



# Murray Clan Society of NSW

## Newsletter – July 2012

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### Greetings to our Members and Friends

#### Annual Gathering – 2012

The first weekend in June was the occasion for our annual gathering. This year we combined our activities with the Bonnie Wingham Scottish Festival and we had a very enjoyable and successful weekend.

The Saturday began early with the erection of the traditional “Murray Tent” in the park at Wingham. The tent was staffed by Murray Clan volunteers throughout the day and we fielded quite a few questions about the Clan Society and the Murray family. It is always enjoyable to move around the various clan tents and other exhibits. There were local charities selling food and other delights, Scottish organisations and businesses selling Scottish products as well as a host of other tents with displays to interest everyone. I was impressed with a display on the Flying Doctor Service brought to Wingham by the Ferguson Memorial Library in Sydney. The pioneers of this service had links to the Manning district.

We had a small but committed contingent in the Procession through the Wingham central business district.

During the day I had the privilege of being introduced to a number of relatives I had not previously met, including another Ross Murray. They were descendants of my great-uncle David Murray, a former mayor of Wingham (amongst other things).

The Dinner at night was another success. As guests arrived at the Wingham Bowling Club we were entertained by the Tamworth Pipe Band, which includes a number of Murrays. We were also very appreciative of a Highland Dance performance by Meredith Long. Meredith is a highly accomplished performer and is a descendant of the original George Murray of Pampoolah on the lower Manning.

Warwick Murray, our Clan Commissioner, addressed the haggis after it was ceremonially ushered in. The haggis was then served as the entrée.

John Easton, the President of the Paterson-Easton Family Association was our guest speaker. His speech reflected on the changes our families have experienced and the importance of family traditions and relationships. It was very well received.



*Timalee, Ross, Dorothy and Alex Murray  
in the Bonnie Wingham procession.*

Vice President Ian kept the proceedings moving along smoothly. During the night we launched a new book on the early Murrays (see below).

After the formal part of the evening we were entertained by noted local artists including the highly recognised Des Morgan. Although the quality of the entertainment was high, we acknowledge that there was a problem with excessive volume. We have taken on board your constructive comments on this and will ensure that in future any background music will be more conducive to the introductions, conversations and swapping of stories that our members look forward to at our gatherings.

One innovation this time was the introduction of coloured ribbons to identify the various branches of the family, as there were indications that people wanted to find others who were in their branch of the family. We thank Margaret Tuiqereqere for this idea and for doing the organisation. We think it is an idea worth developing at future dinners. Margaret and her husband Leke joined the Clan only a few years ago and have been delighted to meet fellow-members of the George Murray branch whom they never knew existed. They have also learned one or two family history surprises.



*The Tamworth Pipe Band provided pre-dinner entertainment*

We had planned a Sunday lunch on the river bank at Wingham, but the weather washed out those intentions. Four hardy souls turned up though and warmed themselves eating hot chips under one of the shelters.

At 10am on the Sunday morning there was a meeting (actually called a "Colloquium") of Clan

Leaders. Many Clans were represented, and there was some profitable discussion on some of the issues facing Scottish societies and pipe bands. Ian and I represented the Murray Clan Society.

## **New Book Launched**

A significant part of the program at the annual dinner was the launch of my book ***Of Greater Worth than Gold: The History and Legacy of Isabella Murray***. Our very longstanding family friend, Jan Weeks (Murray) did me the great honour of launching the book. Jan has been a member of the Murray Clan Committee since its inception and did a great job. The launch was very successful, despite the fact that unexpected delays in production meant that we had only one proof copy for members to inspect! My thanks to the many people who placed orders on the night.

Jan's launch speech is reproduced below.

I am very appreciative of those kind people who have commented on the book, both by phone and email, and sometimes at great length. For example, Julie Evans wrote:

*I have completed my first reading of your book and know that I will return to it many times ... You have created a scholarly history, thoroughly researched and documented and have brought to life our Murray ancestors. I am thrilled to have played even a very minor role in the book's creation.*

*The 'reality' of Isabella is very strong – I feel I have come to 'know' her over so many years of family history research and your book has added another dimension to that knowledge. Providing the history of the times in which they lived, both in Scotland and*

*on the Manning, has meant that we can better understand the context of their lives. How much we are shaped by the events occurring around us.*

*Thank you for the opportunity to read your work... Thanks again for sharing your writer's journey with me. You can be justly proud of the end product...*

Margaret Tuiqereqere wrote:

*I love what I've glanced at so far, just can't believe we descendants should have such a treasure of Isabella's life in our possession. How can we Murrays thank you for your time, effort and devotion in writing it Ross...*

Jim Kable wrote:

