

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

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[www.clanmacrae.org.au](http://www.clanmacrae.org.au)

**Volume 38 - May 2022**

## Message from Clan MacRae President Alan McRae



Finally, the dreaded COVID has taken second place in the news and our daily discussions, even though we are still losing people to this pandemic. I think that the immunisation of most of the nation will stay with us for at least a few years with annual vaccinations becoming commonplace just like the flu needle.

For the first time for a number of issues we have been able to include our upcoming events programme. Note that the Bundanoon gathering has been rescheduled for 6th August. The Clan MacRae

Society will be in attendance at several events, thus the Clan tent will be at Wingham, Aberdeen and Canberra and we'd love to welcome any MacRaes in the various regions to visit us.

On 26th April my wife and I became proud grandparents again when beautiful Violet Aimee McRae arrived in Brisbane. Violet is a sister for 2 year old Oliver and daughter for Melissa and Jeremy McRae.

I appeal to those members who have yet to renew their annual membership to please get organised and do so as we run on a tight budget year to year. Remember that you could give a membership as a birthday present and join up another member of your family.

I have been getting some interesting emails concerning MacRae/McRae family histories from the mid 1800s through to the Second World War. If you have some history already prepared and some original photos (not photocopies) we can include some in our newsletter. Just email me with your information to [amcrae@lisp.com.au](mailto:amcrae@lisp.com.au)

Members will be surprised to hear that Elma McRae had a fall in mid April and was hospitalised after falling and breaking her collarbone. We all wish her a speedy recovery wherever she is at present.

This issue contains more general articles than usual due to numerous gatherings being cancelled because of COVID conditions. We will hopefully have more member's reports in our next issue.

Bi latha iorbhailach! – "Have a Great Day!"

**Alan McRae. President**

**27th and 28th May – Friday and Saturday - Berry Celtic Festival** in Berry, NSW. A celebration of Celtic culture at Berry Showgrounds, with pipe bands, entertainment, stalls and more. Info: [www.berryrotary.org.au/celtic-festival](http://www.berryrotary.org.au/celtic-festival)

**4th June – Saturday - Bonnie Wingham Scottish Festival in Wingham, NSW.** The Manning Valley Historical Society presents this annual free community event. Clans from all over the country descend on Wingham to enjoy the festival. The Clan of Honour for 2022 will be Clan Donnachaidh. See pipe bands, entertainment, Scottish dancers and stalls. Info [www.bwsf.zyrosite.com](http://www.bwsf.zyrosite.com) **The Clan tent will be at Wingham so come to visit.**

**2nd July – Saturday - Aberdeen Highland Games at Aberdeen, NSW.** Throughout the day there will be fun for all the family – there will be Highland and Country Dancing, Pipe Band displays, Strong Man events with the Kilted Warriors to enjoy as well as three-legged races and the famed Kilted Dash to participate in. A multitude of stores and stands will surround the area selling all manner of Scottish heirlooms and souvenirs, clothing and garb, and food and drink to complete your day. For further information phone 02 6540 1300 or [www.aberdeenhighlandgames.com](http://www.aberdeenhighlandgames.com) **The Clan tent will be at Aberdeen so pay us a visit.**

**30th & 31st July – Saturday and Sunday - 75th Anniversary of the City of Maitland Pipes and Drums** in Maitland, NSW. A weekend of entertainment is part of the 75th Year of Foundation celebrations for the City of Maitland Pipes and Drums. Includes a free entry concert for the community at Maitland Park. Info: Greg: 0409 918 260 or [www.maitlandpipeband.org.au](http://www.maitlandpipeband.org.au)

**6th August – Saturday - Bundanoon Highland Gathering** in Bundanoon. One of Australia's largest Scottish gatherings with pipe bands, entertainment, Clans, Scottish dancers, strong men, parade and all sorts of stalls in the beautiful NSW Southern Highlands. Info: [www.brigadoon.org.au](http://www.brigadoon.org.au)

