



Clan Munro Australia

Newsletter of the Clan Munro (Association) Australia

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Have you visited our Website at <http://clanmunroaustralia.org>



Chat

This Month

Bet and I hope you have a very merry Christmas and wish you all the best for the coming year

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Next Newsletter

We will have a very interesting article prepared by our Chief, Hector on his family's involvement with the Seaforth Highlanders and associated regiments - complete with photographs.

Cynthia Munro's visit to Foulis Castle

Wendy Borchers's convict ancestor

And hopefully, there will be more!

Don

The most important Munro event of 2014 is fast approaching. That is, of course, the Clan gathering in Scotland and it will be held at Foulis Castle from Friday July 25 to Sunday July 27. I have reprinted what is a draft programme. I have no cost yet but will let you know as soon as I have further details. It looks a very full and interesting programme so let's hope it whets your appetites. We already have quite a number of members who have indicated that they will be attending the Gathering.

It will be an exciting year as it is the second *Homecoming Year* with lots of events happening all over the country from the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow to Highland Gatherings and all sorts of events in all parts of Scotland.

I had a nice email from Dorothy Rook, Commissioner at Large, Clan Johnston/Johnstone, Australia. Dorothy had read our newsletter on Electric Scotland and asked if she could use some of our items on their radio station, "Celtic Corner" which goes out to the world on www.893fm.com.au on Wednesday afternoons from 2 pm to 4 pm or you can listen to it on 98.3FM in Sydney. Of course I said yes as well as to her using the article on James "Johnty" Johnstone.

Coincidentally I have had a couple of letters that I sent to Mrs Jean Johnson in Corinda Queensland returned so if anyone knows Mrs Johnson's whereabouts I would be most grateful.

You will notice in this month's newsletter that Quentin Munro represented us at the Norah Head Gathering and was supported by Noel & Graham Gates. With Gatherings happening all over the country it would be good if we could be represented and show the Munro banner, so let me know if you would like to help in this way.

I see that we now have a Munro Nobel prize winner. Alice Munro, the Canadian writer has won the Nobel prize for literature – congratulations.

Welcome To Our New Members

None this month I am afraid – I had expected one but that did not happen.

CLAN MUNRO GATHERING 2014

DRAFT PROGRAMME - EXPECT 500 WORLDWIDE MEMBERS

JULY 25-Friday-Afternoon event

- Arrive 2 p.m. 2 hour r/t climb to Fyrish Monument-built by Sir Hector Munro of Novar to commemorate his victory over the Dutch and Indian allies at Negapatam, Madras, India in 1781. – Talk by Ronald Munro-Ferguson of Novar
- For those who cannot undertake the hike, busses will be arranged for a tour of Munro Country (ancestral lands) including history of; or
- On your own.

Evening suggestion

- Return to Inverness for possible civic reception for Clan Munro USA and others staying in the Inverness Area at Town House (beautiful old building) - has a picture of Sir Hector Munro of Novar in entry. Dinner on-your-own.

JULY 26-Saturday-all day event

- Approximately 10:00 a.m. to Foulis. – Welcoming address by Clan Chief, Hector W Munro of Foulis
- Picnic Lunch in Marquee
- Pipe Band of The Queens Own Highlanders Regimental Association and Feis Rois musicians, dancers & singers, re-enactment, birds of prey, chainsaw carver, Highland food & drink fair etc., Separate entertainment for Juniors.
- Shuttle back and forth to Storehouse of Foulis
- End at 5:00 or 6:00 p.m. to hotel/accommodation.

JULY 27th Sunday.

Morning/ Early Afternoon

- Trip to Ft. George. Tour of Fort & The Highlanders Museum – address by Major General The Hon. Seymour Monro, CBE, LVO, DL. & Others
Light lunch.
- Back to hotels/accommodation and dress for formal evening

Evening at Foulis say from 17.00

- Foulis. Talk on whisky with tutored nosing and tasting of whiskies made with Munro barley (Talisker, Glen Ord, Dalwhinnie, Highland Park) and/or a talk by Professor Alexander Munro on an element of Highland history. Separate entertainment for Juniors.
- back to Foulis for formal Scottish dinner (in marquee) with dance band and caller after, then back to accommodation.

