



AUSTRALIA

Clan Munro Australia

Newsletter of the Clan Munro (Association) Australia

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Blether

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What's happening? Droughts, fires, floods and now coronavirus – keep safe, friends.

I thought I was going to have a job filling this Newsletter but articles came in early including one from our Chief, Hector and one from our DNA guru, Colin Munro from Glasgow. Why not reward Colin by getting your DNA tested and helping him and the others working on the Foulis DNA Project, solve that mystery as soon as possible.

I have been making a list of what I call "Ship Arrivals" from our membership forms but that, of course, is only since I took on this job. I would like the list to be as complete as possible, so could you send me where your ancestors came from; where they embarked; what ship they came on; where they landed; dates, etc. If you are not sure if I have got your details, contact me and ask and I will let you know. I will let you know when it is complete.

Sad news in that I have received news that three of our members have passed away. I have included a little bit about them on Page 8

Remember, I need your story for the newsletter. This month I have included the story of Quentin Munro's father, Duncan Scott Munro, who lived through some dangerous times in China and Hong Kong. It also includes a couple of snippets of other members of that remarkable family. With any luck we will get some more stories of Duncan when Quentin finds the time to put them together.

If you are thinking about visiting Foulis Castle here is an update about what you must do. Tours of the castle are conducted on Tuesdays and could you give at least three weeks notice of your intended visit. Times are either 10.30am or 3.00pm. There is no charge for your visit but a donation put in the Clan Munro Association box for the castle restoration fund is appreciated. An appointment to visit the outside and the grounds is not required but please let the Castle when you intend to visit.

Contact our webmaster Ian Munro at info@clanmunro.org.uk and he will arrange your visit.

Visit the clan Munro website at www.clanmunro.org.uk where you will find lots of interesting information about the happenings at Foulis and the Clan in general.

Welcome to New Members

We have two new members to welcome this month, Gregory & Carolyn Pickering but unfortunately I don't have their details yet but will include them in the next newsletter.

Prisoner of War Camp Visit

Our Chief, Hector sent me this article from the Ross-shire Journal by Hector Mackenzie about a trip he and his cousins had taken. There is an Australian connection as well, I know that Lieutenant Colin Patrick Munro of The Cameronians (Scottish Rifles) who was the grandfather of our member Colin Cameron Munro, was in at least one of those prisoner of war camps with Hector's, father Captain Patrick Munro of Foulis. I emailed Colin to see if his grandfather was in any of the photos but unfortunately, he is not. I now know why, All of those in the photos are Seaforths. By the way, Colin used some of his time off from fighting those devastating bush fires around Sydney to answer my email.

Six cousins with strong Ross-shire connections made an emotional journey to the former prisoner of war camps in which their fathers were held for nearly five years.



Among the group making the poignant visit were (from left) Michael Gascoigne, John Munro, Hector Munro, Harry Munro, Charlotte Hunt (nee Munro), Angus Cheape, Alistair Irwin, Laura Mackenzie and Patrick Gascoigne

The poignant visit to Bavaria took in Laufen, Tittmoning and Eichstatt castles, all used as PoW camps from 1940-45 after around 8000 men of the 51st Highland Division were captured at St Valery-en-Caux prior to the fall of France. The men were force-marched through France, Belgium and Holland, crowded onto barges down the Rhine and finally herded onto horse wagons into captivity.

Hector Munro of Foulis, who was on the trip, said: "Our late fathers rarely spoke about their time as PoWs but it affected them all very deeply and we felt we needed to lay the ghost of that significant part of their younger lives to rest."

He was joined by Harry Munro QC, of Nova Scotia; John Munro, of Lejre in Denmark; their sister, Charlotte Hunt, of Balfron and first cousins, brothers Michael Gascoigne and Lieutenant Colonel Patrick Gascoigne MBE (Scots Guards). All are children of brothers Captain Patrick Munro of Foulis and Captain Hector Gascoigne (Seaforth Highlanders), captured on June 11, 1940.