**8th October – Saturday - Canberra Highland Gathering** on the Kambah sports arena in the ACT. It is Canberra's largest Scottish event with a full day of Scottish entertainment with pipe bands, Scottish dancers, the meeting of the Clans, stalls and a great deal more. This is a free community event. There will be an evening ceilidh held at the Canberra Burns Club in Kett Street across the road. Info: [www.canberragathering.com.au](http://www.canberragathering.com.au) **The Clan tent will be at Canberra so join us for the day on the second Saturday in October.**

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## 2022 UPCOMING EVENTS – NEW ZEALAND

19th November 2022 – Saturday - Auckland Highland Games held in Auckland, New Zealand. The Games have been the premier Scottish cultural event that is held in the Auckland Region with pipe bands, Scottish dancing, stalls and lots more. Info: [www.facebook.com/aucklandhighlandgames](https://www.facebook.com/aucklandhighlandgames)

## HONoured CITIZEN IN DORRIGO NSW - GORDON MACRAE

The tragic passing from our midst of Mr. Gordon Macrae, whose death occurred in the Bellingen District Hospital on Sunday, December 22nd, 1946, following fearful injuries received in a motor smash on the Bellingen-Dorrigo Road the previous afternoon, deeply shocked the residents of Dorrigo and district and sincere and genuine expressions of sympathy were general.

The late Mr. Macrae was born in Sydney in 1889. He attended the Burwood and Petersham Superior Schools and, at the latter, he received an education intending to take up a commercial carrier. After leaving school he entered the office of the Colonial Oil Company, an offshoot of the Vacuum Oil Company. When he was 16 he evinced a desire to go on the land, and with that end in view he entered the Wollongbar Experimental Farm on the Richmond River, where he completed his course and emerged with his diploma in dairying.

On his exit from the college he came to Dorrigo and entered into the employment of Mr. Andrew Menzies at North Dorrigo. In 1907 his father took up a selection on Lower Bielsdown and Gordon took up his residence thereon and with the assistance of his younger brother commenced dairy farming on the property. They, of course, had to clear the land and carry out all the improvements necessary to the establishment of a dairy farm.



He carried on this until 1914 whereupon the outbreak of World War One he enlisted in the 6th Australian Light Horse Regiment, left, under the

Command of the late Lieut-General Charles Cox, proceeding overseas to Egypt in late 1914, with his regiment. He was drafted to Gallipoli shortly after the landing and served there till its evacuation. His regiment, once again mounted, served in Palestine till the end of the war. During his service he attained the rank of Sergeant. After the Armistice he returned home and once more settled down to dairying. In 1920 he purchased the property 'Kelvin Park' near Dorrigo and in the same year he married Miss Alice Summerhays. After some years he decided, with the active assistance of his wife, to take up

stud breeding with Jersey cattle. Starting in a small way, he built up, at 'Kelvin Park', one of the foremost Jersey Herd Studs in New South Wales and exhibited his stock at numerous shows on the North Coast with conspicuous success. By this time his family was growing up, and he bought adjoining properties in order to give scope for his activities. He was President of the local branch of the Jersey Herd Society at the time of his death.

Right – 6th Light Horse troops on beach in Palestine.



He took a great interest after



World War One in the affairs of the local branch of the Returned Soldiers League, being a foundation member and was secretary for a number of years just after the first World War. He also took up the cause of the Dairy Farmer by actively supporting the Primary Producers' Union in his own district. He was secretary of the Raleigh District Council of the Union and a delegate from that Council to the Central Executive. During the

two years prior to his death, he was a Vice-President of the P.P.U. His position necessitated frequent trips to Sydney, often at great personal inconvenience and discomfort, particularly during the war years with overcrowded trains and other trials. But he never allowed this to deter him from carrying on. In fact, his death occurred whilst driving from Urunga to his home at Dorrigo after attending a P.P.U. meeting in Sydney the week prior to Christmas.

