



AUSTRALIA

Clan Munro Australia

Newsletter of the Clan Munro (Association) Australia

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

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This Month

Bet & I wish you all the happiest Christmas & New Year possible

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Blether

I see from the Clan Munro Scotland website that the Kiltearn Fiddlers are celebrating their 25th anniversary. In conjunction with this, their new CD is now available to buy online as a digital copy, or hard copy from bandcamp. By buying this cd you will be supporting the fiddlers and letting them be able to go to places like Llangollen and other trips.

<http://www.kiltearnfiddlers.bandcamp.com>

For those of you who don't know about the Kiltearn fiddlers, the following is from their website.

The award winning Kiltearn Fiddlers emerged from the Fèis Rois Traditional Fiddle Classes, initiated by Rita Hunter, in 1990. Alpha Munro, the leader of the Kiltearn Fiddlers, formed the performing group to improve their performance skills, expertise and confidence and to promote Scottish Traditional Music in the area. The classes, which are held in Evanton, Ross-shire, meet once a week for tuition during term at Kiltearn Primary School, Evanton

and, until recently, in Alpha's kitchen. Extra rehearsals are held when necessary.

We have competed and performed at the Highland Festival, Blas Festival and we compete quite often at Llangollen International Eisteddfod and the Inverness Music Festival. Individual performers have played at Celtic Connections, Glasgow and the Cambridge Folk Festival.

Abroad the Kiltearn Fiddlers have played at the Festival of Cornouaille, Brittany, been to Roskilde – Denmark Brideswell Festival, Ireland and Falun Fok Festival

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 know 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

We have one new member this month. Carole Ann Cooper and her parents, James Highfield Cooper and Doris Eileen Cooper nee Thompson came to Australia in the mid 1950s on "The New Australia." The family came from Runcorn in Cheshire, UK and settled temporarily in Melbourne. Carole's father was a marine engineer who unfortunately, died prematurely leaving Carole's mother a widow at the age of 34. Carole's Ancestry goes back much further than that as her three times Great Grandfather was Sir Charles Munro who fought with distinction under Wellington and Picton, in Waterloo and Spain. We look forward to Carole's family story in another newsletter.

From the Eagles Nest

Dear Cousins,

It was fitting to view the Black Watch involved in our late Queen's funeral procession. Her Majesty's cortege from Balmoral to Holyroodhouse in Edinburgh featured many glimpses of the Highland Regiment who have a long and proud history.

As part of our Munro Clan Gathering in Scotland during August, 1997 we visited Fort George, home of the Black Watch. Our Chief, Hector, discovered that the newly opened museum in the Fort had no portrait of Colonel Sir Robert Munro (6th.Baronet) one of, if not the founder of what was to become the Black Watch. We convened in the Fort's chapel and our Chief presented the Commandant with a portrait to be placed in the museum.

Sir Robert fought in the disastrous Battle of Fontenoy against the French. After Fontenoy Robert was promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel because of his leadership and bravery which culminated in his appointment as head of the 37th Regiment of Foot.

Commanding his new Regiment at the Battle of Falkirk the men under him were not Highlanders and ran like sheep from the Jacobite rebels. Robert fought gallantly but was overpowered by the sheer numbers surrounding him and was eventually perished. However, he took several rebels with him. One of Robert's brothers was also killed at Falkirk. Sir Robert was interred at the churchyard of Falkirk and many Clan Chiefs attended. On the 17th July, 1745 Robert's brother, John, was appointed to the Colonelcy of the 37th Regiment.

I shall have more to continue of the Black Watch in future Newsletters.

Also:

A374 litre cask of whisky held under bond since 1988, distilled by Macallan, was recently sold to a US buyer for over one million pounds. This being a world record.

Scotland currently accounts for 30% of total UK exports of food and drink (? whisky). Exports of whisky are up 18.7% to £4.6 billion and salmon rose by 20.6% to £735.6 million.

