

MACQUARIE THE DYNAST: MAJOR-GENERAL LACHLAN MACQUARIE'S ATTEMPTED REVIVAL OF THE CLAN MACQUARIE

Matthew Glozier

INTRODUCTION

Major-General Lachlan Macquarie (1761-1824), Governor of New South Wales from 1810 to 1821, was an ambitious man with considerable talent. He spent a lifetime striving for advancement in his military career and was suitably conscious of the importance of displaying success in a material way. Demonstrations of high rank on uniforms, ownership of land and displays of wealth all played a part in his advertisement of the advancements made by him through his lifetime. However, there was something in his life he valued beyond any of this and it was a thing that could not be bought with money or achieved through hard work – Macquarie was devoted to his clan, to his chief and to his identity as a Scottish Highland gentleman. This article explores the ways in which Macquarie demonstrated, throughout his life, his extremely strong sense of Highland clanship. That sentiment motivated many of his actions, both in his career and in his personal life. It explains his attitude towards his native Scotland, his clan chief and his wives and children, all of whom had a part to play in his self-appointed mission to revive his clan's fortunes (regardless of how far from home he travelled throughout the course of his life).



Figure 1. Lachlan Macquarie, c.1819, at the debut of his tenure as Governor of NSW © Mitchell Library.¹

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¹ Mitchell Library MIN 236. Reproduced by courtesy of the State Library of NSW.

The research and writing of this article has created several debts to researchers that I want to acknowledge. Richard d'Apice, has written convincingly about Macquarie, touching 'on his little-understood place in Clan Macquarie, and his usage as an armiger'.² D'Apice's article on Macquarie's heraldry and his use of armorial bearings is unsurpassed in its treatment of the subject and this article is the beneficiary of that research. The work of Robert William Munro provides an invaluable insight into the Clan MacQuarrie. Munro's book – *Lachlan MacQuarrie, XVI of Ulva. With notes on some clansmen in India* (1944) – is valuably integrated into his collaborative work with Alan Macquarrie in producing something close to an Official History of the clan: *Clan MacQuarrie: A History* (1996).³ These works contain useful and informative commentary on the clan, its chief and their connections to Lachlan Macquarie.

HIS PLACE IN THE FAMILY

Lachlan Macquarie's father is often described as a carpenter, too poor to manage independently on his small farm-steading on Mull. This might be true, but young Lachlan received an education on par with that given to the sons of his chief and neighbour on the small, nearby island of Ulva.⁴ Young Macquarie was also an acknowledged cadet of the chiefly line. Later in life, his chief, Lachlan Macquarie of Ulva, viewed him as a most promising member of the family and maintained a correspondence with him. It is true we will never know exactly where our Lachlan was positioned in the family. One suggestion is that his father belonged to the cadet branch of Macquarie of Ormaig; but, in any case, our Lachlan was the grandson of a Macquarie of Ulva chief through his mother, Margaret, a daughter of Maclaine of Lochbuie.⁵ Significantly, from the point of view of this article, Lachlan's relationship to his chief was never close enough to support a claim to the chiefship of the clan. A man of such energy and ambition as Lachlan Macquarie would undoubtedly have made a claim on that august position had he been sufficiently close in blood.⁶

The Macquaries were an ancient clan, long associated with the Isle of Ulva, and enmeshed by marriage into the neighbouring blood-lines of Maclaine and Campbell. With this kind of history it makes sense that young Lachlan Macquarie would want to stamp his early career success in the army with the signs of gentlemanly status understood and displayed by all

² Richard d'Apice, 'Lachlan Macquarie, Fifth Governor of New South Wales: Scots Clansman and Armiger 1762-1824', *Alta Studia Heraldica: Journal of the Royal Heraldry Society of Canada*, Vol. 5 (2013-14), pp. 61-94.

³ R. W. Munro, *Lachlan MacQuarrie, XVI of Ulva. With notes on some clansmen in India* (Karachi: R.W. Munro, 1944); R. W. Munro and A. Macquarrie, *Clan MacQuarrie: A History* (Bruce McQuarrie, Auburn, Mass., 1996), Ch. 3: 'The Last Chief'. This work is available on-line at <http://archive.li/IVt7>.

⁴ 'Scottish National Archives, GD 174/1387/72', cited in Munro and Macquarrie, *Clan MacQuarrie*, Ch. 3: 'The Last Chief'.

⁵ John Ritchie, *Lachlan Macquarie: A Biography* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1986), p. 12; Malcolm H. Ellis, *Lachlan Macquarie: His Life, Adventures and Times* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1947), p. 1; Jo Currie, *Mull: The Island and its People* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2001), p. 245.

