

A' BRATACH Bhan
the White Banner

the Newsletter of the Clan Mackay Association of Canada

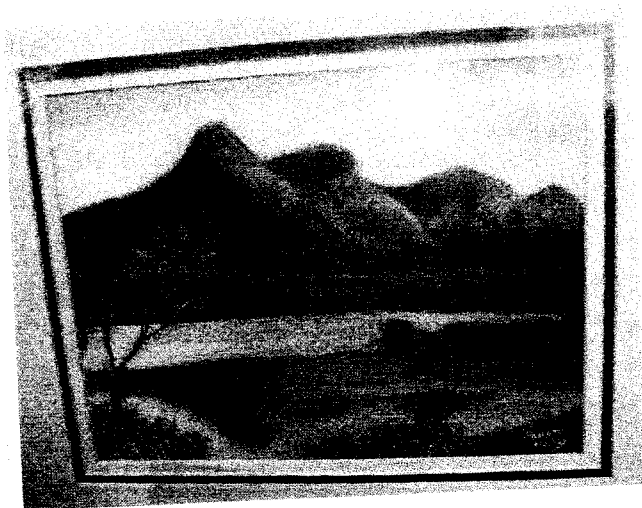
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Clockwise: Isabel Mackay; Last year's raffle prize, this year's raffle prize. See page 5 for the story about Isabel Mackay.

From the Desk of the President

Dear Clansfolk:

The new Canadian jargon for Merry Christmas is Happy Holidays, so called politically correct to service all our Multi Cultural, Multi Religion Citizens. We, here in Clan Mackay, just want all our members to have a Merry Christmas.

During the holidays, each of us may celebrate their festive season with traditions that are important to our family, our friends and our culture. Passed along, from generation to generation, traditions are a part of who we are, they help us honour our past, and serve as a cornerstone for our future.

In my family, via Scotland and New Brunswick, my Father used to read the Bible every New Year's Morning in a different manner than on other days. He would have each member of the family split open the bible. This page would be read for a few paragraphs, whatever the meaning of the script would be just how your year would turn out. It was called "First Dipping". Likely a tradition that came over with the first settlers from Scotland and passed down to other generations, we still do this custom. We would love to have anyone who also has traditions at Christmas or New Years to send them in to us via e-mail or mail. We would complete them for our Christmas 2008 newsletter. You must have some great recipes, ideas, a new way to say grace, we would love to share them with all of Clan Mackay.

The Christmas Tree Tradition began in Canada in 1781, when General Von Reidesel planted the first Christmas tree on Quebec soil at Sorel. The custom spread around the middle class during the Victorian era. It wasn't until after 1920 that the practice began to appear in large cities, and even later in rural areas where a decorated tree only became common in the 1930's.

Our beautiful painting donated by Neil Mackay was won by Gladys Mackay, wife of Gordon W. of Greely Ontario. Our new raffle is a plaque "100 Thousand Welcomes" donated by Lesley Komove. Please send along your ticket money when you renew your membership at the end of the year.

An on-going thank you to all the executive especially Harry McKay, Patricia McKee, Barbara Mallalieu and Sarah Mallalieu who's work continues to make the business of the Clan run efficiently.

Our Spring meeting will be held April 8th at 3665 Autumn Leaf Cr Mississauga ON at 130 PM and the Annual Meeting will be held at Erin Mills United Church Mississauga in the form of a Dinner and Ceilidh on Saturday June 14th. We will need lots of the members and their friends and family to attend this event in order to justify paying for live music etc. We would appreciate any ideas for the Ceilidh re music, dancing, singing or story telling.

Do have a wonderful, and joyful Christmas Season, and please drive safely,

Sincerely,
Mora Mackay Cairns
Tel 905 820 5715
e-mail: morabob@rogers.com

Thanks to Our Contributors

A big thanks to Mora for all her contributions to this issue... thank you!

This newsletter is for the entire clan, and any news that you may like to share is always welcome. Contributions can be made via e-mail through the website at www.clanmackay.ca or via mail to Sarah Mallalieu 741 Woodward Ave #2, Milton ON, L9T 3T6.

Jeanne Coulthard wins Women of the Year Award...

Jeanne Mackay Coulthard has another award to add to her mantel.

The 92 year old Saint Pauls resident was among seven recipients at Optimism Place's Women of the Year Awards October 18th, 2007 being honoured for her contributions to public affairs both with the Liberal party and Women's Institute.

The award is for outstanding achievement and contribution to public life in Perth County. This year's winner is well known and respected.

Jeanne said "I did it for my community".

