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## A TRIBUTE TO ANDREW B W MACEWEN

*Contributed by Adrian Benjamin Burke*

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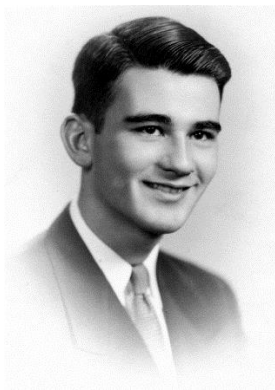
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*Note from the Editor:* This specially extended version of the tribute is provided for online readers. The print version is limited to one page due to space constraints.

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The Executive Committee of the FMG has announced the award of Honorary Membership to Andrew B W MacEwen in recognition of his outstanding contributions to Scottish medieval genealogy, and of his unstinting support for the Foundation since its establishment.

Andrew Brian Wendover MacEwen, of Stockton Springs, Maine, was born in Bangor, Maine, USA, 12 January 1939, younger son of Maynard Leslie and Aimee Maxine (Barnes) MacEwen. Through his father, MacEwen descends from the notorious James Drummond, Rob Roy's eldest son who died destitute in Paris in 1754, and his wife Annabella McNicol, aunt of Rev. Donald McNicol, minister of Lismore, author of the well-known reply to Dr Johnson. Their son John McGregor (1749–1832) served in the American Revolution and in 1784 settled in what is now Prince Edward Island, Canada. In 1988 Maynard MacEwen (1909–2007) matriculated arms following a grant by Lord Lyon Innes of Edingight in favour of his great-grandfather Benjamin McEwen the Younger (1818–1882).



*This striking portrait, taken in 1957, shows MacEwen as a young man about to enter university.*

MacEwen attended Harvard University on National Merit and Harvard National Scholarships and graduated in 1962 with a BA in Medieval History and Literature. Shortly thereafter, he moved to New York City and worked for Bankers Trust and Equitable Life Insurance. MacEwen left New York in 1968 and lived in Boston where he wrote computer software for Honeywell, but in 1972 returned to Maine and joined his mother's antiquarian book business.

MacEwen's life-long interest in genealogy began in 1951 — cultivated by his maternal great-grandmother's interest in her family's history. His own foray into genealogical research began with a study of the families of Prince Edward Island, for which he received the Heritage Awareness Award in 1979 from The Prince Edward Island Heritage Foundation. Following a trip to Scotland in 1973 during which he visited Rob Roy's gravesite; MacEwen turned his attention to medieval Scottish genealogy and in

2012 was elected the first honorary member of The Scottish Medievalists. Such have been MacEwen's contributions to the field of Scottish history and genealogy that the late Donald E R Watt wrote in his preface to the 2003 edition of *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanæ Medii Aevi Ad Annum 1638* that MacEwen's, "critical ventures among the sources for medieval Scottish history leave many of us on this side of the Atlantic awe-struck." In fact, in a private letter to MacEwen dated 5 May 2003, Watt confessed, "Your own critical interest in this project has played an important part in persuading Athol Murray and myself [sic] in our retirement to produce this new edition as our final major contribution to the history of medieval Scotland."

For over forty years MacEwen's approach to Scottish research has been guided by a maxim promulgated by Scottish medievalist Cosmo Innes in the preface to his 1832 *Paisley Register*:

*In the early history of all countries, – but especially of one whose history has been obscured not so much even by the loss of its national records, as by the folly of writers attempting to supply that loss by fabulous inventions, – it is of the first consequence to assemble as a foundation all historical facts, however trivial; and the collector will often be astonished to find these, singly so unimportant, when placed together, arranging themselves in the lucid order and full detail of true history.*

Over the years MacEwen has corresponded with American and British historians and genealogists, viz., Geoffrey Barrow, Lorne Campbell, Archie Duncan, Bruce McAndrew, Donald Watts, as well as Charles F H Evans. MacEwen's decade-long correspondence with the latter began after Evans' January 1976 note in *The American Genealogist* questioning the descent of the Buchanans of that Ilk from Murdoch, Duke of Albany – owing to their failure to lay claim to the earldom of Lennox. MacEwen pointed out that Isabella of Lennox was Murdoch's second wife, a fact first brought to light in 1908 by Rev. John Anderson's chapter, "The Celtic Earls of Lennox," in volume five of *The Scots Peerage*. By his first wife Joanna Douglas (c.1372–1391), eldest child of Archibald the Grim, 3rd Earl of Douglas, Murdoch had a son Robert (1389–1416 or 1417), whose historical significance as one-time heir to the earldoms of Fife and Menteith has not been realized, and a daughter Margaret (1391–aft.1414), wife of Sir Walter Buchanan II. MacEwen describes this puzzle – the proof of which took twenty years to perfect – as, "one of the most intricate problems in medieval Scottish genealogy," and shared his preliminary findings with the late Sir Iain Moncreiffe, who included them in the 1980 revised edition of *The Highland Clans*. MacEwen's article, "Some notes on the Keith and Gordon pedigrees," which proved Elizabeth, heiress of Gordon, was a granddaughter of Robert II's daughter Joanna and her first husband John Keith, was written expressly in honour of Evans for: *Studies in Genealogy and Family History in Tribute to Charles Evans on the occasion of his eightieth birthday*, ed. Lindsay L Brook (1989), 153-189, Salt Lake City: APSG. [Note: *addenda* and *corrigenda* to this article were published in *Foundations* 3(5): 398-400, 2011.]

Although much of his research remains in manuscript form, MacEwen has published widely in American and British journals of history and genealogy – with several articles resolving issues of document dating, a subject of great interest to him. In an August 1984 article, "The English Fleet of 1301," in *West Highland Notes & Queries*, MacEwen showed that three letters by Sir Hugh Bissett, Angus of Islay, and John McQueen, all addressed to Edward of England, were in fact written in 1310 to Edward II, not in 1301 to Edward I, as had been assumed. As a result of this correction, the events described in the letters can be viewed in their proper historical context – demonstrating the importance of proper dating of contemporary records. Another example appears on p.57 of this issue in which MacEwen posed a dating puzzle as a challenge for FMG members. We look forward to many future contributions from this meticulous researcher.

With his article, "A Far-Fetched Alliance," in the present issue of *Foundations*, readers may discover for themselves proof that Andrew B W MacEwen can be considered the greatest living scholar of medieval Scottish genealogy and most deserving of the honour bestowed upon him by The Foundation for Medieval Genealogy. Indeed, students of Scottish history would do well to heed MacEwen's sentiment concerning the reconstruction of Scottish history, *i.e.*, "*Until the pedigrees of her principal families are correctly worked-out and thoroughly digested, the true and correct history of medieval Scotland will never be written.*"

On a final note, I would be remiss not to touch upon my own connection to MacEwen and express my gratitude to the FMG for the privilege of writing this tribute to such a dear friend. American genealogist Anthony Glenn Hoskins introduced me to Andrew in 2009 while we were in the midst of researching what would later become my three-part article, "The Livingston Ancestry of the Duncanson Sisters of New Netherland," published in *The Genealogist*, and mentioned in a note in *Foundations 2*: 6. MacEwen's input included two lengthy footnotes concerning the descent of Margaret Forrester (Colville) (Livingston) from Robert III, King of Scots. Over the years my genealogical research skills — not to mention appreciation for the intricacies of the English language — have grown considerably in part to Andrew's wit and — occasional — prodding. For all our late night phone conversations and the encouragement in all aspects of my professional and personal life; I thank Andrew B W MacEwen, and The Foundation for Medieval Genealogy for the opportunity of honouring such a kind and wise man, and a brilliant genealogist.