⁶ D'Apice, 'Lachlan Macquarie', p. 63.

those around him. Lachlan was a Highland gentleman from an ancient family, irrespective of his father's circumstances which were irrelevant in the context of Highland clanship. However, Lachlan Macquarie had no clear notion of what his arms might be, at least according to the prevailing Scottish system of heraldry which dictated the inclusion of precise difference marks on the shield of every armiger in the kingdom.

We can be sure Lachlan did not use a coat-of-arms prior to his marriage to Jane Jarvis, the youngest of the seventeen children of Thomas Jarvis and Rachel Thibou. Both of Jane's parents were armigerous residents of Antigua in the West Indies.⁷ 'Armigerous' means they possessed a coat-of-arms. Jane's armorial heritage proved she was well-born and well connected and, when she died too young of consumption at Macao in China in 1796, she left Lachlan £6,000 sterling. In part, and in addition to his lingering strong affection for Jane, the material outcome of her death explains his later naming of land on Mull 'Jarvisfield' in memory of Jane Jarvis. As many of us also know, he went further, naming his first short-lived daughter by his second wife, Elizabeth Campbell of Airds, Jane Jarvis Macquarie (born and died in 1807).⁸ That second wife, Elizabeth Campbell, was the daughter of Lachlan's second cousin, John Campbell of Airds (1737–88). Naturally, the Laird of Airds was also armigerous.

This all suggests a strong consciousness, on Macquarie's part, of the desirability of dynastic perpetuity. In fact, by the time of these acts of naming and remembering Jane Jarvis, Macquarie was himself using a coat-of-arms. By that point in his life, Macquarie had the joy of a living child: Lachlan Macquarie, junior (1814–45).⁹ Given Lachlan's family background and the prevailing usages of his era, it is no wonder he began to make use of armorial bearings. In 1794 – shortly after his first marriage to Jane Jarvis – Lachlan Macquarie expressed a desire to know what his own coat-of-arms was. It wanted to paint it on the doors of a new carriage and engrave it on silver plate. After all, he was now a married man and head of a household, albeit for the time being a childless home. He asked his new sister-in-law, Dorothea Morley, to purchase silver-ware when she visited London.

It is fascinating to know the process of commissioning such heraldic work in that era. The first hurdle for Macquarie was to discover his arms. Today a 'google' search might be the starting point for that investigation; a hundred years ago, Burke's *General Armory* could furnish examples of several arms associated with one's surname. In the 1790s, Macquarie was forced to do things differently. He knew his clan chief was an armigerous Scottish gentleman, but he either had never seen (or at least did not exactly recall) the form of his chief's arms. In January 1794, Lachlan wrote to Murdoch MacLaine of Lochbuie, his uncle and resident of the Isle of Mull, requesting him:

To get from [his cousin, the chief of the clan] Macquarie as good an impression as possible from his seal on wax of my family coat of arms ... to have the arms put on our chariot and some articles of plate we have sent for [from London]. Great care must be

⁷ D'Apice, 'Lachlan Macquarie', pp. 63–4.

⁸ *The Scots Magazine and Edinburgh Literary Miscellany*, Vol. 70 (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable & Co., 1808), p. 960. At: <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.32044092547587;view=1up;seq=994>.

⁹ Ritchie, *Lachlan Macquarie*, pp. 91, 140, 221.

taken to make the impression on wax as plain as possible that the engraver and painter may understand it. Indeed, if Macquarie would allow the seal itself to be sent to London it would be the surest way of having our arms properly executed by the artist; and he might send such explanations along with it as he may judge proper.¹⁰

Three days later, Lachlan Macquarie wrote to General Allan Maclean of Torloisk. This gentleman was his chief's brother-in-law and at that time resident in London. Lachlan enquired if he could 'get an impression of it [his chief's seal] struck off on Copper Plate ... [but emphasized] that the Supporters are not to be put on the Carriage or Plate.'¹¹ In the words of Richard d'Apice:

Clearly, while Macquarie regarded the Macquarie arms as those of the family and the entitlement of all, he understood that the supporters were the personal entitlement of the Chief.¹²

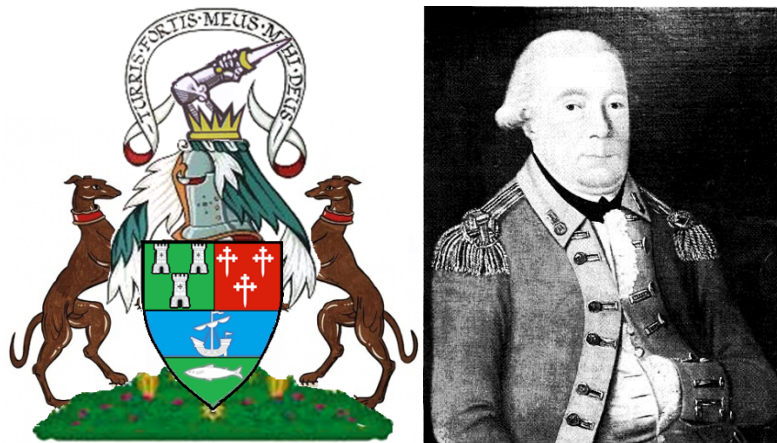


Figure 2. L. Arms of Macquarie of Ulva – Chief of Clan Macquarie.¹³ R. Lachlan Macquarie of Ulva (d. 1818), 16th and last chief of the Macquaries.¹⁴

