



Murray Clan Society of NSW

Newsletter - March 2015

www.murray-clan-nsw.net

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Annual Gathering 2015

Greetings once again to all our members and friends and welcome to our first Newsletter for 2015.

This will be the last Newsletter before the 2015 gathering, so please note the details and remember to register and pay by the due date.

As we advised in our last Newsletter, the **Annual Dinner** this year will be held on **Saturday, 11th April**, a date that will soon be upon us. The function will be held at the **Wingham Golf Club** (note the change from earlier advice). The **Annual General Meeting will take place at 6.00pm** with the **main function to follow at 7.00pm**. We would encourage members to come to the Annual General Meeting and be prepared to raise matters that concern you. The cost of the evening will be **\$40 per person**.

The program will include a haggis ceremony and some Scottish entertainment as well as a fine meal. Our guest speaker, as we advised earlier, is **Mr Stuart Weller** from NABIAC. Stuart attended Taree High School, saw service in Vietnam and enjoyed a long career with the Department of Foreign Affairs. He has published two major historical works, one on his service in Vietnam, *The Cream of her Youth* and, in 2012, an important 512 page historical study of the First World War servicemen from the Wallamba district: *Of this Watershed: the Soldiers of the Wallamba*. Many of our members would recognise Stuart as the Master of Ceremonies at the annual Bonnie Wingham Scottish Festival. He promises to be an entertaining speaker and we urge all members to make every effort to be there.

Booking

We will need numbers by **Thursday, 2nd April**. Please confirm your attendance with the **Treasurer, Murray Clan Society of NSW, PO Box 407, WINGHAM NSW 2429**. A return slip for this purpose is included at the end of this Newsletter.

Payment may be made by cheque (Murray Clan Society of NSW) or by internet banking. Bank account details are:

Account name: Murray Clan Society of NSW

BSB: 032590

Account number: 651482

When making deposits, please use your name as the "Reference" so we have a record of who has paid.

Many members find it convenient to renew their membership when they pay for the dinner. Annual membership fees are vital to our organisation and cover important expenditures such as insurance. Annual membership fees are \$10 per family or \$5 single.

It should be a great night and we look forward to seeing you there.

Commissioner's Visit to Orange

In January, our Clan Commissioner Warwick Murray travelled to the Central West as the guest of honour at the Burns Night held by the Orange Scottish Association. The ABC covered the event and reported it in the following terms:

At Orange in Central West New South Wales the local Scottish society is no different and every year it's a colourful affair featuring whisky toasts, piping of the haggis and not a few hairy legs.

It begins with a parade of the traditional offal dish, haggis, held aloft on a silver platter being piped in by bagpipes, ceremonially speared with a Scottish dagger or dirk and toasted with whisky. It is then plated up with neeps (swedes) and tatties (potatoes) and served as an entree.

Guests are entertained by readings of Robbie Burns poetry and performances from musicians including a clarsach or celtic harp. It's a time of great frivolity and fun and the warmth of the camaraderie is accented by the bright colours of the tartans and plaids.

Special guest at this year's supper was Warwick Murray, the New South Wales Commissioner of the Murray Clan.

"It's wonderful to come over here to a Scottish function and to be tied up with Scottish culture, arguably the most colourful culture the world has ever seen, it's so multi-faceted," he said.

His speech focussed on three aspects of Robbie Burns' life.

"His humanity, his relationship with his church which was often a difficult one and the effect that freemasonry had on him; saved his skin at various times," Mr Murray said.

Mr Murray also performed two Burns poems, 'My heart's in the highlands' and 'Ye banks and braes o Bonnie Doon'.

Mr Murray said a love of all things Scottish is infectious.

"You only have to talk to the kilt makers and the sporran makers and the makers of Scottish socks," he said.

"There's a certain swish and panache about wearing the kilt and people are becoming more and more hooked on it every time you go to a function.

In weeks leading up to the supper, one of the organisers Myra Howell made the traditional Scottish drink, Athol Brose, carefully measuring out and altering the ratios of whisky, cream, oatmeal and honey.

"It is a fun process to make; I have my husband there helping me, he's a great one with the whisky," she said.

But clearly the star of the night's menu was haggis which most guests said they enjoyed.

Margaret Davis said while her parents were Scots she never had the traditional dish as a child and tasted it for the first time at the Orange Robbie Burns supper three years ago.

"It was a little salty and that's probably why our family didn't ever have it," she said.

The haggis was also given the thumbs up by another guest, Jim Anderson who used to make several dozen a week as a butcher in Scotland.

