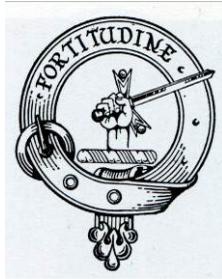


*The Clan MacRae Society
of
Australia and New Zealand
Newsletter*



www.clanmacrae.org.au

Volume 31 - May, 2018

Message from Clan MacRae President



Welcome to our May 2018 newsletter for those new members and current members of the Clan MacRae Society of Australia and New Zealand.

The 30th Anniversary Gathering, Dinner & AGM at Albury in February was an immense success. What a pleasure it was to meet those people who travelled so far. Some brought their family histories and ended up meeting relations they had never met. Our thanks to our secretary Roslyn MacRae for all the work she put into organising the Albury event.

Remember if you appear in the MacRaes Down Under book and it needs updating please send info to clanbook@mcraeit.com.au Ideally, any updates should be in Word format and use the existing numbering system where possible. Contact John Richard McRae, Ph. 03 98822 776, Mob 0414 627 230

Next year's Reunion, Gathering & AGM will take place in the Blue Mountains over the weekend 15th, 16th and 17th February, 2019. Put it in your calendar now.

Alan McRae, President

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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS AND CONGRATULATIONS

Welcome to our new members since our last newsletter:

Mr John MacRae – New Zealand

Mr Neil McRae – Scone NSW

Ms Mary Mead – Vincentia NSW

We have been advised by the RAAF Bomber Command Association that member and WW2 RAAF veteran William 'Bill' McRae celebrated his 105th birthday in mid-January. Happy Birthday Bill!!

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2018 UPCOMING EVENTS – AUSTRALIA

3rd - 6th May – Thursday to Sunday - *Australian Celtic Festival - honouring Brittany, Galicia & Asturias, Where: Glen Innis* - www.australiancelticfestival.com

26th May – Saturday - *12th Berry Celtic Festival, Berry Showground, Hazelbury Park, Berry, New South Wales* www.berrycelticfestival.org.au

8th – 11th June - Friday, Saturday (main day), Sunday - *National Celtic*

Festival, Portarlington, Victoria www.nationalcelticfestival.com

31st May - 3rd June – Thursday, Friday, Saturday (main day), Sunday - 14th Bonnie Wingham Scottish Festival, Central Park, 12 Farquhar Street, Wingham. <http://www.manninghistorical.org/bonniewingham2017.html/>

20th June – Wednesday – Teleconference ordinary meeting of Clan MacRae. The Executive invites all interested members to take part in this teleconference at 7.30pm (NSW time). All you need to do is **at 7.30pm (NSW time) on Wednesday 20th June dial: (02) 8077 0506. When prompted enter access code: 799719** followed by the # key. *Once interested members are connected we will start the meeting.* For our valued New Zealand members, you can participate by dialling: **+64 6-928 7532.**

7th July – Saturday - Aberdeen Highland Games, Jefferson Park, Aberdeen, Upper Hunter Valley, N.S.W. <http://www.aberdeenhighlandgames.com/>

6th October – Saturday - Canberra Burns Club Highland Gathering, Kambah Oval in Kambah on the outskirts of Canberra.

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2018 UPCOMING EVENTS – NEW ZEALAND

24th June – Sunday - 10th North Shore Tartan Day, North Shore Events Centre

3rd November – Saturday - 16th Upper Hutt Highland Gathering, Harcourt Park, Upper Hutt.

10th November – Saturday - Hororata Highland Games, Hororata

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MACRAE MUGS STILL AVAILABLE

Clan MacRae white ceramic china mugs are now available. Why not proudly proclaim your MacRae heritage over morning coffee or give as a gift to a ‘special’ MacRae. Each mug has a double emblem to allow for left and right handers. Every mug comes in a presentation box. They cost: - for 1 mug - \$15 + \$10 p&h = \$25, or 2 mugs - \$25 + \$16 p&h = \$41.

The famous Clan MacRae mugs will be taken to all Scottish Gatherings that the Society attends so take the opportunity to obtain one.

IN LOVING MEMORY

We are saddened to hear of the passing of several of our members. Please accept our sincere sympathy to their partners and family.

VALE – Leo Benedict MacRAE, Passed away peacefully at Darlington Retirement Community, Banora Point (Ballina) on 1st January 2018. Aged 103 years and formerly of Penshurst. Dearly loved Husband of the late Beryl Frances MacRae and much loved father of his six children and their partners.

