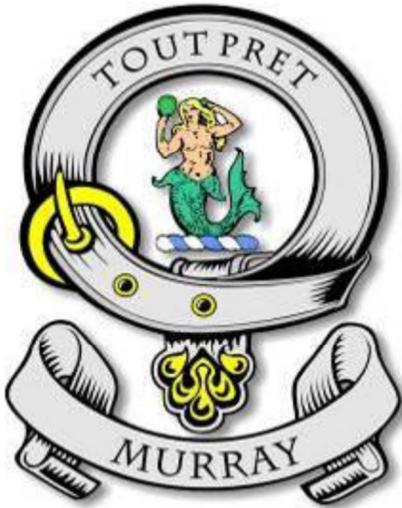


Murray Clan Society of NSW

Newsletter - July 2015



www.murray-clan-nsw.net

PO Box 407

WINGHAM NSW 2429

Ph: 02 6555 9818

Email: murrayr46@gmail.com

Welcome

Welcome to our second Newsletter for 2015. We hope you all find something of interest. Remember that if you have any stories or items of interest we would love to include them.

Philippa and I sometimes watch the TV show *Antiques Roadshow*, a recent episode of which was filmed at Blair Atholl Castle, ancestral home of Clan Murray. As the camera took us through the picturesque grounds and the magnificent castle, we were reminded of a wonderful day spent there in 2008 during a holiday in the Scottish highlands. If ever you have the chance to travel in Scotland, don't miss Blair Atholl Castle. It will be a highlight of your trip.



Annual Gathering 2015

The 2015 Annual Gathering was held at the Wingham Golf Club on 11th April. Attendance was a bit down on last year, but the 50 or so folk who turned up were treated to a very enjoyable evening. It is a great pleasure to share our common Scottish heritage and meet with people who are not only friends but also (mostly) relatives.

Some guests travelled a considerable distance to attend, none further than 86 year-old John Murray who flew up from Melbourne especially for the occasion. John was involved in the Clan in its early days around 1980 and only recently re-discovered us. He is a descendant of George Murray who migrated with his mother Isabella from Scotland in 1851 and who farmed at Pampoolah on the lower Manning River. As a young engineer, John once worked in the Wallamba River area south of Taree planning the extension of electric power to farms and settlements there. It was wonderful to catch up with him and we thank him for making the effort to come along.

Highly regarded local Scottish dancer Christine Waugh performed a number of highland dances, accompanied by John Andrews on the pipes. The meal was good, and Alan Martin's toast to the Clan was

particularly appreciated. His stories and comments conveyed a genuine affection for the Clan and an appreciation of his association with it.

Guest speaker for the night was Stuart Weller. Stuart is a well-known figure in the Manning district. He grew up in Nabiac and attended Taree High School before service in Vietnam and a long career in the Department of Foreign Affairs. Now retired back to Nabiac, where the new bridge over the Wallamba River is named after his father Leslie "Mick" Weller, he has become very involved in community affairs, publishing a valuable history of First World War soldiers from the Wallamba district and acting as Master of Ceremonies for the annual Bonnie Wingham Scottish Festival among other things.

Stuart spoke initially about his own Scottish forebears then gave an entertaining account of his years as a soldier and as a diplomat with long postings in Hong Kong, Jakarta, Canberra and Kuala Lumpur and shorter appointments to other centres. The challenges of his varied work can be gauged from the following extract:

The work is never dull. One of the powers I have as the Vice Consul is that of an Australian Marriage Celebrant and during the posting [in Kuala Lumpur] I perform 55 weddings. One in particular, stands out in my mind.

