



Clan Gunn Society of New Zealand Inc

Newsletter

February 2010

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Editor's Note: *This 2010 February Newsletter is somewhat voluminous than previous editions. I have received several interesting reports/articles from Todd and Sheila Wall regarding their attendance at the Homecoming and the International Gathering of Clan Gunn in Scotland July/August 2009, and I have chosen to include these now rather than leaving some of their articles for the next Newsletter. Some photos taken at the 21st AGM at Lindisfarne October 2009 will now appear in the August Newsletter.*

Please forward articles for the August Newsletter to me no later than 30 July 2010. Thank you.

President's Patter

Greetings to you all. Last year has been hectic to say the least. My wife Sheila and Joyce Shield were busy with all the preparation and mundane tasks connected with our big trip over to the UK to attend the Clan Gunn International Gathering and our subsequent holiday from that. We left NZ on the 13th July and arrived back again on 31st August 2009. I have enclosed an article on the International Gathering further on in the Newsletter.

During that time I met Ted Gunn (Commissioner for Eastern Canada), Alan Robson (UK President at the time), Rich Gunn (North American President at the time) and of course our Commander, Iain Gunn of Banniskirk as well as all their wives. We all got on very well together and they have all become good friends. Rich Gunn is even coming over to NZ in March 2011 for a holiday and to meet other Gunns. I don't know what his itinerary is going to be yet because he only informed me just before I started writing this article. As soon as I know I will arrange gatherings of Gunns to meet him and his wife Linda at whatever location he decides he wants to visit. It's early days but he will initially be coming to Dunedin, whether it be via Auckland or Christchurch I don't yet know. Watch this space.

The exciting news is that we now have a Chief in waiting. His name is William Murray Gunn, the son of William Sinclair Gunn who died just recently after having stated that he wasn't interested in taking up the Chieftainship. William Murray Gunn has stated that he is interested in taking up the position of Chief but is at present sorting out what it entails and his options. He states that he is a very ordinary working class man and a former lorry driver but at the age of 41 is now semi-retired. It seems that there are interesting times ahead.

At our last AGM at Lindisfarne near Cave in South Canterbury we, the Clan, voted on the subject of membership fees going forward after it was proposed, discussed and seconded. These fees have been the same for at least nine years and possibly a lot longer. However, although the Couples and Singles membership fees were taken into account, none of the Committee at the time picked up on the Family membership fee and it fell through the cracks and consequently it was missed. As President I must accept responsibility for that and you all have my apology. So the Family membership fee stays the same but may be altered at the next AGM, while the single fee has been increased from \$12 to \$20 and couples fee has been increased from \$18 to \$30.

It was proposed and seconded that Ian and Lexie Gunn receive Life Membership Certificates for their work on behalf of the Clan over the past 21 years since the Clan Gunn Society of New Zealand's inception. Ian has been our Treasurer for all that time and truly deserves the accolades for his sterling work during that period with a lot of help from Lexie.

Susan Greenwood has now stepped down as Membership Secretary and Newsletter Editor. Thank you, Susan, for your efforts in producing the Newsletter in the past. Sue Gunn has now agreed to take over the Newsletter so thank you Sue for stepping up. Kathy Sauer has agreed to take up the position as Membership Secretary so our thanks to you as well Kathy. Meanwhile Marie Gunn remains as General Secretary, Chris Gunn remains as Vice President and yours truly remains as President. My sincere thanks go to Marie and Chris for their work over the past two years as well and to all the members of the Clan Gunn Committee and David Gunn, our website manager.

Yours Aye,

Todd Wall

President, Clan Gunn Society of New Zealand (Inc)

President's Annual Report 1 November 2009

Welcome to you all and thank you for attending the AGM for 2009.

Absent Friends and Family

First of all I would like you all to join me in remembering those dear friends and Clan members that have passed away or can't be with us due to illness or distance. Let us take a moment's silence now to honour them: please remain seated.

International Clan Gunn Gathering – July/August 2009

In July and August 2009 we had the big International Gathering in Edinburgh of all the Clans besides our own International Gathering. Three of us from Clan Gunn, New Zealand attended.

My first duty was to attend the Standing Council of Scottish Chiefs Conference with the Commander, Iain Gunn,

the American and UK Presidents, Rich Gunn and Alan Robson, and the Canadian Commissioner, Ted Gunn. The ideas I presented to the Council were accepted by the Earl of Cromarty who was chairing our discussion group, and passed on to the Parliamentary Secretary for action.

The march of the Clans up the Royal Mile to Edinburgh Castle was an experience that will never be forgotten. We were flying our Clan Gunn New Zealand flag alongside the New Zealand contingent, together with the main Clan Gunn group which numbered 82 souls from 11 different nations. Two of the Maori presentation group marched with us dressed in traditional attire of feathered cloaks, etc and Clan

Gunn must have been one of the most photographed Clans in the march of 8,000 Clans folk. We received the loudest and most enthusiastic cheers from the crowd as well, and they numbered approximately 30,000 lining the whole route. One New Zealand woman couldn't contain herself and sprang from the crowd to give us hugs before she vanished again. It was a very moving experience.

As the New Zealand President, I was asked to organise the Ngati Awa Maori Presentation Ceremony to our Commander by the UK Clan Gunn welcoming committee. After accepting advice from the Ngati Awa and the Clan, I did this knowing very little about Maori protocol. However, it worked and both sides were pleased with the result and ultimately the way it was performed. It was a great success. The details of the whole International Gathering trip will be included in the Newsletter.

From Edinburgh we traveled north by coach, stopping for two nights in Inverness and visiting various places of interest, including Culloden, Fort George and Cawdor Castle. As we traveled further north to our own Clan lands we stopped at Dunrobin Castle where we were welcomed by Lord Strathnaver and given a talk by him before having a look around. We witnessed a stunning display of falconry by the head falconer as well.