Hector Munro said on the trip the group were joined by their partners and three other children of PoWs, Laura Mackenzie whose father, Lieutenant Colin Mackenzie MC (Seaforth Highlanders), was held in Laufen and later the notorious Colditz Castle; Angus Cheape, younger son of Lieutenant H B Cheape (Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders) held at Eichstatt and Lieutenant General Sir Alistair Irwin KCBCBE, (Black Watch) whose father Lieutenant A D H Irwin (Black Watch) was held at Eichstatt and Tittmoning.

The emotionally charged visit took in the beautifully maintained Durnbach Commonwealth War Grave Cemetery. The majority of the 2934 young servicemen buried there are airmen shot down over Bavaria, Wurtemberg, Austria, Hessen and Thuringia.

The remainder are men killed while escaping from prisoner of war camps in the same areas, or who died towards the end of the war on forced marches from the camps to more remote areas. Among them lie individuals from all the Highland regiments.

Laufen Castle (Oflag VIIC) an austere and forbidding court-yarded castle described by Hector's father as his first and worst POW camp, stands much as it was in 1940. Hector Munro said: "Although now redeveloped into blocks of flats, there was still a disturbing feeling inside the buildings. With the help of contemporary plans and our ability to explore the upper floors, the exact line of the perimeter fence that contained the tiny exercise yard hard up against the fast-flowing Salzach river now forming the frontier between Germany and Austria, could clearly be made out.

To relieve overcrowding, some of the officers were transferred in 1942 to Oflag VIID in the almost inaccessible Tittmoning Castle perched high on a crag above the town, which was also visited. Eichstatt, where most of their fathers were transferred in 1942, was also visited. It is well known that on April 14, 1945, as the US Army approached, the officers were marched out of the camp and that only a short distance from the camp the column was attacked by American aircraft who mistook it for a formation of German troops.

Mr Munro said: "Fourteen British officers were killed and 46 were wounded but what is less well known the is that as the aircraft strafed the column and the British officers dived for cover they swept up a young German boy who happened to be passing them at the time and undoubtedly saved his life. The position of the escape tunnel dug for over a hundred metres from one of the camp latrines to a villager's chicken run outside wire through which 65 prisoners escaped in 1943 was pointed out to the group."

Looking back over the visit, he said: "Probably the most poignant moment of the whole trip was when the three bagpipers, John Munro, Patrick Gascoigne and Angus Cheape, paid tribute to their fathers and all PoWs held at Eichstatt, by playing a selection of tunes including The Black Bear, The Green Hills of Tyrol, Scotland the Brave,



Seaforth PoWs at Laufen in 1941 are shown in a postcard sent via the Red Cross. Hector Munro's father, Captain P Munro of Foulis, is seated on the far right. His brother, Captain H Gascoigne, is standing on the far right, seated centre in the tartan trews is the late Earl of Cromartie

Amazing Grace and The Rowan Tree alongside the line of the perimeter fence. The nearby kindergarten came out to listen, even the police cadets playing on the sports field alongside paused for a moment, and there were moist eyes among the group who had met nothing but kindness and courtesy wherever they went in Bavaria, and a genuine desire to help them fulfil their quest"

He added: "World War II had a great impact on all our lives, politically, economically and socially. Wounds have healed and we have had over 70 years of peace in Northern Europe which has to seriously question the wisdom of Brexit:"



Their visit took In Laufen Castle, which served as prisoner of war camp Oflag VIIC. Pictured there in 1941 are (from left) Captain P Munro of Foulis, Captain Cluny Macpherson, Captain Koch de Gorynne, Captain The Hon J Elphinstone and Captain H Gascoigne.

ONE SCOT'S STORY

This is the story of Quentin Munro's father Duncan Scott Munro who, to say the very least, led a very interesting life!! We look forward to the day that Quentin writes a novel about his father's life, there must be some tales to tell. He has also included a couple of snippets about two of Duncan's brothers. This is one interesting family and shows how members of a highland crofting family can overcome the circumstances in which they were brought up.

