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Scorrybreac

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The Journal of Clan MacNicol
of North America



*A very
sociable clan!*

**Members at this year's annual meeting
in Hilton Head Island, South Carolina**

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

A

AS THE 2009 HOLIDAY SEASON rapidly approaches, I would like to express to each of you my thanks for your support of our North American Clan Society which has had a very busy year.

Jeremy Nicholson

By now, you will have all learned of the passing in late April 2009 of my uncle, Harman Nicholson of Balvenie. Starting in the mid-1980s, he became the greatest benefactor of the Clan worldwide. His crowning contribution for which he will be forever remembered is his work as Editor and sponsor of the Clan history book. Through his outstanding generosity every member of the Clan MacNicol worldwide has a copy of the history. In his quiet and modest manner, Harman was the largest individual supporter of the operations of the Clan Societies in North America, Australasia, and Scotland. His generosity continues even though he is gone. Through his estate, "The Nicholson of Balvenie Trust" has been established to assist the three Clan Societies henceforth. All those who met Harman were captivated by his intelligence, his wit and good humor, and his kindness in so many ways. We shall truly miss him, though his memory shall remain ever-green in our hearts.

An era has now passed. Murray Nicolson, the Chief's High Commissioner for the Americas is the only remaining survivor of a trio of principal pioneers of the Clan Society, following Burke Nicholson's death in 2007 and Harman's this year. For newer members, it is worthwhile restating that Murray was THE founder of the Clan Society. Without Murray, there simply would have been no Clan organization in North America. Now, a hale, hearty and healthy (early) septuagenarian, Murray remains active and substantially involved in the management of the Clan in North America and Scotland as well. He and his wife Barbara remained committed to the Clan's progress and enjoy participating at Clan events worldwide.



The four living Presidents of the Clan MacNicol Society in Atlanta, Georgia: (from left to right): Jeremy Nicholson, Murray Nicolson, Bill Nicholson, and Bill G. Nicol (April 2009)

Attentive readers will note from the front cover that this issue of *Scorrybreac* is Volume 25, Number 2. This means that our Clan newsletter has now been published continuously for a quarter of a century, starting in 1984. There have been five editors: Merry Jayne McMichael (who passed away in August 2007), Tom Nickerson, Bill G. Nicol, Jeremy Nicholson, and Murray Nicolson. This publication started off with a 4-, 6- or 8-page black and white format, with no picture, and "printed" on plain paper by simple photocopy. The current format was created by Murray who has served repeatedly and variously as Editor, Joint Editor and Co-Editor, and whose impetus and hard work has ensured the publication through thick and thin. Each new issue is also available to Clan members on the North American website, clanmacnicol.org.

The Clan was involved in three major gatherings this year: the Rassemblement of the Québec McNicolls at the Canyon-Sainte-Anne in June, The Gathering of Clans in Edinburgh, Scotland in July, and the North American Society Annual Meeting in Hilton Head Island, South Carolina in October.

Additionally, there were two regional reunions: one at Panama City, Florida, and the other at Stone Mountain, Georgia.

(FROM THE PRESIDENT - CONTINUES ON PAGE 18)

Highland Council Rangers assess McCoiter's cave for outdoor activity pursuits

Sandy MacPhee
Highland Council Ranger

WE ARRIVED AT SCORRYBREAC AS A party of four. Highland Council Rangers John Phillips and Sandy MacPhee, George Reid, Highland Council Outdoor Education Officer, Sam Crymble, from the Adventure Activity Licensing Service, and John Phillips, from the Adventure Activity Licensing Service. This was, you will gather, a working party, embarking on a serious mission! We were, in fact, charged with risk assessing the route to and from the depths of McCoiter's Cave to ensure its safety and thus continued use by local school groups as an adventure outing for daring students.

It was the last day of June. The sky was clear blue, interrupted only occasionally by lumpy cumulus clouds sent scudding by a strong, summery breeze. In good spirits, we turned our backs to the picture perfect Portree harbour, and the distant majesty of the Cuillins, and began our ascent via a track to the rear of the Nicolson Clan Cairn. Pushing our way

George Reid, Highland Council Outdoor Education Officer, Sam Crymble, from the Adventure Activity Licensing Service and Highland Council Rangers Sandy MacPhee and John Phillips relax in the sunshine outside McCoiter's Cave above



through ever thickening hazel and beech scrub, we followed the track to a viewpoint, where we stopped to catch our breath. From

there we could see that our elevation was on target, and that our route should now head along the contour of hill. We gained some open ground, before descending slightly to follow a precarious sheep track which eventually led to a ledge at the bottom of a crag, in sight of our destination... the mouth of McCoiter's Cave.

McCoiter may have long since evacuated his abode, but the current inhabitants were not shy in making themselves known! Our first moves from the grassy ledge towards the entrance provoked a flurry of excitement as the resident rock doves deserted their cave for the safety of the open air. As they circled above our heads, we left the sunshine and entered...

At first, despite the decidedly avian smell emanating from bewildered rock dove chicks abandoned so recently in their nests, the cave was pleasantly unchallenging. Formed as a fissure in a great bulk of basalt, the passageway of the cave is narrow, and the roof high. Shafts of sunlight penetrated the entrance, and lit up the first 10 metres of our journey, allowing us to easily avoid the boulders strewn along the cave floor without the use of head-torches.

As we confidently wound our way, the floor began to descend at a manageable gradient. With the light gone, and head-torches fully in use, however, we soon came upon our first hurdle. A fallen boulder had become wedged between the walls of the cave, and a narrow, steep drop in ground level. So a choice was offered. Do we go up, or down?

Partially convinced by a helpful looking rope, we opted for the former, and made our way up a short, but tricky climb, only to immediately encounter another, this time unavoidable drop! Dare I say that nerves were failing some members of the party? Although there

(MCCOITER'S CAVE - CONTINUES ON PAGE 19)



CLAN GATHERING

9th to 12th October 2009 Hilton Head Island

UNDER THE ORGANIZATION OF CLAN MACNICOL Society Secretary Bill Nicol and his wife Joan we held

this year's annual clan gathering near their home on Hilton Head Island, South Carolina. It was a welcome break for the clan members present who had come from Canada and the North-east to get a final taste of summer before the snows come. Most of us stayed at the Holiday Inn right on the beach, and we could walk or cycle for miles along the perfect sand—I'm not sure if anyone braved the water. The island has many fine restaurants and



Ellen and John Nicholson, Ridgeway, South Carolina



Barbara Nicolson, Joyce Keller, Clifford and Cynthia Olstrom, Phyllis Keller and Jacques McNicoll



Ken Lawrence of Clearfield, Utah and Mary Lou Nicolson Klimek of Cochrane, Alberta, Canada

we ate together most evenings, and in particular enjoyed a "Low Country Boil Dinner" on the Saturday evening. Bill organized a very interesting trip to the Honey Horn Plantation. The old house on the plantation was begun about the time of the Civil War, and the land became a hunting preserve of two wealthy Wall

Street tycoons in the 1930s. It is now preserved for conservation by the town of Hilton Head and has some fine nature trails which a group of us followed. Walking along the boardwalks, we saw many egrets and herons and, for many of us, our first osprey watching high in a tree.