Far from feeling threatened or offended by any of this, the Clan Chief, Lachlan Macquarie, 16th of Ulva, happily assisted Lochbuie by referring him to a coloured version of the chiefly arms in the possession of a relation. He added that 'the motto ... is 'TURRIS FORTIS MIHI DEUS', in English 'God is my strong tower'.¹⁵ Although we will never know Macquarie's exact

¹⁰ Macquarie to Murdoch Maclean, 1 January 1794; Mitchell Library, Letter Book, 31 August 1793-25 October 1794, CY Reel 304 A787, cited in Munro, *Lachlan MacQuarrie, XVI of Ulva*, p. 9.

¹¹ Macquarie to General Maclean, 4 January 1794; Mitchell Library, Letter Book 31 August 1793-25 October 1794, CY Reel 304 A787, 71 cited in Munro, *Lachlan MacQuarrie, XVI of Ulva*, p. 9.

¹² D'Apice, 'Lachlan Macquarie', p. 70.

¹³ Arms rendered by the author.

¹⁴ A. McKenzie Annand, 'Two officers of the "old" 74th (or Argyll) Highlanders of 1777-1783', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, Vol. 55, No. 224 (1977), pp. 211-214.

¹⁵ 'Macquarie to Lochbuie, 1 January 1794', quoted in Munro and Macquarrie, *Clan MacQuarrie*, Ch. 3.

relationship to his chief, the question is rendered null-and-void by the fact of his chief's acknowledgement of him as a near cousin. It is clear that Macquarie's chief was highly encouraging of the idea that this successful kinsman should make use of a version of his arms, thereby adding lustre to the clan.

Reference to the chief's supports begs the question of what form the chiefly arms took. Sir Robert Douglas of Glenburvie gives a contemporary account of the arms in his *Baronage of Scotland*.¹⁶ According to the principles of heraldic description, the arms of MacQuarie of Ulva are:

Arms: Vert, quarterly, in chief, three towers embattled, Argent; 2dly, three cross crosslets fitchie; in middle base, a ship, and, a salmon naiant Proper, for the conjunction with the Macleans.

Crest: out of a crown proper, (alluding to their descent,) an arm embowed in armour, grasping a dagger Argent, pommeled Or.

Motto: TURRIS FORTIS MIHI DEUS.

Supporters: two greyhounds, leash'd and collar'd Proper.

An explanation of Lachlan's attitude to his 'family' arms – such a very taboo attitude in Scotland today – is presented by Douglas's description of the arms of the cadet branch of Macquarie of Ormaig – 'The same as Macquarie of that Ilk [i.e. the chief], without the supporters'.¹⁷ Thus, when Lachlan decided to use arms that were almost exactly the same as his chief's, he was operating within the conventional Highland practice of the era.

The Macquarie chief, landless after the sale of Ulva in 1777, maintained to his dying day a great pride in his ancestry and status as head of the ancient Name and Arms of Clan Macquarie. The historians, Munro and Macquarie, record of the last Chief in retirement:

Most of his letters are sealed with a wax impression of his coat of arms as MacQuarrie of Ulva, with 'supporters' denoting his chiefship of the name. The impression is minute but clear: a shield parted per fess (i.e. divided horizontally) and the upper part per pale (vertically), and the three compartments bear – (1) three cross crosslets fitchée; (2) three towers embattled; and (3) a lymphad in chief and a salmon naiant in base. The crest is an arm in armour embowed, issuing out of a crown and grasping a dagger; the supporters are two greyhounds; and the motto, TURRIS FORTIS MIHI DEUS, is equally divided on two scrolls, above and below the arms.¹⁸

It is interesting to note the parallel to his chief, between armorial pretensions and financial indigence present in the story of our Lachlan Macquarie. In 1794, his brother-in-law, James Morley, threatened to sue him when Macquarie wrote directly to his London bankers, requesting them to use his wife's funds to pay for his armorial commissions. The commissions

¹⁶ Sir Robert Douglas, *The Baronage of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Bell & Bradfute, 1798), pp. 505-10.