We stayed for four nights in Thurso which, I must say, was the worst accommodation for the whole seven weeks we were away. From Thurso we visited many sites of historical interest to the Gunns including the ruins of Girnigoe Castle which was the ancient seat of Clan Sinclair. St Tears, the site of betrayal by the Clan Keith, was also visited among many other sites.

For my final duty I was asked by the Commander and the UK President to give a speech and propose a toast to the Homeland at the formal dinner attended by the Earl of Caithness and a Senior MP from the Scottish Parliament. As I was mingling with other guests waiting for the cue to go in, people were coming up to me and congratulating me. I had no idea what I was being congratulated for until the Commander came over to me and congratulated me himself explaining that I had been made an honorary Vice President of Clan Gunn for life for the work I had done in New Zealand. I was absolutely blown away and that honour is due to all the help and support the members of Clan Gunn in New Zealand have given me; the honour belongs to the Clan, I was just the instrument.

Finally, we all said our goodbyes at Kildonan Kirk after a short service. Many new friends were made during that time and it was certainly an experience that all of us wouldn't have missed for the world and will never forget. Our job now is to keep the Clan alive; I hope you will all help in any way you can to do that. It can't be done by one or two people alone. Ideas for these are included in this newsletter under the Address.

Yours Aye

Duncan Todd Wall
President
Clan Gunn Society of New Zealand (Inc)



**Minutes of the 21st Annual General Meeting of
The Clan Gunn Society of New Zealand held at Lindisfarne Camp, Cave, South Canterbury on Sunday
1 November 2009 at 10.00 am**

The President, Todd Wall, warmly welcomed everyone to this historical 21st Annual General Meeting.

Present: Todd and Sheila Wall, Kathy and John Sauer, Viggo Neilson, Wilson Daniel, Jillian McCullough, Julie and Ray Ferguson, Bill and June Jamieson, Joyce Shield, Graham and Sue Patterson, Heather and John Gunn, Chris Gunn, Bonnie Flynn and Isobel Findlay.

Apologies: Ben and Maire Gunn, Val Donald, Stuart and Liz Gunn, Sue Gunn, Susan and Barry Greenwood, Isobel and Peter Patterson, Christine Wilson, Margaret Campbell, Louise Hickleton, Richard Rawstron, Tom and Shirley Campbell, John and Elizabeth McKercher, Jan Wylie, Beatrice Kenrick, Ian and Lexie Gunn and Diane Gunn.

Moved: Chris Gunn *Seconded:* Viggo Neilson *Carried*

Minutes: The Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting held on 2 November 2008 which had previously been circulated were accepted as a true and correct record.

Moved: Viggo Neilson *Seconded:* Sheila Wall *Carried*

Matters Arising: There were no matters arising.

President's Report: The President, Todd Wall, presented his report referring to the sad loss of two members during the year: firstly, George Gunn of Northbridge Retirement Home. George and Jenny have been long time members of the Clan. Secondly to Alexander Maxwell Gunn who was 94.

We remember them and their families with love and respect in prayer.

He made mention also of all members who were unwell and unable to attend or because of distance restraints.

The President made comment that Kathy Sauer was taking the Minutes because Marie Gunn was unable to attend as Ben was so unwell.

Moved: John Sauer *Seconded:* Viggo Neilson *Carried*

Financial Report: Copies of the Income and Expenditure Statement, the Balance Sheet and the Financial Statement prepared by our Treasurer Ian Gunn were distributed and considered. These had previously been reviewed by the President and Secretary according to our Constitution.

Matters Arising from the Financial Report: The following motions were discussed:

- That the subscriptions stay the same (held over for General Business).
- Authorisation for the Treasurer to pay the sum of £50 sterling to the Clan Gunn Heritage Centre, Latheron, Caithness as a donation.

Moved: Chris Gunn *Seconded:* Joyce Sheild *Carried*

- That the President and Secretary be appointed as Reviewers for the 2010 Financial Accounts.

Moved: Kathy Sauer *Seconded:* Sue Patterson *Carried*

Moved: Graham Patterson *Seconded:* Bill Jamieson : that the Financial Report be accepted. *Carried*

Election of Officers:

President: The standing President vacated the chair and was re-elected unopposed.

Moved: Kathy Sauer *Seconded:* Graham Patterson *Carried*

Vice President: Chris Gunn was re-elected unopposed.
Moved: Todd Wall *Seconded:* Isobel Findlay *Carried*

Treasurer: Ian Gunn was re-elected unopposed.
Moved: Chris Gunn *Seconded:* Todd Wall *Carried*

Secretary: Marie Gunn was re-elected unopposed.
Moved: Chris Gunn *Seconded:* John Sauer *Carried*

Members of Council (6): Bonnie Flynn, Kathy Sauer, Stuart Gunn, Merv Gunn.

All re-elected unopposed and it was unanimously decided that should the need arise two (2) further members could be appointed.

Moved: Sheila Wall *Seconded:* Isobel Findlay *Carried*

General Business

Chris Gunn raised the issue of the Canterbury Scottish Heritage Council Commemorative Plaque which is being placed on the corner of Kilmore/Colombo Streets, Christchurch on 11 April 2010. Chris read out the publicity pamphlet to the meeting.

Motion: "That the Clan Gunn Society of New Zealand donates the sum of \$100.00 to the Canterbury Scottish Heritage Council for the purposes of completing the Commemorative Plaque and its installation."

Moved: Chris Gunn *Seconded:* John Gunn *Carried*

Annual Accounts for Members

Chris Gunn advised the meeting that Past President Val Donald would like to see the Annual Accounts distributed to all financial members each year so that they are kept fully informed about the affairs of the Society, and what it is accomplishing in terms of our objectives.