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AUCKLAND HIGHLAND GAMES 2017 – Sue Tregoweth



The Auckland Highland Games returned to Ellerslie, along with the Clan MacRae marquee (left), after 140 years in 2017. The first time there was in 1874 at the ‘Ellerslie Gardens’ as they were then known. Now it is called the Ellerslie Event Centre. It was a little windy and we ended up taking down our gazebo in the early afternoon to save it from damage. There was a

lot less public participation this year possibly due to venue change from the Three Kings Reserve.

Saturday the 18th November was a day of all things Scottish at Ellerslie. Haggis, whisky, food stalls, dancers, pipers, drummers, warriors, clans, kilts, Highland sports and games and pipe bands. The opening ceremony for the games was at 12.30 pm. We were welcomed in Gaelic and English after the Clan March. Thank you to Heather Hine who helped me put up the gazebo and welcome visitors throughout the day. We had a visit from Trudy Reason and her family, it is nice to see you every year. My second cousin Neil MacRae also visited with his grandson who had won a gold medal for the chanter competition.



TURAKINA HIGHLAND GAMES 2018

The 154th Turakina Highland Games was held at the Turakina Domain on the 27th January, 2018. About 1500 people enjoyed the day of piping, drumming and pipe band competitions, Scottish sports events, dance competitions, about 25 stalls and 15 clan displays.



My son Aaron (left), daughter in law Liezel and grandchildren helped me with the Gazebo and throughout the day. We had many people visit our display some MacRaes, others descendants of MacRaes, and others who had visited our beautiful Eilean Donan Castle and were reliving the memory. Everyone was very friendly and interested in our display. The usual clans attended Camerons (Turakina is Cameron country. Camerons settled there in the 1800s and still have a very strong presence in the area) Johnstones, Gordons, Keith, MacMillan. MacKenzie to name a few.

We arrived just before 9am, the solo piping competition had already commenced. The field was surrounded with sales stores. I haven't been to the Turakina Highland Games for a number of years but it has certainly grown. This 154th Highland Games has been kept alive by the support of sponsors, judges, clans, stall holders, volunteers and the public along with financial support from the Rangitikei District Council.

Following the solo piping competitions there were the solo drumming, Highland and national dancing and pipe band competitions. Fourteen pipe bands competed, and the winner was the New Zealand Police Pipe Band.

The two grade one bands performing are preparing to travel to Scotland in August for the World Pipe Band Championships. They were the Manawatu Scottish No1 Pipe Band and the New Zealand Police Band. There were also five youth bands which bodes well for pipe bands in New Zealand. There are a lot of young ones coming through. The field events included children's lunchtime games with tattie & spoon, three legged, sack races and a tug of war. The day ended with a ceilidh and Palmerston North ceilidh band 'Bowmore' had everyone up dancing. They ended up the night with Auld Lang Syne.

notes about their MacRae lineage. The 45 page Clan MacRae Chronicle was extremely well received by the reunion attendees with numerous compliments.

On Friday night there was a 'meet and greet' at the Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen's Club's bistro. Tables were reserved and a large number of people attended. It was a great meal and a chance to meet numerous MacRaes I had corresponded with but hadn't actually met. Some members had travelled from Western Australia, Victoria, South Australia and from over New South Wales.



Saturday morning saw a large group up and ready for the historic bus tour of Beechworth and Yackandandah. Beechworth is one of Australia's best-preserved gold-rush era towns. It has a fascinating history, beautiful streetscape, quality shops and boutiques coupled with hatted restaurants, wineries, brewery and cafes.

Our bus driver proved very knowledgeable and we all enjoyed a scrumptious lunch with a cold drink at Hotel Nicholas, built 1857, that proved to be full of historic photos. It was very pleasant to sit in the cool of the garden.

Our luncheon host, Lorraine Lucas, (right) proved to be the town historian who knew a great deal about Ned Kelly and his association with Beechworth.



Left Sue and Tony Stancombe at lunch.

There were many sites to see including the old stone Beechworth Gaol, the Rocky Mountain Company's water

diversion tunnel which is 1010 meters long, 2.13 meters high and 1.52 meters wide that was cut through granite under Spring Creek, the Gold Office and numerous other historic buildings. Tom Griffiths was our bus driver guide and past member John Sinclair McIntyre joined us for part of the time, so was great to meet him also.