He is a tall, skinny Australian convert to the Muslim faith and she is a very small Malaysian girl and they've met in Melbourne. They marry in her local mosque but also want to have an Australian Civil Ceremony. We have a problem however, as she is a Muslim girl and I'm a man and not a relative, I'm not allowed to see her face, which she has covered with an almost full veil: in fact I can see nothing but a small pile of black robes and two brown eyes! Documents however, need to be completed and displayed for a month but how will I know it's the same girl who returns in a month's time? I call upon Gillian (who was also working in the High Commission at this time) who, as a woman though not a relative, **IS** able to view her face! The two ladies go to an office, have a discussion, Gillian sees her face and the documents are signed. A month later they return and Gillian is again called upon to do her thing. She returns and confirms, "Yes, it is the same girl," and so the marriage takes place. With Gillian as a witness, I marry a tall, skinny Australian man to a small pile of black robes that gave the appropriate answers to questions when asked!

Stuart described a visit to Hanoi, during which he viewed the preserved body of independence leader Ho Chi Minh:

The one city however, that stays in my mind is Hanoi as I was able to visit the tomb of Ho Chi Minh, the leader of the army I had been called up to fight!

Some research revealed Ho had stipulated in his will that on his death, he was to be cremated and his ashes spread over his beloved country. On his death, however, those then in charge decided he could better serve his country as an embalmed icon rather than being cremated and forever lost to sight.

It was an eerie feeling as I moved slowly around the wall of the freezing room on a raised walkway with my eyes fixed on the glass casket to my left pondering the embalmed remains inside. Mind you, all that was visible was his head and his hands which were crossed on his chest. Folk at the Embassy had told me also that since his death, Ho had made several *maintenance trips* back to Moscow because, it seemed, one of his ears kept falling off!

Half way around the room, my mind suddenly flew back to the visit I'd made to the Tower of London on one of my courier trips. If you wish to view the Crown Jewels they are displayed, behind thickened glass, in a series of cabinets. If you choose to view them close-up you're allowed to look at them as you pass **BUT** you're not allowed to stop. If you wish to study a particular piece you have to move behind a low fence about a metre out from the viewing windows and you can stand there as long as you like.

As the group I was in circled Ho's remains – under the close scrutiny of a platoon of armed guards dressed in immaculate white uniforms – it suddenly occurred to me that what I wanted to do was to stop and *go behind the low fence* to contemplate not just the remains of the little man in the glass casket in the centre of the room but also myself and how I'd once been in an army fighting his army, and now here I was in Hanoi, in his tomb, viewing his remains!

But sadly, in Ho's tomb they don't have a low fence, dawdlers are not encouraged – in fact it's strictly forbidden – and before I'd really had time to think about it, I was out of the room and collecting my camera. And that's another thing you're not allowed to do in his tomb either!



Stuart referred to his two major publishing projects, *The Cream of Her Youth*, about his experiences in Vietnam, and *Of this Watershed: The Soldiers of the Wallamba*, launched just before ANZAC Day 2012. We wish him well with his next book, a revision of *The History of Nabiac and District*, written originally in 1950 by Lionel Gilbert, a teacher at the Nabiac School, who later received national acclaim as a historian and lecturer.

*This photo of Stuart at the Nabiac War Memorial appeared in the "Great Lakes Advocate" on the occasion of the publication of his book **Of this Watershed: The Soldiers of the Wallamba**.*

Annual General Meeting

The 2015 AGM was held at the golf club prior to the Dinner with 15 members present. There was some good discussion. The main decision made at the meeting was to change our policy regarding the dates of the annual gatherings. In recent years, the policy has been to hold our meetings during the Bonnie Wingham Scottish Festival every second year, and at a different time every other year. The feeling of the meeting this year was that we should hold our function on the Saturday night of the Festival every year and a motion to that effect was carried unanimously.

Bonnie Wingham Scottish Festival



As always, Clan Members were very active at the 2015 Bonnie Wingham Scottish Festival. We participated in the street parade and operated a Murray tent during the Saturday's activities. As usual, we had lots of visitors and had a very enjoyable day. The Festival gets bigger every year, with more and more activities and stalls.

A section of the parade of banners at the 2015 Bonnie Wingham Scottish Festival. The mauve banner in front is the banner of the Paterson Easton Association, with the Murrays not far behind.