¹⁷ Douglas, *Baronage of Scotland*, pp. 505-10

¹⁸ Munro and Macquarie, *Clan MacQuarrie*, Ch. 3; R. W. Munro, 'Governor Lachlan Macquarie and his Family Circle', *Scottish Genealogist*, Vol. 36, Pt. 1 (1989), pp. 7-21.

were cancelled in circumstances of some embarrassment.¹⁹ However, upon becoming Governor of New South Wales, Macquarie took pride in ‘the seal with my arms’ which he carried with him and used for the rest of his life.²⁰ Richard d’Apice describes these arms:

Arms: Quarterly of three, two in chief and one in base: 1st Gules, three cross crosslets fitchie Argent; 2nd Sable, three towers embattled Argent; 3rd per fess Azure and Vert, in chief, a ship and, in base, a salmon naiant Argent.

Crest: an arm embowed in armour, grasping a dagger.

Motto: above the shield: TURRIS FORTIS below the shield: MIHI DEUS.



Figure 3. L. Crest on a wine coaster, 1807-9.²¹ R. Arms engraved on a pocket watch 1819.²²

These arms closely resemble those of the Macquarie chief, differing only in the placement on the shield of the crosses and towers. There is no crown in the crest and the chief's greyhound supporters are absent.²³ These are the arms that Lachlan Macquarie used for the rest of his life and that usage was an essential component of his dynastic strategy for the establishment of his own landed cadet branch of the family and the revival of the clan's fortunes more broadly.

Proof of how seriously Macquarie viewed the connection between these heraldic adornments and career advancement is evident in his liberal use of the armorial bearings during his tenure as Governor of New South Wales. The arms are engraved on a watch he gifted in 1819; on two wine coasters made between 1807 and 1809; and on a silver trowel from 1821.

¹⁹ Ritchie, *Lachlan Macquarie*, p. 34.

²⁰ Munro, *Lachlan MacQuarrie, XVI of Ulva*, p. 8.

²¹ 'Wine coaster with Macquarie coat of arms', *Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences*. At: <https://collection.maas.museum/object/172202>.

²² 'Lieutenant Watts' watch', *Sydney Living Museums*. At: <https://sydneylivingmuseums.com.au/threads-of-connection/keeping-time#data6809>.

²³ D'Apice, 'Lachlan Macquarie', p. 73.

They were also carved in wood in 1820 on the famous Macquarie Chair now in the possession of Macquarie University (interestingly it is upholstered in kangaroo hide). Altogether, we get the impression of vigorous use of his arms by Governor Macquarie.

Macquarie clearly had a keen sense of the social prestige implied by the use of armorial bearings. Naturally, in the process of him using his arms so prolifically, he was also demonstrating their importance to his son-and-heir, Lachlan junior. Arms are, of course, hereditary and Governor Macquarie had established his usage of a version of his chief's arms (with the active and hearty encouragement of the indigent Macquarie of Ulva). The next step was to augment the honour of gentlemanly rank with honours and decorations, or by upgrading it to titled aristocratic status.

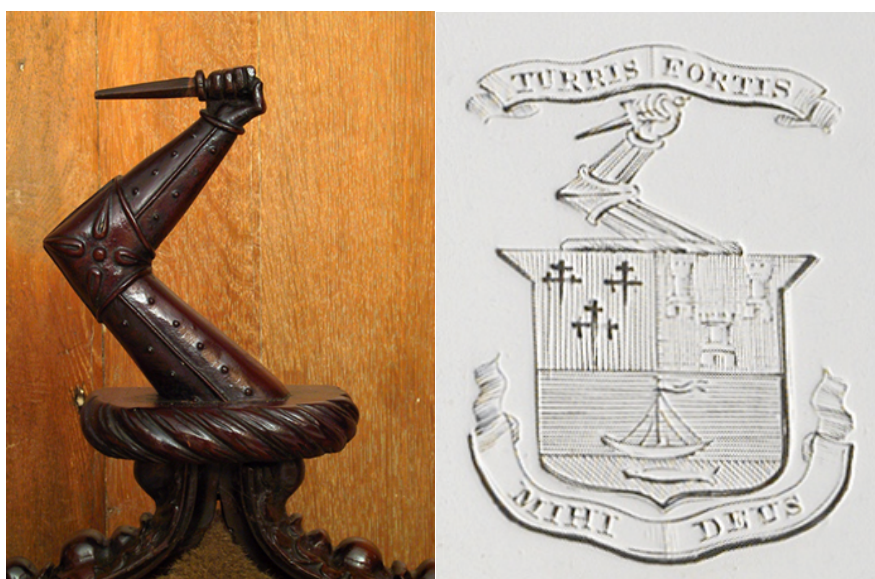


Figure 4. L. Crest on the Macquarie Chair, 1820.²⁴ R. Arms on a silver trowel, 1821.²⁵

When he returned to Britain from Australia in 1824, Lachlan Macquarie's reputation was under a cloud due to the negative Bigge Report then in circulation, much to the ex-Governor's embarrassment and anger. It was a poor time to pursue official Crown recognition of his achievements as Governor. Macquarie particularly sought the grant of a title of nobility. He was desperate for a sign of government approval and safe in the knowledge that he retained some powerful supporters at court. In May 1824, Lord Bathurst, Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, gave Macquarie an immediate negative response to the idea of a title.²⁶ Macquarie did achieve his pension, but at the start of July, before anything more could be achieved, he died in his sixty-second year of life. Lachlan Macquarie's body was returned to Mull and laid in state in the parlour of his small cottage at Gruline, in company with the exhumed body of his daughter. Their mortal remains were accompanied by special dynastic adornments: 'The

²⁴ 'Construction of the Chairs', *Lachlan and Elizabeth Macquarie Archive*. At: <https://www.mq.edu.au/macquarie-archive/lema/chair/construction.html>.