My father, Duncan Scott Munro, was born in ARDGAY (pronounced Ard-Guy) on August 7, 1907. Ardgay is on the far north east coast of Scotland and lies at the head of the Dornoch Firth, in the County of Ross-shire. He was the sixth

born of eight children. Like the other members of his family, he was born at home. No nearby hospitals in those days!

His father was a Crofter and a miller. The "Crofters Holding" had been rented since 1886. The property was (and still is) called "Old Town" because it was built on the site of the original township along with other properties also called "Old Town". The Scots would often name the original settlement as "Old" when they rebuilt a town nearby which they would call "New Town". You will find "New Town" in Edinburgh and in Sydney. Newtown in Sydney was one of the first suburbs built as a major development at the time of Federation around 1900.

Policing, or military service, has always been part of the Highland tradition. Dad's eldest brother, Finlay, joined the Highland Police and ultimately became Chief Constable of Ross & Cromarty including the outer isles. He was also the second Secretary of the Clan Munro Association. So, our family's links to the Clan Chief, and Foulis Castle, go back a long way.



Chief Constable Finlay Munro was awarded the MBE in June 1945 while serving as Superintendent and Deputy Chief Constable of Ross & Cromarty. Upon the retirement of Chief Constable William MacLean in 1953, Mr Munro was appointed as successor. He served as Chief from March 3, 1953 to May 15, 1963 and was the last Chief Constable of Ross & Cromarty. On the following day, the force merged with Sutherland Constabulary to form Ross & Sutherland Constabulary.

The late Supt. Allan M. MacLeod described him this way:

"Chief Constable Finlay Munro MBE was a self-educated and somewhat shy man who had a tremendous flair for reading and copper-plate writing. At that time, every police report and all correspondence passed through his hands and it was instructive to check one's old reports and note the 'red ink' corrections to grammar and punctuation. It thus became somewhat challenging to submit better factual reports."

Mr Munro died on 27 February 1967 and is buried in Mitchell Hill Cemetery, Dingwall"

Another of Dad's brother's, Hugh, served with 1st Battalion Seaforth Highlanders-51st Highland Division before becoming the Keeper of the Queens Deer at Richmond Park in London. Not exactly "police" duties, but still a position of local authority. He lived in a lovely old cottage near one of the entrances to the park. The cottage was called "Stag Cottage".

Richmond Park, in the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames, was created by Charles I in the 17th century as a deer park. The largest of London's Royal Parks, it is of national and international importance for wildlife conservation. The park is a national nature reserve, a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a Special Area of Conservation and is included, at Grade I, on Historic England's Register of Historic Parks and Gardens of special historic interest in England.



Richmond Park deer

Like so many other highland Scots living in a small Crofter's home, most of the seven children lived above the adjacent Steading where the cattle were housed in winter (and kept them warm). Duncan was kicked out of the nest at age 14 to find work. He found employment in an aluminium smelter. As a strong, wee broth of a boy, he participated in numerous Highland games and was a champion shot putter and caber thrower.

But he was seeking more excitement, so in 1930 at age 22, he left Scotland to join the Shanghai Municipal Police in the International Settlement of Shanghai. He continued to participate in local athletic competitions in Shanghai and by 1935, he was shot putting only a foot or two behind the world record. Not bad for an amateur with no training.



Duncan Scott Munro

The International Settlement of Shanghai was divided into two main Zones, the combined British American sector and the French Concession. What made policing very difficult for dad, was that if you were chasing criminals, and they ran into the adjacent French Concession, he couldn't arrest them!