Bill Monroe -- The Father of Bluegrass Music

By: Jeanie Attenhofer

My grandson, Brayden Munro, is learning the guitar so I bought him a CD of Bill Monroe "The Father of Bluegrass Music" so that he could hear this Monroe's music. So it was with pleasure that I found this article in the Eagle Flyer. Jeanie Attenhofer who wrote the article & Margaret Bardin, the editor, have kindly given me permission to reprint this article about another of our famous Munros. There is no mention of Bill Monroe's origins, so I checked the Internet and although I could not find exactly where they originated, it seems likely that he is descended from one of the Munros who were sent to America by Cromwell after the Battle of Worcester. It was also suggested that his early ancestors could have been related to James Monroe, President of the United States of America who is also descended from one of these Munros.

On September 9, 1996, the world lost one of the most influential "bluegrass" musicians the world has ever known – Bill Monroe. William Smith Monroe was the youngest of eight children, born into a family of musicians on September 13, 1911 at their farm in rural Rosine, Kentucky. His parents were James and Malissa Monroe. Before he was ten, he was playing the mandolin, which was the instrument his mother had played. Sadly, his mother and father died before he reached his teens, and he went to live with his Uncle Pendleton. He began performing in his uncle's band and met blues legend Arnold Schultz. Mr. Schultz was to greatly influence his career.



In 1923, Bill purchased a Gibson F5 style mandolin, signed by its creator, Lloyd Loar. Today there are only 200-signed Loar mandolins known to exist. Bill could pick that mandolin like nobody's business or, as some say, "like greased lightning"! He played his Gibson F5 for the rest of his life.

At age 18 he moved to East Chicago, Indiana where he, along with his older brothers, Birch and Charlie, and childhood friends, William Hardin and Larry Moore, formed the "Monroe Brothers Band". The boys worked in an oil refinery by day and played music at night. They were soon performing regularly in Chicago.

In 1935, Bill married Caroline Minnie Brown and had two children, Melissa Kathleen and James William. They were married for almost 25 years when they divorced.

The Monroe Brothers Band received a contract with RCA Victor in 1936. Instantly they had a hit single entitled, "What Would You Give In Exchange For Your Soul?" They soon recorded 60 tracks on RCA's Bluebird label. However, what often happens with musicians, Birch and Larry left the band and Bill and Charlie remained a duo. Though they recorded a few more moderate hits, Charlie and Bill parted ways. This may have been a blessing in disguise, as Bill now had the freedom to create a new style of music. This new sound became known as "bluegrass",

incorporating the old country string sound with the blues vocal style he had learned from Arnold Schultz. He named the band "The Bluegrass Boys", after his homeland, the Commonwealth of Kentucky. He wanted William Hardin to become a member of the Bluegrass Boys, but Hardin declined.

In October 1939, the band auditioned and was hired as regulars on the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville. Bill impressed Opry founder, George Hay with his performance of Jimmie Roger's "Mule Skinner Blues" and soon recorded that song, along with seven others, which was his first solo recording session for RCA. The original Blue Grass Boys consisted of Bill, singer/guitarist Clyde Moody, fiddler Tommy Magness, bassist Bill Wesbrooks. He added the banjo player David "Stringbean" Akeman to the band in 1942. Many of you may remember "Stringbean" from the old black and white television Kinescope recordings of the Grand Ole Opry. I know I do! However, "Stringbean's" style was quite primitive and didn't quite fit in with the group. Major changes were now to occur with the members of the Blue Grass Boys. Bill brought in North Carolina banjo prodigy Earl Scruggs. He had a fantastic three-fingered picking style that drove the Opry audiences wild. They were soon joined by singer/guitarist Lester Flatt, fiddler Chubby Wise and bassist Howard Watts. This instrumental quintet of mandolin, banjo, fiddle, guitar and standup bass defined the lineup of what would become the standard of a bluegrass band's sound. Bill often referred, humbly to himself as "a farmer with a high tenor voice". He often did not sing lead vocals on his RCA recordings, preferring to sing the high tenor harmonies as he had done with the Monroe Brothers.

