



Issue 299

Hunter Valley Scots Club Inc.

Naidheachdan

Newsletter

September/ October 2026

Caledonian Celebration at Sunny Saltire

The Hunter region of New South Wales lights up every year with a festival of Scottish culture and heritage at The Hunter Valley Highland Games presented in the grounds of the magnificent Saltire Estate Boutique Winery at Lovedale.

The 2026 Games, held on Saturday 22nd August was no exception with several thousands of families many travelling from all over NSW and beyond to enjoy this wonderful day of traditional Highland Festivities including some of Australia's strongest men tossing the caber and beer barrels, hammer

throwing and stone put; Jacobite history and battle re-enactments with cultural displays and presentations;

Performances by pipe bands and traditional Highland dancers; Display of Highland cows and best dressed doggy competitions; multitudes of merchant stalls and clan heritage information, food and beverage outlets including local wine tasting from Saltire Estate's cellar door.

Naturally, Hunter Valley Scots Club was in attendance again

with an abundance of trinkets, plush toys and Scottish souvenirs, along with our historians helping people with information on their ancestry, clans and tartans.

Surrounding the spacious arena were dozens of tables and hundreds of chairs where Scots and their families plus those who simply enjoy soaking up the amazing atmosphere, could sit comfortably, relaxing beneath the beautiful sunshine on a perfect day and absorb the ambiance of an ancient culture.



Our first customer of the day young Stirling in full Scottish dress & flag

Throughout the day guests were able to view the entire Hunter Valley and the Saltire event from a bird's eye perspective on an exciting helicopter joy ride. A great day, enjoyed by all!

Come and join in the fun with Hunter Valley Scots' Club committee and members, this weekend, Saturday 26th September, at Bonnie Wingham Highland Festival



Clan MacKay



Clan Mackay is an ancient and once-powerful from the far north of the Scottish Highlands, but with roots in the old Kingdom of Moray. They supported Robert the Bruce during the Wars of Scottish Independence in the 14th century. In the centuries that followed they were anti-Jacobite.

The territory of Clan Mackay consisted of the parishes of Farr, Tongue, Durness and Eddrachillis, and was known as Strathnaver, in the north-west of the county of Sutherland. However, it was not until 1829 that Strathnaver was considered part of Sutherland, when the chief sold his lands to the Earls of Sutherland and the Highland Clearances then had dire consequences for the clan.

In the 17th century the Mackay chief's territory had extended to the east to include the parish of Reay in the west of the neighbouring county of Caithness. The chief of the clan is Lord Reay and the lands of Strathnaver later became known as the Reay Country.

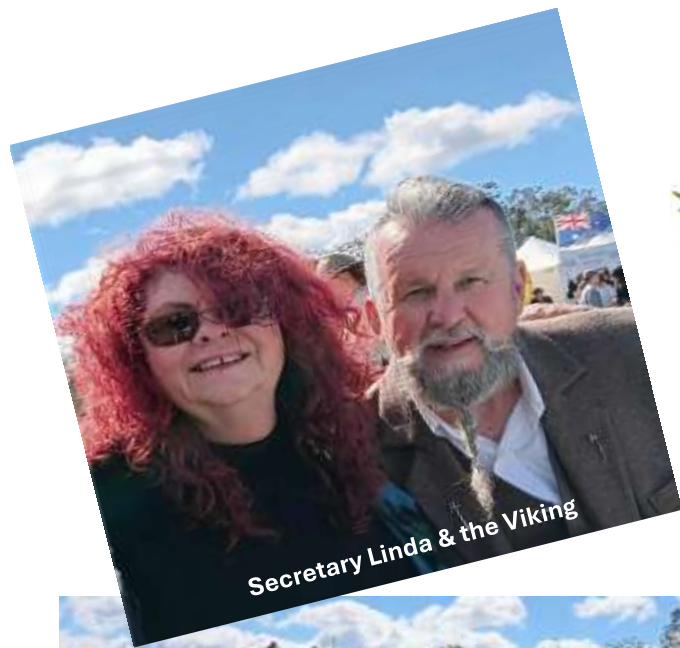
In Gaelic, this name is rendered as 'Macaoidh, son of Hugh. Exactly who Hugh was is uncertain. Sir Iain Moncreiffe suggested the name comes from a branch of the ancient Celtic royal house who disputed the throne in the 12th and 13th centuries. He asserted that the MacKays descend from Aedh, the last Abbot of Dunkeld, the first Earl of Fife and elder brother of Alexander I. Aedh's wife was the granddaughter of Queen Gruoch, wife of MacBeth Malcolm Macaeth, who married a sister of Somerled of the Isles, became Earl of Ross and died in 1168. Malcolm's son-in-law became Earl of Caithness He was also lord of the lands of Strathnaver where, by the 14th century, the clan was seemingly established in it's recognized form.

