

HISTORIC MACLEOD CEMETERY, JAMESTOWN

"Skeletons in the closet for the McLeods of the mid-north" - a Clan visit 30 Oct. 1999

Lets revisit an article in our Clan Newsletter December 1999 and for those who were there lets remember that old and crumbling walled McLeod cemetery, off the Peterborough Rd. and Hillview farm in the distance.

Donald and Annie and their 5 children, and his brother Allan and Margaret came from Isle of Pabbay in the Outer Hebrides after being shuffled about in the Clearances. The ship was the "Royal Albert" and the families settled in the area north of Jamestown. Later their sons purchased land and established the private cemetery in 1872. 50 folk are interred there including the notable MS McLeod of McLeod Tyres. The properties have passed from the families and the cemetery had been in the trust of Elders and various companies.

Rob Miller (Secretary) added.. " The only disappointing aspect of the two day tour was the condition of the McLeod private cemetery. Most of the graves did not have names and the dirt paths surrounding them were scored by erosion. My disquiet was obviously shared as several days after returning home I received a phone call from Robert McLeod who expressed similar views regarding the state of the cemetery. He suggested that the Clan submit a letter of appeal to the State Heritage Commission seeking financial assistance to restore the cemetery, I canvassed this proposal and agreed to draft a letter provided the action was supported by the cemetery trustees and associated parties. At the present time Robert McLeod and Merle Botrall are investigating the above with the costing of the project including the assigning of names to the gravesites."..1999

UPDATE 2002

Our President, Fraser McAskill notified me the other day...."It was necessary to find out who was currently responsible for the cemetery. After a long and involved trail I found that a large sum of money had been left in trust with a trustee company. This company no longer existed, having been taken over by another, which had been taken over by another, which had merged with another etc.

Through a chance meeting I found out that one of the direct descendants of the original McLeod families had received a letter stating that the money had run out and it asked "what was he going to do about it.?"

He (Jeffers) is elderly with limited finance, so was very pleased to know that we were interested, and he would be happy for us to take over the responsibility. I contacted the local Council regarding costs and they offered to waive any costs if we were prepared to look after the cemetery (*as is the situation with Fraser and the McAskill 'Gaelic ' Cemetery in Clare*). However when I checked out the insurance it put the plan out of reach.

Further discussions with the Council resulted in the Council advising me that they were prepared to be responsible for the Cemetery. They are now in discussion with Tower Trust (current Trustees) and National Trust (which has entered the dynamics) as to which is the best way to resolve this so that the cemetery can remain an historic icon in the area. "

We as a group can be proud of the fact that we showed interest and followed up. Intervention may have averted further deterioration and the loss of an important McLeod and historical site.

Thank you Rob Miller, Robert McLeod, Fraser McAskill.

The story of the Families is in the book written and researched by Rod McLeod 1992, "*The McLeods of Pabbay*". We have a photocopy reproduction of it.

Also in our box is *Uphill All The Way*, by Stephen Kelen the biography of Murdoch Stanley McLeod, a great-grandson of those pioneers, and his story overlaps the family history.