Motion: "That a copy of the Annual Accounts be sent to all financial members at the earliest opportunity following the AGM each year."

Moved: Chris Gunn *Seconded:* Wilson Daniel *Carried*

Subscriptions

There was much discussion, some of it heated, regarding the issue of whether to raise the annual subscriptions. Chris Gunn, whose work involves financial management, felt the Society does not have enough in its base fund to move forward and increase the membership. He observed that younger people in their 20's and 30's are too focused on establishing relationships, paying off student loans, etc, to be interested in their cultural heritage. Our focus should be on their parents in the 40's – 50's group, mainly because they have already established their families, etc.

Other members agreed and felt that despite efforts at recruitment the results have been disappointing. Discussions included advertising and what would be the best avenue. Newspapers were not a popular choice but perhaps local publications would bring better results.

Motion: "That the annual subscription be set at \$20.00 per individual and \$25.00 per couple."

Moved: Bonnie Flynn *Seconded:* Wilson Daniel

After further discussion and permission from the Mover and Seconder, the Motion was amended to read "\$30.00 a couple".

One (1) against. *Carried*

Bonnie Flynn presented to the Clan Library the book entitled "Pride of Lion, Waipu The People and the Place", which had been given to her daughter Charmaine Flynn when she was 'Queen of the Heather'. It was generally felt that this was a very generous offer and was graciously accepted.

Motion: "That a letter of thanks be sent to Charmaine care of her mother as Charmaine is out of the country at the moment."

Moved: John Sauer *Seconded:* Chris Gunn *Carried*

Annual General Meeting 2010

It was unanimously agreed to meet at the same venue in 2010, the weekend after Labour Weekend being Sunday 31 October 2010 (Halloween!).

Catering AGM 2010

It was received with regret but much understanding when Sheila Wall announced she no longer wished to cater for the weekend. Sheila and her team always delivered a first class meal with all the trimmings. There was much applause for Sheila, and John Sauer spoke of the Clan Gunn Society's appreciation and acknowledged her huge contribution.

After further discussion it was decided each member would cater for their own breakfast. John Gunn very kindly offered to price out BBQ lunches and indicated that some local ladies (Cave School parents) might like to cater for the evening meal as they do this on a regular basis for functions in the area. It was also discussed that members could do the BBQ lunches themselves.

Website

Chris Gunn pointed out that David Gunn now has increased work responsibilities and much less time to continue his role as web administrator. Consequently, if the website is to be continued, we need to find someone who is skilled in managing a website and has the time and motivation to do it. This is likely to involve some extra cost, especially if it is done by a non-member. It was also noted that currently there is no "visitor counter" installed to record the number of visits ("hits"). What is apparent however is that it has not resulted in any new applications to join the Society. After some discussion, the majority felt that we needed to continue with it in the meantime because of this medium's increasing impact on communications, especially with younger people. There was a show of hands regarding this matter.

For 9 *Against* 6 *Abstained* 4

This is an unresolved issue which will need on-going discussion and thought.

Newsletter Editor

Susan Greenwood, after a sterling effort for many years, advised she no longer wished to continue as the Newsletter Editor. Todd Wall indicated he would "give it a go" if there were no volunteers. Chris Gunn thought his wife, Sue, might be willing to do it in the interim until a permanent Editor can be found.

President's Fund

Todd Wall felt in his opinion the \$600.00 allocated annually for recruitment was a waste of money. He suggested the fund be discontinued and re-named as an advertising or recruiting fund. If introduced, this would allow both Dunedin and Christchurch to be able to draw down on the account.

Recognition of Treasurer's Long Service

Ian Gunn has for the last 21 years been and continues to be our Treasurer. It was overwhelmingly felt that there should be some recognition for this. It was agreed that Ian be made a Life Member, and that a gift for up to \$100.00 be purchased by Todd and Sheila and presented to Ian and Lexie.

Moved: John Sauer *Seconded:* Bonnie Flynn *Carried*

Letter from the UK President – Mr Alan Robson

The letter regarding a Mr Murray Simpson from Australia was photocopied and passed on to Tom Campbell.

Appreciation

An acknowledgement was given to John and Heather Gunn and the McKercher family regarding their fantastic hospitality and willingness in hosting the Clan for the weekend. Their input and knowledge was invaluable and very much appreciated.

Presentation

Kathy Sauer made a presentation of a carving of the Clan Gunn Crest to Todd Wall, President, on behalf of Mr Harry Wilson of Moerewa who completed this work on 8 December 2008.

Historical Brochure

Wilson Daniel enquired whether the Society had a good supply of the Clan Gunn Historical brochures and was advised that the Society does.

Jillian McCullough stated she thought Todd Wall's heartfelt speech and toast to the "Homeland" should be shared internationally. Her suggestion was unanimously supported.

Moved: Jillian McCullough *Seconded:* Wilson Daniel *Carried*

There being no further matters, the meeting closed at 12.15 pm.

The 2010 Annual General Meeting to be held at Lindisfarne Camp, Cave, South Canterbury on 31 October.

**Clan Gunn International Gathering
Scotland July/August 2009
Speech and Toast to the "Homeland" by
Duncan Todd Wall
President, Clan Gunn Society of New Zealand (Inc)**

Good Evening Ladies and Gentlemen...

It is my privilege and honour to have been given the opportunity by our Commander and Alan Robson to propose a Toast to the Homeland but before I do I would like you all to charge your glasses and bear with me as I take you on a journey of my own meandering thoughts regarding the "Homeland".