With three sons away during most of the 1939-45 War, the late Mr. Macrae, with the help of his fourth son, Donald, carried on the terrific task of caring for a large property with 150 head of pure bred cattle, besides being a Company Commander in the Volunteer Defence Corps and maintaining his activities in the P.P.U. of which the deceased had been secretary for 13 years.

Other positions in which the late Mr. Macrae held an active interest at the time of his death was that he was the District Coroner and a Director of the Dorrigo Co-op Dairy Company.

Besides his widow, four sons, Charles, Gordon, Donald, Malcolm, and two daughters, Ruth and Mary, were left to mourn the loss of a devoted husband and a loving father. Another son, Ian, was killed with the R.A.F. over Holland two years ago. Other mourners were Rona and Phyllis, daughter's in-law, Mrs.

Macrae senr., (mother), brothers Douglas and Frank, sisters Catherine (Mrs. R. R. Blair), and Caroline (Mrs. P. Bennison) all of Cronulla. The deceased's baby grandson (Douglas Ian) and father predeceased him recently.

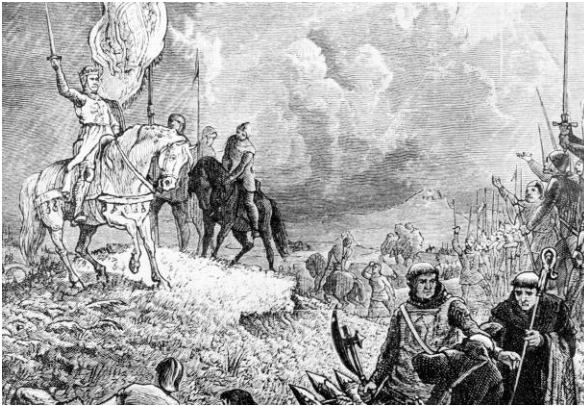
The funeral, which was one of the largest ever attended in Dorrigo, left the Presbyterian Church for the local cemetery on Monday, 23rd December, 1946. Rev. W.E. Dorin conducted the service at the Church and at the graveside, at which the local Diggers formed a guard of honour, with. Padre Edwards and Digger President Mr. C. Banfield conducting the ceremonies.

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## BANNOCKBURN – ROBERT THE BRUCE'S VICTORY

The victory at Bannockburn was due to several tactics employed by Robert the

Bruce. The Scottish force employed terrain, ambush and guerrilla style tactics to destabilise the English forces who had greater numbers on the 23rd and 24th June, 1314.

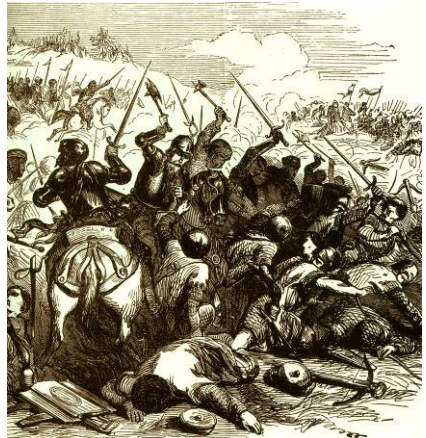


Robert the Bruce, King of Scots, with their pikes, battle axes and broadswords took on King Edward II in the First War of Scottish Independence.

Despite the Scottish victory it would take another fourteen years for victory to be secured.

Robert the Bruce had 10,000 Scottish soldiers, 300 pikemen and 300 light horses, with the Scottish leader deciding to divide his infantry and men at arms into three different bodies.

By 1314 Robert the Bruce had besieged Stirling Castle, near the River Forth, bringing to a head the culmination of the long-running war between the English and the Scots. England's King Edward II had raised 14,000 troops and 2,500





mainly heavy cavalry. The army comprised Englishmen, Welshmen and Irishmen.