²⁵ Reproduced in d'Apice, 'Lachlan Macquarie', p. 77.

²⁶ Ritchie, *Lachlan Macquarie*, p. 210.

escutcheons [family arms, painted on boards] were placed over a table at the head of Macquarie's coffin.'²⁷

The significance of the Isle of Mull demands explanation here as it was a key component of Macquarie's plans for his future and that of his family. Lachlan Macquarie felt keenly the decline of his clan's fortunes. Despite a large family, spanning two marriages, his Clan Chief's large brood of male heirs had mostly died in service in the Americas or India. That last chief of the clan, Lachlan Macquarie, 16th of Ulva, is often accused of financial mismanagement (and his Maclaine relations were damning in their assessment of his life-style). Mr Robin Walsh, former curator of The Lachlan and Elizabeth Macquarie Room at Macquarie University, points out that the old chief was, in truth, quite an old rogue whose personal life and circumstances, as well as his profligate approach to debt and his Ulva estate, doomed the clan to extinction. There is little evidence to suggest that his sons would ever have been any better, had they not predeceased their father.²⁸ However, even his direct contemporaries – including Dr Johnson and James Boswell, who visited in 1773 – saw clearly the harsh effects on the Highlands of the modern cash-based economy combined with government restrictions on traditional Highland chiefship. Most certainly, Macquarie of Ulva was a very traditional Highland chief indeed. This all resulted in the sale of Ulva and the chief living out his days in penury. For our Lachlan, who took such pride in his ancestry and clan membership, this was a travesty.²⁹



Figure 5. Arms of the Mausoleum on Mull, c. 1852.³⁰

²⁷ D'Apice, 'Lachlan Macquarie', pp. 80-81.

²⁸ Personal communication, Tue 26/02/2019 5:50 PM.

²⁹ Donald W. MacKenzie, *As it Was: An Ulva Boyhood*, (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2000), p. 13.

³⁰ The dating of the Mausoleum comes from Pauline Conolly, 'Bitter Legacy: The Dispute over the Macquarie Estate', *paulineconolly.com* (2015). At: <https://paulineconolly.com/2015/bitter-legacy-the-dispute-over-the-macquarie-estate/>.

As their careers prospered, two junior kinsmen of the Clan Macquarie – Lachlan Macquarie and his younger brother, Charles – sought to restore the land-owning status of the clan. Remember, Lachlan was too distant in blood to aspire to the chiefship of the Clan Macquarie. Indeed, his landless chief not only lived to the ripe old age of 103 (finally dying in 1818) but had a son-and-heir on hand in the form of Donald Macquarie, younger of Ulva. Instead, Lachlan Macquarie set his sights on land that had value and meaning for him personally. Thus, in 1802, he finalised the purchase of part of the property of his uncle, Murdoch MacLaine, on the Isle of Mull.³¹ At the same time, Charles Macquarie bought land on Ulva itself. Macquarie's purchase cost £22,000 Sterling (not Scots pounds!), representing his entire fortune built up over his whole career of hard effort. What a strong indication of his depth of feeling for the clan homelands! The purchase achieved the securing of about 10,000 acres, a fair portion of the ancient patrimonial property of the Macquaries.

In July 1804, Lachlan MacQuarrie of Ulva, the last Chief of the Clan, and his son, Donald, younger of Ulva, were present at the inauguration of Lachlan Macquarie's newly purchased estate on the Isle of Mull. When they sat down to dinner at the inn of Callachilly on Mull, Major-General Macquarie declared the consolidated land-holding would be called 'Jarvisfield', in honour of his first wife.³² In the opinion of his second wife, Elizabeth Campbell, the purchase of this estate did not usher in a hopeful and prosperous future for the Macquarie blood-line. Rather, she described it as 'ruinous' financially, and with good reason. When Macquarie's brother, Charles, died in 1835, the proceeds from the sale of his personal estates on Ulva and Mull went entirely towards secured his creditors. Nothing remained for his children.³³ Just like his cousin, the dispossessed 16th Chief of Ulva, Lachlan Macquarie had spent money liberally, especially during his term as Governor of New South Wales. His purchase of a Highland estate at such a high price thus compounded his pre-existing financial distress. Lachlan had hoped to build a castle on his lands, but he had to make do with the small pre-existing draughty dwelling that was Gruline House. In truth, it was little better than the croft in which he had been born ... but at last now he was a Highland laird. There was no question