Patron and former President Alex Murray and his wife Pam at the Poets' Breakfast at the Anglican Hall in Wingham. The Poets' Breakfast is one of the activities of the Bonnie Wingham Scottish Festival.



Part of the Murray contingent. L to R Timalee Murray, Ian Murray, Ross Murray



The Murray Tent



A section of the Tamworth Pipe Band, in which Murrays are well represented.

Annual Gathering 2016

The dates for next year's Bonnie Wingham Scottish Festival are Friday 27 May to Sunday 29 May 2016. This means that our meeting date will be Saturday 28th May 2016. We would be grateful if you could set aside this date and try to join us next year. The Committee will be meeting in late October to plan the evening, so more details about the function will be provided in the next newsletter.

We can advise, however, that highly respected local historian and author Maurie Garland from Taree has agreed to be our guest speaker. We are very pleased that Maurie has been able to make himself available and we look forward to hearing him speak.

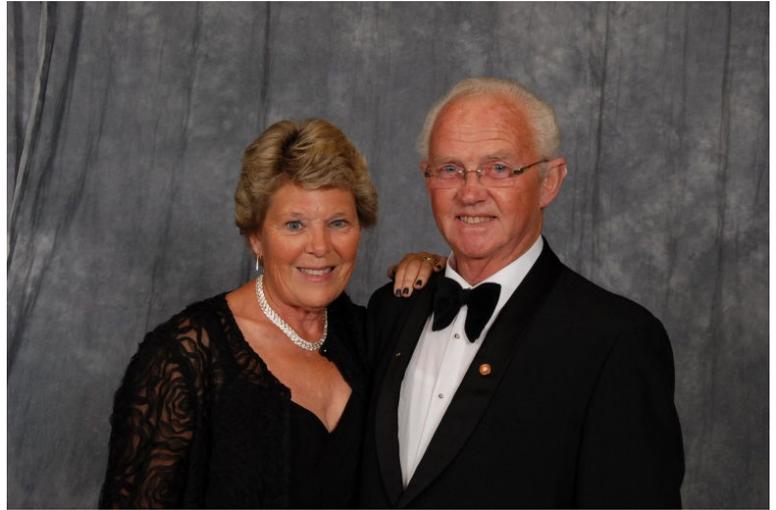
I should mention that the Committee is elected for three years and that the 2016 Annual Meeting will bring to an end the current Committee's term of office. Some of us are getting on a bit and, while we enjoy what we do, the future of the Clan depends on new people coming in to share the responsibility. Living outside

the district is not necessarily a barrier to accepting a role. Please think about this and bring some ideas to next year's AGM.

Joy Murray, Countess of Dunmore

We have received the very sad news that Joy Murray, Countess of Dunmore, has been diagnosed with an aggressive pancreatic tumour. The cancer has spread to other organs and she is receiving palliative care.

Malcolm, Earl of Dunmore, has written to us: "Joy's illness has hit us all very hard and she is the strongest of us all ... She has started palliative radiation to give her a little better quality of life for the time she has left but has been very ill during the process of getting her medications sorted out ... Please pass on our warmest greetings to the Clan members."



The Clan has been greatly shocked and grieved by this news.

Malcolm inherited the Earldom of Dunmore in 1995 and since then he and Joy have been wonderful ambassadors for our Scottish heritage and for the Murray Clan societies in Australia and New Zealand. They have made three visits to the Manning, the last of them in 2014 when Malcolm delivered a most engaging speech at our Annual Dinner. In his speech, he described and commented on his taking his seat in the British House of Lords.

Malcolm and Joy have been much more than figureheads to the Murray Clan Society in NSW. During their visits we have come to regard them both with great friendship and affection. They are wonderful people who have expended a great deal of energy in fulfilling the ceremonial roles that come with their titles and have done this in a way that has endeared them to many.

I have assured Malcolm and Joy of our thoughts and prayers as they face this most challenging time in their lives.