On the Sunday several people went on a trolley tour of the island, firstly to the north where we saw the traditional small houses owned by people who had stayed the course while the plantation owners came and went. On the more developed parts of the island we were impressed by the careful landscaping and inconspicuous signs. We drove through the community of Sea Pines admiring the famous golf courses and stopped briefly in the charming Harbor Town. One brave soul climbed to the top of the lighthouse while the others enjoyed the view and ate ice creams in the sunshine.

The Saturday dinner was attended by 30 clan members and we particularly welcomed very new and enthusiastic clan members Ronald Nichols and his son Christian from Georgetown, Kentucky. The furthest travelled clan member was Mary Lou Nicolson Klimek from Cochrane, Alberta, Canada—where she said they had already had snow and to whom the walks on the beach in the sunshine were especially welcome! There were short talks at the dinner from Jeremy Nicholson and Murray Nicolson, and everyone enjoyed a convivial evening in the best traditions of this very sociable clan. 





Mary Lou and Dick Dewar of Aiken, South Carolina



Gail Clark and J. Denis Nicol of Schenectady, New York



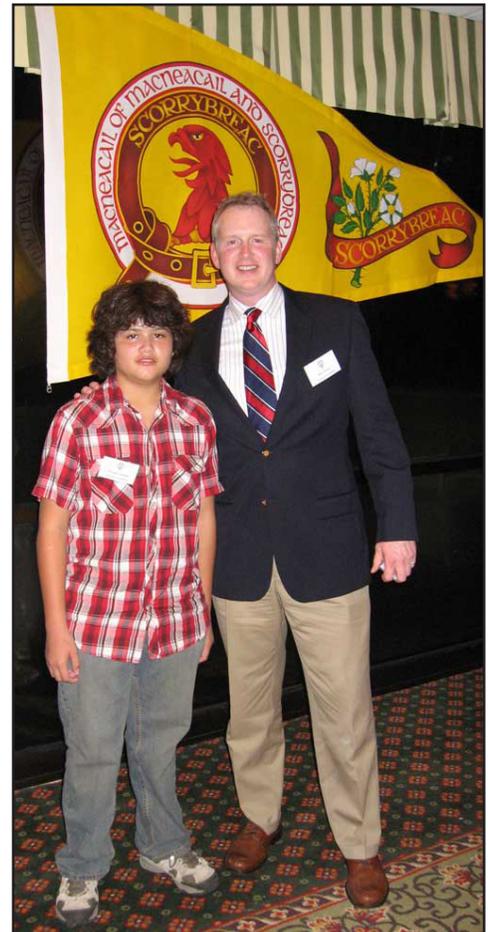
Hosts for the event: Joan and Bill Nicol of Hilton Head Island



Jacques McNicoll of Ile Perrot, Quebec, Canada with daughter Kathy and son Francis



Brock and Colleen Nicholson of Clayton, North Carolina (outside) with Tom and Brenda Nicholson Pritchard of Knoxville, Tennessee (inside)



Christian Nichols and his father Ron from Georgetown, Kentucky



THE GATHERING OF THE CLANS

Edinburgh July 24–26 2009



**Murray
Nicolson**

I WAS INVITED TO ATTEND the Gathering of the Clans in Edinburgh this summer as the representative of our Clan Chief with my wife Barbara. About 85 clan chiefs attended this Gathering, the largest collection of chiefs, we were told, since an event organized by Sir Walter Scott for King George IV in 1832! The events

included a one day Clan Convention for all the Chiefs, held in the new Scottish Parliament building on the Friday, followed by two days of Highland Games in the Queen's Park, next to Holyrood Palace.

At the Convention, the theme was "the role of the clan in the 21st Century". While the Chiefs knew about their inheritance of their Chiefship and the honours that conveyed, it seemed to me that many were unclear what obligations that imposed on them—and if there were such obligations, who would come up with the money for them to fulfil them if it involved extensive travelling, for example. Donald MacLaren of MacLaren, Chief of Clan MacLaren lives in his traditional clan territory of Balquidder in Strathearn. He gave the most rousing of the speeches by the Chiefs. "As chiefs, we have no material powers," he said. "As farm-

ers, politicians, doctors, businessmen, artists, crown servants, lawyers, musicians, teachers, we are much like anyone else. But there is a difference. We have a duty, and we are expected, to exercise leadership." Strong words—but it fell to a visiting American to give the most detailed descriptions of the role of the clan and its Chief, from Bob McWilliam of Milwaukee, President Emeritus of the Council of Scottish Clans Associations. I came away with the impression that the Standing Council of Scottish Chiefs in Scotland have real work to do at home to make Scots more aware of clans and clan societies. In the Scotsman newspaper next day, they picked up the same theme—"There's a significant difference between the chiefs, who have inherited titles and find themselves presiding over a system that has little meaning in contemporary Scotland, and the overseas associations for whom the clan has all the meaning in the world."

The Games held the next day gave evidence of that. There were 124 clan tents—alas none for Clan MacNicol since we had no one in Scotland who might have organized one. But these tents, similar to the ones we are familiar with in North America, were very busy with local people intrigued to discover, perhaps for the first time, the existence of clan societies. The Games were opened by Prince Charles and his wife, and all the Chiefs gathered to welcome them. All were sprouting large eagle's feathers from their hats, and looking over their heads in the crowd there was an extraor-



Ready for the procession - Reid Nicol, Frederick Skogberg, Holly Nicol, Jim Nicol, Barbara Nicolson, Murray Nicolson, Kathleen Nicol, Sean Nicol



dinary sight of waving feathers—85 clan chiefs (more than assembled for Culloden) requires 255 feathers! Nodding and bobbing, they all pressed forward to shake hands with Charles and Camilla. It was a glorious day, the setting

under Arthur’s Seat and Salisbury Crags was magnificent and I believe about 40,000 people were in attendance.