Shanghai was also a highly desirable prize for both the Japanese and the Chinese Nationalist Party

He was there during the five month 1937 "Rebellion" (also known as the Battle of Shanghai) and received an "Emergency Medal" for services rendered in the peace keeping process. It was a fierce five month battle between two divisions (estimated at 100,000) men of Chiang Kai-shek's National Revolutionary Army and the Imperial Japanese Army and navy and was fought house to house in downtown Shanghai and the outlying towns.

The Chinese had surrounded the city by land, whilst the Japanese had war ships moored in the Pearl River, right alongside the city. The Japanese would fire shells and fly planes right over the city right. Once a plane dropped its load of bombs in the middle of the race course whilst the racing was going on!

Dad left Shanghai in late November or early December 1941 when all foreigners (mainly British, Australians, English, French and Americans as well as lots of "White" Russians and Russian Jews) were advised that it was their last chance to evacuate. Things were too hot!

He left on the second last ship to leave before the Japanese invaded. The ship was bound for the West Coast of America where he hoped to train up to Canada, to be with his two brothers. But was diverted to Australia, after receiving a radio call on December 7, advising that the Japanese had invaded Pearl Harbour. The ship landed in Brisbane. He then made his way to Sydney, met my mother (a widow following car crash) and they married. I popped out in January 1945.



Shanghai 1933. Duncan Munro with Chinese Police Officers. Note the "flack jackets", nothing but Kapok padding and bamboo boning. Also notice the chrome plated 45 calibre automatic. Duncan's favourite peace maker. It kicked like a mule!

Now living in Randwick in Sydney, Dad joined the RAAF and was assigned to the Military Police in New Guinea. He spent time in Port Moresby, Lae and Rabaul and some islands. He often flew on Dakotas as muscle power, helping to drop food and munitions to the troops. He returned with malaria and severe leg ulcers that were to plague him for the next 20 years.

After the war, he was contacted by the American Military with an offer to join General Macarthur in Tokyo for the War Trials. Dad had legal experience as a Police Prosecutor, could speak passable Japanese and was fluent in Mandarin. He also knew the "Asian Mind". Like many Aussies, he did not like Macarthur and turned down the offer.

A counter offer, which he accepted, was made by the British for him to join the Hong Kong Police, who had suffered terribly during the Japanese occupation. Two thirds of the Police had either been killed or died from malnutrition or diseases.

Dad flew to HK in a Dakota with numerous landings on islands that were under occupation, including one where there was a mass grave of Japanese just dumped in a swamp. At that time, the allies had no sympathy for the Japanese. Dad ended up as Chief Inspector and headed up a number of roles including the Piracy Squad which was stationed near the Stanley Gaol (later to become the site of the Stanley Markets).

My mother and I went by ship, the "Taiping", in early 1946 to join him. I have a photo of my mother and I in Hiroshima. We are



Quentin's Mum kneeling, trying to control Quentin

standing in front of the ONLY building still standing in the city after the atomic bomb fell on it less than a year earlier. It was probably still highly radio active!

We returned to Australia in 1949 on the "Sou Chow". Duncan came back about 6 months later having completed his contract.

He was unable to get a job in the Australian police force as all positions were to be filled with returning diggers. We enjoyed a great life in Sydney...but that's another story.

The pollution in Shanghai, the stress of the war, and an ingrained habit of smoking strong, unfiltered American cigarettes finally got to him. Duncan died on June 25 1969 at age 61, yet another victim of lung cancer.

Quentin Munro, Killcare, New South Wales

Shoalhaven Mackenzies

You might be wondering why I have included a Mackenzie family story in our Munro Newsletter but the Mackenzie family of Shoalhaven were in fact originally Munros. Murdo Munro of Teaninich changed his name to Munro on inheriting his maternal grandfather's estate, then he bought Dundonnell. This story from from Colin Munro and the Bundanon Trust web site www.bundanon.com.au. Please visit and see the wonderful legacy left to the nation by Arthur and Yvonne Boyd. This is what the site says "Arthur and Yvonne Boyd's gift of Bundanon has given Australia a unique cultural and environmental asset. It was born out of Boyd's often stated belief that 'you can't own a landscape' and the wish that others might also draw inspiration from this remarkable place."

