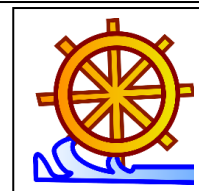


# HELM



## Heritage of East Lake Macquarie

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JUNE 2019

email: helm2281@gmail.com

### OUR SCOTTISH HERITAGE

In the first weekend of July Aberdeen celebrates the heritage of the Scottish migrants, pioneers and miners, with whom many in the Hunter and Lake Macquarie areas have a strong connection.

#### ABERDEEN HIGHLAND GAMES, UPPER HUNTER.

**SATURDAY 6<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2019. JEFFERSON PARK.**

This year marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the annual games held in Aberdeen. This year a gift of a **Commemorative Cairn** is being constructed in Taylor Park, Aberdeen in memory of the massive input by the Scottish forebears of the Hunter. This event has



its roots in celebrating National Tartan Day. Some of the locals, most prominently, John Flood and Charles Cooke, wore kilts to work; some of the businesses mounted shop displays. This culminated, after a few years, in the Highland Games, being held at Jefferson Park on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July, 2000; featuring traditional game events.

**Why choose Aberdeen you may wonder?** There are many towns and street names in the Upper Hunter that reflect that Scottish background. Jefferson Park was chosen being an established sport and recreation venue with appropriate facilities. But the main intention was to uplift the morale of the town after the meatworks closed after over 100 years, a heavy blow for the town. Starting out as a small, local community event, the Highland Games at Aberdeen have grown successfully and are now one of the major celebrations of Scottish heritage in NSW, with thousands attending from all over Aust.

**What will you see?** Celebration, participation and enjoyment are promoted above the inevitable competition. Some of the highlights are the gathering of the clans, pipe bands and dancers. Favourite presentations are by the massed pipe bands; tugs-of-war; novelty events. Prizes are given for best dressed man, woman, child and pet. **The Kilted Warriors in the strongman competition this year will also attempt an Aust record weight lift of 225kgs.** Food and market stalls give everyone a chance to browse and graze. There is the opportunity to trace family heritage, view Celtic displays, and buy traditional Scottish items. On Saturday night, a social evening, "ceilidh" (kay-lee), is held with songs, story-telling, music and dancing. This is followed on Sunday by the Kirkin' (from the Scottish "kirk" =church) – a blessing of the the Tartan, service. The success of the games is shared by making donations to local community groups who have helped with the games and who give services (eg Mens Shed, SES). Threading all this together sounds like a logistical nightmare, but **the opportunity to enjoy**

**and promote Scottish Culture as a part of our heritage should not be missed!**

See [www.aberdeenhIGHLANDGAMES.COM](http://www.aberdeenhIGHLANDGAMES.COM) for more information; tickets.

*We kindly thank the games organisers for sharing information about their event.*



- Highland Games 1
- Tartan; Warriors 2
- Kilts; history 3
- McEwen Pipe Band 4



first national REAL ESTATE | Andrew McGrath

**Kindly supporting the community – including Caves Beach Surf Life Saving Club; this edition of HELM newsletter.**

**4972 1066 - NOW AT SWANSEA!**  
**SWANSEA PLAZA ARCADE**  
Near Coles and Blondies.

## THE UPPER HUNTER TARTAN #12,320

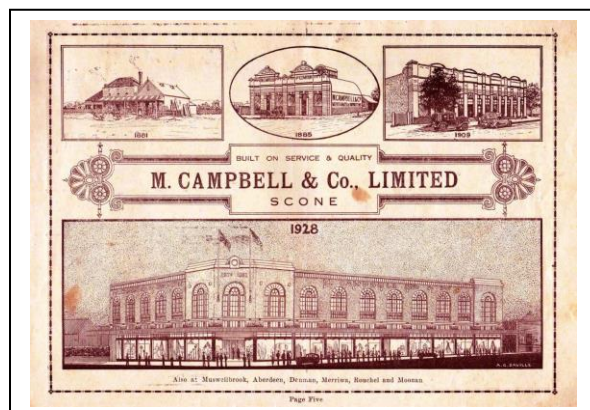
As a part of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations, an official District Tartan has been developed and registered to represent the area bounded by Singleton, Murrurundi, Merriwa, Cassilis and Denman, as a community gift.