Iye was chamberlain to Walter Bishop of Caithness in 1263. Angus Dubh married Elizabeth, sister of Donald, Lord of the Isles and granddaughter of Robert II, around 1415. This indicates the clan's importance and Angus is said to have been able to call out 4,000 men from his lands at Strathnaver. From this height of power, the clan spent the next five centuries fending off their predatory neighbours, the Earls of Sutherland and they ultimately lost their lands to the Sutherlands in 1829. In 1556 Iye Mackay, then the chief, was captured by the Sutherlands and sent as a prisoner to Edinburgh Castle. His grandson, Sir Donald Mackay, was created a Baronet of Nova Scotia on 28th March 1627 and a year later was elevated to the peerage as Baron Reay. Lord Reay was a distinguished soldier who fought for Charles I in the civil war. He was to have been created Earl of Strathnaver, but the royal patent was not completed, and he went into exile in Denmark where he died in February 1649. His second son, Angus, became a colonel in the Danish army. He married Catherine of Killerman and is ancestor of the Mackays of Melness. His second wife was Barbara, daughter of Hugh Mackay who commanded the forces of William & Mary at Killiecrankie in 1689. John's second son, Aenas, was Brigadier General of Mackay's Scots Regiment in the service of the States General of Holland. The family settled in the Netherlands where they prospered. Barthold Mackay was created Baron Ophemert in June 1822. In Scotland, the chiefly line passed to cousins from time to time, when the chief died without heirs. Eric, the 9th Baron Reay got heavily into debt and the Earls of Sutherland encouraged

him to borrow money, having first had their lawyers ensure that the Mackay lands were pledged as security. The Sutherlands acquired the entire estates when Eric died unmarried in 1875. There have been many distinguished Mackays in recent times, James Mackay prospering in business becoming chairman of the P & O Shipping Company. He was created Earl of Inchcape in 1929 and in October 1987 Donald Mackay, now Lord Mackay of Clashfern was appointed Lord Chancellor of Great Britain. The 14th Lord was one of the remaining hereditary peers elected to the House of Lords and was an active member of the European Parliament. The present Chief is Aeneas the 15th Lord Reay who succeeded his father in 2013.



More Fun in the Sun



O Flower of Scotland

Flower of Scotland is a Scottish patriotic song commonly used as an unofficial national anthem of Scotland. Its lyrics describe the victory of Robert the Bruce, King of Scots, over Edward II, King of England, at the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314. Owing to its historical basis in the Wars of Scottish Independence, it urges contemporary Scots to rise again as a nation and remember the day their ancestors deterred Edward's English invaders. Notable for its association with supporters of the Scottish national football team and Scottish national rugby union team, "Flower of Scotland" is one of the most popular sporting anthems in Europe.



It was composed in the mid-1960s by Roy Williamson of the folk group the Corries and was first heard publicly in a BBC television series in 1967, where it did not yet include the third 'we can still rise now' verse. The words refer to the victory of the Kingdom of Scotland, led by Robert I, over Edward II of the Kingdom of England at the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314. Although there is no official national anthem of Scotland, "Flower of Scotland" is one of a number of songs which are used, along with the older "Scotland the Brave".

HVSC Committee meets at Club Macquarie, Argenton at 7pm on the second Tuesday of each month

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Upcoming Events 2026

Sat 26th Sep Bonnie Wingham Scottish Festival at Wingham from 9am at the Showground. Wingham has a long history of Scottish influence, beginning with the settling of Scottish immigrants in the early 1800s. They arrived with very few possessions and struggled to establish a way of life. Their Scottish Festival celebrates the lives and culture of these early Australians and welcomes people of all nationalities to join them. The number of clans increases and enthusiasm is still there!

Tue 29th Sep HVSC Members' Social Night – to be held this month at Boolaroo Bowls & Social Club 31 Eighth Avenue, Speers Point from 6pm to 8pm. Good menu of family favourites. Call Linda to book in.

Sat 3rd Oct Penrith Highland Festival sponsored by Penrith RSL at Penrith Showground from 8am to 5pm. Enjoy all the fun of a real Highland Gathering. Tickets only \$15.00. See their website for info.

Sat 10th Oct Scottish Australian Heritage Council invites you to their 2026 Canberra Dinner from 6pm at D'Browes Restaurant, 59 Boolimba Cresc, Narrabundah ACT
Contact: Susan Cooke alfredhcooke@gmail.com

Sun 11th Oct HVSC Annual General Meeting to be held again at Club Macquarie. Join us in the Bistro for Sunday lunch, if you wish, from 12 noon – great specials to suit all tastes. Then from 2pm the AGM will begin, followed by our usual complimentary afternoon tea. You must be a financial member to vote. Membership fees can be taken before the meeting,

Tue 27th Oct HVSC Members' Social Night back at our favourite venue, Mr. Zhou's Asian Bistro at Teralba Bowling Club. Join us from 6pm. Call Linda to confirm.

Sat 31st Oct The Great Sydney Highland Fair, Windsor, hosted by the Governor Macquarie Memorial Pipe Band and Windsor Wolves Football Club at the Windsor Sporting Complex, Rifle Range Road from 11.30am to 9pm. This is a large scale family- friendly outdoor cultural festival celebrating Scottish heritage and Celtic traditions.

Sun 29th Nov St. Andrews Day Church Service and the 'Kirkin' o' the Tartan' at Warners Bay Uniting Church, 342 Hillsborough Road, Warners Bay, commencing at 9.00am followed by Morning Tea and Scottish Country Dancing in the hall. Enquiries to Grahame Pricter 0402 335 410

Tue 1st Dec Hunter Valley Scots Club Christmas Party in the Sunset Room at Club Macquarie. Lots of fun and frivolity and oodles of surprises. Order your own food from the Bistro and celebrate the spirit of the season with your fellow HVSC members.

Sat 30th Jan Hunter Valley Scots Club Burns Night Supper in the auditorium at Club Macquarie, Main Road, Argenton. With our new semi formal event. Bookings will open soon at Trybooking <https://www.trybooking.com/DMFNB>. Stand by for further information or call Linda 0434 617 842