes, which often document local events – weather, famine, war – and parishioners' behaviour through their notes on illegitimate births, irregular marriages, or poor relief in times of hardship. Communion rolls and seat rents unveil the names of some of the inhabitants in different parishes. School records, ministers' diaries and journals all throw light on information not found elsewhere on *ScotlandsPeople*.

For more information about these records, please see the guidance on church court records, kirk session records, and using Virtual Volumes on *ScotlandsPeople*. The article about the General Assembly sets out details about the history and the role of the supreme court of the Church of Scotland.

If you are new to reading and interpreting church court records, you can find help in our guide to reading older handwriting, the Scottish Handwriting resource and a glossary of abbreviations, words and phrases.

Electronic Version of Creagh Dhubh and the Branch Newsletter.

In early 2024 the e-version of *Creagh Dhubh* 2024 Issue No 76 was sent to all members for whom an e-mail address was held. Those few members who are not e-connected were sent a hard copy. It is pleasing to observe that the issue by e-mail was well received, and no e-mail bounces occurred.

Give the increased cost of postage, this issue of the Branch Newsletter is also being sent by e-mail using the same distribution as *Creagh Dhubh*. Those wishing to print a hard copy should use the 'Booklet' function on their computer printer.

Australian Branch Contacts

Chairman: Pam Rhemrev 0407 789 924

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Secretary: John L Macpherson 0409 122 141

Australian.Secretary@clan-macpherson.org

Treasurer: Don K McPherson 0497 286 556

Australian.Treasurer@clan-macpherson.org

Registrar: Pat Macpherson 0416 054 869

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Bundanoon is Brigadoon – CANCELLED (Again!!!)



Regrettably heavy rain on the preceding days caused the cancellation of the 44th Bundanoon is Brigadoon Gathering on 6th

April 2024. Very disappointing given the cancellations over 3 years in 2000-2022 because of COVID and severe rain. Notwithstanding postponement to 3rd August, forecast bad weather caused a second cancellation by the local Council, owner of the Bundanoon Oval and surrounds.

Bundanoon 2025 is now planned to be held on Saturday 5th April.



Kryal Castle Highland Spectacular - 17/18th August, Ballarat.

David J McPherson (Templestowe Vic) mounted a tent at the successful Ballarat event despite poor, very cold weather. David was assisted by local CMA members John Waddel, Peter Shine and David McPherson Junior with the set up and packing up on the Sunday.

The event had many attractions, and the Castle Venue is a great place to hold a Highland Gathering event which included; highland

dancing, massed pipe bands, a Lone Piper opening, jousting duels on horseback and traditional Scottish games. Eight Clans attended including Buchanan, Fraser, Donald, MacKinnon, Gregor, Edmonstone, MacNicol, Victorian Scottish Union and CMA. Our tent fielded enquiries from persons seeking CMA and other information. Many enquired about Clan Chattan related Clans. Visitors included Greg Davies (see pic at left) a former Victoria Police Association Secretary and Victoria's first Victims of Crime Commissioner, and Melita King who made an enquiry about her ancestry associated family name Leishman which she found on an internet search of Clans of Scotland which showed Macpherson affiliation.

Some photos and videos have been placed on the Official Clan Macpherson Facebook page.

Julie and Emma Driver (mother and daughter) with David J. Julie's grandfather was Christopher Smith (an associated family). (See pic at right).



(Ballarat) pictured) assisted and took part in the Clan March with David J MacPherson (Templestowe). A number of visitors interested in the Clan Macpherson and Associated Families called in seeking information about Clan names and sought general knowledge concerning Scotland and Clan Macpherson/Clan Chattan connection.

