

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



www.clanmacrae.org.au

Volume 34 - May 2021

Message from Clan MacRae President



Thank you for voting me in as President for another twelve months in February with the executive being re-elected to their ongoing positions. My thanks to them all especially to Roslyn MacRae our Secretary.

The Government's introduction of the COVID-19 vaccine back on Monday 22nd February, 2021, hopefully will get things back toward some sort of normality by Christmas. We will see however! My wife, Kerry, and I have had our first jab.

The Annual General Meeting, the associated luncheon and the unveiling of the Lewin plaque on the Pioneer Wall beside the Macquarie River at Bathurst on 20th February was a success. A full report appears on page 6.

Alan McRae. President

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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS AND CONGRATULATIONS

Greetings to all our members as we are almost halfway through our second year under COVID-19. The nation is generally doing well, especially when compared to many unfortunate countries overseas. It is pleasing to see some of the gatherings are getting underway once more.

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NOTICE OF ORDINARY MEETING

Ordinary meeting of Clan MacRae Society to be held by teleconference starting at 7.30pm on Wednesday 16th June, 2021. All members are welcome to participate.

TELECONFERENCE INSTRUCTIONS: Dial: **(02) 8077 0506** - When prompted enter access code: **799719** followed by the # key. You will then be greeted by either our President Alan or myself and after a short period, allowing all interested members to connect, we will start the meeting.

For our valued New Zealand members, you can participate by dialling: +64 6-928 7532. If you have any issues, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards, Roslyn MacRae, Hon. Secretary - 0412 291 054

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IN LOVING MEMORY – MOLLY ACKERS



Sue Tregoweth reports - It saddens me to bring you news of Molly (Mary Justine) Akers's (nee Gawith) passing. She passed away peacefully on Friday, 7th August, 2020, aged 94 at Summerset Care Centre, Palmerston North in New Zealand. She was the dearly loved wife of the late Alan, and mother to Carol and Jacques Bahbout (London), Judy and John Calleson, Hugh and Judy, Clive and Jane, Bev Akers and Gary Bevins. Grandmother to eleven and great-grandmother to twenty one.

Because Molly died during our second

COVID-19 lockdown in August and the Palmerston North area was in level 2, the family were only allowed 100 mourners. They held the funeral at the Akers homestead in Opiki.

Molly's mother was Justine Isabel Antill born in Victoria, Australia, who married Alan Clyfford Gawith in 1914 in Woodville, New Zealand. She had six siblings. Her grandmother Jane Gertrude MacRae was born in Burma to Robert Campbell MacRae in 1822 in Demerara, British Guiana and Jane Eliza Currie. Robert's father Colin MacRae was born in 1776 at Inverinate, Scotland. Robert's eldest brother Sir Colin George MacRae was the Lineal representative of the Inverinate line of the Clan MacRae.

Molly's interest in genealogy began in 1976 and became a 'disease' which took her through all her lines. A MacRae query in a genealogical list around 1985 was answered by Flora Willmott of Queensland, Australia. They had both read the Rev. Alexander MacRae's 1899 edition of the Clan MacRae

History which left them so proud to have some MacRae blood. Molly and Flora decided to gather genealogies of MacRaes in their countries.

Most MacRaes will know Molly from her ten years of research, specialising in MacRae families in New Zealand. She ended up compiling “MacRaes to New Zealand - Genealogies of Clan MacRae Families in New Zealand up to 1990” with the help of many contributors which was published on Christmas Eve 1994. She tried to tie as many families back to Rev. Alexander MacRae, Clan MacRae History. She succeeded with the early families in her book but those of us who can’t make that connection are in the later pages. Eileen McMillan was Molly’s great helper with the production of the book, getting all the information onto computer during those arduous years before publication. Because the book took so long to research and they had a massive amount of information, they stopped taking contributions in 1990. In 1996 Molly also published a supplementary index to her book which recorded MacRae marriages for mainly early surnames.

Other books written by Molly were “From Fibre to Food: Opiki, The District and its Development, 1928-2003” was published in 2003 and “Suspended Access - The History of The Privately Owned Opiki Toll Bridge 1918-1969” published in 2003.