Dr Kenneth Mackenzie came to live at Bundanon in 1838 with his wife Julia. They settled just west of Haunted Point on the Shoalhaven River, and built a timber house on the edge of the tree line above one of the natural water sources at Bundanon (the foundations are still visible on the property). The following year they made application to lease the neighbouring 850 acres. Their five children were born in that house: Helen 1839, Mary 1841, Murdo 1843, Hugh 1845 and Jean in 1848.

The very social Mackenzie family were known as the "Bundanon push...." Dances were held in the big room in the main house for both the family and farm workers with cricket played regularly.

- Peter Freeman

The disastrous flood of 1860 impacted dramatically on the landscape of Bundanon and would have hastened the construction of the two story Georgian stone homestead which had begun in the 1850s. Sandstone blocks from the local area, cedar from the property and lime mortar made from shell deposits collected from the Shoalhaven River were used. The house, completed in 1866, was built on high ground above the flood level and doors, ceilings and all internal fine joinery were of local cedar, except for the floors which are hardwood.

In 1866 the Mackenzie family moved into the newly constructed, Sparrow Peck finish (also known as Convict or Quarry Pick), sandstone block, two-storey homestead 'Bundanon'. Sadly, Julia had died from cancer in 1858 and so never saw it finished. The homestead had been carefully sited above the flood levels of earlier deluges. The floods of 1870 washed away most of the Bundanon outbuildings; however the homestead and the worker's huts survived as they were situated at a higher elevation.

Dr Kenneth Mackenzie and his eldest son Murdo returned to Scotland in 1869 to take up ownership of the ancestral home in Dundonnell. On the death of his father, Murdo inherited this property in 1879.



Bundanon Homestead

Second son Hugh Mackenzie, inherited Bundanon that same year. Hugh had married Bella Mary Biddulph of 'Eearie' (an adjacent property) in 1876. By 1901 they had eleven children all born at Bundanon who, when old

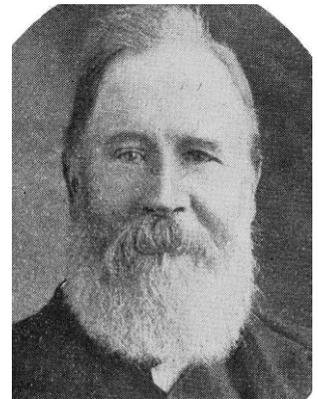
enough, were taught by a governess. A tennis court to the east of the house had been constructed by 1902 and was frequently used by the extended family and friends.

Their eldest son Kenneth took over the property on the death of his father in 1917. Under Kenneth, Bundanon was home to between twenty-five and thirty people, including the Mackenzie family and five to six farm labourers and servant families. However, Kenneth Mackenzie Jnr's ownership of the property was short-lived as he drowned in 1922 in the Shoalhaven River trying to save his daughter Helen, who had been washing her pony before going to the Nowra Show. The Jacaranda tree in the garden was planted in memory of Kenneth and Helen

Following the drowning death of her husband in the Shoalhaven River, Kenneth's widow, Aylene Mackenzie, with her daughter Jean and son Colin, departed the property in 1926. The 'Bundanon Farm' was then leased to tenant farmers for the next 40 years.

Obituary Hugh Mackenzie 1845-1917

By the death of Mr. Hugh Mackenzie, of Terrara Estate Shoalhaven, N.S.W., which occurred last month at the age of 72, there has passed away a well known and highly esteemed pastoralist. He was a son of Dr. Kenneth Mackenzie, of Dundonnell, Rosshire, N.B., who having come to Australia, practised his profession in Shoalhaven in the early days, and was one of the first magistrates of that district. Dr. Mackenzie was a man of extensive professional experience, having practised in London, Dublin, Paris, and Rome, and as a linguist was able to speak fluently in French, Italian, and Gaelic.