³¹ It was not until 1803 that financial arrangements were completed for the purchase of Killiechonan, Torlorchan (including Salen, the village founded by Macquarie), Jarvisfield Home Grounds (including Gruline House), portions of Callachilly, Kilbeg, Codully and Bentalla. It consisted of approx. 10,000 acres and he paid £10,060: Richie, *Lachlan Macquarie*, p. 67. The second land acquisition was in 1816, this time from the Duke of Argyll. This land was referred to as 'Leharnakeal' and included all the lands along Loch Na Keal from Gruline to the ferry crossing at Lagganulva: Kellan, Kiliemore, Archarn, Archronich, Oskamull, Korkamull and the higher slopes of 'shieling' land. This tranche of land measured approximately 10,000 acres. This time Lachlan Macquarie authorized his brother, Charles, to expend himself financially up to £21,000 (he was prepared to go as high as £25,000). This latter amount he did not possess and the final purchase price was £22,000: 'Lachlan Macquarie to Charles Macquarie, 8 April 1817', *Macquarie Papers* (National Library of Scotland, NLS, MSS 3383). It was this latter purchase that bankrupted Macquarie. I am grateful to Mr Robin Walsh for these details.

³² 'Clan MacQuarrie', *Wikipedia* (Last updated August 15, 2025).
At: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clan_MacQuarrie.

³³ Pauline Conolly, 'The Two Wives of Hector Macquarie', *History: Magazine of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, No. 104 (2010), pp. 10-12.

of collecting rent from tenants (who were either non-existent or had nothing to give), and the land itself was virtually unsalable in an era before sheep grazing became the profitable mainstay of Highland estates.³⁴

Elizabeth Campbell's pessimism took longer to eventuate than she predicted, because the aspiration to revive the fortunes of Clan Macquarie did not die with the ex-Governor in 1824 (or with the passing of his younger brother, Charles, in 1835). Lachlan Macquarie, junior, was only 10 at the time of his father's death, but his subsequent life proves he had taken note of his father's inclinations in regard to dynastic ideas.³⁵ He took possession of his inheritance in 1835, the year his mother died. The following year he followed local family tradition by marrying a distant relation (and a Campbell), Isabella Hamilton Dundas Campbell of Jura. Lachlan Macquarie, junior, died just ten years later in 1845 at the young age of 31. He was not made in the same mould as his career-driven father and even the old last Clan Chief of Ulva might have looked askance at his life-style. Childless, Lachlan Junior's death marks the end of his father's hopes for a landed dynasty that might have lasted centuries.³⁶



Figure 6. 'Chiefly' arms used by Lachlan Macquarie, junior, c. 1835-45.³⁷

³⁴ N. D. McLachlan, 'Macquarie, Lachlan (1762 - 1824)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol. 2 (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1967), p. 187; d'Apice, 'Lachlan Macquarie', pp. 68-9.

³⁵ D'Apice, 'Lachlan Macquarie', p. 83.

³⁶ Ritchie, *Lachlan Macquarie*, p. 220; Pauline Conolly, 'The Strange Story of the Macquarie Mausoleum', *Quadrant* (2009), p. 66; Pauline Conolly, 'Bitter Legacy: The Dispute over the Macquarie Estate', *paulineconolly.com* (2015). At: <https://paulineconolly.com/2015/bitter-legacy-the-dispute-over-the-macquarie-estate/>.

³⁷ Reproduced in d'Apice, 'Lachlan Macquarie', pp. 84-85.

Lachlan Macquarie, junior, was not the last of his blood-line, however. His cousin, Charles Macquarie, the eldest son of his uncle, Charles Macquarie, contested the will when Lachlan, junior, tried to gift away the family land on Mull to William Henry Drummond, Viscount Strathallan, a childhood friend. Uncle Charles Macquarie challenged the will, without success, and the 'Jarvisfield' estate was lost to the name of Macquarie.³⁸ This suggests that Lachlan Macquarie, junior, had little regard for his patrimony or his father's efforts to rebuild the Clan Macquarie. However, this is not the case because, at some point in his brief life, Lachlan junior at least flirted with the idea of asserting that he was the chief of the Clan Macquarie. He demanded to be addressed as 'Macquarie of Macquarie' and even adopted the chiefly supporters his father had adamantly avoided. This chiefly pretension is evident in his bookplate, marked 'Jarvisfield' for the name of his estate.³⁹ How far this reflects the peculiarities of Lachlan junior, versus the messages regarding dynastic succession he had inherited from his father, is impossible to say. Certainly, towards the end of his life, Lachlan junior's sanity was questioned.



