

The Clan MacRae Society
of
Australia and New Zealand
Newsletter



www.clanmacrae.org.au

Volume 33 - May 2020

Message from Clan MacRae President



Welcome to our May 2020 newsletter produced under lockdown conditions brought on by the Chinese Coronavirus disease (COVID-19). How quickly things changed when Governments and the majority of the world's population realised how serious it could get. This new strain of coronaviruses has shut the world down which will bring more financial and labour problems long after numbers are brought under control.

As I write this on 27th April, 2020, Australia has had 6,711 cases of Covid-19, with 16 new cases and a total of 83 deaths. The total people recovered is 5,539 with 1,089 still considered active cases of which 42 patients are considered critical. To date health authorities around Australia have carried out 506,449 tests. I think Australia and New Zealand have been lucky when we see what is happening in the United Kingdom, America, China, Spain, Germany, Italy, France, Iran, Switzerland, Turkey and other European countries.

It was declared a pandemic on 11th March, 2020, and more than 2.4 million people in 210 countries have been confirmed to have COVID-19 worldwide. According to the World Health Organisation more than 169,000 people have died up to 23rd April, 2020.

Unfortunately all our upcoming Scottish Gatherings around Australia have been cancelled and hopefully some may take place later next year, we will see what eventuates.

One of our New Zealand members, Ian Rae, was on a cruise around South America and wasn't aware of any problems until Chile denied access to their ports. Passengers had no evidence of the virus on board but being denied entry they headed directly for San Diego to disembark. Some 2300 of them were temperature tested before disembarkation and Ian subsequently flew from LA to Auckland to go into 14 days isolation. As it turned out 61 passengers and crew eventually tested positive for the virus and one died. Ian is okay and getting back into the restricted life at home. We will have Ian's detailed story in our next newsletter.

NOTE - Our new website is now operational, you can have a look at Clan website - www.clanmacrae.org.au

27TH PAEROA HIGHLAND GAMES & TATTOO



The massive twelve hour Scottish extravaganza was entertainment for the whole family on Saturday 8th February, 2020, at the Paeroa Domain.

Clans of Highland heritage descended upon Paeroa as

the games and tattoo is one of just seven Scottish gatherings in the country and the only one in New Zealand to hold an evening tattoo. Twenty-seven years ago the event started as a small pipe bands competition, which grew over the years. At its most popular, 8,000 people attended. There were 14 Scottish Clans in the Village this year along with several Scottish Shops.



There were classic Scottish events such as Highland Dancing, heavyweight field events, pipe band contest, axemen's' carnival, Celtic singers, mace flourishing, solo piping and drumming and fire performers.

Our own young piper Fabian MacRae was competing. See information page 6.

We also saw the return of the Junior Highland Games, with teams from all the local primary schools taking part. This year's special guests were The Topp Twins, Brendan Dugan, Saltire Duo and

Highly Flammable. The Topp twins are a New Zealand and Internationally acclaimed comedy duo. They had us entertained and hanging onto every word whenever they were on stage. Brendan Dugan is an all-time favourite New

Zealand Country & Western singer. Saltire Duo is the Scottish version of the famous Irish Foster and Allen. The duo is David Vernon, an Edinburgh based virtuoso accordionist and Alex Hodgson a Prestonpans singer/songwriter/guitarist. David appears on 23 CDs and can be seen playing in the Robert Duvall movie “A Shot at Glory”. He is also a ceremonial Bagpiper. Alex has made 2 CDs. He has performed for the Queen at the Ghillie Ball at Balmoral. He also appears in Scottish variety theatre and on Radio shows. Their show is Scottish folk music, humour and accordion playing at its best.



There was a stage for the performers between 11am-4pm, stilt walkers, clowns and Steampunk. The Thames were roaming the grounds. Steampunk is a retrofuturistic subgenre of science fiction or science fantasy that incorporates technology and aesthetic designs inspired 19th century industrial steam powered machinery. Although its literary origins are sometimes associated

with the cyberpunk genre, Steampunk works are often set in an alternative history of the 19th century British Victorian era or the American “Wild West”, in a future during which steam power has maintained mainstream usage, or in a fantasy world that similarly employs steam power

In the evening there was a tattoo, this two and a half hour variety spectacular under a castle is based on the Edinburgh Tattoo in Scotland. The tattoo consisted of two massed band displays featuring 250 pipers and drummers and the lone piper.

Right - Our Future Clan Piper - Fabian MacRae started learning the pipes two and a half years ago. He has won all he can in the Novice Competitions and is



now playing in the D Grade. His first solo competitions in D Grade were at Turakina Highland Games in January in which he was placed 1st in the Piobaireachd. His second solo competitions in the D Grade were at the Paeroa Highland Games & Tattoo where he was placed 3rd in the 2-4 March.