In the evening the clans gathered at Holyrood Palace for a procession up the Royal Mile to the Castle. There were so many people, we had to leave in waves, in alphabetical order. We were collected (incorrectly) under the heading “Clan Nicolson”—strictly speaking actually another clan—we should have been Clan MacNicol. But that didn’t spoil the fun. Somehow in the frenzy around the Palace we gathered a dozen clan members to march. Jim Nicol of Newhall, CA carried the Chief’s pinsel, a large triangular flag nearly 5 feet long with the Chief’s crest that signifies that the Chief is not present and has delegated his authority. (We have three such pinsels in the clan, used at formal clan gatherings around the world.) We all marched the mile up to the Castle interspersed with several pipe bands, and we were amazed at the crowds that had lined the route to cheer us on. On the esplanade of the Castle there was late evening presentation of a specially commissioned pageant entitled “Aisling’s Children – Tales of the Homecoming”, which

(EDINBURGH- CONTINUES ON PAGE 20)

Les Nicholson from Townsville, Australia, Murray, Jim Nicol and Cary Lewis



Our clan bard Aonghas MacNeacail joins the procession up the Royal Mile

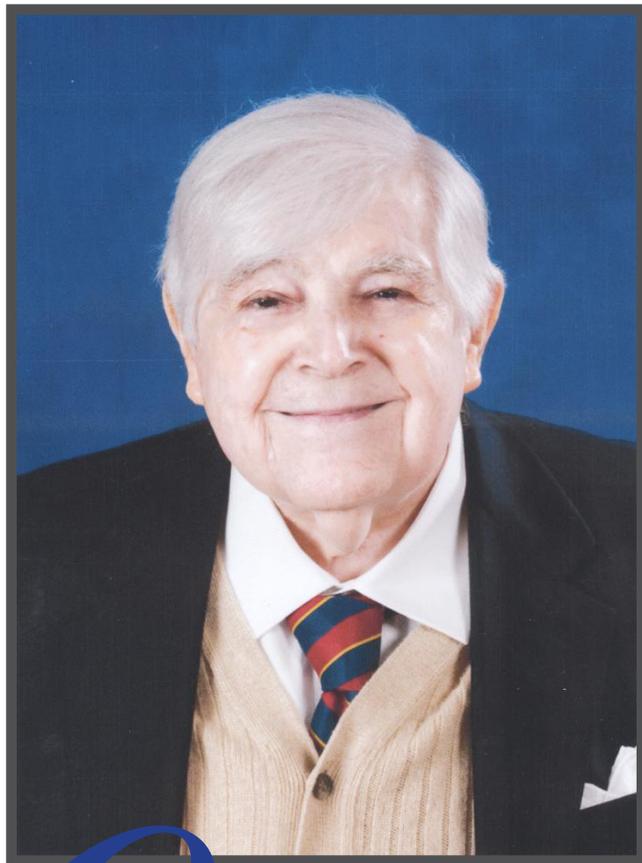


A view of the games site at The Gathering, with Reid and Jim Nicol in the foreground, standing on the path up to Salisbury Crags

C. B. HARMAN NICHOLSON

(in Scotland, Harman Nicholson of Balvenie)

8 October 1920 – 24 April 2009



Atlanta, September 2009

CHARLES BECK HARMAN NICHOLSON,

also recognized in Scotland as the Baron of Balvenie, passed away on 24 April 2009 at the age of 88. A native of Columbus, Georgia, he was a pioneer of the Coca-Cola business in Italy, where he lived for thirty-seven years. Having served as Chairman of two subsidiaries of The Coca-Cola Export Corporation in Italy, he retired in Atlanta in 1985 after thirty-nine years of service with the Company.

After joining the Coca-Cola Company in New York in 1946, he served as a sales representative in Vienna, Austria and was assigned in 1948 to Milan, Italy where he held various senior managerial positions including Deputy General Manager of the Italian Divi-

sion. In Milan he was also a Director of the American Chamber of Commerce in Italy and of the American Relief Society. He also had brief Company assignments in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and in London, England.

Born 8 October 1920, the second son of the late Hammond Burke Nicholson, former Chairman of The Coca-Cola Company, and the late Lucia Meetze Harman Nicholson, Harman was a descendant of Duncan Nicholson, born 1777 in the Hebrides Isles of Scotland.

After attending schools in Atlanta, Toronto and London, the latter at King's College School and King's College, University of London, he received the degree of Bachelor of Arts (in English Literature) at Princeton University in 1942.

During World War II, he served in the Army of the United States in Europe and prior to his discharge in 1946 held the rank of Second Lieutenant, QMC and Adjutant in the Seventh Army in Germany.

Following his retirement, he pursued his longtime interest in Scottish matters and he and his late brother, Burke Nicholson of Balvenie, became Founders in Edinburgh of the New Museum of Scotland and major supporters of the recently completed restoration of the Thistle Chapel of Saint Giles Cathedral.

As Baron of Balvenie, Harman was the holder of the ancient Castle of Balvenie in Dufftown, Banffshire where he also was Honorary President of the Dufftown and District Highland Games, Patron of the Dufftown Horticultural Society and a Benefactor of the ancient Mortlach Church there.

For over two decades, he was deeply involved in the affairs of the Highland Clan MacNicol worldwide as Archivist to the Chief, Chieftain, and Chairman of The Highland Clan MacNeacail Federation since 2008. A Founding Member and Director of the Clan MacNicol Society of North America, and a Trustee of Urras Clann MhicNeacail on the Isle of Skye in Scotland he participated in the purchase and reforestation of the ancestral Clan land on the Isle.

Harman was the Editor and sponsor of the definitive book of the Clan's history, *The Highland Clan MacNeacail (MacNicol), a History of the Nicolsons of Scorrybreac*, co-authored by the now Lord Lyon King of Arms, W. David H. Sellar and the late Dr. Alasdair Maclean. By

(HARMAN - CONTINUES ON PAGE 19)



MEMBERSHIP REPORT AUTUMN 2009

(Concord, MA), Thomas F. Nicolson (Cumming, GA), and Avis and Chenoweth Watson (Carolina Shores, NC).

DURING THE LAST EIGHT months, your Clan Society has received with gratitude a total of 33 new memberships: 10 from 2 Canadian provinces, 3 from Scotland, and 20 from 11 U.S. states.

We welcome our new members and look forward to many years of a mutually satisfying and productive association.

It is our further pleasure to report that over the same period 34 membership renewals have arrived from 6 provinces in Canada, and 118 from 30 states in the U.S. totaling 152.