*I have just now finished reading through your first-rate family/cultural history "**Of Greater Worth than Gold**". How glad I am to have it on my family history bookshelf ... absolutely bravo on the chapter acknowledging the Indigenous Birpai/Biripi people of the Manning River Valley! A totally uplifting story ... Meticulously told! Congratulations!*

*Your detail on the emigration process ... was fascinating - intention, selection (and rejection - and why) and then the actual process - shipping/ship-board life - and arrival - brilliantly comes to life ... - your book is terrific. Many thanks for your scholarship!*

We are dependent to a large extent on "word of mouth" to publicise this book. I would be grateful if members would pass on the information about the book to other family members who might be interested. Hint: Father's Day is coming up before too long. If you are receiving this Newsletter by email, feel free to forward it on to others.

The book costs \$25. It contains coloured illustrations and has been produced using quality paper and binding.

Email recipients of this Newsletter will find the front and back covers of the book attached to their email.

## **Ordering**

There are three ways you can obtain a copy:

1. Buy one from either the Wingham Museum or Manning Valley Books in Manning Street Taree.
2. Send me a cheque with your address details and I will post it to you. (Postage \$3 extra.)
3. Deposit the \$25 + \$3 for postage in my bank account (using your name as the reference), and email or ring me with your address. My account details are:

BSB: 812170  
Account number: 6950322  
Account name: RD & PM Murray.

**Note:** Orders received in July will be processed within three days after payment has been cleared.

***I will be overseas during the first three weeks of August, so any orders placed during that period will be filled as soon as I return.***

## **Speech Delivered by Jan Weeks in Launching *Of Greater Worth than Gold: The History and Legacy of Isabella Murray***

When Ross sent me an email asking if I would say a few words at his book launch I was very cautious about accepting his offer. There are many others who deserve this honour. I hope that I can do justice to this task.

When I began High School, I remember one of my first Social Studies tasks was to write out my family tree. This proved to be a difficult task. Dad actually visited two of his elderly aunts in Taree and found that they had a family tree and he copied out a little section for me. That was when my appetite for knowledge of my family history began but I didn't ever seem to have the time to pursue that interest myself.

In 1979, our family went to the big Murray gathering at Wingham Brush. When the time came for the election of committee members, I remember Dad saying: "These people are going to write a book and do a family tree. I'll nominate you so that you can get a copy when it is written". I was elected and so I became a committee member of the Clan Murray of NSW. At this time, although we lived at the Bucketts Way end of Bootawah Road, our family had no idea that Camp House was at the other end of Bootawah Road at Alex and Heather's place. At the committee meetings I met Fred and his cousin Joan Murray and later Ross (although I remembered him from Taree High School days). Fred and Joan did write that book with the family trees, Darryl Murray followed that with his book of my Hugh line and now Ross has completed his book. What a wonderful legacy we Murrays now have!

I remember how excited everyone was at the Committee Meeting when Isabella's letter from Joseph Chatto Lamb was presented by Alex and Ross began his research.

The Wingham Chronicle this week included an article about Ross' book stating that the book's title was born from an extract from that letter written to Isabella in 1852 by a family friend who was a well-to-do member of the English gentry.

"Dwell in the love of God, seeing how he loves you. This is far greater riches than all the gold in the world, to come to understand and believe what Jesus did when he died for you." Hence the book's title... "Of Greater Worth than Gold"

The letter became important for so many of us as we wondered about Isabella, why she would come to Australia with her children and her Christian background. Ross has pursued this and it has become a significant part of his book. I can't imagine how many hours have been spent researching and writing and how many kilometres have been travelled before Ross was able to present us with his treasure tonight.

The story goes back as far as 1669 to the earliest documented Scottish ancestor, *John Murray I* and, using historic references, follows our line through to John and Isabella.

In his Introduction, Ross writes that John and Isabella Murray were victims of the vast industrial and agricultural changes that transformed British society during the Economic Revolution. As tenant farmers, they lost their small holding, as farms on the large estates were amalgamated and as sheep production replaced the more traditional intensive cropping.

John and Isabella's story in itself is an interesting one. They are not just names in a genealogy. They were real people who had to make hard decisions in the light of the social upheavals that were going on around them. When John died in 1845, Isabella was left with ten children in a situation of great uncertainty. Isabella was a strong woman, mother and pioneer.

Ross's book traces the story of the families of John and Isabella, as far as available records allow, for the two centuries prior to these events. In 1848, five of John and Isabella's children, Hugh (together with his wife Margaret), James, William, Thomas and Agnes, migrated to Australia on the sailing ship, the *Castle Eden*. They were followed by Isabella and the rest of the children, John, Robert, George, Veitch and Walter, in 1851, on the *Earl Grey*. It considers the issues involved in the decision of Isabella and the children to migrate

to Australia. You could ask yourself how you would react to the setback the family must have experienced when half the close-knit family was approved for assisted emigration in 1848 and the other half was rejected.