Figure 7. Matriculation of arms in name of Maj.-Gen. Lachlan Macquarie, granted by the Lord Lyon King of Arms in Scotland in 1967.⁴⁰

Remarkably, even though Macquarie's direct blood-line ended, his armorial bearings have continued to live on. No member of the Macquarie kindred has matriculated arms in the *Public*

³⁸ Conolly, 'The Strange Story of the Macquarie Mausoleum', p. 66.

³⁹ Reproduced in d'Apice, 'Lachlan Macquarie', pp. 84-5.

⁴⁰ 'Matriculation of the arms of Lachlan Macquarie' Governor of NSW' *Public Register of All Arms and Bearings in Scotland*, Vol. 49, fol. 93.

Register of All Arms and Bearings in Scotland, which was established in the 1590s and reinvigorated in 1672 and continues to operate with gusto to this day. Yet, long after Macquarie's life ended, arms were matriculated in his name by Macquarie University in 1967. The process was meant to be a precursor to a Scottish grant of arms to the University, based on the Macquarie arms.⁴¹ Although neither Lachlan Macquarie, nor any of his kindred, ever interacted with the Lord Lyon King of Arms in their life-times, our former Governor finally achieved a properly and officially recorded coat-of-arms.

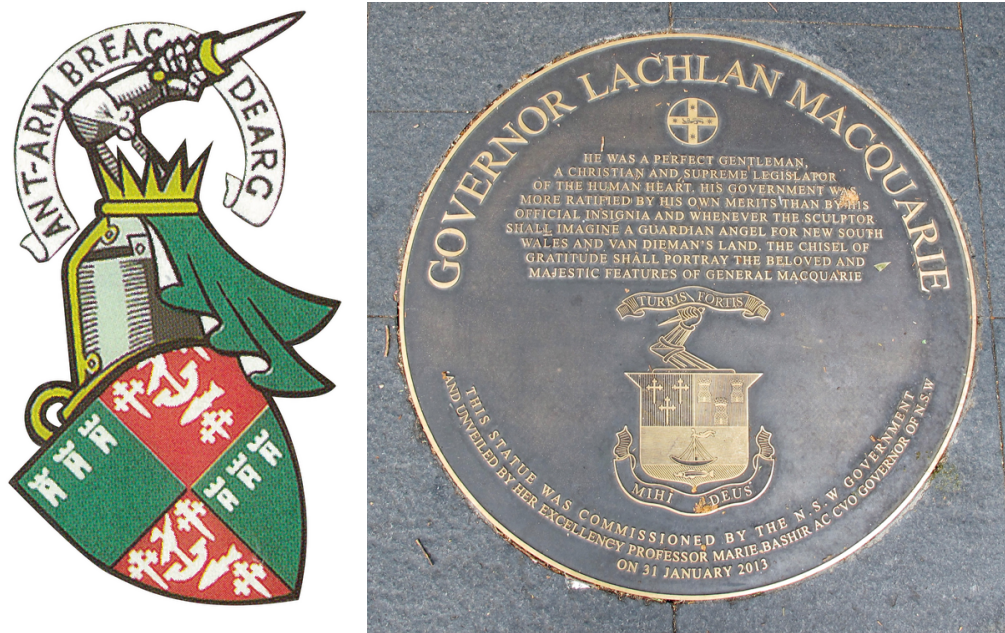


Figure 8. L. Arms of the “Chief of Macquarie” attributed by Moncrieffe and Pottinger, 1983.⁴²
R. Arms on a memorial plaque in Hyde Park, c. 2013.⁴³

The arms recorded in 1967 are not attractive, nor do they bear any relation with those armorial bearings used and valued by Lachlan Macquarie during his lifetime. Remarkably, however, since 1967 Macquarie's coat-of-arms has taken on a life beyond its owner. In part, this is due to misidentification of the place of Governor Macquarie in his family. For example, his Wikipedia entry misidentifies him as the son of the last chief of Ulva.⁴⁴ Wikipedia even goes further, giving an example of Lachlan's 1967 arms as those of his chief – thus intruding recently-granted arms that have no historical character to them into the history of the great Clan Macquarie.⁴⁵ This is not just a failing on the part of modern computing technology. In 1983,

⁴¹ ‘Matriculation of the arms of Lachlan Macquarie’.

⁴² Iain Moncreiffe of that Ilk and Don Pottinger, *Scotland of Old* (Edinburgh: John Bartholomew & Sons, 1983).

⁴³ Reproduced in d’Apice, ‘Lachlan Macquarie’, p. 92.

⁴⁴ ‘Lachlan Macquarie’, *Wikipedia* (Last updated 13 September, 2025).
At: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lachlan_Macquarie.