Earlier in the year the **Melbourne Highland Gathering and Celtic Festival**, formerly known as the Ringwood Highland Gathering, attracted about 1,000 visitors at which some 20 plus Clan tents were mounted at Eastfield Park, Croydon. CMA member Peter Shine

Macpherson Places of Interest in Badenoch

Arising from a recent discussion within the Museum Advisory Committee (MAC), a question was posed concerning the upkeep of the Cluny Castle Burial Ground which is located adjacent to the southern boundary of the Castle grounds. Its upkeep has been left to the devices of local members of the Clan, who have arranged periodic maintenance. Both the CMA and the MAC are of the view that a more formal arrangement should be in place albeit at a cost, currently £150 per annum, subject to the agreement of the owners. There is some delicacy extant as neither the Museum or the Association own the Burial Ground which is located within the curtilage of Cluny Castle which was, together with its contents, sold in 1943.

Located approximately 4 miles west of Newtonmore on the A86 to Laggan, the Burial Ground contains the graves of:

Duncan of the Kiln (1748-1817) son of Cluny of the '45,
Colonel Ewen Henry Macpherson (1838-1900) second son of 'Old Cluny' and Mary Stacey,
Colonel Duncan (1833-1886) eldest son of 'Old Cluny',
Catherine Cameron (widow of Duncan of the Kiln),
Ewen Macpherson (1804-1885) eldest son of Duncan of the Kiln,
Sarah Justina Davidson (wife of 'Old Cluny'),
Albert Cameron Macpherson (1854-1932) youngest son of 'Old Cluny' and Frances,
Catherine (daughter of 'Old Cluny') and Albert's sister.



Others, possibly workers on the estate, bear names on headstones including Cattanach, Grant, McBain, McDonald, McGregor and MacKay.

The Cluny Castle Burial Ground looking south. The Laggan Road is just beyond the gates, with Newtonmore to the left (east).



The Cluny Castle Burial Ground looking north.
Newtonmore is to the right (east)

Clan Websites

Clan Macpherson Association

<http://www.clan-macpherson.org/>

Official Clan Macpherson Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/clan.macpherson.association>

Clan Macpherson Museum

<http://www.clan-macpherson.org/museum/index.html>

Clan Macpherson Museum Facebook page

<https://facebook.com/clanmacphersonmuseum>

New Member

We welcome new Annual member; Julia Macpherson, Baldivis WA

Recent News for 2025

The Annual Clan Chattan (CCA) AGM and Dinner will be held next year on Thursday 7th August 2025, at the Drumossie Hotel, Old Perth Road Inverness. While the first Thursday in August usually precedes the Clan Macpherson Gathering, occasionally the nexus is broken as the CCA AGM etc., is tied to the Moy Country Fair, next year to be held on 8/9th August 2025 at Moy Hall.

Book Review. *The Wild Black Region: Badenoch 1750-1800;*

David Taylor. Reproduced by courtesy of the Clan Chattan Association magazine, March 2024.

The closing years of the 18th century have seen few studies of Highland regions like the quality of David Taylor's book *Badenoch*. Taylor is far from selective in his approach to the changes in the farm economy, the community and culture of this important Clan Chattan region. He looks at the effects of the new society that evolved after Culloden, concerned not about landowners, but tacksmen, subtenants and the lowest cottars as they responded to changes in community, the realities of the Badenoch environment and commercial opportunities.

He lays out the involvement (and non-involvement) of the clans in the '45 and how clansfolk suffered afterward as a result of the Hanoverian military presence. The destruction of dwellings and farm buildings and the theft of livestock that formed the economy was experienced by all, regardless of allegiance, and left the people in dire straits. Taylor's analysis of the place of tacksmen in the hierarchy before the Rebellion and changes in progress is well explained and very important to the following chapters, but he also includes commentary regarding claims to the dutchas and the close bond of the tacksmen and their under tenants. He takes issue with other historians who expressed dim views of the tacksmen of the period. He acknowledges the rent burdens imposed on sub tenancy, and credits tacksmen with the enterprise and energy to make the necessary changes such as land improvement and cattle marketing.