We have been delighted to receive renewals from ten members who belong to the "Class of 1986." They were among the first to join the Clan Society in that year and have remained staunch supporters for over two decades since. In alphabetical order by family name, they are: Richard Augustine, Sr. (Florissant, MO), Bruce Goodburne (Alpena, MI), Gerald and Elizabeth McNichols (Winston-Salem), Robert and Frances Nichols (Webb City, MO), Robert and Lisa Nicol (Wilmington, NC), Forrester and Judith Nicolson (Wellesley Hills, MA), June Nicolson (Sacramento, CA), Murray and Barbara Nicolson

The following members purchased a gift membership in 2009 for a relative: Shirlee MacPhee Weinmann (Woodside, CA) for her son Paul Marchant (Lafayette, CA), and Graham and Gay Nicholson (Marietta, GA) for their friends Gordon and Priscilla Reiss (Beverly Hills, CA). Thanks to Shirlee, and Graham and Gay for their thoughtfulness and generosity, also to Thomas Nicolson (see the details of his gift in the next paragraph)!

Nine renewing members have earned a special mention of appreciation for their extra effort: Arlene and Thomas Sampson (Carefree, AZ) who paid for two years of membership (2009 and 2010), as did Thomas Nicolson of Cumming, GA, for himself and his daughter Anne Marie Maloney of Arlington Heights, IL (2009 and 2010). Renewing for one year in advance were: Michael and Kimberley Cook of Calgary, AB (2010), Ken E. Nicolls of Flagstaff, AZ (2010), Robert and Margaret Nickell of San Diego, CA (2010), Douglas Ikelman of Atlanta, GA (2010), Robert and Frances Nichols of Webb City, MO (2011), Kenneth and Carolyn Nicoles of Norman, OK (2010), and Richard and Mary Dewar of Aiken, SC (2010). Bravo and thanks!

Ninety-two members also significantly helped the Clan Society by contributing a donation in addition their annual dues. Thank you so much to each of you: these funds will be of great help to the Clan in its increased attendance at Scottish festivals and Highland games throughout North America!

One hundred and thirty-six members generously contributed to the Scorrybreac Fund for the maintenance of the Clan lands on Skye, including thirty-two who exceeded the basic \$5 level. Ben Chracaig will continue to thrive thanks to these donations.

Many thanks again to all for your support: your interest and generosity keep the Clan Society going!

2009 FINAL CHANCE

Membership Renewal Invitation

Members who have not yet renewed for 2009 are invited to complete the separate renewal form which has been inserted for you only in this issue. Please return it by **December 31, 2009** to the indicated address in the U.S. or Canada—as appropriate—with your check made out to "Clan MacNicol Society, Inc."

If this issue does **NOT** contain a renewal form, this means that you have paid your 2009 dues and therefore don't have to do anything more.

If you have any question about your membership status, please contact me as soon as possible by e-mail at clanmacnicolsociety@bsn1.net or by phone at 770-650-0905 and I will be happy to assist you.

Please return the completed form by to the indicated address in the U.S. or Canada—as appropriate—with your check made out to "Clan MacNicol Society, Inc."



NEW MEMBERS

(April through mid-November 2009)

CANADA

Ontario

John D. and Marie Nichols Collingwood
James Nicoll Mississauga
Rodger and Madeleine McNicoll Ottawa

Québec

Isidore McNicoll Anjou
Hélène McNicoll Château-Richer
Frederick McNicoll Montréal
Kathy McNicoll Montréal
Linda McNicoll Montréal
Francis McNicoll Québec
Pierre McNicoll Québec

SCOTLAND

Andrew Nicoll Dundee
Esther Bremner Glass, Huntly
Lilian Macleman Drummur, Keith

U.S.A.

California

Chad McNicholas Carmichael
Donna Weidenfeller San Francisco
Edward and Desiree Nicol Stockton

Florida

Kirk and Kate Alrough New Port Richey

Georgia

Jennifer Nichols and Christopher Churchill Atlanta
Erica Duncan and James Harmon Decatur
John E. and Sandra Nicholson Locust Grove
Sean D. and Jennifer Nichols Mableton

Kentucky

Patricia K. Nicol Frankfort
Ronald R. Nichols Georgetown

Maine

Lois and Orland Seamon Farmington Falls

Massachusetts

Ian M. and Eleasha Nicoll Webster

Missouri

Cary and Mitchell Lewis Rolla

New Hampshire

Timothy G. Scott Jackson

Ohio

James M. and Lynn Nickell Dublin
Lauchlin W. and Romkje McKeigan Lyndhurst

Texas

Ronald W. Nickell Midland

Utah

James and Jenny Nicholson Pleasant Grove
Karl and Maxilyn Nicholson Salt Lake City
Chris Nicoll Sandy

2009 RENEWING MEMBERS

(April through mid-November 2009)

An asterisk * preceding your name means that you generously donated to the annual upkeep of the Clan Land on Skye, and a crosshatch # in the same position denotes that you made an extra gift to the Clan Society beyond your annual dues.

Those members who have gone the extra mile and joined the Friends of Scorrybreac Lands with a fiveyear commitment of support are gratefully identified by the designation FoSL at the end of their listing.

CANADA

Alberta

*#Michael and Kimberley Cook Calgary (2010) FoSL
*Stephen H. and Beverly Nichol Calgary
*Jessie and Hugh Nicol Sloan Calgary
*#Mary Lou Nicolson Klimek Cochrane FoSL
*#Ian and Margaret Nicolson Edmonton
*#Michael and Karen Klimek Lloydminster FoSL

British Columbia

*#Erron Nicolson Grand Forks
*#Brent Nicolson Kamloops
*Fred and Evelyn Nicolson Kamloops
*#Kenneth McNicoll Nanaimo
*#Bruce Neill and Ellen Nicholson Nanaimo
*Hugh K. and Bonnie Nicholson Prince George
*Kelly and Andrew Nimmo Richmond
*#Deborah Nicol Victoria
*Michael and Heather Siska Victoria

Nova Scotia

*#Peggy Nicholson Halifax
*William T. H. Nicholson Englishtown
*#Robbie Nicholson Pugwash
*#Winnifred and Robert Nicholson Pugwash

Ontario

*Kimberley Ann and David Nicholson-Simpson Arthur
*#Stewart and Marie Nicholson Brampton FoSL
*#Norman H. and Deborah Nicol Burlington
*#Margot and Cameron Nicolson-Trott Collingwood
*#John W. Nicholson London
*#Mary Jean and Michael Nicholson North York
*#Allen and Linda Nicholson Peterborough
*#David W. and Margaret McNicol Stayner
*#Donald H. and Carol Ann Nicholson Thornbury
*#Carla and Douglas Nicolson-Johnston Thornbury

Prince Edward Island

*Ronald and Janet Nicholson Cornwall
*Sandylee and David Nicholson-MacLure Montague
*Wilfred Lloyd Nicholson Montague FoSL

Quebec

*#Tony McNicoll Gatineau
*#Jacques and Sylvie McNicoll Ile Perrot

U.S.A.