The University of Stirling has been testing the effect of extreme drought on Scots pine trees. This may have implications worldwide in connection with climate change. It was found that in a past drought period of nine years the trees grew at a faster level.

Did you know that seven Scots were in the US 7th. Cavalry with General Custer at the Battle of Little Big Horn in 1876.

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year.

Dad's Story (Part 1)

I received this story from Gail Munro some time ago It is simply titled "Dad's Story" and was written by Gail's Dad, Alex Munro, so is the story of Gail's Grandfather and her father. In the beginning it covers the story of Colin Munro 3rd who I wrote about a few years ago, so I have omitted that part but then goes on to tell the story of Colin Munro 4th and then Gail's father, Alexander Munro in much detail and I am sure you will enjoy reading it over the coming months as it tells of the conditions in which our ancestors lived and what they got up to.

The activities of my father, Colin Munro 4th were varied and as I do not know all the details so will just record the main facts, as I know them. He was educated at the Brisbane Grammar School and, after the Drynie collapse, I think he had a selection. He also had a small sailing ship, the Albert, and, with this, he brought bananas and timber to Cardwell, which was the main port on that coast at that time. Later, he was back on the Burdekin and, at some time, he was an overseer of Kanaka labour gangs because they took to him with hoes at one time and gave him a proper beating. His left arm was badly broken and was never completely straight again. He married my mother, Marion Frances Waugh, on 2nd January, 1896 and, from then on, there is an authentic record. The Waugh family are interesting too but I will try and record some of that later.

From letters I have in my possession, it is quite clear that my father was the Head Sugar Boiler at Kalamia Sugar Mill in 1891. I do not know how long he was at Kalamia but it could have been from 1891 to 1897 and, during this period, the sugar boilers were only engaged for the crushing season and found any work they could in the slack season. It could have been that this was the time when he was the Kanaka overseer. In 1897/98, he was Sugar Boiler for the Mossman Central Mill.

In April, 1898, he was offered a job as Head Sugar Boiler at the GinGin Central Mill, at a salary of \$4/5/0 per week. Apparently, he accepted this offer and boiled at this mill for the '98 season when Penny & Co offered him the management of Knockroe Mill at North Isis (Bundeberg district). He remained as Manager and Chief Chemist of Knochroe until the end of the 1901 season. Then, as far as I know, he went to Proserpine and took up a selection at Glen Isla. (I will confirm some of this with the Lands Office in Bowen when I go north.) According to my cousin, Duncan McEachran, who was in Prosperpine at the time, Dad went broke at Glen Isla and this is confirmed, from his papers, by a foreclosure notice from the Agricultural Bank. He then took up a selection at Preston (Prosperpine) and, with one horse (Billy Atlas) and an axe, set about hacking out a home for this family. You must remember that at this time, these people mostly worked at a sugar mill in the crushing season and tried to develop a selection for sugar cane growing during the off season. They had no implements so planted what cane they could, mainly on the side of hills in fallen scrub country, with a mattock and what little cane the wallabies and possums did not eat for them. They harvested as best they could during the next crushing season to get sufficient money to buy plants for another go and to buy a few tools. However, their selection at Preston was not on the side of a hill: it was perfectly flat and contained more forest land than scrub so, consequently, was easier to work. Nevertheless, it was damn hard work. From this point onwards, my own story begins.

Proserpine, in those days, boasted a population of some three to four hundred people. Like the usual country town, there were various types of businesses but the main centre of employment was the sugar mill. Preston was approximately seven and a half

miles from town and our farm was in flat country, with a range of hills extending along the coast to the east of us and about two miles away to the nearest foothills. A creek ran through the middle of the property, which was of 160 acres, with a strip of heavy scrub (now generally referred to as "rain forest") on either side. The remainder was what we called "forest country". Like all the creeks in North Queensland, our creek flooded badly in the Wet Season, ran until June or July, and then gradually dried up, leaving pools at various points for the remainder of the year, if we were lucky! In dry seasons, it dried up completely. This, together with rainwater from tanks and a couple of indifferent wells, provided our water supply.