In 1946 the band recorded 28 songs on the Columbia label. The most famous of which was "Blue Moon of Kentucky". Bill always remembered his Kentucky roots. Flatt and Scruggs left the band in early 1948, forming their own group, "The Foggy Mountain Boys". Bill quickly tried to regroup with guitarist Jimmy Martin, Rudy Lyle on banjo and over the years several different fiddlers. This should have been the "golden age" of his career, but sadly the sounds created were a shadow of the music produced by his original group of musicians.

In January of 1953, Bill and the band's new member, female bass player, Bessie Lee Mauldin, were critically injured in a two-car wreck, when his car was struck by a drunken driver. They were returning home from, of all things, a foxhunt north of Nashville. He sustained injuries to his back, left arm and nose. It took him almost four months to recover and resume touring.

By the late 1950's, his commercial fortunes began to slip. Rock-and-roll was on the rise and the development of what became the "Nashville sound", threatened bluegrass' viability. He found dwindling success on the singles charts and struggled to keep the band together. The demand for his live performances was declining. His fortunes did make a minor comeback in the Sixties with college students enjoying folk and country and western music.

Ralph Rinzler, a musician and folklorist from New Jersey, became Bill's manager in 1963 and an effort was made to bring bluegrass back to life. It was he who gave Bill the nickname, "The Father of Bluegrass ". As the folk revival faded in the mid-1960s, Bill, ever the consummate performer, founded an annual bluegrass festival in Bean Blossom, Indiana in a park he had purchased in 1951. To this day, The Bill Monroe Bean Blossom

Festival is the world's oldest continuously running annual bluegrass event.

Bill Monroe's works and recordings are endless and far too many to name. However, the honors he received over his vast career are the envy and dream of every singer, songwriter and musician. He is in the Country Music Hall of Fame, the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame, and the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. He is one of only a few to be honored in all three. Bill was the inaugural inductee into the International Bluegrass Music Hall of Fame of Honor and has received a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award, as well as the National Medal of Arts. Elvis Presley, Paul McCartney, and Patsy Cline have recorded "Blue Moon of Kentucky". He is also listed as one of the 40 Greatest Men of Country Music..

In 1985 at age 73, wedding bells rang out for Bill again. He married 43-year-old Della Streeter; however, the marriage only lasted two years. In April of 1996, Bill suffered a stroke, thus ending his musical career. He was not simply a singer, songwriter, mandolin player, and bandleader. He was a musical genius. His songs were true to life. He said of his music, "Its Scottish bagpipes, old-time fiddlin', blues, jazz and a high lonesome sound! It's plain music that tells a story. It's played from my heart to your heart, and it will touch you." Someone once said, "There

would be no bluegrass music without Bill Monroe". This is so true! He is a legend and thanks to recordings, his music will live on forever!

Article suggested by Kendyl Monroe.

Sources: Wikipedia, <rockhall.com>, <nashvillesongwritersfoundation.com>, <find-a-grave.com>



Congratulations

Congratulations to Ray & Helen Munro on the birth of their grandson, Hunter and of course to the proud parents Richard & Rebecca. That is a typical lovely Aussie beach scene & Hunter is such a happy chappie.



A Family Tree

As promised, another poem from Del Smith, this time "A Family Tree"

A tree that turned my world around
Is a tree by chance I found
Its branches roots and leaves are one
Of hopes and dreams of things to come

They travelled here from near and far
To make us what we surely are
With courage by their very side
They showed us how with every stride

How true the stories that they render
From that long lost family member
A small white lie, a pinch of truth,
What now to do without the proof

So many records long time lost
We pay the price but at what cost

A birth, a death, a marriage sort
To find it wrong the one we bought

With all these families from our past
We search and search to make it last
A letter here, a letter there
We live in hope and then despair,
Are we the only ones who care?