He said the dish is still popular in his homeland.

"A deep fried haggis goes well on a Friday night," he chuckled.

We are grateful to journalist Melanie Pearce and ABC Central West for permission to reproduce both the above report and the accompanying photographs.



Warwick Murray conducting the Haggis Ceremony at the Orange Scottish Association Burns Night

Farm Accident

Commissioner Warwick has recently had an unfortunate accident on his farm, having been run over by his slasher. He suffered extensive lacerations but was allowed home after treatment. We wish him a speedy recovery and trust that there will be no long-term damage.

Bonnie Wingham Scottish Festival

Our current policy, reaffirmed at the Annual General Meeting in 2014, is to hold our gatherings in conjunction with the Bonnie Wingham Scottish Festival every second year. There has been some discussion of this, and a suggestion will be put to the AGM this year that we hold our function during the festival every year. The Clan always operates a tent at the festival and participates in the parade, and we encourage our members to be involved. The festival will be held this year from **Friday 29th to Sunday 31st May**.

David Murray Scrapbook

One of our stalwart members, Margaret Tuiqereqere, is the Cultural Officer at the St George and Sutherland Branch of the CWA and as such speaks for five minutes at monthly meetings. At the meeting on 11th June, 2014, she drew some thoughts from the scrapbook kept by her grandfather, David Murray, a prominent

Wingham citizen (businessman, councillor and mayor) who eventually became a successful businessman in Sydney.

We thought the essence of the talk was worth reproducing in the Newsletter.

EXTRACTS FROM MY GRANDFATHER'S SCRAPBOOK 1904 – 1927

Over 100 years ago, my Grandfather, David Murray, began a scrapbook. I have the good fortune to be the keeper of that book. A couple of weekends ago, I sat down with it and three hours later I knew more of my grandfather, from the newspaper cuttings he had thought worthy of pasting into this sturdy red book, than I had learnt in our short shared lifetime together of just ten years. He was of Scottish descent, and my childhood memories of him were mainly the memorable “hold your whist” when we children were talking too much, or my fear of the dreaded Sunday morning Bible reading at the breakfast table, seated beside him, after which I religiously knocked over my glass of milk. I hope you enjoy the few articles I have chosen of stories of that era.

There are articles on everything from a report on 4/10/1914 on “Precautions to safeguard Kaiser” (“the roofs of the carriages of the special train by which the Emperor travels have been painted with the Red Cross”); then Dame Nellie Melba’s Farewell, the Proposed tunnel under the English Channel, to a questionable story re surviving the sinking of the Lusitania and of course they covered the period of the Great War of 1914-1918.

We note that the Anti-Discrimination Law had not yet been introduced as a cutting from the The Glen Innes Examiner advised that applications from two men eligible to enter a ballot to secure land were disallowed by the Land Court due to the fact that they were unmarried.

Then on 20 December, 1919 a message received from Cloncurry states that the Aviator “Ross Smith left this morning about 6.30, beginning with a magnificent take-off before a large crowd. He will reach Longreach to-day and Charleville tomorrow”. Sir Ross Smith and his brother Keith and two others were the first to fly from England to Australia.

Then an article on the plight of the homeless and jobless three years after the end of the 1914-18 war. The article reads “Domain Nights, Queue of The Hopeless Dawn – 500 Unemployed fed by Salvation Army”. The homeless who had slept in the Domain were given a cup of steaming coffee and a double slice of buttered bread. The article said there was a place where one could get a bed for the night for sixpence, but those places were always full, and another man said “there were 12 to 14 in a room there and it was hell” so they preferred to sleep in the Domain.

Another article suggests “Use Coconut Oil for Washing Hair”. It said “a couple of teaspoons of ordinary colinated coconut oil Shampoo (a quite greaseless liquid) rubbed into wet hair makes a perfect flood of rich, thick, creamy lather and cleanses both hair and scalp thoroughly. The hair dries quickly and evenly and comes out silky, bright, glossy and fluffy”..... Then in 1921 “An English Churchman’s View of Education – the Dean of Newcastle advocated for Christian teachings to be brought into schools. He said “to give a people education without religion was to breed a race of clever devils” Then there is an article entitled “Patch of Glory. The Governor Opens Parliament. Scarlet and Gold and Cocked Hats”. It records “A guard of honour for the Governor, drawn from the Royal Garrison Artillery, marched up Macquarie Street to Parliament House. The report states “With twenty-one explosions and a burst of scarlet and gold – Wigs like mushrooms, and diamonds crusted into stars – Cocked hats and epaulettes, Black Rods, swords and ermine – Proudly and magnificently, the fourth session of our Parliament was opened by the Governor at noon today. The long article continued under the sub-heading “More Ceremony Than Seriousness” so it