First of all I must pass on a wee bit of information regarding my own Clan history. This won't take long so you won't have to check your watches! My mother was a Wilson and my grandfather Wilson traced us back to the Clan, so my mother told me when I was in my teens.

I forgot about this over the years as I was too engrossed in pursuing everything else except my ancestry. It wasn't until nine years ago that I saw an advert in our local newspaper saying that there was to be a Clan Gunn meeting at a School near us and people with the following sept names were welcome to attend. Of course the name Wilson was among them. My wife Sheila and I went along and subsequently joined the Clan but I have yet to re-trace my line as my grandfather before me did. Unfortunately he died when I was but 15 years old and I only ever met him once in my life so I knew very little about him. When time allows I will carry out the detection necessary to form an ancestral tree.

Now, what is the Homeland? As you are aware, we all come from different countries and cultures and we all have different accents. Some are born in those countries and some have chosen to live in them, so are these countries then not your Homeland? Of course they are.

We all belong to Clan Gunn and so there is a common thread of allegiance and blood ties going back centuries to our Scottish ancestors. Because of this we regard Scotland as our Spiritual home. How many of you here, when you come to Scotland for the first time feel like you have come home? I know I did. Most of us have a mixture of Scottish and the blood of another nationality in our genes somewhere so why do we not feel that "the other country" is our homeland?

It is perhaps a feeling of pride in our ancestors, who were so brave and endured so much in their lives. We feel this pride more so in our Scottish ancestry rather than in any other ancestral link. There is a feeling of Scottishness in our whole being. There is nothing diluted about that.

A woman, who was a New Zealander, once said to me that her husband came from Scotland and thought that the overseas Scottish Gatherings and events were run by pseudo Scots, people trying to be Scots. I told her to tell her husband that our ancestry and blood were as good as his even though our accents differed. She smiled and said she would. I never heard what the outcome of that was.

The Homeland then is not really about the land and it is not about the people or the Clan but the essence of all these things. This essence is what we carry within us. It is the Spirit of the land, the people and the Clan. It is our Spirit.

We are the Homeland.

Ladies and Gentlemen, please be upstanding and raise your glasses to the essence of who and what we are
The Homeland!

Thoughts from the 21st AGM

It was a shame that John and Heather Gunn had to wait so long for the first arrival which happened to be us at around 7.30pm. It was very much appreciated that John and Heather had the heaters and lights on; we experienced a great welcome and quickly settled in. Heather's womanly touch with a few flowers was very evident. As previously experienced, all facilities were very clean and comfortable.

Perhaps some liaison with John and Heather the day before would overcome any uncertainty in the future. On Saturday, there was an air of enthusiasm getting ready for the big night (for most of us our 21st birthdays had long gone!). Everyone joined in and did their bit and the end result was **FABULOUS**. The decorated tables, walls and hall made for a festive occasion. In the afternoon a treasure hunt was a wonderful idea, lots of fun and a huge success.

For the Saturday evening everyone dressed up in their finery. Those fellows who brought in and addressed the Haggis looked magnificent and proud. It was a very moving ceremony.



Carrying in the Haggis



3 Fine Fellows: Viggo, Chris and Todd

The food cooked and served by Sheila and her team was second to none, and better than we could expect from any "Posh Hotel". We moved from the meal to an evening of fine entertainment from our members. It was wonderful and thoroughly enjoyed by spectators and participants.

After a good night's sleep and a lovely breakfast, we all helped with the clean up and setting up for the AGM. Following another pleasant lunch and cleanup, it was time for everyone to say their goodbyes and go their various ways.

We are definitely looking forward to the next AGM weekend and would encourage other members to consider making the effort to join us for a fun filled action-packed weekend with first class fellowship, friends for life, lots of laughs, even a few tears.
Hope to see you there.

Yours aye,
Kathy and John Sauer.

**Address given by Todd Wall
To the Standing Council of Scottish Chiefs
In The Scottish Houses of Parliament**



Most of the Clans are experiencing a decline in membership. Why?

There are many reasons that have been bandied around regarding this subject but very little has been suggested and acted upon to halt the decline. There have been pockets of activity but it needs all the Clans to act in unison and with enthusiasm otherwise membership will continue to decline and with ever increasing speed as time moves on, especially if the Clans rely on the old tried and true ways, hoping their membership will increase.

If the Clans are to move into the 21st century then perhaps new innovative ideas need to be addressed without compromising their past heritage, customs or ideals.

One way to do this is to involve people outside the Clans. Working with local Councils and Tourists Boards, organizations and even perhaps the National Government, a Clan membership system could be introduced. This could be done in the first instance by setting up Clan areas, eg Caithness would be the area for perhaps four or five Clans. These Clans could set up signs with their tartan and/or coat of arms with a notice that visitors are entering the Clan territories of ---- (*name the Clans and Septs*). Notices in large characters beneath the name of the Clan could inform people that they would be welcome to join the Clan as an associate member for a day, a month, a year, five years or a lifetime. Of course there would be a fee, dependent on the period of time, for the privilege.

They would not be hereditary members, nor would they have voting rights but would be entitled to wear the tartan and badge of the Clan that they joined until their membership ran out. This membership would only apply to the person subscribing to it. It should not be passed down to or used in any way by other members of the family. Each member of the family would have to join the Clan individually.

This would not only be of interest to tourists and visitors but would provide much needed income for the Clans. Clans and tourist operations would work together to provide the means for tourists to join the Clans. There could be all sorts of work provided for local crafts people in each Clan district for them to produce unique items associated with their Clan such as wearable items or items representing a certain custom of each individual Clan, etc. The idea would be to get away from the usual shop bought goods.