She is the mother of Norma Howe, who is a director on our Clan Mackay Association of Canada Board.

"We only switch the telly on once over Christmas.... ...we'd better switch it off when we get to New Year's Day though!"

Isabel Mackay

Isabel Mackay was installed as an Honorary Member of the Clan Mackay Association of Canada in 1998. Isabel lived an interesting, exciting, and dedicated life at home in Canada as well in parts of Asia. Here is her story as written by her sister Margaret Mackay.

Isabel was fourth of five Mackay children, namely Anna, Leslie, Ross, Isabel and Margaret, born about the time to the Great War, in Tamsui, Formosa (now Taiwan) when the Island was a colony of Britain.

The story began with our father, George William Mackay, a student at Knox College, was sent on a summer mission to Saskatchewan. There he met Jean Roos, a young teacher who rode to and from school on horseback. At summer's end, George bequeathed his own horse, Coltie, to his future bride. In 1911 the couple were sent as missionaries to Formosa to engage in educational work. For George, it was going home.

In 1872, his own father, George Leslie Mackay, was appointed by the Presbyterian Church in Canada as a missionary to "somewhere in China". Rather than settling on the mainland, he chose the small port town of Tamsui on the northern tip of Formosa, where the gospel had not been preached since a Dutch mission was wiped out three hundred years before. The "Old Dutch Fort" now housed the British Consulate. Junks from across the channel and small streamers from Hong Kong came and went in the harbour, but the "Black-Bearded Barbarian" was seldom home as he tramped from village to village, preaching, distributing medicine, pulling teeth and founding churches. Later came schools and a small hospital, the forerunners of several large institutions today. His devotion to the people and his choice of a Formosa Bride, earned him another title, "Son-in-Law of Taiwan." He is still honoured to this day on the Island.

Tamsui was always home to the Mackay children, but their time there was interrupted by furloughs and boarding-school, and the time would come to return to Canada "for good". No one of them dreaming of any returning visits by ship or plane.

School was the Canadian Academy in Kobe, Japan, a few days journey by ship. Staffed mainly by Canadian teachers, it followed the Ontario curriculum. Boarders were mostly missionary kids, from Japan, China and Korea. Day students came from diverse backgrounds and added an international flavour to the mix.

School meant bells (but a ship's gong was for meals) and rules, such as keeping within bounds, the Kobe Hills and udon shops were equally off-limits. We made our own compromises. It also meant sharing fun and trials and the beginnings of life-long friendships.

Isabel was not one for mad escapades – always an honour student, but on one occasion she had a rebel moment.

Normally we went home to Tamsui for the summers, but one year, by extending the holiday to cover travel time, we braved the wintry passage back home for Christmas. Just before the holidays, a measles epidemic broke out. On our last night, going up to bed, Isabel encountered the matron at the head of the stairs conducting a stop-and-search operation for suspicious spots. Nimbly dodging her grasp, Isabel charged down the hall to her room but was not pursued. Not till their first morning at sea did the spots appear in full riot. She passed a pleasant convalescence at home and Christmas with family decorated with tree tall red poinsettias, much larger than our Canadian plants.

From her earliest years, Isabel had known what she wanted to be. Accordingly, on her return to Canada at the end of high school, she enrolled in Nursing at the Toronto General Hospital and later taught nursing there. In 1952 she joined a World Health Organization (WHO) team bound for Taiwan and served for four years on the southern end of the Island, a few hours by train from Tamsui.

On June 2, 1953 a gala tea was planned at the British Consulate in Tamsui to celebrate the Queen's Coronation and, hopefully, Hillary's conquest of Everest. Isabel came home the day before in order to attend. That night, her Father, rising to investigate strange noises in their cottage, the home he had built for retirement, was faced by a gunman and was shot in the abdomen. Mother was unhurt, but a bullet was later found in her pillow. Next door, Isabel was also scrambling out of bed when a second intruder raised his gun and shot her in the leg. Fortunately, it was only a flesh wound.

Isabel's calls for help and the gunshots themselves, soon brought the police and others to the scene. Father was rushed to the Government Hospital in Taipei where the bullet was found to have bypassed all vital organs. In time, he recovered, to enjoy another ten years in his Tamsui home. The two assailants were soon caught, but no explanation was ever given for the assault. Isabel did not attend the gala tea, which was indeed a double celebration.

On Isabel's return to Canada, her next venture was to pursue graduate studies in Seattle USA, where a short run up the coast would also allow brief visits to her brother Ross and family in Vancouver. Then a time of service at "Sick Kids" in Toronto and then a final term at Toronto General, where her nursing career had started.