I was born at Glen Isla so was too young to remember the commencement of the selection but Dad had working for him a man named Watty Keil who remained with us for years and was highly respected by us all. Our house was well above the average for the district and was built entirely by my father and Watty Keil. It was on high blocks. The roof and outer walls were of corrugated iron and it had a verandah on three sides. Upstairs, there was a lounge room and three bedrooms. Downstairs, which had a dirt floor in the early stages, were the dining room and kitchen. There was no bathroom. We used to have a shower under a tree at first and, later, a bathroom and a new kitchen with a timber floor were added. We also floored the dining room. The house was built with some sawn timber but quite a lot of it consisted of bush saplings and palm slabs. These slabs were made from long, slender palm trees, which were split into two, three or four strips, according to the girth of the tree, and then the pith center was trimmed away with an adze, leaving one flat surface and the other curved. Although they allowed plenty of fresh air to enter, they formed a reasonable sort of wall to keep the weather out, but only lasted a few years before rotting. For those days, and in this area, it was considered quite a good respectable farmhouse and served us well for many years and also for the owners when we sold the farm years later.

The humpy that was built for Watty Keil on the edge of the scrub was built entirely of palm slabs for the floors and walls and the roof was made of thatched grass. It was quite large and, as humpys go, it was comfortable.

When established, our annual crop of cane was anything from 150 tons to 240 tons and the price of cane at that time was about one pound per ton, rising later to one pound ten shillings per ton. It will always remain a mystery to me how Dad was able to keep going and pay labour at the same time. Of course, Watty Keil was employed for only part of the time, mainly in the crushing season. He found work with other people for the remainder of the year. We always appeared to be in debt to the Agricultural Bank and, in fact, when we finally sold the farm later, I think it took the full price of the farm to pay off the Bank while we were still left with a debt of two hundred and fifty pounds to pay the store keeper.

About three miles south-east of our place was a one-teacher school (Preston) and about three miles to the north-west of us was also a one-teacher school (Mt Marlow). Our nearest neighbour was about half a mile away and, generally, farms were very scattered. This was, briefly, the environment in which I spent my childhood.

Our life centred around our immediate neighbours and these were not numerous. In close proximity was a family, Billy Fahey and his wife, (known to us as Mrs Lyons) and a couple of kids whom we saw very little of. Closer still was the Prossenski family, consisting of Frank and his wife, son, Frank and daughter, Vicki. A little further afield was the Busuttin family of five kids, Basil, the eldest, Connie, Arthur, Mick and Pidgie. Lee Brothers lived about three miles away but they were an adult family and did not interest us much.

Billy Fahey was quite a character. I remember that he liked to go to town on Saturdays and get a belly-full of grog. I also remember that he had a very nice sulky and trotting

pony. He was reputed to be a pianist of fair standing and inevitably, when we later bought a piano for the girls to learn to play, Billy was invited over to try it out. When the piano arrived, the first problem was how to get it upstairs because the only stairs to the top floor of the house were narrow and steep. We lay planks on the steps and all hands set to, to push the thing up. Billy was at the bottom and I remember well that he had a split in his trousers and his bum was beginning to burst through. The more he pushed, the more his trousers split.

Both Nell and Maisie, my sisters, laughed so much, they let go the pressure on the piano. This meant that poor old Billy was stuck with the major part of the load and he dared not let go. By the time we got the piano to the top, half his bum was really sticking out. Then the fun started. We thought this great new instrument of ours was a delicate thing and we all nearly fainted when Billy set to, to hammer the keys and snort like a pig as he played. To the boys, this was a serious matter because we had visions of the damn thing falling to pieces but, to the girls, it was funny.. Needless to say, he was not invited to play our piano again for a long time and not before we realised that you can hit the keys very firmly without damage.

Another great source of amusement to us at the expense of poor old Billy was that at about six o'clock every Saturday night, he would dash past our place in his sulky with his horse flat out trotting and Billy sitting bolt upright. This was a sure indication that he was as full as a boot and, without fail, about daylight next morning, Billy would be on his way back towards town to pick up his weekly parcels of food etc which he had spilled out of the sulky the night before.