Clan entertainment would be another avenue for both Clan awareness and revenue. Besides ceilidhs, historical events from the Clans could be enacted involving the public. This is being done to a certain degree but usually with the public as spectators. If more than one Clan has been involved with some historical event in the past, they could all come together to make a big event out of it. Businesses should get behind these things and make it happen. If they do it on a big enough scale then it will generate not only revenue but more business, local and tourist interest.

Everything has to be very Scottish with a lot of tartan and custom involved and in the full glare of public awareness with huge billboards and advertising using Scotland's Clans, tartans and heritage as its weapon. This is where the local councils, tourist board and tourist operators could be a big help.

The whole idea is to get the Clans to get the people outside of the Clans involved with them.

This idea may be an anathema to some but it could be the death knell of the Clan system if it is ignored. It has become blatantly obvious to those of us from overseas that the Scots themselves are more negative than their overseas kin about the Clan system. Bring the Clan system alive again and the Scots themselves may take more interest. Put the old feuds and disputes to one side because nothing is to be gained by their continuation. Work together as Scots for Scotland.

A lot of Clan Chiefs were involved in the Clearances that displaced so many of their kin. Perhaps now is the time to turn history around and make amends for the misery and despair that so many shared during those times.

The aforementioned are just ideas but they may be of some use to those with entrepreneurial skills and the ability to use them well.

It is time now perhaps for all Scots to honour themselves.

Yours aye

Duncan Todd Wall
President
Clan Gunn Society of New Zealand (Inc)

by Val Donald

This year I represented the Clan at several events. In October the Heritage Council held "The Kirking of the Tartan" at St Andrews Church, Merivale Lane. John Sauer carried the Banner, and there was a good attendance of Clan Members. Along with the Heritage Council, I went to the Northwood Residents Association Fair; a great day, lots of talking but no new members.

The Gathering of the Clans held annually at the Scottish Society Hall was a success. A great show of Clan Banners; unfortunately I was the only Clan Member present.

Saturday 5 December 2009, Victoria Square day – a day of piping, drumming, Highland dancing and Pipe Band contest. I met a lot of tourists from many countries, all very interested in our Scottish heritage. Another enjoyable day: again, no new members.

Attached to this Newsletter on a separate sheet is the Proposed Programme for the unveiling Ceremony for the Scottish Pioneer Tribute held on **Sunday 11 April 2010**. All members (or as many as possible) are encouraged to attend to witness this very significant ceremony.

Val Donald
Past President, Clan Gunn Society of New Zealand (Inc)

Editor's Note: The Dunedin Clan Gunn Report for 2009 has, by mutual agreement, not been included in this February Newsletter due to the large number of reporting articles associated with the Clan Gunn International Gathering in Scotland July/August 2009.

A New Zealand Grace or Toast

I have Music from the Highlands and Peace from the Glens.
The Lord provides the Sustenance for the Hearts and Souls of Men.
The Crofters contribution is the Cloth we proudly wear.
The land provides the wherewithal for our Epicurean Fare
Lord, bless this gathering here today as we talk of that Far Land
The one that we so fondly call "Bonnie Scotland"

Contributed by Junette Wilson



*Todd Wall, Isabel Findlay and Chris Gunn
at the 21st AGM at Lindisfarne, Cave on 1
November 2009 cutting the birthday cake.*

New Chief of Clan Gunn An Extract from the Scottish Clans Website

☞ "Clan Gunn is one of Scotland's oldest Clans, its history dating back centuries. The Clan is descended from Vikings, claiming their descent from Sweyn Asleifsson, a warlike Norwegian known as "the Ultimate Viking". This most northern Clan inhabited Orkney, Sutherland and Caithness. Clan Gunn has been without a chief for more than 200 years. The last Clan Chief was Morrison Gunn, an army officer who died childless, a successor has not been found - until now.

41 year old former Lorry driver William Murray Gunn has stepped forward to claim his right to be chieftain, ending years of dispute about who should be head of the family.

Clan Chiefs have historically been wealthy land owners, coming from a public school background and titled parentage. Gunn comes from a working class background. He is now in line to become the latest chief after the recent death of his father William Sinclair Gunn, a plasterer from Wick, who decided not to take up the title.

A genealogist claims that Gunn's senior's heritage can be traced directly back to the previous chief, Morrison Gunn, who died in Gibraltar in 1785. Also backing Gunn's claim is Hugh Peskett, the Scottish editor of Burke's Peerage, who said he has proved that the line of descent should pass from Morrison Gunn to William Murray Gunn's father. Peskett states "There is totally sound genealogy that WS Gunn is the rightful chief".

In the Scotsman William Murray Gunn says he is now considering applying to the Lord Lyon to become the first recognised clan chief.

He said: "My dad was the direct line. The only thing that puts me off is that I'm just working class and I'm used to being myself and doing my own thing. But I'm semi-retired just now. Of course, it does excite me that I'm descended from clan chiefs. It is hard to put into words. But I'm just an average person."

"I mean, I was always happy being part of the family, but being a clan chief never came into my thoughts. But when it was looking like I was, it was exciting. You're afraid of it too, because I don't know what it entails". He added: "I would like to take it and let the clan do what it wants; that's the kind of person I am".

It was during the 1990s, a genealogist discovered that William Murray Gunn's great, great, great, great grandfather Robert Gunn, who was alive in the early 1800s, was a distant cousin of Morrison Gunn. They also found that Morrison Gunn and Robert Gunn had a common great grandfather, Donald Gunn, who lived between 1685 and 1709 and was clan chief. Gunn's claim is not without rivals, while his father was alive the issue became complicated by a claim from a Michael J Gunn, a historian descended from the same line.

Due to William Sinclair Gunn not being interested in the chieftainship, it was agreed to resign in favour of Michael J Gunn, but later reneged on that deal, according to Peskett, leaving the succession undecided. While having no official chief, the clan does have a respected commander, appointed by the Lord Lyon in 1972 to fill the gap.