Alabama

Mark and Diana Nicholson Hartselle

Arizona

*#Arlene and Thomas Sampson Carefree (2009-10)
*#Ken E. Nicolls Flagstaff (2010)
*#Harley and Janet Lee Mesa
*#Robert and Alice Nicholson Scottsdale
*Jerry E. Nichols Mesa

California

*#Garrett and Kathleen Nichols Ben Lomond



*#Gordon and Priscilla Riess.....Beverly Hills (2010)
 #Dale W. and Marilyn Nicoll.....Concord FoSL
 *#Paul L. Marchant.....Lafayette
 *#Walter William Nicholson.....Long Beach
 *#Robert D. Nicol.....Napa FoSL
 *#James and Judith Nicol.....Newhall
 *#David and Lana Nicol.....Orange
 *Virginia Woodis.....Pacifica
 *George N. Popa III.....Poway
 *#June O. Nicolson.....Sacramento
 *#Edward and Valerie Nicolson.....San Francisco FoSL
 *#Robert and Margaret Nickell.....San Diego (2010) FoSL
 James Tanner and Star Seward.....San Jose
 *#Shirlee MacPhee Weinmann.....Woodside FoSL

Connecticut

*Jeanie Nicol England.....Cheshire
 *Doris Nicol and Michael Marinaro.....South Glastonbury

Florida

*James C. and Anita Nickelson.....Apopka
 *#Ruby Brown.....Casselberry
 *#Clifford Wolf and Claudia Finn.....Crestview
 Emma Lou and William Weldon.....Gainesville
 *#Daniel and Coralee Nichols.....Homosassa
 *#Jessica Lee Nichols.....Homosassa
 Eddy and Faye West.....Tamarac
 Linda and Dexter E. Beck Sr.....Rockledge FoSL
 *#Kimberly and William Giglio.....Saint Augustine
 *#Joyce and Phyllis Keller.....Tampa
 *#Cynthia and Cliff Olstrom.....Tampa

Georgia

*#Douglas C. Ikelman.....Atlanta (2010)
 *James Nichols.....Atlanta
 *#Carolyn Nicholson Worley.....Atlanta
 Lamar Britt.....Conyers
 *Thomas F. Nicolson.....Cumming (2009-10)
 *#Bradley C. and Rebecca Tabbert.....Cumming
 *#Philip L and Pansy Nichols.....Hampton
 *#William C. and Maura Nicolson.....Hiram
 Lisa Anne and Dexter E. Beck Jr.....Marietta FoSL
 Jane and Richard Johnson.....Marietta
 *#Graham and Gay Nicolson.....Marietta
 Sandy Nicholas Powell.....Marietta
 *#Dennis Nichols and Yana Liu.....Villa Rica
 *#John D. and Joan Nicol.....Woodstock

Hawaii

*#Robert and Drucilla Gilroy.....Kula

Illinois

*Anne Marie Maloney.....Arlington Heights (2009-10)
 *#L. Dow and Diana Nichol.....Glen Ellyn
 *#Robert and Susan Harmon.....Lincoln
 *#Christopher and Judy Trenkle.....Lombard
 *#Carl and Jane Nicoll Stover.....Park Forest
 *William G. and Shelley Nicol.....Springfield
 *#Heather Nicholson and Clint Studebaker.....West Chicago

Indiana

*#William A. and Ruth Nicoll.....Frankfort

Iowa

*Harold and Rose Mary Nichols.....Moorehead

Maine

*Stephen E. and Caroline Nichols.....Buxton
 *#Jack and Barbara Nicholson.....York

Maryland

Larry and Susan Saunders.....Baltimore

Massachusetts

*#A. Murray and Barbara Nicolson.....Concord FoSL
 *William E. and Ann Nicholson.....Natick
 *Elizabeth Cross Hartman.....Saugus
 *#Forrester and Judith Nicolson.....Wellesley Hills FoSL

Michigan

*#Bruce Nicholson Goodburne.....Alpena
 *David and Laurel Nicol.....Big Rapids

Missouri

*#Richard J. Augustine Sr.....Florissant
 *#Robert L. and Frances Nichols.....Webb City (2011) FoSL

Montana

#Kenneth Marx and Cheryl Christopher.....Helena

New Hampshire

*#Wayne and Sally Nicoll.....Andover
 *#Steven Nichols.....Ashland
 *#David and Jean Nichols.....Center Conway
 *Ellen and James Greene.....Center Sandwich
 *#Mary and Robert Wilkinon-Greenberg.....Jackson
 *#Bruce Nicholson and Judith Levis.....Sanbornville

New Jersey

*#Guy Williams.....Bordentown FoSL
 *#George F. McNicol.....Bridgewater
 *#Raymond and Joyce Williams.....East Brunswick

New York

*#Irene Nicoll Blankschen.....Bayside
 *#J. Dennis Nicol and Gail Clark.....Schenectady

North Carolina

*Avis and Chenoweth Watson.....Carolina Shores
 *#Anne Nicholson Crocker.....Concord
 *#Robert H. and Daniel A. Nichols.....Conover
 *Chapman B. and Jeannette Cox.....Davidson
 *Richard and Elizabeth Roush.....Greensboro
 *Ann R. Nicholson.....Middleburg
 *Robert and Lisa Nichol.....Wilmington
 *#Gerald and Elizabeth McNichols.....Winston-Salem

Ohio

*#Cindy Nicol Hill.....Cincinnati
 *Craig and Barbara Nicol.....Cleveland

Oklahoma

*Marsha Long.....Norman
 *#Kenneth and Carolyn Nicoles.....Norman (2010)

Oregon

*#Scott and Susan Nicholson.....Albany
 *#Richard E. Nichol.....Portland

Pennsylvania

*#Sharon and Trent Nichols.....Hanover
 *Edwin and May Nichol Dowlin.....Pine Grove
 Norman D. Nicol.....Shavertown
 *#Carolyn M. Moore.....Telford
 *Julie and André Turbide.....Warren