Next month Alex tells of the schooling children in the bush had.....Ed

Mary Reibey

Have you ever thought about the lady on our \$20.00 note? She is Mary Reibey, a convict who became Australia's first lady entrepreneur, one of Sydney's biggest landholders and a very wealthy woman

She was baptised Molly Haydock and was born on 12 May 1777 in Bury, Lancashire, England. Following the death of her parents, she was reared by a grandmother and sent into service. She ran away, and was arrested for stealing a horse in August 1791. At the time, she was disguised as a boy and was going under the name of James Burrow. Sentenced to seven years' transportation, she arrived in Sydney, Australia, on the *Royal Admiral* in October 1792. She was just 14 years old.

On 7 September 1794, 17 year old Mary married Thomas Reibey, a junior officer on the store ship *Britannia*. Reibey also used the surnames Raiby, Reiby and Reibey interchangeably; the family adopted the spelling Reibey in later years. Thomas Reibey was granted land on the Hawkesbury River, where he and Mary lived and farmed following their marriage. They built a farmhouse called Reibycroft, which is now listed on the Register of the National Estate.

Thomas Reibey commenced a cargo business along the Hawkesbury River to Sydney and later moved to Sydney. Thomas Reibey's business undertakings prospered, enabling him in 1804 to build a substantial stone residence on a further grant of land near Macquarie Place. He acquired several farms on the Hawkesbury River and traded in coal, cedar, furs and skins. He entered into a partnership with Edward Wills, and trading activities were extended to the Bass Strait, the Pacific Islands and, from 1809 to China and India.

When Thomas Reibey died on 5 April 1811, Mary assumed sole responsibility for the care of seven children and the control of numerous business enterprises. She was no stranger to this task, having managed her husband's affairs during his frequent absences from Sydney. Now a woman of considerable wealth by her husband's businesses, Reibey continued to expand her business interests. In 1812 she opened a new warehouse in George Street and in 1817 extended her shipping operations with the purchase of further vessels. In the same year, the Bank of New South Wales was founded in her house in Macquarie Place.

By 1828, when she gradually retired from active involvement in commerce, she had acquired extensive property holdings in the city. Like many others, however, she was on occasions somewhat economical with the truth. In March 1820 she had returned to England with her daughters to visit her native village, and came back to Sydney the next year. So in the 1828 census, when asked to describe her condition, she declared that she "came free in 1821".

In the emancipist Society of New South Wales, she gained respect for her charitable works and her interest in the church and education. She was appointed one of the Governors of the Free Grammar School in 1825.

Reibey built a cottage in the suburb of Hunters Hill, New South Wales circa 1836, where she lived for some time. The cottage, situated on the shores of the Lane Cove River, was later acquired by the Joubert brothers, who enlarged it. It is now known as Fig Tree House and is listed on the (now defunct) Register of the National Estate.

On her retirement, she built a house at Newtown, Sydney, where she lived until her death on 30 May 1855 from pneumonia. She was 78 years old.

An enterprising and determined person of strong personality, during her lifetime Reibey earned a reputation as an astute and successful business woman in the colony of New South Wales. She is featured on the obverse of Australian twenty-dollar notes printed since 1994.

The oldest son of Mary and Thomas Reibey, Thomas Haydock Reibey II (1821-1912: clergyman, farmer and politician), later became the Premier of Tasmania from 1876 to 1877. The Entally Estate was established in 1819 by Thomas Haydock Reibey II in Hadspen, Tasmania. The original house and some outbuildings are now a historic house on the outskirts of Launceston, in northern Tasmania. Mary, the matriarch of the family, had been transported to Australia in 1790 for the crime of horse stealing, then aged 14. She would later marry a junior officer of the East India Company, Thomas Reibey (senior), who established the Entally name as a successful trading company that owned a number of vessels running coal up the Hawkesbury River in New South Wales. Following her husband's death in 1811, Mary became one of the richest and most successful businesswomen in Australia. She then obtained the grant of 300 acres of land upon which Thomas II was to settle and build the homestead and outbuildings.