The 76-year-old commander said he would welcome a resolution. "We are in limbo at the moment," he said. "I was appointed in 1972 until such time as the chiefship was resolved and I'm still here. If they find a legitimate chief, that's fine. The Lord Lyon is considering the questions that people have raised." ✂

About Bletherskite: The Scotclans Blog : They are a family run Scottish company who research Scottish clans and promote all things Scottish.

Editor's Note: Go to the website www.scotclans.com/bletherskite/?cat=65 for more information. Thank you Marie Gunn for this information.

Haggis Recipe

Ingredients:

2 sheep heart
250 gms beef
1 liver and 1 tube sausage meat

Trim heart and liver of veins and skin

Cook well. Cool then mince. Season with grated onions, salt, pepper, cayenne and nutmeg.

Mix with 8oz (250gms) of oatmeal and some shredded beef suet. Add 2 tablespoon white stock. Shape into a ball. Flour and grease old flour bag or a good sized circle of Calico. Put ball in centre. Tie up allowing room for expansion. Boil over a low heat for 3 hours. **Don't** boil dry.

Serve with neeps and tatties, mashed with butter and pepper. These may be mashed together, if so desired. Turnips can be used instead of Swedes.

Don't forget the side dish of a good Whiskey. Enjoy!

PS Minced tripe may be added to this mixture. You could also add a couple of sheep's tongues (or ox).

Contributed by Junette Wilson

**New Zealand Gunns at the Homecoming
and the**

International Gathering of Clan Gunn 2009 in Scotland

Edinburgh 22nd – 27th July 2009: Joyce Shield, Sheila Wall and Todd Wall, the only New Zealand Clan Gunn members attending the Homecoming and International Clan Gunn Gathering in 2009, arrived in Edinburgh on the 22nd July after a three night stopover in San Francisco and a further five nights in England. We registered at the Apex International Hotel where the Clan had been block booked to stay. There were 82 Clan members representing 11 different countries at the International Gathering. The first two days we spent catching up with friends who live in Edinburgh and indulging in some sightseeing around Edinburgh itself. From then on it was all go.

On Friday, 24th July I had been invited by the Standing Council of Scottish Chiefs to attend a conference in the Scottish Houses of Parliament together with the Commander, Iain Gunn, Alan Robson (U.K. President), Rich Gunn (U.S. President) and Ted Gunn (Commissioner for Eastern Canada). We had to go through a screening process before entering the building and then we had to register at a reception desk where we were colour coded. As we were queuing with all these Dukes, Earls, Knights, etc., to register I started talking to the lady behind me and it turned out to be Diana Gabaldon, the authoress of Crossstitch, Dragonfly in Amber, etc., who was there as an observer she told me. During the morning we listened to speeches by eminent speakers from America and Scotland explaining their views on the state of the Clan system and how we must try to stop the declining numbers worldwide. In the afternoon we went off in colour coded groups to various committee rooms to discuss these issues.

I submitted three A4 pages of ideas which were read out by a parliamentary secretary to the sub committee chaired by the Earl of Cromarty, and they were accepted for further consideration by the Scottish Parliament. At that point the fire alarm went off and we all had to assemble outside the building which virtually ended the conference. Once the all clear had been given we all crammed into a taxi and went back to the hotel again.

During the day Sheila and Joyce had a thoroughly enjoyable tour around the ex Royal Yacht Britannia which has been preserved as it was when the Queen and the Royal Family used it before it was decommissioned. They said that it was excellent.

Alan Robson and I met up with the Ngati Awa group in the evening and discussed the upcoming presentation ceremony to the Commander that was to take place on Sunday. It was a very warm, convivial meeting with mutual respect given by both sides.

I have deliberately left out a portion of this report because Sheila has already covered the Edinburgh part of the Gathering in her article "A Woman's View of the Homecoming". There is no sense in repeating it.

Journey to Caithness and Gathering in Thurso: On Monday 27th July we all embarked on the coach bound for Inverness. We spent two nights there and visited Culloden where our American cousin, Chuck Jamison, who was our official Clan piper for the Gathering, played a lament beside the Monument to the fallen Highlanders. It was very moving. We went on to visit Cawdor Castle which is the seat of a Clan Campbell Chief and Fort George which has a grim past as far as the Highlanders are concerned. It was from here that troops were sent out to remove Clans folk from the land during the Clearances.



Cawdor Castle
Joyce Shield, Todd & Sheila Wall



Falconry, with Dunrobin Castle in background

On the 29th July we arrived in Thurso after travelling through the Strath of Kildonan stopping at Dunrobin Castle for a talk by Lord Strathnaver and touring around the Castle and watching a wonderful falconry display in the castle grounds. It was a real highlight. When we arrived at the Weigh Inn Hotel we were given a key to our rooms in the Lodge. We couldn't believe our eyes when we saw them. They were disgusting to say the least. Unfortunately there was no other accommodation so we had to make the most of it. It was the worst accommodation we

experienced the whole seven weeks we were in the UK. Apparently the rooms in the Hotel itself were good but one of the receptionists was not. She never smiled, was most unhelpful and looked she had just eaten a lemon. She had a disposition to match.

We toured the area each day we were in Thurso and visited many Gunn sites including the battleground of St Tears, Girngigoe Castle (Sinclairs), Dunbeath, Staxigoe Harbour, Latheron and many other places such as museums and towns.

I managed to stay on in Dunbeath when we visited the Heritage Centre there. Dunbeath was our own Ben Gunn's (Christchurch) village. The centre was his old school and I spent the day, after teaming up with one of his cousins, taking photos of nearly every house (including Ben's old house) in the village plus lots of photo's of various scenes around the place to take back to him. To say that both he and Marie were pleased would be an understatement.