Fabian also plays in the Lewis Turrell Memorial Trust Juvenile Band and Hamilton Caledonian Development Band. Both of these bands are run by Brendan Eade who is also Fabian's tutor. He has also played at the Dawn and 11am Anzac Day Services in Te Kauwhata for the last 3 years. In March the family is going to the Nationals in Invercargill. Sue Tregoweth

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IN LOVING MEMORY

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

*“An honest man here lies at rest
As e'er God with his image blest.
The friend of man, the friend of truth;
The friend of Age, and guide of Youth:
Few hearts like his with virtue warm'd,
Few heads with knowledge so inform'd:
If there's another world, he lives in bliss;
If there is none, he made the best of this.”*

- Robert Burns

VALE – CLINTON DEWAR JOHNSON - We are saddened to hear of the passing of Clinton Dewar Johnson, born 5th December, 1926, and died 21st March, 2019, at New Plymouth. (General contributor, page 227 to “MacRaes to New Zealand” compiled by Molly Akers). Clinton descends from Kenneth MacRae a sea captain who married Jane MacGregor in 1833. Their 6 children were born in Plockton, Lochalsh, Scotland.

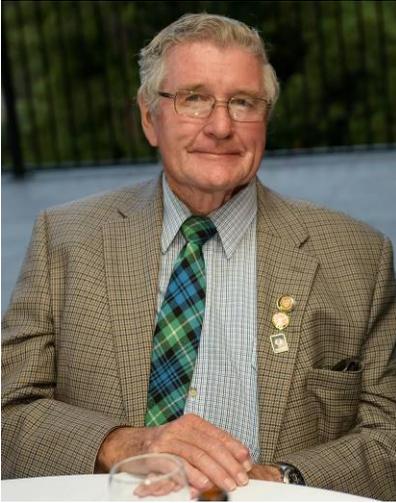
Their son Duncan, born 1846, followed his sister Catherine and her husband to Napier, New Zealand, arriving about 1873. Duncan married Janet Muir at his sister's residence in 1877. (This was his second marriage, his first wife Anne MacKinnon died in Scotland in 1871) Duncan and Janet had 12 children.

Clinton's mother was their 11th child born in 1895 who married Dewar Johnson, a master mariner, on 24th February, 1926, and Clinton was their first child. Clinton, a school teacher, married Elizabeth (Beth) Fraser in 1955 and they had 2 children. One of his pupils wrote “As a child, I had Clinton as my teacher at Waikanae School. A “scary” man in those days, 45 years ago, but a

big soft heart. A great teacher but heaven forbid if you didn't pay attention in his class. To Phillipa and Steve, David and Lucy and families, we send our sincere sympathy.

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VALE – THOMAS EDWIN BROWN



Tom Brown was our Clan MacRae Society of Australia and New Zealand treasurer. He was born on 6th January, 1942, during World War Two and passed away on Wednesday 26th February, 2020, aged 78.

Born in Narrabri, he was christened Thomas Edwin Brown, a son for Florence Beatrice and Thomas Fredericks Brown. He was an only child and began school in 1947 aged 5, attending Wee Waa Central School which was directly across the road from where he lived.

In 1955 Tom contracted Rheumatic Fever and was taken out of school and he never returned. He continued his studies by correspondence, acquiring his leaving certificate in 1959. He had a brief time working for Elder's, a Stock and Station agency in Wee Waa, before commencing a 25-year period with local accountancy firm FRC Boyle.

Tom met his future wife just after his 21st birthday. Over the next two years Jenny would come to know this handsome young man until, in January 1967, they were engaged. Tom and Jenny married at the St Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Inverell on 13th April, 1968. They initially lived in Tamworth before moving onto a property out of Wee Waa and named it 'Wynella Park' in 1981. Tom remained in accountancy but later worked for Lockhart and Carrigan until retirement in 1997, aged 65.

Sons Ian and Stewart would marry late in the 1990s, Ian marrying Shelby in Sydney in 1996 and Stewart marrying Rachel in 1997. Tom and Jenny also took an active role in the sesquicentenary of the arrival of the MacRae descendants to Australia from Scotland and made a trip to Eilean Donan Castle in Scotland for the worldwide reunion of the MacRae Clan. Around 2009-ish, towards the end of the decade, Tom was diagnosed with Waldenstrom's Disease – a form of non-aggressive, treatable, but not curable,

leukaemia. This meant the start of a series of chemo-medication in a tablet form. In 2012 Tom celebrated his 70th birthday. Tom and Jenny would also make the life changing decision to move from Wee Waa to Tamworth, not making the move until 2013.

Tom became active early being involved with Probus, the Tamworth Vintage Car Club and treasurer of the Clan MacRae Society of Australia and New Zealand, making many new friends while continuing to keep track of old ones. Tom also volunteered a good deal. It was by the grace of God that the whole family could gather together from around the country and celebrate Tom and Jenny's 50th Wedding Anniversary.

A true gentleman he was, loving husband and family man with a great love for his eight beautiful grandchildren. Thank you Tom.

