



# THE GREEN BANNER

## NEWSLETTER

Clan Macpherson Association Canadian Branch

Vol. 3 Number 3

July 2009

### WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

We are very pleased to welcome the following new annual members: James Place of Hamilton, ON whose grandmother was Mary Jane McPherson; Janice McGowan of Saskatoon SK; and Linda Pearson, wife of long-time member Donald E. Pearson of Calgary, who has also joined as a member.

We would also like to welcome new Life Members: Dr. Ewan A. Macpherson, Clan Piper (see photo of Ewan and family on page 71 of Creag Dhubh 2009) who has returned to Canada from the US and is living in London, ON; and D'Arcy McPherson of Ottawa, an annual member who has now joined as a life member, and his partner, Andre Fontaine.

### MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN



Here we are at the beginning of July with the clock ticking down to our rally in Quebec City in September. This issue of the Green Banner is intended to bring you up to date on the rally and to encourage you to make the decision to join us if you have not already registered. You will read elsewhere that June and I have visited Quebec to tidy up some details and to give the hotel and can report that it passed with flying colours.

We have several members who have indicated their intention to be there. Some have already registered and others have booked their rooms at the hotel. We will be seeing Shelagh Macpherson-Noble, soon to be International Chair, with her husband Alistair from the UK. George MacPherson the US Chair is coming all the way from California.

Stuart Macpherson the Membership Chair from the US has registered. Cluny has sent his regrets as the strenuous events in Scotland this summer will take a toll. He sends his regards to all and best wishes for a successful rally.

Those of you who have not yet made the decision to join us in Quebec should do so now and book your room at the Palace Royal. The program is more or less set with a mini-ceilidh being organized for Saturday evening. If you are a Canadian with talent let me know what you can do and you will get a place on the program to do your stuff.

John Gillies and other members of the Executive have been working for the past year on a constitution and bylaws for the Branch. In order to adopt them, they must be put to a vote at the AGM in Quebec. Although only members present may vote as we do not use proxies, your input is welcome. You will find the draft in this mailing. I would appreciate if you would read it and send me any comments or suggestions as soon as you can so they can be considered. I will presume if I don't hear from you that you are satisfied with the draft.

As I mentioned in my message in the March issue, the membership campaign is our key focus for the next few years. Some members in Ontario have volunteered to help with the telephone calls. This is much appreciated. Jean Whitten will be calling the Toronto Macphersons in the next few months. Bill Macpherson will be calling the Lakeshore Macphersons. Ken Gillis is calling the Lakeshore Gillis'. Mary Margaret Gillies is calling the Toronto Gillies and Gillis'. Jacqueline Murdoch is calling the Toronto Murdochs. James MacPherson of Creemore has the Lake Simcoe-Georgian Bay area underway with 10 new prospects already.

The aim of the telephone campaign is to sort the Macpherson clan name people into two groups, those that are interested and those that are not. Our Secretary-Treasurer takes over from there and sends out a membership package by mail to the interested ones. We have sent out about 100 packages so far and we will be starting follow up phone calls soon.

This campaign is a long-term project with the objective of doubling our branch membership over the next two to three years. Although making cold telephone calls is not for everybody, anybody can do it once they get over their initial reticence. I will be looking for more help right across Canada to get the job done over time. The potential for the Branch out there is huge. Our next program will be to have local events between rallies.

That's all for now. See you at the rally in Quebec

Mark F Macpherson

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## JEAN WHITTEN, DIRECTOR



**M**argaret Jean Webster was born in Strathroy at her grandmother's house (no public hospital for her granddaughter!!) Her great grandparents had also lived in Strathroy. Her great grandmother, Janet McPherson, had come to Canada as a young woman with her family from Argyllshire, Scotland. Janet's father, Hugh, bought a farm along the road from his brother, Duncan, outside London, near Glanworth. Jean's mother, Jeanett, remained close to her McPherson cousins and so being a McPherson was part of Jean's growing up,

Jean grew up in Niagara-on-the-Lake, was educated at Niagara High School and St. Catharines Collegiate, and then graduated from University College, University of Toronto with a Bachelor of Arts degree

In 1951 she married John A. Whitten. They lived in Toronto, Port Credit, Oakville, and now reside in Mississauga, spending the winters in Sarasota, Fla. They have two daughters, Jill and Janet, and four grandchildren. Jean did volunteer work with various charitable organizations and served on the executive of the University Women's Club in Port Credit. She was also on the Directorate of the University College Alumni and a member of the College of Electors of the University of Toronto.

Jean and John attended the first Tattoo at the Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto when Cluny was the honoured Chief. They started to attend the rallies in

Scotland where they made many friends and became more involved. Jean became a life member at the International Rally in Niagara-on-the-Lake and John has since become one too. Jean helped arrange CMA dinners in Toronto which were well attended. Jean has been a Member-at-Large of the Branch Executive for several years and attends the Canadian rally each year.

While attending rallies in Scotland Jean did a lot of Macpherson family research, knocking on doors, working in the Edinburgh Archives and talking to people, which is much more interesting than just using a computer as one can do now. She found it was very interesting putting the puzzle together and with help from many people getting back into the 1700's. She eventually put all her findings in book form which the University of Toronto Press published.

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## NOTES FROM QUEBEC



*June on atrium balcony at Palace Royal*

**M**ark and I have just returned from Quebec City where we were making final arrangements for the Rally. Naturally we stayed at the Palace Royal and found the accommodations very pleasant. There is a large indoor swimming pool and a hot tub where you can rest your weary feet after a day of sight-seeing. So be sure to bring your swimming suits!