South Carolina

*#Richard and Mary Dewar.....Aiken (2010)
 John V. and Ellen Nicholson.....Ridgeway FoSL
 *#William R. and Joan Nicol.....Hilton Head Island

Tennessee

*Sandra Nichols Shassere.....Norris
 *#Doug and Robin Harrill.....Walland

Texas

*#Olive H. Pearson.....Fort Worth
 *Carolyn Nichol-Williams.....Garland
 *#Daniel and Susan Regalado.....Hurst
 *Thomas and Mary Nichols.....Livingston FoSL
 *Everett and Marie Nichol.....Pasadena
 *#David and Diane Marx.....San Antonio

Virginia

*#Leland R. Nicholson.....Bracey FoSL
 *#Leonard and Sharon McNicol Jones.....Fairfax
 *#John T. Nichols.....Manassas
 *Herbert and Mary Long.....Richardsville

Washington

*#Bruce C. McNichols.....Kirkland FoSL
 *Richard and Jean Nicholson.....Shoreline

Wisconsin

*#William L. Beckman.....Lake Mills FoSL



THE ROLE OF THE CLAN CHIEF

SPEECH BY THE MACLAREN OF MACLAREN TO THE CLAN CONVENTION IN THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT: 24 JULY, 2009

At the Clan Convention in Edinburgh in July 2009 there was a meeting in the new Scottish parliament building for all the Clan Chiefs and their representatives. One of the keynote speakers was Donald MacLaren of MacLaren, Chief of Clan MacLaren, describing what he thought was the role of the Clan Chief in today's world. Here is part of what he said:

'S e fìor onair a th'ann dhomh labhairt as leth nan ceann-cinnidh a-nochd. It is an honour to speak on behalf of the chiefs.

In his bid to unite Dalriada and Pictland, Kenneth MacAlpine invited all the Pictish princes and nobles with rival claims to the throne to a great meeting and banquet. Disarmed at the door, rather like us, they entered all unsuspecting. But pits had been dug beneath the benches on which they were seated and at a given signal the bolts securing the benches were drawn out. As one of the hapless nobles fell into the pit he looked up and cried out: "What is this treachery? You invited us for a discussion on kinship." Kenneth MacAlpine moved cautiously to the edge and looked down slyly: *O a dhaoine bhochda! Feumaidh nach do thuig sibh an cuireadh.* "Oh dear, you must have misread the invitation. It clearly said a convention on Kingship." And with that, they were all murdered and he was master of most of Scotland. Sadly, by the end of lunch, unlike in our case, there wasn't much of a group photo.

Well, after twelve centuries we have definitely managed to move on....haven't we? Do just check under your seats anyway. After all, you lowlanders, and Hanoverians, may well find yourselves sitting next to a highland-

er, or, worse, a Jacobite. Do take care.

Yes, we are aware of our history. And much of Scottish history is steeped in blood. Inevitably, it is the more dramatic moments that get remembered and get embellished as the stories are passed down through the generations; and—Scotland being what it was—those tend to be the gorier bits. How the "Good Sir James", alias the Black Douglas, dealt with half an English garrison by falling on them at Sunday worship and cutting their heads off in the church. Then, returning to his own castle, burnt the whole lot down in order to deal with the rest of the garrison who were occupying it. Or, the great piobaireachd, *Cill Chrìosd*, composed at the moment of victory of one clan over another. It is a fine tune and in the Thumb Variation has those High G notes in it, the ones that make the hair stand up on the back of your neck. Not knowing the story, I once remarked on this to another piper. "Oh yes, you see the defeated clan were driven inside a church, the doors were secured, it was set on fire and the piper of the victorious clan played as he marched around the outside. The High G notes? Why, they are to represent the shrieks of those inside."

Mostly, our ancestors were busy cultivating potatoes, a little barley (various uses) and driving cattle (not always their own) to market. But that doesn't make such riveting history. What is remembered are the great battles—clan versus clan; reiver versus reiver; or, on a national level, the wars of independence, the campaigns of the Covenant, the Jacobite risings, the power of the chiefs to apportion land among family and followers, to dispense justice and, in some cases, to exer-



cise power over life and death. Life itself: short and brutish; the clansman or borderer: hero or savage, take your pick.

Look at us today through some other people's eyes. Inheritors to all this passion, fire and turbulence; yet, somehow, strangely removed from it, even civilised. Prufrock with a kilt. No wonder that some liken us, two hundred and fifty years on from what they call "real history", to the rim left around the inside of the bath when the water has run out.

More than that, chiefs and heads of family can easily—too easily—be caricatured as idle, comfortable land-owners, often living in self-chosen "exile" far from their ancestral places: remote from their origins, remote from their history and—perhaps most tellingly—remote from the people that still look to them as the head of their family.

Take education. I happened to be educated in Scotland: my sons in England. A farmer in the glen stopped me one day, looked at me straight and said: "Oh, Donald. What a pity that you've chosen to educate your children abroad." And then there's the dreaded English accent. One of my children, taking an interest in this Convention, asked me: "Daddy, apart from you, how many of the other chiefs speak with the wrong accent?" Well, how many? Perhaps 80, 90%? I don't think it greatly matters. I once knew someone who could speak eleven different languages and dialects; and had nothing sensible to say in any of them.

Caricatures are fun. Sometimes they can be deadly accurate. But when it comes to this generation of chiefs, in most cases, I think the picture is overdrawn. We are sometimes portrayed as out of date. I think that perception is itself out of date. We are no longer warriors. As chiefs, we have no material powers. As farmers, politicians, doctors, businessmen, artists, crown servants, lawyers, musicians, teachers we are much like anyone else. But there is a difference. We have a duty, and we are expected, to exercise leadership. This is the thread that runs right through our individual and collective histories: from the middle ages, and before, to 21st century Scotland.

Our predecessors may have wielded military and economic power. But their primary duty was care of their own clan or family. The clearest expression of this, in celtic times, was that land was not individually owned but husbanded and provided for the next generation. A chief that did not respect his people quickly lost respect himself. And however changed our context is today that is the vital link that should not be broken between us and our forbears. Nor is that link a prerogative of the chiefs. Our kinsmen have that link; and we to each other. As one sixth generation Canadian of Scots descent put it: "Loyalty to fellow clansman and chief—these kinds of connection are universal and not restricted to a specific time or place."