The book describes the voyages themselves in 1848 and 1851 where both branches of the family faced difficulties. What would Isabella have been thinking when, with her young boys to protect, scarlet fever was raging through the *Earl Grey* on the high seas? Imagine Hugh's wife, a pregnant Margaret Murray aged 22, enduring a 116 day voyage, and a storm at sea of sufficient strength to smash all three of the ship's masts.

Ross writes that his book also examines something of the character of these early generations of Murrays, in particular the profound Christian convictions which motivated their thoughts and actions and which have left a long-lasting legacy of Christian commitment and service in many branches of the family. A big percentage of the Scots who came to Australia were Christians, and this is partly because of the huge role the churches played in supporting emigration schemes. This firm Christian faith held their lives together for generations. It was a very Scottish faith that had its roots in the Scottish Reformation.

Ross also records the settlement of the pioneering Murray family in the Manning Valley on the Mid North Coast of NSW, where our rolling green hills and rich farmlands would, no doubt, have reminded the family of the Borders valleys of the Rulewater and Jedwater that they had known so well.

The Murray families have made a significant contribution to the Manning District and indeed to the nation. Members of this family put their skills to work in Australia showing their enterprise and adaptability, but although they prospered on their farms they also put back into their communities through their church activities and community involvement. Perhaps our Murray families today have preserved and honoured the memory of their Australian founding family more than many other families. We have certainly attempted to do this through the Murray Clan Society with its annual get-togethers.

Ross has acknowledged many who have assisted him and we are indebted to them too for researching our heritage. He also states that our Yellow Murray Book written by his father, Fred, and Joan Murray, (*The History of the Australian Murrays*) gave him valuable starting points. Likewise, he sees his book as being useful when branches of the family want to write their own histories. By assembling the information available about the original Manning Murrays and their forebears, particularly over the period leading up to their settlement in Australia, writers now do not have to reinvent the wheel by researching that part of our history that is common to all branches. They now have a place to start.

Ross wrote to me stating:

“I wanted it to be a book of use to historians so there is a lot of general history in the book, but I also wanted to avoid unnecessarily academic language that would discourage a general reader. I would like to think that my love of family, and my studies in history and theology, have combined to produce a book that will help the family and local historians to appreciate the place of the Murrays in the history of the valley, and indeed beyond it.”

With photos, and Ross's writing style, I am sure that you will enjoy reading this 94 page book.

- If you would like to know about the life of our ancestors in Scotland in the 1800s and our Murray ancestors in the Manning Valley, you will want to read this book.
- If you want to learn about the beginnings of the Murray Clan Society of NSW you will want to read this book.
- If you always wonder what to buy your parents, children and grandchildren for birthdays or Christmas...then this is the book for you.

Ross has printed 800 copies only and they are indeed a quality production. Thank you, Ross and Philippa for giving us your time for several years and for producing this treasured “little book” as you have affectionately called it, Ross. Congratulations on this historical and literary achievement. I hope everyone enjoys reading it. This book and you, Ross Murray, are of Greater Worth Than Gold.

## **Colin Murray**

Most members would know by now of the sudden death of our esteemed Treasurer and Life Member Colin Murray. Col attended his last Committee meeting on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> May. He was his usual jovial self and presented his financial report in his usual methodical manner. We all enjoyed a light lunch together. It was therefore a shock to learn that he had passed away at his home just after lunch the following day after attending Church that morning with his wife Dorothy.

Col was born in Wingham on 6<sup>th</sup> November 1932 and was raised on the family farm, *Camphouse* at Killawarra, with his siblings Bruce, Jess and Alex.

He left school at 15 to work for the Bank of NSW (now Westpac). He worked in a number of different towns including Warialda where he met Dorothy. They married in 1954. Col was one of the old style bank managers who put the interests of their customers first. He refused to cooperate in the selling of products and providing of loans to people who he knew could not afford them, and pressure to do so contributed to his early retirement at 55.

Col led an active retirement. For example, in addition to his pivotal role in the Murray Clan Society, he was Parish Treasurer for the Anglican Church and assisted at their Op Shop. He was involved with Probus. He never lost his love for playing cards, which he was taught as a child by his father Alexander.

As far as the Murray Clan is concerned, Col will always be remembered as a diligent and competent Treasurer, a faithful Committee member who made worthwhile contributions to our discussions, and as a good friend and colleague. He was a man of integrity whose dedication to the Society over a great many years was acknowledged in his appointment as a Life Member in 2010. He was also a loving husband and father, and we extend our sympathy to Dorothy (our Secretary) their four children and their families.