I got to know Molly through researching my family to go into “MacRaes to New Zealand”. Molly took over as NZ Representative of the Clan MacRae Society from Eileen McMillan in 1994. In 1996 I took over from Molly.

With Molly, I organised Gatherings in Te Kuiti, Gore, Christchurch, Palmerston North, Dunedin, Napier and Nelson. We were honoured by visits to our MacRae Gatherings from Elma McRae, (secretary) in 1997, Nancy Williams 1998, Mrs Marigold MacRae with her daughter, Baroness Miranda Van Lynden in 1999 and with her grandson, Tristan Van Lynden in 2003.

In August 2000 I took a tour of 24 clan members to Scotland to the Millennium Clan MacRae Gathering. Molly, her sister Doth, brother Alan and his wife Shirley spent several weeks on the tour. At the end of the tour Molly, Marion Lawson, Shirley Tregoweth and I spent another 2 weeks exploring Scotland independently. Molly was in her element as it was her first and only trip to Scotland and she got to meet other clan historians like Jack Dan McRae who she had corresponded with for several years.

Both Molly Akers & Eileen McMillan were honoured for their work with MacRaes by the Clan MacRae Society in 2008 with Life Membership.



Paeroa Highland Games.

VALE – CAROL MACRAE

Our deepest sympathy goes to our New Zealand member Neil MacRae and his grandson Fabian (our young piper) on the death of their wife and grandmother Carol.

Carol died on the 8th February, 2021, at Te Kauwhata (a small town in the north of the Waikato region of New Zealand, situated close to the western shore of Lake Waikare.) She had had a short illness and was aged 67 when she passed on. Sue Tregoweth always enjoyed a visit from the family at the Auckland and

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2021 UPCOMING EVENTS – AUSTRALIA

5th June 2021 – Saturday - Bonnie Wingham Scottish Festival at Wingham.
Only one day this year. A free community event at Central Park to celebrate Scotland with music, dance, stalls and more. Info: <https://bwsf.zyrosite.com/>

3rd July 2021 - Saturday – *21st Aberdeen Highland Games* at Aberdeen in the Upper Hunter Valley of NSW. The Games begin with a parade of bands, clan representatives and others which 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

9th October 2021 – Saturday - *Canberra Highland Gathering* - celebrate Scottish heritage at the Canberra Burn's Club Highland Gathering at Kambah Playing Fields. Free event with pipe bands, Scottish dance, entertainment and numerous and varied Scottish stalls. There is plenty to see and do at this event. Info: www.canberragathering.com.au

Note – our marquee won't be at any of the above events until next year.

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2021 UPCOMING EVENTS – NEW ZEALAND

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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OUR CLAN'S 2021 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING IN BATHURST



Saturday, 20th February, 2021, turned out to be a beautiful summer's day for the unveiling of the John Lewin plaque to mark his family's time at Peel working for Mr. Grosvenor Suttor at his Peel Steam Flour Mill near Bathurst. The plaque is mounted on the 'Pioneer Wall' beside the Macquarie River.

Clan piper Doug McRae piped the official party to the Pioneer Wall which included the two youngest McRaes, Joseph Lewin Volpatti and

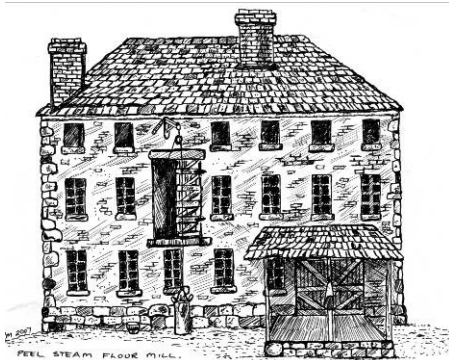
his dad Jeremy and Jaxon Matthew McRae and his mum Amy.

Alan McRae welcomed the group before talking about the short history (below) of the Lewin family in the Bathurst district during our nation's early goldrush.

My Australian lineage begins with my Great Grandmother Ellen who was born Ellen Cruttwell Lewin on 20th January, 1848, at Wickham Markets in Suffolk, England. Her parents were Francis, born on 21st October, 1815, and Ellen (nee Richards) Lewin. Ellen was their eldest daughter and she would later marry Murdoch McRae in northern New South Wales.