Some societies in other countries are characterised by ancestor worship. Some, by ancestor neglect or indifference. In Scotland, I would describe it as ancestor respect. This is sometimes hi-jacked by Walter Scott or Mel Gibson-style romance. But that is not what I am talking about. Why is it that of all the countries across Europe, including notably those settled by Celts, and that once had clan systems, it is essentially Scotland

where an identifiable structure still survives? Accident of geography is not a sufficient answer. It is because of an intense and enduring pride in name and family and kinship. Probably, the strongest pride. Whatever hellish things were done, including, in later centuries, betrayals by chiefs of their own people, those people held family and kinship to override all else. Scotland is a changed place. And, still, the story continues.

How we play our part and re-define our role is up to us. We have already discounted the first option of doing nothing. Each chief and head of family has their own style, their own ideas and—if they are lucky—a Society or Association also with ideas and individual personalities continuing to breathe life into this shared concept of kinship. And that is why we are fortunate today to have so many overseas representatives as part of this debate. You could just as easily be out there playing golf. You are all considerably younger than Tom Watson. But you have chosen to be here, supporting and, I hope, inspiring your chiefs.

The clan and family societies, and their representatives—at home and overseas—provide a structure long after those clans have dispersed that is vital. Vital: another over-used word but not in this case. Because what I am referring to is something human and living.

We are rather more than a collection of dining clubs, reminiscing about the past. When we dwell on the past it is to learn lessons from it. We certainly work to preserve this country's heritage: conducting historical and genealogical research, helping restore ancient monuments, preserving family and national artefacts. And we contribute to its present day culture: sponsoring events and competitions—piping, dancing, singing and our local Games. But also through development and educational trusts, helping local schools and charities and providing scholarships, we are contributing to this country's future. And those who decide this country's future should think of using us.

To quote the author of "The Prince" (not Charles Edward Stuart; much earlier than that), a great observer of what motivates people and what matters in the real world: "Titles are not to honour men. The man or woman is to honour the title." 



David Nicolson
and Ian Nicolson
of Braes
at the Scottish
Fuels terminal



Friends of Scorrybreac Lands 2009

The Friends of Scorrybreac Lands is a group of clan members that we set up in 2006 to provide funds for the maintenance of the clan lands near Portree, Isle of Skye. Each year, they receive a report of activity on the land, and this is a summary of the 2009 report.

Murray Nicolson

At the Clan MacNicol gathering on October 4th, 2008 a new cairn was dedicated by the Clan Chief to the memory of Burke Nicholson of Balvenie and his wife Juliet. The plaque on the cairn is made of bronze and is quite large – about 36” by 18” – and is set down into a cairn to make it both weather- and vandal-resistant. Almost all of the costs were met by a donation from Burke’s brother, Harman Nicholson, but as reported in this newsletter, sadly this summer we also lost Harman, a real

Looking over Loch Portree, the cairn area in July 2009. Note the 2004 cairn with the new 2008 cairn behind it.



friend to the Scorrybreac Lands. The plaque is inscribed with a description of the mountains that are visible from the site, and is now widely used by all the visitors.

To check on how things were looking on Ben Chracaig, my wife and I and my brother David visited Portree this July, and I’m glad to report that the land is looking as magnificent as ever. All of the area around the cairns is now being maintained by Ian Nicolson from Braes, near Portree. Ian works for the local oil distribution company, and we caught up with him at the terminal on the quayside and thanked him for the efforts he and his son have been putting in. They go up to the land every week or two in the summer and cut back the grass with a heavy-duty WeedWacker, and it make a really pleasant outlook point for the many visitors on the various seats we have installed around the area.

We continue the contacts we have made with the Skye and Lochalsh Rangers, who provide a guide service for visitors to Skye. One of them, Sara Kay, has organized a group of volunteers who have been going up to Ben Chracaig and doing some maintenance work on the paths. They received from the Trust some financial support for an extension to the path around the farm at the back of the land. Visitors can now either go to the left of the farm and complete the circuit around Ben Chracaig, or use the path extension to go to the right of the farmyard and up towards Torvaig and the ruins

of Scorrybreck House, the home of the Chiefs until about 1825.

One problem we have is from the vigorous growth of the bracken over the edges of the paths. Apparently the solution is not to cut the bracken (which only encourages denser growth) but to bruise it with sticks. The volunteers have asked us for support to buy materials to make a set of "bracken bruisers" to help control the problem.

If you'd like to join the Friends of Scorrybreac Land (known as FoSL's!) here's what to do:

In the USA, please make a cheque payable to **Scorrybreac Fund Inc.** in the amount of \$100, and send it to Dick Nicoll, Treasurer, 19 Dignon Road, Billerica, MA 01821.

In Canada, please make a cheque for \$100 payable to **Clan MacNicol Canada** and send it to Jacques McNicoll, Treasurer, 87 Des Pins, Ile Perrot, Quebec J7V 8L6.



Reid and Jim Nicol from California beside the original cairn on Ben Chraicag on Skye before attending the Gathering in Edinburgh this year. Note the heavy bracken behind the cairn.

David and Murray Nicolson with Donald Kennedy at the path extension being built with Trust help



(FROM THE PRESIDENT - CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4)

across North America, one more than in 2008. None of these would have been possible without the devoted hard work of our State and Provincial Games Commissioners who expended much effort to staff Clan tents and booths and represent the Clan to a wide public.

There has been a major change in the management of the Clan Society in Canada. As noted in the previous issue, Michael Nicholson, our Canadian Co-Commissioner, has had serious and continuing health problems and therefore couldn't exercise his functions for over a year. At its meeting in October, the Board of Directors elected Mary Lou Nicolson Klimek and Jacques McNicoll as the two new Co-Commissioners for Canada. Jacques will continue to serve as Canadian Membership Secretary. Both Jacques and Mary Lou have worked diligently for the Society over the past decade. We congratulate them on their new and important responsibilities, and wish them every success and many more years of rewarding service to the Clan.

The Society has cause to be extremely thankful to Michael for his outstanding contributions to the Clan in Canada which was close to collapse when he assumed responsibility for it nearly ten years ago. He nurtured the branch back to health in terms of membership, finances, and representation at games and festivals. He also created a Canadian website, and was a significant contributor to this newsletter. He organized two major and very successful events, the North American Gathering in Ottawa (2001) and the 250th Anniversary Gathering in Commemoration of the Selkirk Fleet's Landing in Belfast, Prince Edward Island (2003). We sincerely regret that Michael's health difficulties have prevented him from continuing participation, and hope that in time he will be well again and able to rejoin the Clan Society management.

The Clan's Canadian website has now been closed for some months. Its coverage will be subsumed by the main North American site located at www.clanmacnicol.org, and to a lesser degree by the French language Quebec site at www.clanmcnicollduquebec.com and the Western U.S. site at www.clanmacnicolutah.com.

