



Hunter Valley Scots Club Inc. Naidheachdan

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'Scotland the Brave'



Undoubtedly, one of the most recognizable Scottish tunes, 'Scotland the Brave' regularly hails the entrance and exit of pipe bands at Highland Gatherings and events worldwide.

Scotland is a country steeped in history, culture and tradition and, while it has a rich heritage, Scotland does not have a national anthem of its own but, despite this, one song that has become synonymous with Scottish identity is 'Scotland the Brave'. The song has become a source of pride and inspiration for the people of Scotland and its popularity continues to this day.

The origin of the tune of Scotland the Brave can be traced back to around 1891 when it was published in Norman McDonald's Jester collection of highland music under the title of 'Scotland Forever'. However, the sentiment dates back to at least the 1820's, the tune being originally a flute solo and it is not clear who actually composed it, therefore it is always listed as 'traditional'.

The lyrics were written by Scottish journalist, songwriter and historian, Cliff Hanley in 1951, who was asked to write those lyrics by Scottish tenor, Robert Wilson, a prominent performer who needed a song for the finale of his Christmas Review that was being performed at the Glasgow Empire Theatre.

Wilson paid £25 to Hanley for the lyrics but refused to take the rights to the song stating that it was far too good. The lyrics to 'Scotland the Brave' reflect the



bravery of the Scottish people and their love for their homeland. Then song speaks of the natural beauty of Scotland, the bravery of its warriors, making no mention of wars against the English.

This emotional reflection of a Scottish soldier far from home made the song so popular with Scottish people that it was quickly adopted as an unofficial national anthem. The sound of the pipes was widely recognized in the late 19th century, as a precursor to the

arrival of Scottish regiments. Their military prowess was well known throughout the world, and the sound of the pipes would instill fear in the enemies of the British Empire and raise the morale of those they were coming to relieve. The warrior tradition of the Scots runs deep, and the song is felt by Scots to be a celebration of their bravery as a race both individually and nationally. In June 2006, the Royal National Scottish Orchestra conducted an online poll on their website asking visitors to choose a favourite song to be Scotland's national anthem. With over 10,000 votes cast 'Flower of Scotland' came in first with 41% followed by 'Scotland the Brave' with 29%. Despite not officially being recognized as the national anthem of Scotland, 'Scotland the Brave' continues to be a source of inspiration and pride for Scottish people worldwide. It has become synonymous with Scottish identity, its origin enshrouded in mystery but its popularity and importance to Scotland continue to this day. Whether it becomes the official national anthem of Scotland remains to be seen, but it will always remain an important part of Scottish culture and heritage. The words of the song tell the story



Robert Wilson

Hark when the night is falling, hear, hear the pipes are calling, loudly and proudly calling, down through the glen.
There where the hills are sleeping, now feel the blood a-leaping, high as the spirits of the old Highland men

CHORUS: Towering in gallant fame, Scotland my mountain hame, high may your proud standards gloriously wave,
Land of my high endeavour, land of the shining river, land of my heart for ever, Scotland the Brave.

High in the misty Highlands, out by the purple islands, brave are the hearts that beat beneath Scottish skies.
Wild are the winds to meet you, staunch are the friends that greet you, kind as the love that shines from fair maiden's eyes. CHORUS

Far off in sunlit places, sad are the Scottish faces yearning to feel the kiss of sweet Scottish rain.
Where tropic skies are beaming, love sets the heart a-dreaming, longing and dreaming for the homeland again. CHORUS

Clan History Mackay

Clan Mackay (Scottish Gaelic: Clann Mhic Aoidh) is an ancient and once-powerful Highland Scottish clan 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 and in the centuries that followed they were anti-Jacobite. The territory of Clan Mackay consisted of the parishes of Durness, Eddrachillis and Farr 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.

The name Mackay takes its origins from the Gaelic 'Macaoidh' or 'son of Hugh'. The identity of this Hugh is uncertain, but the name probably derives from a member of the ancient Celtic royal house, whose branches disputed the throne in the 12th and 13th centuries.

The Mackays also had strong links with the progeny of Queen Groch, who was married to MacBeth.

By the 14th century, the clan Mackay was well established in the most northerly and remote area of Scotland – their land extending from Cape Wrath along the north coast to Caithness. This is the land known as Strathnaver.

The Mackay clan were both numerous and powerful and theirs is a history of continual strife with their neighbours. After five centuries of dispute, they finally lost their lands to the Sutherlands in the 19th century. The importance of the clan, at this time, is best illustrated by the marriage of Angus Dubh with the grand-daughter of Robert II – a significant political alliance.

The warlike reputation of the clan is echoed in the family motto 'with a strong hand' and the military tradition of the family continued with 3000 Mackay clansmen fighting in the 30 Year War whilst also providing combating force alongside William of Orange.

Historian Angus Mackay in his Book of Mackay (1906) compares two different genealogies of the early chiefs of the Clan Mackay. The first is by Sir Robert Gordon, a 17th-century historian and the second by Alexander Mackay of Blackcastle, an 18th to 19th century historian who had access to the charters and historical documents of the Mackay chief's family. Both genealogies have similarities but there are also significant differences given for the ancestry of the Mackay chiefs. Gordon's genealogy also claims that the chiefs of the Clan Mackay shared a common ancestor with both the chiefs of the Clan Forbes and chiefs of Clan Farquharson. Historian Angus Mackay gives evidence that explains that Gordon's theory of the connection to the Forbes' was due to an extremely strong alliance between the two families that began during the 16th century in a long feud with the Gordon family. The Blackcastle MS shows that the Mackay chiefs were related to the Farquharsons but gives a different connection to that given by Gordon. Angus Mackay analyses what evidence is available to support each of the two genealogies and concludes that the one given in Alexander Mackay's Blackcastle Manuscript is by far the most accurate.



The chieftain of Clan Mackay is **Aeneas Simon Mackay**, the 15th Lord Reay. He is also a Dutch nobleman and was officially inaugurated as the 29th Chief of Clan Mackay on 19th August 2023. Lord Reay succeeded his father, Hugh Mackay, the 14th Lord Reay, who died in 2013. The inauguration took place at Strathnaver Museum in Sutherland, The ceremony was conducted in accordance with ancient Highland customs and traditions dating back to pre-Christian Scotland. In assuming the leadership responsibilities Lord Reay will ensure that the traditions and customs of Clan Mackay which have been passed down for generations are respected and preserved for future generations. He inherits the title and related responsibilities of Chief of Clan Mackay. He commented that "the role of the Clan Chief in modern times, although largely ceremonial, consists of representing the clan and its heritage to the wider world and to the next generation". A weekend of celebrations included visits to clan Mackay sites of historical significance.



Nollaig Chridheil

Hunter Valley Scots Club

Is delighted to invite all members to a festive

Scottish Christmas Party

At Club Macquarie - in the Sunset Room at 6pm

*on **Tuesday 2nd December 2025***

Meals can be purchased at the bistro,

this is a wonderful opportunity to kick off the holiday season.

Please RSVP to Linda 0434 617 842 or Toni 0417 274 200

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

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Elizabeth Lewin

Committee
Matt Baer
Robert Findley
Helen Fulton
Robyn Smith
Andrew Smith
Toni McLean



Upcoming Events 2026

See the attached flyer for our Burns' Night Celebrations At Club Macquarie



Bookings are already open, so be early and don't miss out !

Stayed tuned for updates on HVSC and
other events in 2026