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VALE – IRENE FLORA McRAE - 9-9-1934 to 15-7-2019



Sadly, since learning that Flora McRae of St. Arnaud had passed away on 15th July, 2019, news was received of the death of her beloved husband Rodney on 23rd October at Goodwin Village in Donald. After losing Flora, his wife of almost 64 years, his sister Isobel McNally, also residing at Goodwin village, passed away 2½ weeks before Rodney's death.

Our deepest sympathy is extended to their grieving family, Rosemary and Peter Edwards of Huntly, Susan and Chris Wood of Donald, children and fourteen great grandchildren.

Irene Flora, one of nine children of Mabel and Albert Klauss, a share farmer, was born at Jeparit (Western Victoria). She became known as Flora at school to avoid confusion with a cousin of the same name. A foundation member of the Clan MacRae Society in Australia and its Victorian Representative since 1996, Flora's tireless efforts ensured the success of the gatherings held at Ballarat (2), Bendigo, "Glenwillan" Homestead and Hall's Gap. She and Rodney were there to welcome everyone and Flora made beautifully decorated fruit cakes for these occasions. In 1999 Mrs. Marigold MacRae and daughter, Baroness Miranda Van Lynden were the special guests at Bendigo, as part of their busy schedule which included Clan Gatherings at Armidale and New Zealand.

Very athletic, Flora's under 14 years 100 yards Sprint Record remained unbroken for forty years. After leaving school Flora worked in the wool-spinning section of the Prestige Factory in Ararat and continued her active lifestyle with athletics and hockey. She and National Serviceman Rodney McRae, met at a dance at Ararat, where they married in 1955. They settled at "Oakbank", the McRae family property selected in 1872. Here tennis was the regular sport and Flora was soon part of the local team! Assisting with flower arrangements at the Gre North Presbyterian church where the family worshipped, led to a lifelong passion and many awards for Flora's entries displayed at flower shows and St. Arnaud Show.

The impressive "Oakbank" garden Flora had created was the setting for both daughters' wedding receptions for which Flora, who enjoyed cooking, also catered. Geneology and scrapbooking were also interests, Flora recording the history of "Oakbank" in two scrapbooks which may be viewed at St. Arnaud Bowling Club.

Many organisations, including St. Arnaud Historical Society, the Uniting Church and St. Arnaud Norman Simpson Pipe Band enjoyed Flora's support. With great love of all things Scottish, Flora was thrilled when grandson Jack McRae began piping and when she and Rodney attended Clan MacRae's Millennium Gathering in Scotland.

Not one second of Flora's 84+ years was wasted it would seem. However, family members report that she watched all Collingwood AFL matches in order to barrack for the opponents! I treasured her friendship, as would all who were privileged to know her. Flora will be greatly missed. Elma McRae

VALE RODNEY JOHN McRAE - 30-4-1935 to 23-10-2019



Rodney (left), the eldest child of Joseph John and Janet, "Jessie", nee Cameron, McRae had siblings Isabella, Marie and Hugh. He attended Gre Gre North Primary School. Hugh recalls Rodney's

mischievous sense of fun. "When attending school, the teacher, who boarded

with their aunt and shared their buggy travelling to and from school, would sometimes fall asleep on the way home. Rodney could then not resist taking the reins to steer through a large pothole in the road.”

At fifteen years of age, due to his father’s ill health, he left school to work on the farm and at 22 years had full responsibility after his father’s death. During National Service he met Flora Klauss at a dance in Ararat where their marriage was celebrated in 1955.

He was now breeding Merino sheep and in 1980 Rodney began “Oakbank Merino Stud” which has won many Victorian and interstate awards. Rodney enjoyed planning and designing improvements for “Oakbank” which included a new woolshed to replace the first which occupied part of the original house, on the property selected in 1872, and an elaborate BBQ which became the site for many happy family gatherings.

After many years playing tennis, Rodney took up bowls, enjoying playing pennants. He and Flora retired to their new home in St. Arnaud which they immediately surrounded in flower and vegetable gardens. It was appropriate that Rodney, with the help of his granddaughter Ivy, and Lynn of Goodwin Village, planted the first seedlings in a new vegetable garden (planned by the Village’s Men’s Club) just three days before his death.

Rodney was a member of St. Arnaud Lodge, the RSL and the Traynor’s Lagoon Bush Fire Brigade and had many friends in the sheep industry in Victoria and interstate. The support he and Flora gave to our Society and their hospitality when I visited Victoria for Clan Gatherings was greatly appreciated.

Elma McRae

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VISIT FROM NEW ZEALAND

Earlier this year before the virus, Sue Tregoweth visited Australia and called in on Elma McRae, our past and long serving secretary, in Sydney. The two went out for lunch and to catch up as to what was happening in New Zealand.

Mrs. Sue Tregoweth is our Clan’s New Zealand (North Island) representative and currently providing all the New

Zealand Gathering reports and updates for the newsletter.

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Membership is due in January

Cost is \$15 per annum – Payable to the Secretary temporarily