At least three novels have been written based on her life. The novel *Sara Dane* by Catherine Gaskin, which has sold over 2 million copies, is only loosely factually accurate. It was made into a television mini-series in 1982, which added romantic entanglements and a second-marriage for the character, Sarah Dane, which did not occur for Mary Reibey. More accurate is the novel *Mary Reibey* by Kathleen Pullen. A neglected but interesting Australian children's author, Nance Donkin's historical children's novel *House By the Water* (Angus and Robertson; Sydney, 1970: Penguin; Ringwood, 1973) tells part of Mary Reibey's story, but is no longer in print. Donkin also wrote *An Emancipist*, illustrated by Jane Robinson (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1968), a biography of Mary Reibey, written for children. Meg Keneally's novel *The Wreck* (2020 Zaffre, ISBN 978-1838771393) features a character, Mrs Molly Thistle, based loosely on Mary Reibey.

Christmas in Scotland

Did you know that at one time it was a crime to celebrate Christmas in Scotland? Christmas was very much seen as a Catholic church-led celebration so after the Reformation in 1560, Christmas was promptly downgraded and, led by John Knox, Christmas celebrations were gradually banned. In fact an act of the Scottish Parliament in 1640 made celebrating Christmas illegal. The law was strictly enforced. People were hauled before the courts and kirk sessions for celebrating Christmas Day, and bakers were even banned from making mincemeat pies. In short there was a total clampdown on Christmas.

Monarchs such as James VI and I and Charles II (below) all tried to get celebrating Christmas back on the agenda, but the Church of Scotland was unmoved.

But the Scots were not to be outdone and the festivities were transferred to January 1 and the preceding evening, Hogmanay. Traditions such as first footing were translated to Hogmanay and since it was an entirely secular feast, the Church of Scotland could do nothing about it.

Christmas remained a working day for the vast majority of Scots well into the 20th century but times change and Christmas did become a public holiday in Scotland but that was not till 1958. The Boxing Day holiday came even later – in 1974.

Eds Note: *Certainly, in my young days back in Scotland, Christmas day was a working day but we did celebrate the giving of presents and we did hang up our stockings. The little village of Beaulay where I lived, was probably evenly divided between Protestants and Catholics and many of the Protestants visited the Catholic Church on Christmas Eve for the very colourful celebration.*

Can you Help?

Ray received the below information from Peter Roberts, so let's see if we can help him. Contact Peter at pbr-support@bigpond.com if you can help and don't forget to let me know as well.

I am trying to find a Munro branch of my family tree. My real knowledge starts with the wedding of Alexander Munro (Abt. 1851 – 1884). Records suggest that he was born in Perth Scotland and came to Australia about 1856. He married (aged 23), to Emma Kennaway Sowden on 5th Feb 1874 in Harrow, Victoria. Marriage certificate gives father's name as Donald Munro a teacher and mother's name – Mary Stewart.

Alexander died on 27/2/1884 aged 33 as the result of an accident near Nymagee NSW leaving 5 children. (as per death Certificate).

To date I can find no references to the family prior to the Munro/Sowden marriage. No references to Donald the School teacher, no details of the family leaving the UK or arriving in Australia (expected to be about 1856).

I can find no evidence of a marriage in Scotland between Alexander's parents (Donald Munro and Mary Stewart) nor any clear record of a birth of either one. I have reasonably details records of the investigations that have been undertaken to date.

I write to you with some level of desperation – I have no idea where to turn to next. This may be a question that has no relevance to you and your group – but worth a try.

I have been working hard with DNA results and have been able to get 2 cousins from the Munro side of the family to undertake DNA test. I am hoping that eventually this may give us some answers but nothing as yet.

Are you able to give me any pointers on where I might go next? I am happy to join the Munro clan.

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

*Clan Munro (Association) Australia
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