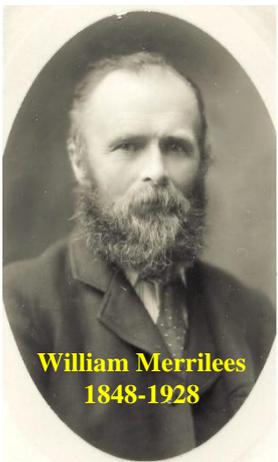
But never mind, you carry on
To give up now sure would be wrong
The thrill, the joy, the chase, the sorrow
What can we hope to find tomorrow.

By Del Smith
Aug 1996

DNA to the Rescue

I received a query about DNA testing, so I thought it would be appropriate to include an article I prepared for the Merrilees Newsletter. Christine Elizabeth (Bet) Merrilees is my wife's maiden name and she is a member of the Merrilees Family Association, a group of Merrilees families who formed themselves into a Clan at a Gathering in 1998. Originally there were 35 separate families which, for research purposes were given the names Tree 1 to Tree 35. Through research, some families were combined so that now there are only 15 left to be linked together. This article shows how a combination of traditional research and DNA testing have linked another two trees.....Don Munro

Tree 11 is the only Aberdeen-shire tree in the Merrilees Family Association and starts with Esther Chalmers who had an illegitimate son she named William Merrilees. Tracing the tree back to Esther was relatively easy but what happens next? Would it be possible to find William's father – where would we look? First clue of course, is



that Esther gave her son the surname Merrilees; did she pluck the name, quite an unusual one, out of the air? Quite possible I suppose but back in those days the church was the guardian of the people's morals and in a small village you could be sure that the Elders would know of an illegitimate birth. So, was Esther brought before the Kirk Session to confess her sin and name the father and did a Merrilees admit to being the father? From Scotlandspeople, we find "In the case of an illegitimate birth, the father's name might be recorded along with the penance committed by both parents, for example, having to make a public confession and profess their repentance before the congregation, being forbidden to take communion for a set period of time, having to pay a fine to Poor Relief. In cases where the father was unknown, the mother was often put under considerable moral pressure to name him and sometimes an alleged father would dispute the mother's allegations. The drama would be played out through the Kirk Session minutes. Sometimes the mother would resist all attempts to discover the father's name and the child would be recorded under the mother's name" The father's name would be used if he acknowledged

paternity. Again from Scotlandspeople we find "If the parents were not married when the child was born, the father's name could still be entered in the register provided he admitted paternity; that is, he went with the mother to register the child and they signed the register together. The child's birth would then be indexed under both the father's and the mother's surnames. However, in practice, some were registered only under the father's surname, and known by that name". As I asked before, did this mean that William's father had admitted paternity? Where I could possibly find the answer would be in the Kirk Session minutes for the

Longside Parish – but these are kept in Edinburgh, a long way from Perth, Western Australia and they are not on line. I commissioned a researcher to check the Minutes to see if any record could be found; unfortunately he found nothing. Nor could we find William's birth certificate.

This seemed like a dead end but we did not give up and the next step was to find any record where William stated that his name was Merrilees and who his father was. In the certificate for his marriage to Margaret Will, his father is shown as William Merrilees, draper, deceased. When Margaret died, after bearing thirteen children, William married Margaret's sister, Jemima, and in this certificate, his father was again shown as William Merrilees, draper, deceased. His death certificate showed his father as Merrilees, draper and of course, he was William Merrilees in all of the Census records during his lifetime. From all of that we can see that William at least, was quite convinced that his father was a William Merrilees.