Since retirement her interests have centered largely around Toronto Knox Presbyterian Church, the Clan Mackay, as she was a founding member in 1980, enjoying the fellowship with other clansfolk and learning more of her Scottish heritage.

Signed,

Margaret Mackay.

Recipes

Shortbread

Shortbread is now eaten throughout the year, traditionally, it was associated with the Christmas or Hogmanay time and was derived from the ancient Yule Bannock, which was notched around the edge to signify the sun's rays.

Shortbread #1

This recipe is made in a cookie pan about 9" x 12 ½ " x ¾"

Do not grease the pan.

4 cups sifted flour

1 ½ cups icing sugar

2 tablespoons cornstarch

1 pound butter (cream the butter, it needs to be soft)

¼ teaspoon of salt

Cook at 275 degrees for 1 hour and 5 minutes

Use a ruler and score with a knife.

Score before it is cold, when it is about ¾" high, score rows 1" wide and about 2" long.

Shortbread #2

2 cups flour

3 tablespoons icing sugar

1 cup butter

1 teaspoon vanilla

salt

Have butter soft, beat all together for 2 minutes, use an electric beater. Drop by small teaspoons on a cookie sheet. Make them like "hay stacks" Cook on the middle rack of the oven. Watch them as they brown fast. Cook in a 350 degree oven for 17 minutes. Could be decorated with icing sugar.

Althole Brose

My Dad made this for us every time my Mother went out for the evening. My sister Hazel and I loved it. Toast 2 ounces oatmeal till a light golden brown. Beat 1 pint double cream till thick. Stir in oatmeal and 4 level tablespoons clear honey, or brown sugar. Just before serving stir in 4 tablespoons whisky. Pile into small glasses and serve. Needless to say, we did not get the whisky in ours.

Scotch Eggs

4 hardboiled eggs 1 egg slightly beaten
A little seasoned flour bread crumbs
½ pound sausage meat fat or oil for frying.

Chill eggs, remove shells. Roll in seasoned flour and cover in sausage meat. Dip in beaten egg. Coat with bread crumbs, pressing crumbs well in. Fry in hot, deep fat until golden brown. Drain and cut in half. Serve hot or cold.

Why we kiss under the mistletoe...

The Druids considered the mistletoe to be a sacred plant and believed it had miraculous properties which could cure illnesses, serve as an antidote against poisons, ensure fertility and protect against the ill effects of witchcraft. Moreover, whenever enemies met under the mistletoe in the forest, they had to lay down their arms and observe a truce until the next day. From this has seemingly come the ancient custom of hanging a ball of mistletoe from the ceiling and exchanging kisses under it as a sign of friendship and goodwill.

Another version, however, says that this custom, which was widespread among the Anglo-Saxons, was connected to the legend of Freya, goddess of love, beauty and fertility. According to legend, a man had to kiss any young girl who, without realizing it, found herself accidentally under a sprig of mistletoe hanging from the ceiling.

Even if the pagan significance has been long forgotten, the custom of exchanging a kiss under the mistletoe can still be found in many European countries as well as in Canada. Thus if a couple in love exchanges a kiss under the mistletoe, it is interpreted as a promise to marry, as well as a prediction of happiness and long life. In France, the custom linked to mistletoe was reserved for New Year's Day: "Au gui l'An neuf" (Mistletoe for the New Year). Today, kisses can be exchanged under the mistletoe any time during the holiday season.

Just a quick reminder...

Don't forget to renew your membership for 2008! The form is included with this newsletter.....

Also, please find copies of the raffle tickets enclosed. Remittance is to Clan Mackay Association of Canada c/o 52 Mendota Road, Toronto ON M8Y 1G2.

Nollaig Chridheil agus Bliadhna Mhath Ùr

(Gallic for Merry Christmas and Happy New Year)

**Clan Mackay Association of Canada
Membership Application 2008
Annual fee \$15.00**

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/Pr/PC _____

E-mail: _____

New Member: ☐ Renewal: ☐ (please check one)

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**Clan Mackay Association of Canada
Annual Raffle – 2008
Plaque “100 Thousand Welcomes”**

Name: _____

Address: _____

donated by Lesley Komove _____

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**Clan Mackay Association of Canada
Annual Raffle – 2008
Plaque “100 Thousand Welcomes”**

Name: _____

Address: _____

donated by Lesley Komove _____

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Please complete above and mail form, together with your cheque or money order, made out to Clan Mackay Association of Canada to Harry McKay 52 Mendota Road, Etobicoke Ontario M8Y 1G2

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