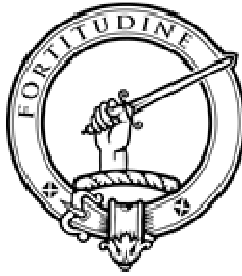


The Clan MacRae Society
of
Australia and New Zealand
Newsletter



www.clanmacrae.org.au

Volume 34 - January 2021

Message from Clan MacRae President



Fàilte (welcome). As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to disrupt our lives I feel we are sort of getting used to living with the daily updates. The country areas are better off though variants are making an appearance at present.

MacRae Clans around the world have also been severely disrupted and I feel for them with the larger number of deaths and hospitalisation. We are thinking of them during these times.

Just after Christmas, on Boxing Day, Barbara McRae of Scone passed away. The centenarian was 102 living most of her long life working in the family store in Scone.

Further details are in the '2021 UPCOMING EVENTS' section in this newsletter. Our next meeting is the AGM on Saturday 20th February, 2021, at Bathurst Panthers. The day commences at 11.00 am, if you are interested, with the 'Unveiling of Lewin plaque' (my ancestor) at Pioneer Wall in Stanley Street. Then 12.30 pm for lunch in Panther's Bistro with the AGM starting at 2.30pm. You can join in remotely via teleconference – see attached details. I look forward to meeting those who are coming to Bathurst on Saturday 20th February.

As a friend of ours used to say 'Lang may yer lum reek' which plainly translates to 'Long may your chimney smoke!' meaning 'may you live a long life.'

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



Alan McRae. President

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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 various partners, family and relations.

VALE – Barbara McRae passed away peacefully on Saturday 26th

December, 2020. Late of Farram's Clothing & Footwear store, 157 Kelly Street, Scone, NSW. Loving wife of Colin Stuart McRae (deceased). Barbara is survived by her three sons John (Wentworth Falls) Bruce (Moonan Flat) and Neil in Scone who ran the store. Barbara was aged 102 years and until the last couple of years still worked most days in the shop. The funeral for Barbara took place on Tuesday 5th January, 2021, at 2pm in St Lukes Anglican Church in Scone and she was buried at the Scone Lawn Cemetery.

Barbara was a Mother, Grandmother, Great Grandmother and friend to many. She was born 102 years ago on 4th September, 1918, and was the first born to Edith and Wilfred Farram. Barbara's younger brother Warwick arrived thirteen months later. Barbara's Mother, Edith, was a daughter of Albert and Henrietta Collison, of Moonan, who together with the Farram's family provided an enormous number of cousins, aunties, uncles and friends which were a constant source of joy and support for Barbara all her life.

As children, both Barbara and Wally used to help their parents in the family Tailoring and Clothing business. At age 15, during the depression, Barbara came home from School and informed her father that she was not going back to school but was going to work in the shop with him. Two weeks later Wilfred left Barbara in the Sample Room which was filled with shoes, upstairs at the Golden Fleece Hotel, with instructions to "buy what your customers want and only if you think you can sell it". Barbara later said that first time buying, on her own at age 15, was a very difficult task, but it was to be the first of many and began a love of the shoe trade, which was to last all her life.

Barbara was known to have an amazing work ethic which probably came from her paternal Grandmother, Mary Anne Farram, who she loved to visit and help her. Mary was a hardworking widow running a boarding house in Liverpool Street. In 1932 when Barbara was 14, her Mother Edith had written in her autograph book: "We are not here to play, to dream, to drift, we have hard work to do and loads to lift. Shun not the struggle, Face it, Tis God's gift."

Perhaps the Farram's family Cost Code "WORK AND LIVE", which was in use until computers arrived in the 1980s, constantly reinforced this work ethic. Barbara loved talking with people and helping her customers.

Barbara was to work at Farram's Store all her life and only a few weeks ago was asking to help with the Christmas trade, she kept saying "I don't see anyone at home, I want to go to work and talk to people, I can still serve you know".