Inheriting many of the fine qualities of his father, Mr. Mackenzie soon made his influence and high character felt in the district. At the death of his father he succeeded to Bundanon Estate, twelve miles from Nowra, and dwelt there for many years. Upon the death of his elder brother, Murdo, he inherited the Dundonnell Estate, in Scotland, and made a trip to that country in connection with the administration of the property there. In 1886 he purchased for £40,000 the Terrara Estate of 1000 acres which had been owned for many years by the De Mestre family.

Mr. Mackenzie took a very active part in public affairs, and as mayor of South Shoalhaven, a position he held for successive terms, he never lost an opportunity of furthering and protecting the interests of the town. He undertook the work in an honorary capacity, and consistently refused to accept any mayoral remuneration. For many years he was president of the Shoalhaven Agricultural Society, and contributed largely towards the cost of improvements in the show grounds and towards other expenses that had for their object the success of the shows. As a judge of horses he was considered to be particularly good, and he judged in that capacity at many of the neighbouring shows.

A man of fine physique, standing 6 ft. 6 in. in height, he had a commanding personality, combined with a charming and sympathetic manner which won the respect and admiration of all with whom he came in contact.

Mr. Mackenzie leaves a widow and a large family of sons and daughters. His son Kenneth occupies the Bundanon Estate, two other sons, Hugh and Murdo, own conjointly Tooloombah, Croydon, Lotus Creek, Barwon Park, and Cluen Stations, in Queensland. A younger son, Norman, died on active service.

Can You Help

Alex Munro from New Zealand is looking for the Australian side of his family. If you can help, contact him on alexwmunro1992@gmail.com

William John Munro married Henrietta Macrae in 1797 in Ross-shire; their son Hugh Munro born 1816 in Rosskeen married Isabella Munro; their son John Munro was born in 1855 in Inverness married Agnes Carr John died in Woolahra NSW, so he was the one who migrated to Australia; their son Fredrick Munro born 1880 in Sydney married Kate Anna Harris, he died in Dunedin NZ so he migrated to NZ from Australia. Frederick's siblings were John, Sydney and Christina and they all stayed in Australia.

Vale Jillian Ann Munro Oppenheimer

Jillian was very proud of her Munro heritage and wrote the book *Munros' luck* and allowed me use some of the stories in our newsletter. What follows is one of her obituaries.

Former University of New England Council member and alumna Jillian Oppenheimer passed away in October 2019. A ministerial appointment, she served on council from August 2002 to August 2006. She is remembered as a passionate supporter of academia and arts, especially history and unafraid to voice her opinions. She brought a deeper understanding of the region and its needs to council. The local Walcha legend graduated with a Master of Arts with Honours in 1979 and was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for services to heritage conservation and the environment, particularly through the National Trust of Australia in 1999. Jill's interest in all things historical also extended to gardens. She was a founding member of the Australian Garden History Society (AGHS) and described as a "joyful, excellent companion on visits to gardens."

Vale Graham Munro Gates

Another great loss to the Clan was Graham Munro Gates who kept in close contact with me. The Gates side of our Clan represented us at the Anzac Day parade in Sydney every year and Graham provided me with the excellent reports and photos that I printed in the newsletter.

Vale Edgar John William Munro

Our most recent loss was Edgar Darb Munro who kept in touch with me through Messenger almost every week. Ed also started his own family site and I hope that keeps going in his memory. In Newsletter 45, I told the story of his family in Australia going all the way back to 1797 in Dornoch, Scotland.

Membership

Annual:	\$25.00	Spouse or children of member under 18 years	\$8.00
Three Years:	\$55.00	Spouse or children of member under 18 years	\$20.00
Ten Years:	\$160.00	Spouse or children of member under 18 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*

Sender
Don Munro
18 Salter Road
Mt Nasura WA 6112
Phone 08 9390 5065
donmunro36@hotmail.com

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