The undercheck is based on the Campbell of Breadalbane tartan to recognise the contribution to the area made by Malcolm Campbell. In 1862 he established a department store in Muswellbrook, which expanded to become the department store chain at Scone, Aberdeen, Rouchel, Muswellbrook, Merriwa, Murrurundi, Gundy and Denman. Campbells stores dominated retail trade in the area up to the 1990s. Their stores were fine, architecturally designed buildings, where you could buy almost anything – farm equipment, building materials, car service supplies, clothing, groceries. The Campbell base tartan colours are blue and green and represent the two life-bloods

of the region. Green for the rich lands which provide lucerne and feed for the dairy, beef and horse industries. Blue for the water from the Hunter and Goulburn Rivers, and the dams; and the oceans, over which came people with skills, livestock, and supplies. The colours of the overcheck also convey a meaning. White stands for the dairy industry (Aberdeen Butter, Muswellbrook Milk, Singleton Cheese); Black of the coal seams; Purple to represent grapes, wine also the lucerne and thistle flowers; Yellow as the golden cereal and canola crops; and Red to signify the blood shed by the light horsemen and their horses in WWI. The wool was spun at Nundle Woollen Mill and woven at Crofters Weaving Mill at Spring Ridge.

**The new tartan will be available for sale at the games.**

*Source: Scone Advocate*



## THE KILTED WARRIORS.

These strongmen display their skills in three events. **1. The Stones:** They lift 3 stones increasing in weight (some 100-165 kgs) off the ground onto a barrell in a set time. There is a high difficulty factor because there are no edges to hold on to. **2. The Sheaf:** a hessian bag stuffed with straw, weighing about 7kg has to be hurled with a pitchfork cleanly over a horizontal bar, like a high jump, higher than the competitor. **3. Caber Toss:** a large wooden pole (similar to a telegraph pole) some 6m long and weighing c.80kg has to be flipped directly in front – top over end, 180 degrees. This skill originated from having to toss sturdy logs across chasms and streams, to make a bridge to be able to cross over to the other side, especially in wartime. This enabled them to chase rival clans during battles; and avoid the freezing cold waters. Accuracy rather than distance was and is vital.



## THE HIGHLAND DANCERS.

In traditional dress and accompanied by the bagpipes piping traditional airs, they display great skills of flexibility, agility, timing and precision. Some of the items are the Sword Dance; the Highland Fling; and Shawn Trews (old trousers). This dance symbolises getting their culture back from the British after the mid 1700s. After the Battle of Culloden tartans, kilts, bagpipes and anything that resembled Scottish culture was banned in retaliation for the uprising - an attempt to subdue their push for independence and patriotism. There was no love lost between Scotland and England. The dance celebrates throwing off the hated trousers and restrictions.



## THE STORY OF TARTANS, KILTS AND SPORRANS

The everyday checked-pattern dress of the Highlanders, continued to develop and become identified with clan membership. Kilts were worn with a knee-high boot of untanned hide kept in place by thongs, and topped with a knitted hat displaying the clan badge, usually a plant or flower. Early tartans were simple checks of only 2 or 3 colours, made from local plant, root, berry and tree dyes; thereby identifying them as the local clan colours. As chemical dyes were developed, weavers could make more complicated patterns with a greater variety of colours. As clans changed through birth, death and marriage, so new tartans emerged by adding overstripes to the base pattern of the parent clan. Kilts of long ago were simply a long piece of woollen material, c.2m x 4-6m, gathered with a belt at the waist and a pin at the left shoulder. It allowed freedom of movement; but most of all it was warm and waterproof; and could even be used as a blanket. The big disadvantage was that there were no pockets. And so the Sporrán, made from leather or fur, was added at the front of the kilt as a pouch or wallet to carry items, ammunition or daily rations. As time went by, they became more elaborately decorated. Perhaps they were the forerunners of the man-bags of today. *Source: historic-uk.com*

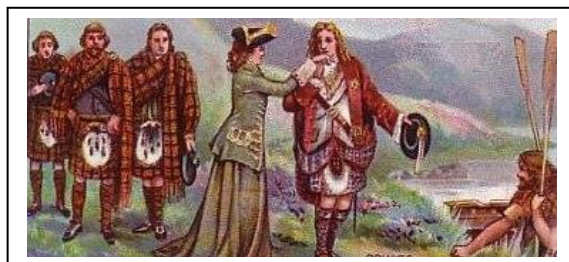


## COLOURFUL SCOTTISH HISTORY

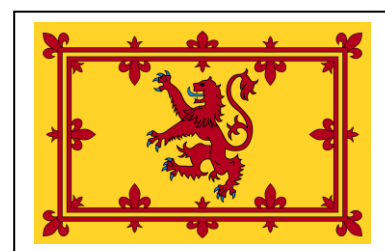
Scotland is often regarded as a “melting pot”. The native pict (“painted people”) were a war-painted race who disappeared leaving few signs of their existence. The first invaders were the Irish, followed by the Vikings, the Romans and then the English.