Golf was Barbara's favourite sport and she also loved her Lawn Bowls. Her

2021 UPCOMING EVENTS – AUSTRALIA

NEXT GET-TOGETHER

20th February 2021 Saturday – Panthers Bathurst, 132 Piper St, Bathurst. NSW 2795

11.00 am - Unveiling of Lewin plaque (Alan McRae's ancestor) – meet at the Pioneer Wall at the Macquarie River, corner Stanley and William Street, Bathurst. All welcome - further information from Alan 02 63315404

12.30 pm - Lunch in the Panthers Bistro, **RSVP by 14th February to the Secretary – Roslyn MacRae – Ph: 0412 291 054 Em: learn@vsr.com.au with numbers - URGENT.**

2.30 pm - 33rd Clan MacRae Annual General Meeting - You are cordially invited to personally attend at 'Panthers', Bathurst, or ring in and 'attend' via teleconference/zoom beginning at 2.30pm.

6th March – Saturday - *Liverpool Plains Military Tattoo* at Quirindi, NSW. The Annual Military Tattoo will be held in the town of Quirindi's Longfield Park on the Liverpool Plains of NSW. Entry is free and open to patrons of all ages with the aim to showcase military bands in both a competition and exhibition format, and pays homage to the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo. Info: www.liverpoolplainsmilitarytattoo.com.au

2nd and 3rd April – Friday and Saturday - *116th Maclean Highland Gathering* at "Scottish town" in Maclean over the Easter weekend. Scottish dancers, displays, all sorts of food and Scottish stalls and lots, lots more. Info: www.macleanhighlandgathering.com.au

17th April - Saturday - *Bundanoon Highland Gathering* - Enjoy a street parade with marching pipe bands, Clan Societies, children's decorated floats, The Tartan Warriors - Bundanoon Stones of Manhood, Mary Kiani - Scottish Singer, Fiddlers performing in the Fiddlers' Tent, Scottish Highland and Country Dancing, 120 speciality crafts, souvenirs and food stalls. <http://www.brigadoon.org.au/>

1st and 2nd May – Saturday and Sunday – *Australian Celtic Festival* - Glen Innes. A full weekend of Celtic entertainment and events held at the Australian Standing Stones. It will take a different form this year. More information at www.australiancelticfestival.com

3rd July 2021 - Saturday – 21st *Aberdeen Highland Games 2021* at Aberdeen in the Upper Hunter Valley of NSW. The Games begin with a parade of bands, clan representatives and others that leads into the Massed Band Salute and Chieftain’s Address which officially opens the day. Plenty of Country Dancing, Strong Man events - tug-of-war, three-legged races, and the famed Kilted Dash along with a multitude of stands selling all manner of Scottish heirlooms and souvenirs, clothing and garb, and food and drink. Info: www.aberdeenhighlandgames.com

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2021 UPCOMING EVENTS – NEW ZEALAND

30th January - Saturday, *157th Turakina Highland Games*, Turakina Domain, Cameron Rd, Turakina. Solo piping & drumming, Highland & National dancing, Scottish Official Board Highland dancing, pipe band contest and traditional field events. www.turakinahighlandgames.co.nz

6th February - Saturday, *28th Paeroa Highland Games & Tattoo*, Paeroa Domain, Paeroa. The sounds and soul of Scotland gather at Paeroa for their annual Highland Games. Whether there is a bit of Scot in you or not this is an entertaining day. www.paeroahighlandgames.co.nz

20th November - Saturday, *Auckland Highland Games*, Ellerslie Event Centre, Auckland. Auckland’s annual Highland Games is a showcase of Scottish heritage in Auckland for all the family. A kaleidoscope of activities will be on display. The day is a community and family event where you can either relax, take in the sights or join in. www.ahg.org.nz

**PLEASE CHECK THE PREVIOUS WEBSITES BEFORE
ATTENDING ANY OF THESE EVENTS AS THERE MAY BE
CANCELLATIONS**

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JOHN RAE (McRAE) - ARCTIC EXPLORER

John Rae (McRae) was an Arctic Explorer and intrepid discoverer of the fate of Sir John Franklin’s last expedition. John was born in September 1813 near Stromness, on the Orkney Islands, the fourth son of John Rae senior. Rae discovered the final section of the North West Passage in Canada and was a Scottish Orcadian surgeon after studying medicine at the University of Edinburgh and graduating at 19 years of age.