Finally and most importantly, the Board of Directors has confirmed that the 2010 Clan MacNicol International Gathering will be held in Vancouver, British Columbia during the Columbus Day/Canadian Thanksgiving Day weekend on October 8-11. Our Chief Scorrybreac and his wife Jenni will be coming over from Australia for the occasion. Mary Lou Nicolson Klimek, our new Canadian Co-Commissioner, has taken on the substantial responsibility of organizing this event. She would be most grateful to receive help and support from Clan members in and near Vancouver. Volunteers are urged to get in touch with her promptly (see the page 2 masthead for her contact details). More details about the Vancouver Gathering will be published in the next newsletter issue, as well as posted on the North American website.

As always, I invite any of you to contact me directly by phone, e-mail or letter about any Clan matter - check my masthead listing for ways to reach me.

In conclusion and on behalf of all Clan Officers, I would like to wish all of you and your families a Merry Christmas and the best of New Years! We all look forward to the return of more prosperous and more peaceful times.

Jeremy Nicholson



was another rope to assist the 2 metre descent, there was an overhang directly below, and footing was difficult to find. A demonstration by the most able of our group bolstered our spirits, and we all determined to make it to the end! One by one, we completed the task, feeling very pleased with our bravery and accomplishment...until we noticed the cave didn't end there!

The final challenge was of a different nature altogether—one which the larger members of our party eyed with some suspicion. The once lofty roof was now low above our heads, and the only way onwards was to make worm-like on the ground, and wriggle through a small opening into an unknown cavern. One by one, we assumed an undignified position, and passed through the opening into a tiny chamber which was undoubtedly the end! Undertaking our route in reverse was much less daunting, and we finally emerged, blinking and dishevelled, into sunlight again. With our mission complete, our day was not yet over. We had another two of Skye's most famous caves to explore – High Pasture Cave, an iron age burial site, and Spar Cave, with its magnificent flowstone staircase leading to the mermaids pool eulogised in Walter Scott's 'Lord of the Isles'.

*And mermaid's alabaster grot,
Who bathes her limbs in sunless well,
Deep in Strathaird's enchanted cell.*

But that is another story....

Since our visit to McCoiter's Cave, we have had confirmation that it is, indeed, suitably safe and we may continue to offer outings here as an outdoor opportunity for local children. In the past, groups have been taken there as part of their John Muir Award. With increasing numbers of children on Skye participating in this award, we hope that an expedition to McCoiter's Cave will continue to be a highlight! 

*Footnote:
The Trustees of Urras Clann MhicNeacail, who administer the land which includes McCoiter's Cave, do not encourage visits to the cave unless it is led by someone with outdoor skills training and who takes responsibility for the safety for all the participants.*

his outstanding generosity, he made it possible for every active member of the Clan MacNicol worldwide to receive a complimentary copy of this history, a gift which will extend to all future new members of the Clan.

In Atlanta, he played a significant philanthropic role. He donated the Nicholson Gallery to the new Museum of the Atlanta Historical Society, and was a major contributor to the Olympics Monument at Pershing Point, as well as a Patron of the High Museum of Art, the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, and the Atlanta Opera.

He was also a member of the Capital City Club in Atlanta, the Princeton Club of New York, the English-Speaking Union and the Churchill Society. As a Life Member of the President's Club of Mercer University, he endowed the Nicholson Scholarship for a semester's undergraduate study at Oxford University in England.

An active communicant of St. Martin in the Fields Episcopal Church, Harman endowed the Nicholson Hall and the new church organ.

He was a bachelor and the third of five brothers and sisters (all of them Clan members), of whom surviving is Martha Carolyn Nicholson Worley of Atlanta, Georgia. Deceased are John Hurt Nicholson (Atlanta 1992), Lucia Harman Nicholson Lines (Toronto, Canada 2000), and Burke Nicholson of Balvenie (Atlanta 2007).

Harman is also survived by one niece living in Canada and eight nephews living in the United States. He bequeathed the Barony and Castle of Balvenie to his nephew, Jeremy Duncan Nicholson of Atlanta, who has been visiting Scotland and Dufftown annually since 1997 and has held senior positions in the Highland Clan MacNicol in North America, Scotland and worldwide.

The funeral for Harman was held on 30 April in Atlanta and attended by his large extended family, as well as the Chief of the Clan, John MacNeacail of MacNeacail and Scorrybreac who, along with his wife Jenni, flew over from their home in Ballina, New South Wales, Australia to participate in the ceremony.

Also present were several senior dignitaries from the Clan: Murray Nicolson of Concord, Massachusetts, High Commissioner for the Americas; and Bill R. Nicol, Secretary of the North American Clan Society, with his wife Joan of Hilton Head Island, South Carolina. All living former Presidents of the Clan Society were in attendance: in addition to Murray, Bill G. Nicol with his wife Shelley drove over from Springfield, Illinois - Bill piped most movingly at the funeral and the burial; and Bill Nicholson (one of Harman's surviving nephews) with his wife Maura from Hiram, Georgia who were also part of the family group. 



(EDINBURGH- CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

told a tale of many generations of a family Scots through the centuries, ending with Colin MacLean, a sheep farmer now living in Queensland in Australia. There were depictions of the many battles fought over the ages, and then the long voyage to emigration in Australia. The production used the spectacular backdrop of the floodlit castle and cleverly lighting effects, and much original music. It included a Gaelic poem from our own Clan bard, Aonghas MacNeacail who lives in Carlops near Edinburgh, and who had joined us in the procession up the Royal Mile. The last verse of his poem in Gaelic and English is worth repeating:

Chan eil sràid no sliabh no bainnseach
Gun làrach bhonn chlann alba;
An guth na shiést air chùl nan còmhradh
Bho àirdean fuar gu fàsaich

*There's neither street nor peak nor plain
Without a footprint of the children of Scotland;
Their voice a refrain behind every conversation
From polar regions to deserts.*

It reminded me of the claim made during our meetings that although there are only 5 million people living in Scotland, there are over 40 million people of Scottish descent living around the world. I think The Gathering was a huge success (and extremely lucky with the weather - it poured the days before and after), and there are calls for it to become a regular event. Perhaps next time we'll be able to staff a clan tent too! 🏴󠁧󠁢󠁥󠁮󠁧󠁿



Charles, Camilla and Lord Sempill (Co-chairman of The Gathering)



A fine collection of eagles' feathers as the chiefs wait to greet Charles and Camilla!