⁴⁵ ‘MacQuarrie Crest and Coat of Arms’, *Scot Clans*. At: <https://www.scotclans.com/blogs/clan-mn/macquarrie-crest-coats-of-arms>.

seemingly on the basis of the same 1967 matriculation, entirely un-historical arms were attributed to the chief of the Clan Macquarie by Sir Iain Moncreiffe of that Ilk and Don Pottinger, in their wall chart: *Scotland of Old*.⁴⁶ This revelation was made by Richard d'Apice in 2013, based on his thorough study of the actual historical arms used by the Macquaries.⁴⁷

Incidentally, another honour, associated with Lachlan Macquarie, has similarly come into existence and taken on a life of its own – the assertion that he was created a Companion of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath. He was not awarded this honour during his lifetime (or subsequently) and the first instance of it being attributed to him appears to have occurred during the centenary celebrations, attached to his term of office in Australia, that occurred in the 1920s. At this time he began to be described as 'Lachlan Macquarie, C.B.'. ⁴⁸ One eulogistic writer in 1924 even went so far as to call him 'Major-General *Sir* Lachlan Macquarie, C.B.'. ⁴⁹ In retrospect, we might all agree he *should* have been awarded these honours, but the truth is that he was not. Today, his erroneous status as 'C.B.' appears to be enshrined in on-line biographies of Lachlan Macquarie.



Figure 9. Arms of Major-General Lachlan Macquarie, Governor of NSW (1810-21) as used by him in his lifetime.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Iain Moncreiffe of that Ilk and Don Pottinger, *Scotland of Old* (Edinburgh: John Bartholomew & Sons Ltd, 1983).

⁴⁷ D'Apice, 'Lachlan Macquarie', pp. 89-90.

⁴⁸ *The World's News*, 1 October 1921, p. 23; *North West Champion*, 3 July 1924, p. 3; *Sydney Mail*, 30 June 1926, p. 22.

⁴⁹ *National Advocate*, 2 July 1924, p. 1.

⁵⁰ Arms rendered by the author. *Note*: the tincture (colour) of the mantling is usually dictated by the principle colour and metal in the arms. In this case, the mantling should be Gules (red)doubled Argent (silver). However,

Given all of this, it is pleasing that the plaque erected recently at the north end of Hyde Park in Sydney in 2013, to accompany Lachlan Macquarie's statue, accurately represents Macquarie's armorial bearings as he used them in life. As a final comment, it seems fitting to display Lachlan Macquarie's full achievement of arms as he used them in his lifetime.

CONCLUSION

Lachlan Macquarie was, throughout his lifetime, certain of his identity as a proud son of the great and ancient Clan Macquarie of Ulva. His desire to prove himself worthy of that status was one of the strongest driving forces of his life. In particular, it inspired him to pursue a career in arms. He excelled in the military and profited financially from service in dangerous foreign lands, where he faced both the bullets and sword-cuts of opponents and the risk of tropical disease. Yet all of this sat alongside frustration and disappointment. In his personal life, Lachlan Macquarie lost loved ones who died too young – both a wife and child. Financially, he risked and lost everything he had gained through his hard-fighting career in the purchase of an estate in his homeland. His reputation also suffered as a consequence of the Bigge Report, which threatened his pension and guaranteed he never received official recognition (in the form of title or medal) of his service as Governor of New South Wales. In summary, Macquarie died a dispirited man and before his time. How does one explain this apparent contrast of fortune, or success running parallel with failure? An answer can be found in his strong focus on his Scottish origins and the sense of service he felt towards his clan. All his life Lachlan Macquarie maintained a resolute focus on restoring the glory of his clan and its reputation, while simultaneously building up his own bloodline as a landed cadet branch of the great Clan Macquarie. His obsession with this project dominated his later years and, ultimately, bankrupted him (and impoverished his brother). The subsequent loss of the 'Jarvisfield' estate on Mull is merely the denouement of Macquarie's story. The real end came in 1824, when his death ensured Macquarie could push his stock no further. Macquarie is popularly remembered as a great egalitarian, keen to give convicts a 'fair go' in their new lives in Australia. However, it is a revelation to explore Macquarie's use of heraldic symbols of a type connected intimately to the ruling class that was instrumental in the penal justice system that was responsible for the transportation of convicts to Australia. Perhaps we should think all the more highly of Macquarie that he was capable of transcending social snobbery in order to favour ex-convicts. He recognised convict skills and rewarded effort, and this aspect of his character is what separates him from others who served as Governor of New South Wales in its early colonial period. Indeed, his Scottish Presbyterian work ethic and value for honest labour was present in his decision-making and sat logically alongside his desire to be a Scottish laird and landed gentleman. This is why the coat-of-arms of Lachlan Macquarie features so prominently on his memorials, because it is not an embarrassment, but rather an enhancement of his achievements in life.

it has been left Vert (green) doubled Argent in this example in deference to the arms of the Clan Chief, Macquarie of Ulva.