Some of the well-known Scots are:

**Flora Macdonald** who aided the daring escape of Prince Charles Edward Stewart after the Battle of Culloden, 1746. He had been in hiding for 2 months. Flora was accompanied by 2 servants and a crew of 6 boatmen. “Bonnie Prince Charlie” was disguised as Betty Burke, an Irish spinning maid. They set sail for Skye, and after travelling further overland, he was able to board a boat to France. This episode in history is remembered in the Skye Boat Song, 1880s: “Speed bonny boat like a bird on a wing, Onward the sailors cry. Carry the lad that’s born to be King, Over the sea to Skye”.



**King William I “The Lion”** 1143-1214. The red-haired, brave and energetic leader inspired the creation of the flag with a red lion on a yellow background often used in heraldry - “The Rampant Lion Flag” – the Royal banner of Scotland.



**Mary, Queen of Scots.** abdicated in 1567 and was imprisoned by her cousin Elizabeth I for 18 years because she was a threat to her rule. She was eventually executed for treason.

**Sir William Wallace 1274-1305** A brave and patriotic 13<sup>th</sup> century defender of Scottish independence. He used tactics and the terrain to defeat the army of Edward I at the Battle of Stirling Bridge; and was made Guardian of Scotland. He engaged in further battles, but ultimately was defeated. In 1305, he was captured, tried for treason; then hung, drawn and quartered. His story has been popularised by the film “Braveheart”, loosely based on his life. He is immortalised in this statue at Aberdeen, Scotland.



**Saint Andrew c.5AD – c.50AD.** Patron Saint of Scotland. He is said to have been crucified on an X-shaped cross (Saltire Cross). Nearly 800 years later King Angus II had a vision on the morning of a battle - a huge white Saltire Cross on a bright blue sky; seen to be a good omen. This became the Cross of Saint Andrew and the flag of Scotland. Saint Andrews Day is celebrated on the 30<sup>th</sup> of November each year.



## BELMONT'S CLAN MCEWEN PIPE BAND.

David McEwen was born in 1887 in Perth, Scotland. His family then moved to Beith, about 20 miles SW of Glasgow. In 1911, Dave set sail for distant shores. He arrived in Sydney, and worked there for a short time before settling in Tamworth, where he plied his trade as a baker. After marrying Eva, 2 sons were born, and the family moved to Murrurundi, as the depression took hold, establishing their bakery business in Main St. Here another 3 sons were born. The final move was to Belmont. At first their business operated on Main St Belmont, opposite where the Reject Shop now stands and then a new bakehouse was built in Docker St, Marks Point. A further 2 sons were born. All 7 sons learned their trade from their father and followed into the family business. It was at Belmont South that the Clan McEwen Pipe Band started in 1945 with 5 founding members – sons Val, Jock, Davey and wife Gladys, friend Ian; practising in front of their house. They have become well known locally for leading the annual Belmont Anzac Day marches. The strong family membership still continues today. On Thursday nights, members from Blacksmiths, Belmont and Tingira Heights practise at Marks Point Community Hall. In addition to the bagpipers, there are tenor drummers, side drummers and dancers. Although not entering competitions these days, they perform for enjoyment and the community; making appearances at the Wallsend Winter festival, Morisset Show and other local events such as the arrival of Santa by boat at Belmont jetty. By keeping the family involved, their heritage, traditions, pride and skills will pass on to future generations.



The 1949 photos above show Dave leading the band, with Jock front left; and the band marching along Belmont South waterfront. Central to the band and proudly displayed on their drum is their clan crest and motto - "Reviresco" meaning "I'll grow strong again". It shows the stump of a sturdy old oak tree, sprouting new growth.



The band performed at the rotunda in Talbot Park, Swansea, before it was demolished; Jock's son Donald 1963; and more recently they took part in the ceremony commissioning the latest boat – named the "Neil Grieves" – for Lake Macquarie's Marine Rescue service, based at the Pelican Boat Base, with MPs Greg Piper and Yasmin Catley; and Mayor Kay Fraser, on April 27<sup>th</sup> this year. *Source: McEwen family; Lake Mac news; LMCC.*

### Disclaimer

: Whilst every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the information in this newsletter, however, the accuracy of statements or opinions expressed in articles cannot be guaranteed.

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WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR YOUR IDEAS FOR MORE HERITAGE STORIES!!!