The way forward was to find if there were any William Merrilees in Aberdeen at that time who could have been the father - and we did find one. William Merrilees a merchant and his twin brother James and their families lived there. In the 1837 Pigot's Directory William is shown as a Draper in 72 Union Street, Aberdeen and his brother James is also there as a general merchant in 9 Adelphi Court. No other William Merrilees could be found, so this William Merrilees had become the central focus. He is also found with his family in the 1841 census under the name Morilees. Another Merrilees was now interested in this tree, our research agreed and she was convinced that William Mirrielees was the father. As far as I was concerned, what our research proved was not that he was the father but that he was the most likely father and using traditional research methods this was as far as we could go. By the way, the William Mirrielees we are looking at is in tree 33 and the book Muir & Mirrielees, shows him at that time as a partner in the firm Cattenach & Mirrielees, clothiers & tailors, 126 Union Street Aberdeen. Is it a coincidence that the 1851 census shows Esther Chalmers and her sister as seamstresses?

Enter our Chief at that time Mike Mirrielees who, in his wisdom decided that the Merrilees Clan needed to find a common ancestor and the only way to do that was by DNA testing. Thank you for that Mike! Fifteen trees were tested to twelve markers by Family Tree DNA and it was found that fourteen of the trees matched exactly in all twelve markers with one tree matching eleven markers. What this proved was that all of these trees had a common ancestor about 400 years back. Bet's Tree 11 is one of those trees that matched exactly, proving least that our original Merrilees name was correct but of course not yet proving who the father of our first William was. Next, Mike decided that the way forward was to test to 37 markers and asked for volunteers to contribute to the cost of doing this. Both Trees 11 and 33 were tested and Tree 11 was found to be only one marker different from Tree 33 – a very close match, in fact this is what Family Tree DNA says about such a match.

*"For example, if you and your match have both tested at the Y-DNA37 level and are a 36/37 match this is a genetic distance of one. You are then considered tightly related. **Few people** achieve this close level of a match."*

Traditional research showed that we had a very possible match and I believe that this, combined with DNA testing proves that William Mirrielees from Tree 33 was the father of our first William and that Tree 11 can now be combined with Tree 33.

Munros Fly The Flag At Norah Head Gathering

Note: Quentin did not bring his sons with him to the Gathering but the photo shows what they would have looked like if he had!!.....Don



The Munro Clan Association was represented at the recent Norah Head (NSW) Highland Gathering. Norah Head is a charming beach-side suburb on the Central Coast about 100kms north of Sydney. It has been hosting a Highland Gathering for the past 6 years or so.

The Gathering had 8 pipe bands that kept the spirits up and included traditional caber tossing, shot put and strong man events like carrying huge 180 kg stones! Women were also included in the strength events...although Munro's were conspicuously absent!

Our thanks go to Scottish House NSW who kindly enabled us to share some of their space in their tent.

Manning the stall was Quentin Munro who now lives at Killcare Beach on the Central Coast. Quentin also was the official banner holder in the march past. Assistance was also provided by Noel and his brother, Graham Gates. Noel was able to borrow a magnificent, hand made banner from Marge Rowlands, now 92, who had lovingly made it many years ago. It was much admired.

The purpose of the stall was to attract new members and to pass on information about the Munros. Unfortunately, there were not too many Munros in the area! However, one young Munro family did step forward. The 5 year old boy's Christian name was "Munro", after his Grandfather. His mother was so committed to the Munro name that she had it proudly and very visibly tattooed across her right breast. In today's world, one wonders of breast tattoos might take over from tartans! (Let's hope not)

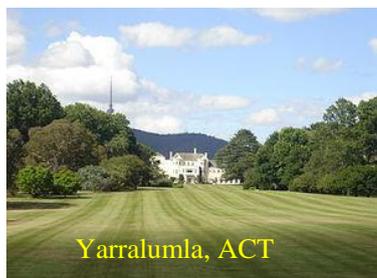
Quentin tells me that he brought the Clan into disrepute but I think that he was just adding to the crowds' enjoyment!!

The official plan for the closing ceremony included a detailed "choreography" for all the banner holders and bands. All the banner holders were aligned in front of the bands and just before we were to exit the playing field, we were to face left...then march back around the side of the bands...upon reaching the last band member, we were to march up between their rows with flags and banners held high...and then, when our clan name was called out, we were to shout out the clan war cry.