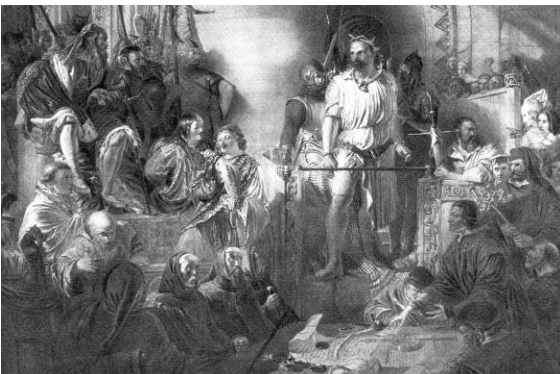
Stirling Castle was on the route north into the Scottish Highlands and was manned by the English.

The Bannockburn was a stream that the English forces had to cross, however as the English approached Stirling little did they know that the Scots had booby-trapped along the stream and surrounding boggy fields with shallow holes with sharpened stakes in the bottom. Numerous soldiers and men were injured in the pits but still the English pressed on. One of the English knights challenged Robert the Bruce to a one-on-one fight, which was accepted. Bruce soon despatched him with his axe.

The English then called off crossing the stream and set up camp for the night. Their full army hadn't arrived, straggling in throughout the night in great disorder. English morale was low after the previous day. Realising the situation Robert the Bruce ordered his attack at about 3am just as the first rays of light illuminated the scene. His men came hurtling out of the adjacent woods catching many of the English still asleep.

Unable to make their formations, the archers with their longbows and heavy cavalry fought on foot and were soon forced back onto marshy ground where the dexterous Scots despatched them. By now the English were panicking as they realised they would be defeated. As the troops were collapsing King Edward II fled from the battlefield leaving his troops to fend for themselves.

The King took with him his Royal bodyguard of 500 knights. Robert the Bruce again used their guerrilla tactics and ambushing skills to great advantage.



Left - William Wallace had been Robert the Bruce's predecessor.

Wallace was a Scottish knight who became one of the principal leaders to inspire Scottish resistance against the English King Edward I during the First War of Scottish Independence. William did

not believe that an English King could make decisions about Scotland.



Wallace had already defeated an English army at the Battle of Stirling Bridge in September 1297.

He met a gruesome end after being charged with treason - he was hanged, strangled by hanging, but released while he was still alive, emasculated, eviscerated and his bowels burned before him, beheaded, and then cut into four parts on 23rd August, 1305. His preserved head was dipped in tar and placed on a pike atop London Bridge. It was one of the worst ways to die during Medieval times.

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## SCOTTISH BUTTER MOULD

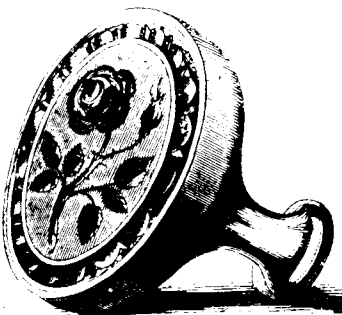


left - Wooden butter mould with a Scottish thistle pattern with its typical knob handle. Many of these were hand-carved and can date back to the 1860s - right.

Butter moulds were first used centuries ago in northern Europe.



Today, most of the oldest moulds are found in European and North American museums and date to the mid-18th century. In the 19th century, dairies became commercial and the wooden butter mould was widely mass-produced. Antique moulds of the late 19th and early 20th century are often found in personal and family collections. Antique American butter moulds have, in the past fifty years, become popular Americana and Australian collectables and have greatly increased in value. Such moulds are, due to their condition, best used as display or decorative pieces.



If your wooden mould needs cleaning you can use hot water, mild soap and a brush to loosen any residue. Do not soak your moulds in water. After drying the mould you will need some mineral oil to recondition the mould and to prevent it from drying and cracking. If you use your old moulds wipe over with the mineral oil after every use.