Rae had an active childhood trekking, fishing, sailing, hunting and climbing. When he was six his dad was appointed the Orkney agent of the Hudson’s Bay

Company.

In 1833 John Rae decided to accept the surgeon's job aboard the Hudson Bay Company's ship 'Prince of Wales' just before the ship sailed to Moose Factory in James Bay in Canada. After serving for two years he became the resident surgeon at the trading post staying for a decade.

He admired the Canadian Cree Indians with their bush skills especially manufacturing and preserving their snowshoes, how they constructed their shelters, made and operated their canoes and how they hunted caribou, deer and waterfowl and stored their meat for survival.



Photo above – Shows the detailed sculpture of John Rae in his ‘Arctic’ outfit. The sculpture is in the St Magnus Cathedral nave in Kirkwall, the capital of the Orkney Islands. Photo by Elma McRae.

He undertook three major expeditions in 1848 – 49, 1851 – 5, 1853 – 54 each time wearing his Indian fur clothing. From the time of the European's discovery of America the search for the Northwest Passage basically began with numbers of explorers attempting to solve the mystery, including a McRae association in John Rae. Various expeditions set out including the voyages of Jacques Cartier and his successors to the St. Lawrence and John Cabot and the brothers Gaspar and Miguel Corte-Real to Newfoundland and Labrador were all undertaken with the aim of finding the passage. John became proficient in the use of a sextant and the art of surveying, of which he did a good deal.

John was also recognised for reporting the fate of Sir John Franklin's lost expedition for the first time. In 1845 Franklin set out to find the route of the North West passage. He was able to substantiate that Franklin and his crew had perished. Sir John Franklin had died on 11th June, 1847. Franklin had been the 25th man to perish on the expedition. Rae ended up leading two missions in an attempt to locate the missing hundred or so sailors who had ultimately died of starvation. The Navy found that some skeletons of some of the last survivors confirmed that the men had been cannibalised, however many perished from starvation, lead poisoning, botulism, scurvy and exhaustion.

In 1852 Dr. John Rae was presented with the Royal Geographical Society Founders Gold Medal in recognition of his discoveries in 1846-47 and 1851. Finally in 1856 Rae decided to retire from the Hudson's Bay Company after which he resided principally in London though he participated in bringing about the land surveys to establish the electric telegraph between England and America from 1860 and 1864.

In 1884, aged 69, he was employed by the Western Telegraph Union Company to explore the best telegraph route down through Siberia, the Bering Strait, Alaska and down to British Columbia. Dr John Rae died in London on 22nd July, 1893, aged 79, after which his body was returned to Kirkwall on the paddle steamer 'St Magnus' and buried in St Magnus Cathedral Kirkyard. Still he was never given the full credit of his discoveries though there is no denying that he was known for his remarkable physical strength and his capacity to live off the land.

A book written by Ken McGoogan called 'Fatal Passage' reveals the courage and determination shown by John Rae. It has been said that Rae walked over 23,000 miles in his travels in the Arctic.

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ROSAMOND JEAN McRAE - RAAF WAAAF AIRCRAFTWOMAN



After World War Two was announced in 1939, the Royal Australian Air Force soon realised that they required more personnel to undertake some skilled jobs as well as maintenance personnel. Volunteers would undertake a number of jobs and as the Government needed the men to fight overseas women could be trained to do their

jobs.