The pool is located in an atrium which is ten stories high. We had a suite with a balcony on the tenth floor overlooking the pool, a super place to have a drink and relax before dinner. The room where we are to have dinner on Saturday evening has a wonderful view of the St. Jean Gate. We tried the hotel's restaurant and the food was excellent. Nevertheless there are many restaurants within walking distance as well as shops.

One pleasant surprise was the Eccobus that is a free service offered by the City and stops just outside the door of the hotel. The bus tours the city and one can get on and off at various points of interest. There is no tour guide on board but the convenience of the service makes up for that.

Just one reservation, there are many steep hills in Quebec so be sure to have walking shoes, although there is a taxi stand right outside the hotel. While walking distances may not be far, for those with difficulty going up hills (like me) the taxi ride is probably no more than five minutes. My recommendation would be that if you have the time, take an extra day or two to enjoy this wonderful old City.

## THE GREEN BANNER

Published from time to time to bring news to the members of the Canadian Branch of the Clan Macpherson Association

### Officers:

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## TOMMY MACPHERSON - CAPTAIN OF THE NEWTONMORE GAMES

Members of the Canadian Branch who have attended the rally in Scotland will recall the elegant white haired gentleman who welcomes Cluny and Clan Macpherson to the Elia after our march to the games. We know that he is Tommy Macpherson but not many of us know his background.



Tommy was the youngest of seven children and attended Cargilfield School in Edinburgh before World War II. He is an obsessive reader and developed a skill for languages that was to later affect his military career. While at school he became an accomplished piper and cricketer. When the family moved to Newtonmore he became an avid hiker and hill climber developing fieldcraft skills. In 1938 He won a scholarship to Trinity College at Oxford.

At the start of the war Tommy took a commission in the Cameron Highlanders. Later when Winston Churchill decided to establish the Commandos, Tommy applied and was accepted. He started a successful and daring career, serving with distinction in the Middle East and North Africa where he was captured following a raid and was sent to Italy as a POW. Tommy escaped but was recaptured and sent to Poland but once again escaped, this time successfully with the help of the Polish Resistance. While a prisoner he had picked up fluency in German, Italian and French.

When Tommy eventually returned to the UK, Churchill was forming the Jedburgh units to work in France with the French resistance. Tommy, now battle hardened with his language capability was an ideal candidate. He was promptly "vounteered" to go to France in the rank of Major with a mission in enemy territory to slow down German reinforcements approaching the D day beaches. Tommy did this very effectively over a two-month period wreaking havoc behind the German lines while dressed in highland kit to inspire the his French comrades.

During his tour in Normandy he drove through a German formation, in his highland kit, to their headquarters and convinced the Commander to surrender his 23,000 troops by bluffing the General that he had many fighters at his disposal along with heavy artillery and RAF bomber support. By this time the Germans had a price of 300,000 francs on the head of the "lunatic Scottish major" because of his deadly campaign in their midst.

After Normandy, Tommy was posted to Italy with the mission of keeping Trieste as part of that country, where

he saw more action and was involved in more intrigues. This annoyed Marshall Tito of Yugoslavia resulting in another reward for his capture.

Tommy won the Military Cross three times, one of 25 men to ever do so. In addition France awarded him the Croix de Guerre three times and also the Legion of Honour.

After the war Tommy took up his studies and trained for the World University Games for the mile. To his disappointment this athletic endeavour was terminated with a twisted ankle. He was invited to be in the 1948 Olympic Squad but had to refuse because he was starting his working career and couldn't spare the time.

Tommy pursued a successful business career and was awarded the CBE by the Queen for his services. During the 1970's he leased Balevil house and restored it. Balevil is outside of Kingussie and is the site of the afternoon teas hosted by Allan Fletcher-Macpherson, the present owner, each year on the Sunday of our rally in Badenoch. It was originally built by James Macpherson of Ossian fame. During the war the house was taken over by the RAF. By 1966 there were pigeons in the hall and sheep in the entrance with concomitant damage to the interior. Tommy brought it up to its present splendour but unfortunately had to move when the lease expired.

Tommy's presence in our clan is indeed an honour to all of us and we look forward to seeing him at more rallies in the future.

With acknowledgements to *Scotland on Sunday* May 2009 and R. Gordon Macpherson CM.

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## WHO YOU WILL SEE AT THE RALLY IN SEPTEMBER

The following members and guests have advised us of their intention to come to Quebec. Most have booked their rooms and have already registered:

Robert and Sondra Archibald from Brantford, from Burlington Gordon and Nancy Macpherson, , Kirk and Pam McPherson with their son James, John and Wendy Gillies from Collingwood, James and Dawn McPherson from Creemore, Mark and June Macpherson from Hemmingford, Myles, Linda, and Arielle Macpherson from Kirkland, Carol McPherson from London, Jean and John Whitten, Bill and Irene Macpherson, all from Mississauga, Bob and Marlene Archibald from Port Hope, from Toronto we have Mary Margaret Gillies, Simon and Dana Fitton, Jacqueline Murdoch with her daughters, Jamie and Rebekkah Rogers, from the UK, Shelagh and Allistaire Macpherson-Noble, from the USA we have George MacPherson from California, Bonnie Macpherson from Florida, and Stuart Macpherson from New Hampshire,.

We look forward to seeing more of you registering and booking you hotel room during the next month.

Remember our hotel deal expires on August 11.