Well, I was at the end of the row of banner holders and was first to face left ...and then started marching down the line of band members with the clan flag held high whilst silently rehearsing "Castle Foulis Ablaze! Unfortunately, our fearless leader had changed the instruction (which I couldn't hear because I was facing away from him). The rest of the banner holders marched out of the ground as I marched the other way on my own! I was rescued from further ignominy by the laughing spectators who were pointing at me to turn around. Worse, we didn't get to shout out the war cry!

Government House: Family Day

Some time ago I mentioned the Government House family day. Graham Gates and a friend from the Sutherland Clan went along dressed in their kilts and this is Graham's report.



The weather on the day was absolutely perfect and on arrival we immediately recognised that a great deal of preparation had gone onto making the day a "day out" for the families and residents of-Canberra to celebrate their Centenary Year anniversary. There were aerial displays / hot air balloons / equestrian events, assembled choirs and bands, and tours through the residence, but alas not pipe band to be seen nor a resemblance or gathering of Scottish folk to be seen. My friend David Sutherland did eventually make contact with Clem Rook (also kilted) amongst the crowd on the day and was informed that initial interest he had earlier received had melted away necessitating the cancellation of a bus organised to bring the numbers down from Liverpool on the day.

So, all in all, it turned out to be a "non event" as far as a Celtic representation was concerned, but nonetheless it turned out to be a most entertaining day and we were not disappointed we took the trouble to be there on the day, pity though the opportunity was missed

Vale John Munro

I was so sorry to hear of the passing of John Munro from South Australia. John was always happy to help anyone, he loved his shed and always busy doing some thing, he is sadly missed

Vale Max Binning

Another of our popular Western Australian members has passed away. Max Binning was a much loved and very popular family and community member; he was involved in and played a major part in many community organisations.

Vale Pauline Edwards

A bad time for Western Australia with the passing of another of our members. This time one of my favourite ladies, Pauline Edwards. You might remember that I have written about Pauline a few times in the newsletter, one of these was when I wrote of how Nevill Shute had based his central character in "A Town Like Alice" on her husband's experiences in a Japanese prisoner of war camp during WW2. The funeral was held at GinGin, where Pauline and her husband had spent there last years before Jim died and Pauline was brought back to be buried beside him. And what a grand send off we gave her. She was taken to the grave in an old fashioned glass sided hearse pulled by two magnificent white Andalusian horses with black plumes on their heads. They stood so quietly all through the service which was attended by many friends and relations who had come to pay their respects from as far afield as Queensland and the north of Western Australia.



Can You Help?

Robyn Taylor wrote "I am a descendant of Alexander Munro and Jane Gale who lived in Deniliquin sometime in the 1800's, I know very little about them and their lineage and was wondering if any of your members are connected to them. I would be most grateful for any information. I am particularly interested in finding any siblings of Alexander, where they lived, etc." Robyn can be contacted at doogs43@icloud.com

Daphne Grinberg, one of our members who helps others is now looking for some help herself. Daphne wrote "My uncle, Ian Moreland Munro, served in Egypt during WWII, and married a girl from Durban, Natal Province. After the war they moved to what was then Rhodesia, where they lived until my uncle's death, after which my aunt Leila went back to Durban. I have obtained my uncle's records, but cannot find where to go for records for Durban. Any assistance greatly appreciated." If anyone can help, contact Daphne at laurus@qld.chariot.net.au

Membership

Annual Membership: \$25.00	Spouse or children of member under 18 years	\$8.00**
Three Years: \$55.00	Spouse or children of member under 18 years (3 years)	\$20.00**
Ten Years: \$160.00	Spouse or children of member under 18 years (10 years)	\$70.00**
Life Membership is calculated according to age as follows: -		
Up to Age 40:	3 X 10 Year Dues	\$480.00
Age 40 to 50:	2 X 10 Year Dues	\$320.00
Age 50 to 60:	1½ X 10 Year Dues	\$240.00
Age 60 and over:	Same as 10 Year Dues	\$160.00
Age 80 and over:	Half Ten Year Dues	\$80.00

Clan Munro (Association) Australia Newsletter

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