The common people still operated within a subsistence farming economy that was heavily dependent on their mountain environment. He points out, that they were too quick to exploit market opportunities that came their way despite the post Culloden legislation that created intolerable pressures on clanship. Taylor argues that change, despite outside influences was proactive in Badenoch and that amid such chaos, the residues of clan society remained. The question "Who has destroyed the Gaelic people?" challenges the established trajectory of chief to landlord at the expense of an increasingly superfluous tacksman class. He drags the maligned tacksmen out of their

past ignominy and celebrates the entrepreneurial skills lacking in the profligate Duke of Gordon, the primary landowner. He strikes a comfortable balance between a crusade against landlordism and an apology for the rapacious actions and behaviour of the landowning classes. Taylor is careful to state that his book is not a study in isolation; that Badenoch was not an island, 'did not operate in a vacuum, but within a rapidly changing national dimension' and government policies aimed at 'civilising' the population. It did not experience the wholesale clearances of the Western and Northern Highland and the Isles. Later chapters encompass a half century of change covering the twenty years 1750 -and three later decades 1760s, 1770s and 1790s; a not entirely convincing approach because it seemed to set aside the natural evolution of change and the full value of events over time. Notwithstanding, Taylor's exploration of tacksmen's adjustment to changes in their roles within the clan system to within the new world of commercial farming is of great value.

The reviewer concludes, 'a rewarding and satisfying book. Future Highlands historians may have much to learn from the manner in which the author dealt with change in this singular region'.

The book can be bought from [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) or [Abebooks.com](https://www.abebooks.com).

Canberra Highland Gathering



Bright sunny weather greeted visitors to Kambah where the annual Highland Gathering was held on 12 October 2024.

Attendance was down on previous Gatherings but a large collection of Clan tents maintained the Scottish flavour of the day.

Activities across the Country
(* check the date)

OCTOBER 2024

Saturday 5th October, Highland Harmony, Bundaberg Qld,

www.facebook.com/BundabergCaledonianPipeBand

Sunday, 6th October, Armadale Highland Gathering, Champion Lakes Regatta Centre, WA.

www.perthkiltrun.com.au

Saturday, 12th October, Canberra Highland Gathering, Kett Street, Kambah, ACT.

www.canberrahighlandgathering.com.au **Clan Macpherson Tent**

Sunday, 13th October, Brisbane Celtic Festival, Moorlands Park Qld, www.ccaq.org.au

Saturday, 26th October, Williamstown Highland Celtic Gathering, Williamstown, Vic.

<https://melbournehighlandgames.org.au/williamstown-highland-celtic-gathering/>

NOVEMBER 2024

10-12th November, Beechworth Heritage Festival, info www.beechworthheritagefestival.com.au

Kirkin o' the Tartan services:

Sunday, 17th November, St Stephens Presbyterian Church, Macquarie St Sydney.

Sunday, 24th November, St David's Presbyterian Church, Toukley, NSW.

Sunday, 24th November, St Andrews Presbyterian Church, Forrest, Canberra, ACT.

Sunday, 24th November, Overnewton Castle, Keilor Vic, info

<https://overnewtoncastle29.rezdy.com/606823/scottish-festival-2024>

DECEMBER 2024

Tuesday, 31st December 2024, Hogmanay

JANUARY 2025

Wednesday, 1st January Maryborough Highland Gathering, Princes Park, info 0407 046 933

events@highlandsociety.com.au

25th January Happy Burns Night *Nationwide*

MARCH 2025

*9th March, Hay, NSW. Hayland Gathering will include pipe bands, Scottish dancers and Scottish heavy events.

Info: haylandgathering@gmail.com

*23rd March, Melbourne Highland Games & Celtic Festival, Croydon, Vic

Pipe bands, Clans, Scottish vendors, entertainment and more at Eastfield Park. Info:

www.melbournehighlandgames.org.au

APRIL 2025

Saturday 6th April, Bundanoon is Brigadoon, Bundanoon (NSW), info 02 4883 7471 or

www.brigadoon.org.au **Clan Macpherson Tent**

18/19th April, 120th Maclean (NSW) Highland Gathering, Easter weekend in Australia's

Scottish Town. info www.macleanhIGHLANDGATHERING.com.au

MAY 2025

3/4th May, Australian Celtic Festival Glen Innes (NSW). Featuring Brittany, Cornwall and Wales.

www.australianticfestival.com