Joan Smith

Since our last Newsletter we have lost another of our pioneer members. A few weeks ago the Clan was saddened to learn of the passing of Joan Smith of Chatham, Taree, aged 87. Although in recent years age has limited her involvement, Joan always remained an enthusiastic supporter of the Clan. She and her late husband Bob had five children, 14 grandchildren and 30 great-grandchildren.

Alex Murray

We congratulate Alex Murray on turning 80 years of age on Friday 24th July. Alex was a founding member of the Clan Society and has served our interests faithfully in so many ways that we would find it hard to list them. His knowledge of the family and its history is encyclopaedic and has been helpful to many enquirers. We all join in wishing Alex well on reaching this new milestone.

Paterson Easton Association

Murray Clan members would be aware of the very close relationship between our society and the Paterson Easton Association. The relationship stretches back to when the Manning Murrays and the Eastons were neighbours in the Scottish village of Camptown, and has been strengthened through longstanding friendships and inter-marriage.

The Murrays are therefore cordially invited to a Paterson Easton family reunion on Saturday 19th September 2015 at the Nabiac Showground. The day will begin with a morning tea at 10.00am, with lunch at 12.30.

The cost of the lunch is \$20.00.

The Paterson Easton Association has been well represented at recent Murray Clan functions and we encourage our members to reciprocate in the Nabiac reunion. If you are able to attend, please advise Jan Pratt at janpratt1@hotmail.com or 204 Veron Road, Umina Beach 2257.

Warwick Murray

Some good news is that Clan Commissioner Warwick has largely recovered from the tractor accident we reported in the last Newsletter. He tells us that he has some “colourful scars” and an ankle that is “still not the best” but not bad enough to keep him off the dance floor which he graces twice a week. He’s heading off to Honiara in the Solomon Islands for a week in early August to investigate military sites in Guadalcanal.

Murray Clan Website

www.murray-clan-nsw.net

Request for Family Information

We continue to receive requests via our website. Sometime we are able to provide the information requested, but at other times we simply don’t have information on the families concerned. The following request was received from Prue Smith. If anyone is able to help Prue, please feel free to do so.

Email: prue@michaelbowman.com.au

Hello,

I’m currently researching my Ward family history from Kiama NSW. Thomas Ward married a Clasindra Murray. Is Clasindra one of your Murrays? If so, are you able to share that information with me?

News from the Highlands

We had an interesting email through our website from Elizabeth Ritchie from the University of the Highlands and Islands in Scotland. Although the references do not relate to the particular Murray families who make up the Murray Clan Society in NSW, there is some interesting reading here about our Scottish background. We thank Elizabeth for contacting us and hope that some of our members will enjoy following the links provided in the message. I was not aware before reading this that there is a separate branch of the Murrays who are not connected to Murray of Atholl (or presumably Tullibardine) but are actually a sept of the Sutherland Clan. Here is Elizabeth’s email:

Email: elizabeth.ritchie@uhi.ac.uk

Good morning. I am writing because of a recent fieldtrip I organised with a number of our students at the Centre for History at the University of the Highlands and Islands. We went to Aberscross in Sutherland where we investigated the ways that people farmed and lived before the clearances. This was an area

populated by Murrays for quite some time. One of my students wrote a report about this which I have published on my local history blog: <https://historylinksdornoch.wordpress.com/2015/05/20/field-trip-to-aberscross/>

A previous post also deals with Aberscross, but more with Sutherland and Gordon families: <https://historylinksdornoch.wordpress.com/2015/03/09/the-funeral-of-james-sutherland-of-pronsie-1741/>

Additionally, a researcher from Nova Scotia recently contributed a two-part post about a William Murray which was particularly interesting: <https://historylinksdornoch.wordpress.com/2015/03/31/its-complicated-the-relationship-of-william-murray-and-girzel-grant-part-1/>

Having had a number of students with Australian connections, including one Masters student who is just graduating this year who is based in Australia, we are always keen to create connections, so I wondered if your members might be interested in reading about one of the branches of the Murray clan.

All the best in your endeavours,

Elizabeth Ritchie.