seems not much has changed in Parliament in the last 100 odd years.....and then a fishy story from England “Fish in Houses – Unique Flood near Liverpool in England when a torrent of water 20 feet deep swept across a field, tearing up trees and crops and drowning stock. It flooded a village to a depth of 6ft, so that hundreds of fish up to a pound in weight were caught in the street, and even in the houses, which were invaded by thousands of water-rats.”

I was then surprised to see an article written in 1920 referring to a Melbournian’s unsavoury view of Sydney – it seems the Melbourne/Sydney feud was alive and well in 1920! It was entitled “Another Silly Slander Uttered Against Sydney – How Christmas in This City Frightened a Timorous Man from Melbourne”. It referred to Sydney’s “Dreadful Depravity”. “Skirts become shorter, blouses thinner and more open, back and front, lips redder, eyes more unhealthily glittering and hungry; and the list of tragedies based upon sex mania and unbridged passions increase in length as the weeks and months go by”. It seems this Melbourne gentleman was very scared to be in Sydney at Christmas – in 1920!

Then on 11 November 1921 an Article “Two Armistice Days – Three years has sobered the world – we may forget for a minute the Bolsheviks and a few others. Sydney today is a studious, pensive Sydney. It is Armistice Day. Cheerful crowds stroll along the streets, pausing now and then at gaily painted stalls, laughing as they fish out a coin for Warriors’ Day. Pianos are playing – chocolate wheels whirring....” Oh dear, not gambling again, not Sydney... Another article written on the same day screams “Kiddies’ Pennies Support Chocolate Wheels – Is Sydney Decadent?” A Reverend Gentleman from the Pitt Street Congregational Church made a telling address on post-war evils. “Sydney is becoming like a decadent Italian or Spanish town,” he said. ”A public park in the western suburbs is a perfect gambling hell”, he said. “Chocolate wheels are the ruination of our children. Shame on you!” he roared.

The scrapbook contains many cuttings and photos of Royal events. The last of such cuttings was dated 19 February 1927 and headed “The Duchess of York and the Baby – (The Duchess of York was the late Queen Mother, and the “Baby” is our current Queen Elizabeth II). The Duke and Duchess were planning their first visit to Australia. The article refers to the “Little Duchess” as she was affectionately named in England and refers to the old adage of “Tall women are made to be admired, little women to be loved”. The article concludes: “Australians will surely give the winsome little Duchess a prominent place in the sun”.

But I leave you with a questionable story. The Lusitania was sailing from New York to Liverpool during the War when it was torpedoed by a German U-boat and was sunk off the coast of Ireland. On May 10, 1915 under the heading “The World Appalled – Lusitania Horror – Lady’s Wonderful Escape” came the following report: “Many interesting stories, some of them highly sensational, are told of survivors of the Lusitania disaster. One lady tells of an extraordinary escape. She was thrown into the sea and had given up hope, when she was drawn down a funnel. Then a tremendous shot of air threw her out and she fell into one of the boats, safe but severely injured”.

Well, they do say never believe everything you read in the press.

Rob Oakeshott, *The Independent Member for Lyne, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 2014, 380pp.*

At our annual dinner in April 2010 it was our privilege to have as our guest speaker the local Federal MP Rob Oakeshott who gave an absorbing and informative after-dinner speech about his Murray ancestors, in

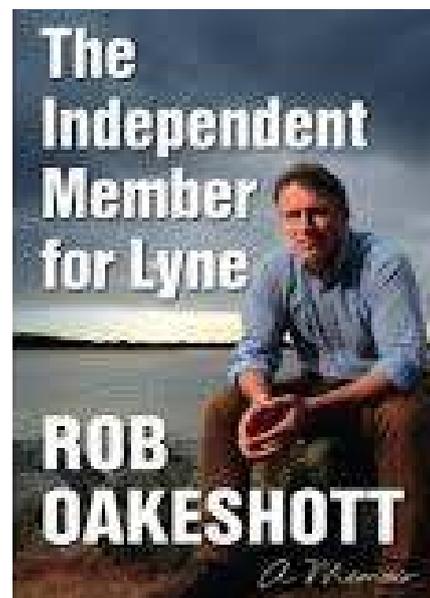
particular his grandfather Sir Angus Murray, the eminent Australian doctor who served in both World Wars and who was for a time the very influential president of the Australian Medical Association.