Left -Colin MacRae posing like the photo of Ned Kelly to his left. John McRae below.



The successful Annual General Meeting via teleconference took place from 4.30pm to after 5pm with no change in executive positions.



The 30th Anniversary Gathering Dinner took place on Saturday evening commencing with the Official Party being piped into the room. Doug McRae, left, was our official piper for the evening and also organised the evening's entertainment.



Right - Colin and Elaine Strong enjoying the dinner.

The Official Party was led by Piper Doug McRae, followed by Rachel Mead who carried the Australian Flag, then Andrew Macrae had the Clan MacRae banner with Roslyn MacRae, Clan Secretary and Alan McRae, Clan President

following.



Colin MacRae, left, was the Master of Ceremonies and did a magnificent job. President Alan McRae welcomed those in attendance before explaining that our past secretary Elma McRae was to be bestowed with a presentation from Marigold Parker-Jervis, President of the Clan MacRae Society in the UK.



The group then enjoyed a delicious two course buffet dinner. Top right - Rachel Mead and Margaret McRae attended their first Clan MacRae gathering. Right, Grace Kelly travelled all the way from Camberwell in Victoria.



After dinner came the entertainment including two young ladies from Scottish Highland Dancing Albury Wodonga. With reels, jigs, and strathspeys to choose from we were treated to a display of professional dancing which was once the social entertainment in ceilidh events in many

parts of Scotland. The dancers were accompanied by the pipes of Doug McRae and Scott Nicolson from the Scots School Albury, below left.



On Sunday locals Joe and Jill Wooding from the Albury District Historical Society conducted a Historic Tour of Albury, below. Our tour included visiting the War Memorial, early buildings and the inscribed tree by the river bank by explorers Hume and Hovell.



As space is not available see a fuller report of 2018 Albury Reunion and Gathering at www.clanmacrae.org.au

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IN TOUCH WITH MY SCOTTISH HERITAGE

A recent holiday provided me with the opportunity to get in touch with my McRae family heritage. After a terrific two weeks of cycling the Danube River from Passau in Germany through Austria, Slovakia and ending in Budapest Hungary, a good friend and I made our way through France to Scotland.

Our journey through McRae family history started with an eighteen hour train ride over two days from Budapest to Lille in France. The scenery we passed through was incredible – fields dotted with wind turbines, beautiful blue skies. Once in Lille we based ourselves in an ‘airbnb’.



From Lille we made our way by bus to Armentières then trudged through a slow, sodden walk to Bonjean Cemetery to visit my Great Uncle Murdoch McRae's grave. Murdoch died in 1917 and was buried in Bonjean Cemetery along with many other Australian men. The emotional impact when I considered that my blood relative was resting in the earth beneath my feet in this foreign land took me by surprise. I had taken a slip of red river gum planted in Geelong on the Barwon River by my dear, late friend and armed with a knitting needle to create a hole I gently slipped in a piece from home and left beside it a knitted poppy. Two such small tokens from home considering what he gave up by serving in the war.

From France we travelled by train again through England on to Scotland where we hired a car and drove to Dornie via the beautiful Trussachs National Park. The view on arriving at Eilean Donan Castle was as breathtaking as the shortbread tin lids I have seen since a child. You may notice in the photos that the flag is at half-mast.



Sadly after booking in we heard news that Marigold's husband James (Jim) had passed away the day before. Staying at the Eilean Donan Apartments overlooking the majestic castle, we were able to soak up the views for two days before continuing on. We then explored the area and took the bridge over to the Isle of Skye. On the way home we popped in to the butcher, which happened to be owned by the McRaes. On the advice of some lovely ladies at Eilean Donan, we had a lovely meal at the end of a railway line on the pier in the town Kyle of Lochalsh. Funnily enough, again we found out it was owned by the McRaes. Further advice took us to the Lochcarron Weavers to be measured for a kilt for myself. These weavers were a treasure to find and upon placing my order in the McRae modern hunting tartan the lady excitedly called out to fellow staff, "This lady is from Geelong!" She explained their buyer comes out once a year to Geelong to purchase the merino wool then takes this home to create the tartan fabric I had just ordered. I understood her excitement when I considered the wool would be coming full circle back to Victoria.

From Dornie, we travelled to Edinburgh for a few days before heading back home to Australia.

Mandy McRae

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