On 4th February, 1941, our nation's War Cabinet ratified the formation of an

Air Force women's auxiliary which was approved by the War Cabinet after some fourteen months of negotiation and outright opposition. The volunteers were known as WAAAFs - Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force. Most female volunteers wanted to contribute to the war effort, especially after the Japanese entered the war and do their patriotic duty. It wasn't long before other women's service organisations were formed such as the Women's Royal Australian Naval Service (WRANS) and the Australian Women's Army Service (AWAS).

Bathurst born Rosamond Jean McRae enlisted on 2nd November, 1944, in Sydney along with some 27,000 women who enlisted in the WAAAF between 15th March, 1941, and 24th August, 1945. She listed her father, Ronald McRae, as next-of-kin. Born on 1st October, 1926, she became a qualified Aircraftwoman before being discharged on 15th March, 1946. WAAAFs also filled roles such as armament workers, fabric workers, truck drivers, flight mechanics, teleprinter operators, fitters, ambulance drivers, meteorological assistants, instrument makers, radio operators, radar operators, electricians, wireless telegraphists, anti-gas instructors and general clerks, in fact over 70 different trades including some very highly skilled.

The WAAAFs were the largest of the World War Two Australian Women's Services with their formation releasing male personnel for service overseas. Basically the WAAAFs worked wherever they were required. At their peak the WAAAFs comprised 10% of the total RAAF personnel. Whilst the women were performing the same duties as males they were paid less. Married women were not allowed to remain in the WAAAFs. It was disbanded in December 1947.

Are you related to

Rosamond?

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SILVER VESTA MATCHBOXES WERE A HANDY GIFT

A ca 1901 silver Vesta matchbox with its Chester hallmark and engraved 'J. A. M. 1904' can be seen on the next page. It was given to her father, James McRae, by his daughter, Ada Elizabeth McRae and her husband David Stewart, a teacher at Pine Valley near Cooma. The couple had been married on 19th September, 1903.

It was given to Ada's father who lived in Berridale near Cooma in New South Wales, the year after Ada and David were married.

Vesta cases are small portable boxes made to contain matches to keep them

dry. The cases could be attached to keys or carried in one's pocket. They were known by a number of names - vesta cases, vesta boxes, pocket match safes or simply matchsafes. Generally they are made of silver in a rectangular shape, with a spring-loaded, close-fitting lid at the top. The base had a corrugated or serrated Vesta match striking surface.



Whilst most are made of silver or plated silver others were made of gunmetal, pressed brass, nickel silver, gold, ivory, leather, ceramic, bone, pressed tin and even wood. Overall there are other different patterns and shapes. There are some that are novelty shapes such as boots and shoes, hearts, skulls, animals and birds and musical instruments. The more expensive types had a gold wash applied to the interior to prevent corrosion by the chemically active match heads.

Some of the fancier match safes included a built-in cigar cutter or a small knife blade as well. A small buckle on one side enabled it to be carried in one's pocket. Some types were even small enough to be suspended from a fob chain or an Albert chain.

The variety of match held in the containers at the time was known as a 'vesta.' It was a small, thin wax candle basically. The Vesta was made firstly in France in the 1830s before being introduced and factory-made in England. The use of Vesta matches and cases reached their peak of popularity between 1890 to the 1920s.

The name Vesta first appeared in Roman mythology, Vesta being the goddess of home, hearth and family. The Romans believed that the deity was symbolised by the blessed fire that flared in her hearth and numerous temples. Thus the name 'Vesta' was used by the match manufacturing companies at the time.

The Vesta cases were made to safely keep a person's supply of matches after numerous accidents happened. Earlier types of matches were unreliable and were prone to combustion, either spontaneous ignition or from the friction of the matches rubbing together.

The Vesta case, often made slightly larger, were made for use in the household, they would be stored in a convenient position such as in the

OFFICE-BEARERS FOR 2021

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Cost is \$15 per annum – Payable to the Treasurer

Clan MacRae Website www.clanmacrae.org.au