Rob has written a book about his time in politics which I read over the Christmas holidays. Called simply *The Independent Member for Lyne*, it is a well-written account of his political life, especially during the turbulent period from 2010 to 2013.

Rob's decision, with that of New England MP Tony Windsor, to support the Gillard Government was controversial at the time, and this book goes a long way towards explaining the rationale behind that decision and the anguish he experienced in making it. It covers many aspects of the politics of that period that failed to get much coverage from the mainstream media. It is in effect an honest and real-life story. There are some thought-provoking anecdotes that reveal how politics works in this country, and Oakeshott is particularly perceptive in describing the out-of-proportion influence of wealthy vested interests and political lobbyists within the system and the ways that the media distort events and ideas.

This is a very personal and candid book. It reveals in very stark terms the cost to Rob's family of his commitment to his beliefs and his electorate, and the sheer exhaustion he experienced in having to keep abreast of a wide range of policy areas. I felt on reading the book that I had come to understand the man and his ideals in a way that would be impossible from media sources alone. He certainly achieved great things for his electorate.

In contrast to most political memoirs, the book is far from self-serving. In no sense is it primarily a defence of his actions. In fact Rob is very open and refreshingly honest about his mistakes and weaknesses. I thoroughly enjoyed reading this book and am happy to recommend it. Politics can be very divisive, but whatever our party political views might be and no matter what we might think about particular decisions Rob made, he comes across as a man of integrity and honesty who put the interests of the nation above his own personal interests, and at great cost to himself and his family.



Historic Grave Restoration

Warwick Murray and his son Cameron, a stonemason, have restored the historic grave of ex-convict Alexander Lobban at The Bight Cemetery near Wingham. Alexander Lobban was the father of Margaret Lobban, the wife of George Murray who settled at Pampoolah on the lower Manning and is therefore the ancestor of a large family of Murrays.

Vehicular access was not possible, so restoring the stone, which had fallen over and broken into two pieces, was a major task, involving a hired generator and an engine lifter. A canvas sling was used to raise the stone.

The base of the stone was re-positioned and the two sections joined with stainless steel dowels. Lobban was a driving force in the settlement of Wingham and a key figure in the establishment of the Presbyterian Church. He made an immense contribution to the district so his grave is of considerable historical significance.

A photographic record of the restoration has been kept for historical purposes.

The inscription on the stone reads:

In memory of Alexander Lobban, native of Banffshire, Scotland, who departed this life at Parkhaugh, 30th January 1876 aged 73 years, and who for 26 years was a resident of the Manning district, the interests of which he always strove to promote, and for most of that time as an elder of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia. He performed the duties of that office with a zeal guided by intelligence and sanctified by divine grace. Strong in faith, he was called to his rest leaving an example worthy of imitation as a loving husband, a tender father, a wise counsellor, a faithful friend, a sincere Christian, and in all the transactions of life an honourable man.

Above that inscription is an open Bible with the words: "Rom 5:1 Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ".

Here are some photos of the grave restoration:



Scottish Story

"How's the flat you're living in in London, Jock?" asks his mother when he calls home to Aberdeen.

"It's okay," he replies, "but the woman next door keeps screaming and crying all night and the guy on the

other side keeps banging his head on the wall."

"Never you mind," says his mother, "don't you let them get to you, just ignore them."

"Aye, that I do," he says, "I just keep playing my bagpipes."

Final Remarks

A couple of reminders:

1. We would like to request again that if members have an email address but are receiving this Newsletter by post, we would be grateful for your email address so we can email the Newsletter to you.
2. We still have copies of the book *Of Greater Worth than Gold: The History and Legacy of Isabella Murray* for sale at \$25 each.

Thanks to everyone for your support for the Clan Society. We hope to see many of you at the Clan Dinner in April. Feedback is always welcome.

Warm regards,

Ross Murray

President

Annual Dinner Booking Slip

Please return this slip to confirm your attendance at the Dinner.

We must have this information by Thursday, 2nd April.

I / we will be attending the Murray Clan Society Annual Dinner on Saturday, 11th April 2015.

Names:

Method of Payment (\$40 per person) – Please circle correct responses:

- a) Payment is enclosed
- b) Payment has been transferred to the Society's Bank Account

Optional: Payment includes membership subscription of \$10 (family) / \$5 (individual).

Please post to:

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