Site of St Tear's Chapel



Staxigoe Harbour



Braemore – Sheila, Todd & Joyce



Dunbeath

We had a lively ceilidh on the evening of 31st July at the Portland Arms Hotel in Lybster after first gathering at the Commanders House for drinks. It was a great night chatting with lots of different people tempered with good meals and plenty of action with the dancing.

The following day I missed the AGM because we were picked up by another cousin of Ben's, Flora Jack and her husband Donald. They took us out to Braemore where Ben was actually born. We took photo's there as well of the Lodge, houses and cemetery where some of Ben's ancestors were interred. It gave purpose to our visit to Caithness.

That evening was to be our last which was to end with the formal dinner. I was asked to make a speech and give a toast to the Homeland. As we were all waiting to be ushered into the dining room, dressed in our finery, people were coming up to me and congratulating me and I hadn't got a clue why until the Commander himself came and congratulated me. I asked what it was all about and he said that at the AGM (that I had missed) it had been proposed and seconded that I be made an Honorary Vice President of the Clan for life. I was dumbfounded. Apparently it was for the work I do here in New Zealand. As I said at our last AGM, this honour is the Clan's not mine. I am the figurehead and there are a lot of hard working people who help me in what I do and that recognition would not have been possible without them. The speech went off well at the dinner too so I was told. Sheila and I presented gifts from the NZ Clan to the Commander and Bunty and personal gifts to the other two Presidents and their wives before the commencement of the speech. I have since received an e-mail from the Commander asking me to thank you all for the gift which he and Bunty felt honoured to receive.

The following day we embarked for Edinburgh stopping at the Kildonan Kirk on the way for a short service and to bid farewell to all our new found friends and compatriots which ended the Gathering. Sheila, Joyce and I then

headed off to visit various parts of England from there.

Contributed by Todd Wall



Formal Dinner - Thurso



Kildonan Kirk

A Woman's View of the Homecoming by Sheila Wall

As our Commander with his Presidents and Commissioner stood in the Hotel foyer prior to attending the Conference of Chiefs at the Scottish Houses of Parliament, I looked at my husband (your President) and felt so proud of him. He certainly did you all proud in representing New Zealand and you at this gathering.

Between the five men they all had different tones of the Clan Gunn tartan, not planned, that's just how it turned out to be, and they all looked splendid.



Commander and Presidents in Hotel foyer

Walking around Edinburgh one saw many different tartans being worn in many styles of dress, even when in casual dress most people sported a piece of their tartan either as a scarf, rosette, tie, and more, together with some form of their country's emblem being displayed also in or on their dress. The atmosphere was electric and everyone friendly. Joyce Shield, a Dunedin member of Clan Gunn, and I carried special Kiwi bags made for us by a friend: mine was black with the silver fern on each portion of the patchwork and Joyce carried a forest green coloured bag with Kiwis on it. Our friend instructed us that we had to give them away which we did at the end of our journey.

Saturday dawned bright and clear for the first day of the Gathering. We walked to the grounds dressed in our Clan tartans joining hundreds of other people on the way. We had purchased our Homecoming Passports prior to leaving NZ and with these hanging around our necks we entered the grounds quite quickly, pleased that no one took too much interest in taking our photos as we all looked like something indescribable. We made our way to

our Clan tent. All Clans that were represented at the Homecoming had their own tent. The tents were white and high domed, looking like something from medieval times. One almost expected to turn around and see a jousting match taking place. The tents were all in one area of the ground forming a tent village. We were told that the tents were hired from Holland.



Clan village tents

Our eyes were darting everywhere trying to take in the splendid vista around us. The outfits worn were just amazing and one could have taken hundreds of photos, from the Chiefs sporting large feathers in their hats being escorted by one of their minions carrying their personal standard. The women in short and long skirts with wonderful tops in different materials and colours, all toning in with their tartans. Some groups wore costumes of a different age with men resplendent in velvet jackets and ruffled shirts - it was just breathtaking to say the least. The atmosphere was like one giant bee buzzing, people talking, pipes were playing from all directions mingling with the aroma of food being cooked at the various stalls where queues formed very quickly. As we had passports we went to a special area that had been set up with tables and chairs. Here one could purchase snacks or a full meal, and being a very hot day most people were opting for cold drinks.



Two people in old fashioned dress

Where would one start? There were so much going on and afterwards while on the Clan tour, and talking to others, one soon realized that we had not seen everything but there is only so much that one can take in on such a day. Over the heads of the thousands attending we caught a tiny glimpse of Prince Charles who officially opened the Homecoming and the Duchess of Cornwall who was wearing a cream outfit.

Joyce and I had lost Todd in the crowd so we slowly meandered around visiting various displays and large marquees where many items were displayed that one could purchase, all very beautiful but expensive. Catching up with Todd once more we all decided that we were absolutely bushed and needed a nap before presenting ourselves for the march along the Royal Mile. Managing to flag a taxi we went back to our Hotel.

So once more dressed in all our tartan finery we set off to meet up with other Clan members for the March up the Royal Mile. We then proceeded into the court yard of Edinburgh Castle for a pageant which was called Ainslie's Children. We had to be at Hollyrood Palace by between 7.00 p.m. and 7.30 p.m. It was bedlam with people milling around trying to find their particular Clan and getting themselves in alphabetical order. There was a kaleidoscope of colour with just about every tartan you could imagine on display. Once we had found Clan Gunn, identified by the banner, we all stood and eyed each other up and admiring each others outfits. The men of course were all pretty much the same but the ladies were all certainly different. Once everybody had sorted themselves out the March began. There were 8,000 Clans folk on the march with a pipe band leading each section of a thousand people (approx). There were 30,000 spectators along the route as well.