Modern butter moulds are difficult to find

made of timber these days and even more scarce is someone who knows how to use these interesting household items.

Basically, the following instructions are for use when using a modern butter mould -1. Get a bowl of ice water and soak the mould for 45 minutes. This will help to prevent your butter from sticking to the mould.

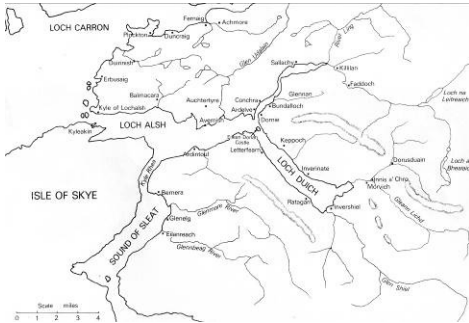
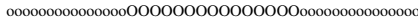
2. Rinse the mould again with cold water and fill the mould with softened butter.

3. Smooth the surface of the butter with a butter knife or spatula and cover with cling wrap.

4. Chill for 2 hours or more.

5. To remove the butter from the mould run the tip of a paring knife around the edge and lever out.

Other mould patterns to be found can include a pineapple, large leaf patterns, flowers, acorns, oak tree leaves and acorns and more.



# EILEAN DONAN CASTLE ON LOCH DUICH - SEAT OF CLAN MACRAE

Charming Eilean Donan castle sits on a small tidal island in the western Highlands of Scotland at a point where three sea lochs meet - Loch Duich, Loch Long and Loch Alsh. Connected by a stone footbridge to the mainland, the castle has great

meaning for Clan MacRae so be sure to include a visit if you are in Britain. The 13th Century, fully-restored castle would definitely be one of the most recognised castles in Scotland and is not far from the nearby village of Dornie.

Eilean Donan has, over many years, been used in the movies as film producers find the magnificence of the great movie location. The first time the castle appeared in the cinema was after World War Two in 1948 with 'Bonnie Prince Charlie' which starred David Niven. The Australian-born Errol Flynn was there filming 'The Master of Ballantrae'. It was about the struggle between two brothers, Scottish noblemen, whose family was torn apart by the Jacobite rising of 1745 with the movie released in 1953.

With bigger budgets and the need to find more exotic locations, Eilean Donan Castle has appeared in numerous movies, to name a few - The New Avengers,

Highlander, The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes, Mio in the Land of Faraway, Rob Roy, Oliver's Travels, Loch Ness, James Bond's The World is Not Enough, Kuch Hota Hai, Entrapment, Kandukondain, BBC One Television Identity series, Elizabeth: The Golden Age and Maid of Honour.



Today the seat of the Clan MacRae Society is at Eilean Donan Castle which sits mesmerisingly on a small island on Loch Duich, see above. The now restored castle was earlier the sanctuary of the MacKenzie Chiefs.

The name MacRae or Macrae was initiated by being provided to particular males in a number of places who, it was thought, were gifted with holiness and honour. In the 11th and 12th centuries it was adopted as a personal name primarily for clergymen, as well as lords and poets.

Originally the Clan MacRae name is of Irish origin before moving to Ross-shire. In 1263, during the Scottish-Norwegian War, Clan MacRae skirmished alongside Scotland's King Alexander III at the Battle of Largs against the Norse Viking army of King Haakon IV of Norway. The Norwegians were decisively vanquished and sent packing. Eventually this minor clan moved to Kintail and became subordinate to the Seaforth branch of the MacKenzies. As expert archers and warriors the MacRaes attended as forces of the Mackenzie Clan at Kintail and at Loch Gairloch. As the official bodyguards of the MacKenzie Clan the MacRaes grew to be as famous as the Mackenzies' 'shirt of mail.' The MacKenzie chiefs continually assigned the MacRaes to be Constables of Eilean Donan Castle.

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**In need of representative.**

**Membership is due in January**

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

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