Francis got married at 30 years of age to Ellen Richards, the 22 year old adopted daughter of Rev. Richard Cruttwell. By the time Francis and Ellen sailed for New South Wales after securing a passage as cabin passengers and free settlers, bound to the Southern Colony via Rio de Janeiro. Francis was a thoroughly competent flour mill engineer in sails, water wheels and steam. He was also interested in plants, grapes and vegetable gardens.

The miller's house and mill were built in the thriving village itself, not far from Clear Creek. The Peel Steam Flour Mill was operating in 1854. The machinery was to be upgraded in 1856 and that is why Francis Lewin was employed. The Lewin family travelled over the Blue Mountains to Kelso near Bathurst by wagon then out to Peel.



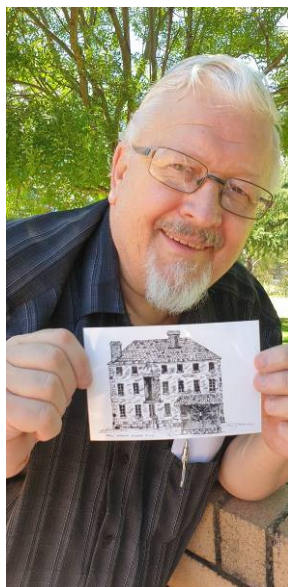
Ellen loved her time at Peel, according to a family letter. She was able to go with her father to the three storey steamdriven flour mill with its sack hoist, which was built of local granite, handmade bricks and hand-forged nails by 8 to 10 men and progress was continually reported in "The Bathurst Free Press" at the time. The complex was situated on 12½ acres. The mill was operated by a 20 HP steam engine situated at the rear of the building, which operated three sets of grinding stones.

Left - Ellen Cruttwell Lewin (taken about 1880 in Inverell.) With the gold petering out and the dwindling population, the mill became less and less profitable so the services of Francis Lewin were no longer required and the family set out for Sydney by coach towards the end of 1860. The Peel mill was later sold in May 1868.



The family later moved up to the New England Tablelands to Inverell and that is another interesting story.

The brass plaque says "LEWIN FAMILY – FRANCIS LEWIN – ELLEN RICHARDS" – it then mentions their time at Peel and at the bottom says that the plaque was presented by the descendants of Ellen Cruttwell McRae."





Left – Jill Glencorse, nee McRae, Kerry and Alan McRae, Jaxon Theobald and his mum Amy Theobald, nee McRae.

Below left - Jeremy Volpatti, young Joseph Lewin Volpatti with his mum Lauren, Piper Doug McRae with his wife Margaret with President Alan McRae, FAIHA, President of



Clan MacRae of Australia and New Zealand at the back.

After the unveiling the party moved to the Panthers Bistro for lunch before going upstairs at 2.30pm for the 33rd Clan MacRae Annual General Meeting. A number of the members travelled quite a distance including Kim and Shirley

McGrath who travelled from the Southern Highlands to attend the luncheon and the Annual General Meeting.

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PAEROA HIGHLAND GAMES

The sounds of Scotland returned to Paeroa on Saturday, 13th February, 2021, for the 28th annual Highland Games and Tattoo. Whether there is a bit of Scot in you or not this is a great day of family entertainment. It is a day of celebrating everything Scottish and more, with Highland dancing, solo piping and drumming, pipe bands and traditional Scottish field events. Eighteen clans were represented in the Village this year, many people called to learn about their clan histories, which were often colourful and bloody.

caterpillar train along with the amazing stilt walkers and the Steam Punks. The Victorians were fascinated with the Steam revolution and Scottish Clan History. Therefore Steampunk in Tartan evolved to showcase the melding of two distinct periods of cultural history. Each costume has to have an element of both for the criteria for the Paeroa Highland Games and Tattoo.



Special guests were The Patea Maori Club who rose to fame in 1984 with the song Poi E. Today the song maintains its status as a cult classic and the Patea Maori club has continued to perform throughout New Zealand. They have toured the UK, played at the London Palladium and the Edinburgh Festival and gave a royal command performance

at the Albert Hall.

The evening tattoo entertained everyone with Massed Bands, Mace Flourishing, Scottish Country Dancers, Inter-island Caber Challenge and many more acts.