Two members of the Ngati Awa tribe, dressed in their traditional cloaks had joined us for the march under the New Zealand Clan Flag. They certainly caused a huge stir of interest with flashlights from cameras coming from every direction, and as we began our march TV crews from UK, Scotland and NZ gathered to film this most historical happening of the first Maori people to be part of such a Scottish Clan Homecoming. The main Clan Gunn flag bearer was leading the Clan followed by the Commander, together with the three Presidents from the UK, US and NZ. We, being Joyce, me Pouroto and his wife Aroha, followed immediately behind the Commander and the Presidents. As we proceeded along the Mile the crowds went wild when they saw Pouroto and Aroha and our NZ Clan Flag. There were shouts of “go Kiwis” and offers of whisky and beer were being thrust at the men. Todd had the good fortune to be suddenly hugged by a fellow Kiwi woman who came out of the crowd with tears in her eyes. I can honestly say it was one of the most moving experiences I have had, not only to be there for this historical event but to also be representing NZ and our Clan. Although born in the UK I am certainly very proud to be a Kiwi and represent my country.



Lined up and ready to March

When everyone was finally seated at the Castle, the Pageant began. The story line was of how the Scots had fled and immigrated to various parts of the world; the Pageant unfolded with an Australian and going back through his ancestors to Scotland and then the story proceeded from there. Despite the cold wind that was now blowing through the ramparts, we huddled down in our coats to enjoy the Pageant. Arriving back at our Hotel which was only a short walk away we had a very welcomed hot cup of tea and discussed how we three had felt with the whole experience. It certainly was a most memorable day.

Sunday being the last day of the Homecoming events commenced for us with the presentation to our Commander from Christine Wilson of the Ngati Awa tribe. She was bringing the spirit of her husband John Mahiti Wilson back to his father's birth place and Clan. This had never been done by any Maori tribe or experienced by any

Scottish Clan. Unless one has experienced a Maori ceremony you have no idea of how emotional and Spiritual this can be, certainly for everyone taking part in the ceremony and you could see how this beautiful ceremony was affecting the spectators. Try to visualise that you are standing surrounded by the heather covered hills; a lone piper begins a lament as he and Todd escort Christine and her party to the Commander. Pouroto, who has a heavily tattooed face, wearing the traditional Maori cloak and carrying his talking stick, and at the same time begins his prayers of invocation with both the invocation and pipe music echoing round the surrounding hills. As we walk along, the hair on the back of our necks begin to rise and everywhere else all activity has become silent and still. To me it really felt as if the whole Ngati Awa tribe's ancestors were there with us.

It was very emotional not only for Christine but for all of us taking part. Clans folk from other clans all over the park, hearing the piper and Maori language joined our Clan to witness the event.



Christine Wilson presenting the photo

The ceremony concluded with a welcome by the Commander and Christine presenting a framed photograph of her husband with a very tearful speech to the Commander and a Paddle representing her husband's canoe that had carvings on it depicting the interwoven cultures of both tribe and clan, together with gifts of Greenstone in the form of a pendant to the Commander and a brooch to his wife, Bunty. A short speech of thanks was given by the Commander and gifts of Greenstone were also presented to all the members of the welcoming committee in little woven baskets of flax. This was followed by a Hongi and the ceremony concluded. Both the photograph of John Wilson and the canoe paddle will be kept in the Clan Gunn museum at Latheron.

So ended for us a most memorable weekend, and certainly well worth all the hard saving for three years to get there and take part. As a very old Scotsman said, "May the sight and the smell of the heather upon yonder hills bring you back to this fair land". This we will certainly do.

Sheila Wall

Do you like a good read?

Readers will recall the mention of a website (www.whittlespublishing.com) in the last Newsletter. If you haven't already investigated this site then I suggest you take the time to do so. Click on: *New Titles / General Interest, Landscape and Nature or Classic Fiction.*

Having looked through the various books and categories we eventually sent away for 5 of the books – 3 by Neil M. Gunn and 2 by Robert P. Gunn.

If you haven't already come across these writers then you are in for a treat. Neil Gunn is an acclaimed writer of Scottish novels, essays etc. who vividly portrays the life, cultures and personalities of Caithness in the early part 20th century.

Robert Gunn is less well known but then he has the distinct advantage that he is still writing! Apart from being a fine writer Robert is also an accomplished piper and the official Piper to the Clan Gunn Society UK. Robert lives in Wick, Caithness.

I particularly recommend his book "Tales from Braemore", a wonderful collection of stories and folklore from Caithness.

Good reading!

Contributed by Marie Gunn

OBITUARY - The Passing of Max Gunn

In 2009 we lost one of our longstanding members, Max Gunn, who always took pride in his Gunn heritage. Well known as the redoubtable champion of the small shareholder and one who didn't relish the limelight, he was nevertheless prepared to defend the rights of the minority shareholders against what were seen as unfair practices.

A.M. (Max) Gunn was born in Timaru, the second son of William Gunn whose father, also William, had emigrated from Scotland in the mid-nineteenth century. The family moved to Auckland in 1924 and Max was educated at Kings College. He served in North Africa during the war and on his return joined his brother in partnership in an accounting business. After his retirement in 1979 he became an outstanding advocate for small shareholders during the 1980's and 90's. Max had a great love for the game of tennis and played a good game for many years.

Max paid tribute to the influence in his life his aunt, Dr Elizabeth Gunn. She was an indomitable woman of great integrity and the founder of the NZ Children's Health Camps.

Max will be greatly missed and we extend our sympathy to his wife and family.

By Dianne Gunn

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2009 - 2010

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Margaret is only too willing to help members find their ancestry.

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