Along with other members of the Clan Society I was privileged to attend Col's funeral in Wingham. The large crowd and the tributes that were made bore witness to the esteem in which he was held.

## **Scottish Festivals**

25<sup>th</sup> August – “Gathering of the Clans” at Norah Head on the Central Coast.

For details see [www.gatheringoftheklans.weebly.com](http://www.gatheringoftheklans.weebly.com)

15<sup>th</sup> September – “Clans on the Coast” at Nelson Bay.

For details see [www.clansonthecoast.com](http://www.clansonthecoast.com)

## **Annual General Meeting**

The current policy regarding our annual gatherings is that they be held every second year in conjunction with the Bonnie Wingham Scottish Festival and in alternate years in September. This policy, adopted at the Annual General Meeting in 2009, accommodates those members who like to attend both the Festival and the Murray gathering in the one weekend. It also recognises that there are others who like to attend the Bonnie Wingham Grand Ball and would prefer to attend a Murray Gathering at a different time.

This matter will be discussed again at the AGM on Saturday, 8<sup>th</sup> September at 9.00am in the Tinonee Anglican Hall. All members are welcome to make submissions to the meeting even if you cannot attend the AGM.

This Newsletter constitutes formal notice of the AGM and we will not be posting out any reminders unless motions are submitted that require dissemination to members.

## **Constitutional amendment**

(Feel free to skip this bit if you are bored by such matters.)

After it was first suggested that we hold our Annual Gathering in conjunction with Bonnie Wingham, it was reported to us that the idea had been rejected most strongly by the Bonnie Wingham Committee. In response to that, it was decided to move our function to September, so that the two events would be well apart. Because it was assumed at the time that our meetings would be held annually in September, the Constitution was amended to enable the Annual General Meeting to be held at the same time as the Annual Gathering, i.e. in September. The relevant clauses currently read:

- 14) The financial year shall be the period 1<sup>st</sup> July to 30<sup>th</sup> June.
- 15) The Annual General Meeting shall be held within ninety (90) days after the end of the financial year.

What has changed is that the Bonnie Wingham Committee is now happy for us to hold our function in conjunction with the Scottish Festival, but for reasons stated above we will still do this every second year (unless the policy is changed at an AGM). The problem is that our Constitution currently obliges us to hold our AGM during July-September, even if our Gathering is held in June.

We realise that this arrangement makes it difficult for out-of-town folk to get to the AGM. We don't expect people to travel hundreds of kilometres for a short meeting. The issue is a bit messy at present and there is no simple solution. I also realise that constitutional issues do not concern the vast majority of members who simply want to join together once a year with other Murrays, keep in touch with their extended families and enjoy a bit of Scottish heritage.

I am proposing that at the AGM on 8<sup>th</sup> September we amend the clauses to read:

- 14) The financial year shall be the period 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> March
- 15) The Annual General Meeting shall be held within three months of 31<sup>st</sup> March during the weekend of the Annual Gathering.

My suggestion will be that while ever the Society agrees to do so we should combine with Bonnie Wingham in June every second year. In the alternate years we should hold our function as we always used to do between April and June, but not within four weeks of Bonnie Wingham. Whether we meet during Bonnie Wingham or not, we can still hold our AGM the same weekend as the Annual Dinner. I hope that this will prove an acceptable compromise. At least it will serve as a basis for further discussion.

Any opinions sent to me prior to the AGM will be raised at the meeting. Please send me any submissions / opinions before the end of July. I will have only two weeks between my return to Australia and the AGM and would like to have everything organised before I go.

## **Website update**

We are still at [www.murrayclannsw@weebly.com](http://www.murrayclannsw@weebly.com) . We will let you know when the new domain name is registered and the site upgraded.

## **New Treasurer Learning the Ropes**

We are delighted that Timalee Murray is taking on the role of Treasurer. At present we are changing our bank details, and in our next Newsletter I will be able to provide that information. Once the new system is in place, it will be easier to use internet banking to pay for membership subscriptions and the cost of our dinners.

## **Family Bible Returned to Family**

At the recent Annual Dinner, the family Bible belonging to the first John Murray to settle on the Manning was presented by Alex Murray to John's descendants, represented by Judy Bourke. John's family are delighted to have this historic Bible back in their possession.

## **General Remarks**

Don't forget to let me know if you change your email address or other contact details. It is a lot more efficient to send the Newsletters out by email, so if you have an email address but are receiving your Newsletter by post, please let me know.

Remember, too, that contributions are welcome. Stories, news, photos – anything of interest. I hear that some of the John Murray descendants are heading off to Scotland. It would be great to get an article with a few pictures to share around when you get back.

Please spread the word about the Isabella Murray book.

Warm regards to all,

Ross Murray

President