Sue Tregowarth

Sue Tregowarth



AUCKLAND CLANS DINNER 2020

On Saturday, 28th November, 2020, Heather Hine, my husband Kevin and I attended the Scottish Clans Association Annual Dinner at the Parnell Hotel and Conference Centre in Auckland. The invitation was extended to all our members but no one was able to attend. This was a celebration for St Andrews Day and instead of the Auckland Highland Games and a great excuse to dress in our tartan.



All available tables were full of enthusiastic people celebrating their Scottish heritage. Guests and the Official Party were piped in by Charlotte Rhodes the 2019 Youth Scholarship Awardee. She did a wonderful job, I'm sure she will have a strong piping career ahead of her. We were welcomed by the President, Trevor Stewart before Malcolm Campbell sang "Flower of Scotland" and James MacGee said the Selkirk Grace. Charlotte Rhodes piped in the Haggis and the ceremony was performed by James MacGee and volunteers. The guest speaker was Andrew Wilkie, High Commissioner of Clan Donald New Zealand who spoke of the role and responsibilities of the warrant.

The food was delicious, soup and Haggis were served at the table while the main course and dessert were buffet style. After “Auld Lang Syne” the evening was over. I’m sure everyone enjoyed getting together for this celebration in these strange times.

Sue Tregowarth

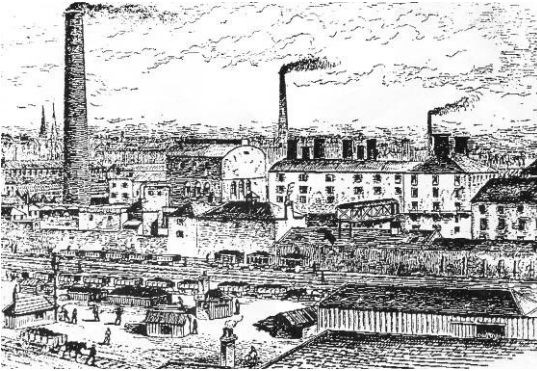
Sue Tregowarth

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Local Uralla News – Scots Wha Hae! – So many members of the Clans are numbered among our new residents that it prompted a remark at the Institute meeting the other night that the time would be right for forming a Scottish Society in our midst. The McRaes and J.B. Sword (Uralla Town Clerk at that time) are new residents of the last month. One of the Campbells has taken a post at the New South Wales Bank and a Mr. McLeod is relieving at the Commercial Bank. Another of Scottish descent is Miss Cromack, head of the Show Room at Trickets' store.

From the Uralla Times - Thursday 15th September, 1927.

SCOTLAND'S CALEDONIAN DISTILLERY



Left – an engraving of the Caledonian Distillery situated in Edinburgh, seen here in the 1880s.

The famous distillery was constructed by Graham Menzies & Co, in 1855 with its 300 feet high chimney stack though it was built later between 1870 and 1880. It was a large grain whisky

distillery and in 1887 the company was employing 220 men and boys. It was generating some 2,000,000 gallons of whisky at the time from a Coffey Patent Still, as well as two large pot stills.

The mash consisted of $\frac{1}{3}$ malted barley to $\frac{2}{3}$ raw barley.

The distillery was initially called 'Edinburgh' at that time but it was decided to change its name to the 'Caledonian.' It was well designed with a large mash house and tun room. Originally the distillery had a two-storey power house to hold the two large boilers. The building also boasted several duty-free warehouses as well as a tall four-storey bonded warehouse.

For a large number of years the distillery was the largest or second largest in Scotland, depending on the year.

The distillery had its own railway line at the rear of the building not far from Haymarket Station. This brought in the bags of barley from the farms around the country before emptying out the bags into the silos located within the building. The building had a reputation of being remarkably clean.

In the 1770s there were eight licensed stills in Edinburgh itself. However, officials were concerned about the some four hundred illicit stills operating in Edinburgh at the time. Constables had been sent out to try to find at least some of them, however they were not successful as too many people were involved. A group of smugglers were apprehended moving over 800 gallons onto two boats in the dark of night but the 'evidence' couldn't be found the next morning.

The Caledonian Distillery was finally closed down in 1987.

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Membership is due in January

Cost is \$20 per annum – Payable to the Treasurer

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