Clans on the Coast

An invitation has been received from Steve Buchanan to the 19th Gathering of the Clans at Norah Head Sportsground, Bungary Road, Norah Head on Saturday 5th September 2015. Steve writes, in part:

“For the public, entry to the Gathering is a mere gold coin donation. The pipe-band, Highland athletics and Highland dance competitions; medieval warrior and Highland Regiment re-enactments; and other entertainments, make the entry fee extraordinary value for money. Last year, despite some ‘Scottish’ (inclement) weather, we had relatively strong attendance and a number of our vendors found that they sold out before the end of the day. Norah Head is very accessible by road from both Sydney and Newcastle (public transport is also available, <http://www.transportnsw.info/en/index.page>), and the neighbouring surf beaches and lake make it a full-day experience for a family or young adults. For those with a little more time, Norah Head is central to the vibrant Central Coast and close to the Hunter Valley vineyards.



On the day, the Norah Head Sportsground is cunningly crafted into two arenas and a Highland dance stage, and simultaneous events are happening in these venues throughout most of the day. Market stalls and Clan/Celtic Nation information tents are interspersed around the ground, and many of the entertainments are easily viewed and heard from these tent sites. We plan to launch the day with the ‘Parade of Tartans’ (along the adjacent streets) and opening ceremony. This will showcase the ten pipe-bands and the participating Clans and Celtic Nations.”

For more information, visit <http://gatheringofthec clans.weebly.com/index.html>.

A bit of fun

How do you recognize a left-handed Scotsman?
He keeps all his money in his right-hand pocket.

John McDougal heard about a doctor who charged ten pounds for the first consultation but only three pounds for every subsequent visit. So he walked into the doctor's surgery and announced, 'Here I am again, doctor.'

'Just keep up the treatment I prescribed last time,' said the doctor, who was also a Scotsman.

A Scot was heard to say: "My wife was the last of 5 Scottish sisters to marry, the confetti was filthy."

Jock & Jimmy were walking along a street in London.
Jock looked in one of the shop windows and saw a sign that caught his eye.

The sign read, "Suits £5.00 each, Shirts £2.00 each, trousers £2.50 per pair".

Jock said to his pal, "Look at the prices! We could buy a whole lot of these and when we get back to Scotland we could make a fortune.

Now when we go in you stay quiet, okay? Let me do all the talking cause if they hear our accents, they might think we are cheap Scotsmen and try to screw us. I'll put on my best London accent".

"OK Jock, I'll keep me mouth shut" said Jimmy.

They went in and Jock said in a posh voice, "Hello my good man. I'll take 50 suits at £5.00 each, 100 shirts at £2.00 each, and 50 pairs of trousers at £2.50 each. I'll back up me truck ready to load them on, old chap!

The owner of the shop said quietly, "You're from Scotland, aren't you?"

"Well yes," said a surprised Jock. "What gave it away?"

The owner replied, "This is a dry-cleaner's....." !



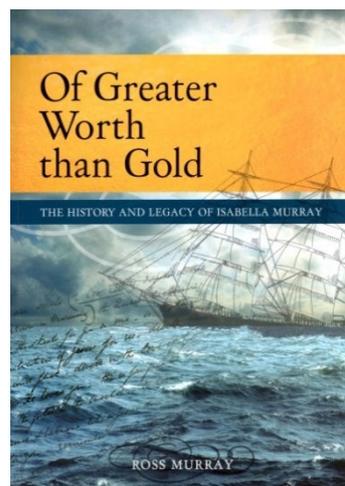
Used with the kind permission of the artist, Larry Hehn (larryhehn.com)

A Scots boy came home from school and told his mother he had been given a part in the school play. "Wonderful," says the mother, "What part is it?" The boy says "I play the part of the Scottish husband!" The mother scowls and says: "Go back and tell your teacher you want a speaking part."

Isabella Murray Book

The book on the history of the migration of the Manning Murrays from Scotland is still available.

They are \$25 each (\$28 posted).



Warm regards to all,

Ross Murray
President