



# Murray Clan Society of NSW

## Newsletter - September 2016

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### Welcome

Greetings to all our Murray Clan members and friends. It has been a while since our last Newsletter and quite a lot has happened since then. In particular we have experienced the sad loss of Alec Murray, one of our foundation members and a pillar of the Society in so many ways. See below for a tribute to Alec.

After the annual dinner in May, my wife Philippa and I spent a month travelling through the Kimberleys in a hired camper, along with other family members. What an amazing place it is. The Gibb River Road and its attractions and scenery are unforgettable.

I hope you all find something of interest in the Newsletter. If you would like to contribute an article of interest, please feel free to send it to me.

### Annual Gathering 2016



A good crowd gathered at the Wingham Golf Club on 28<sup>th</sup> May for our Annual Dinner. Local historian Maurie Garland spoke on aspects of early Manning history. It was an enjoyable night, with the Murray Clan combining with the Thorburn family for the occasion.

Maurie Garland

### Annual Gathering 2017

The 2017 Annual Gathering will be held on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> June. Please set aside this date. The Committee is considering a slightly more informal function next year, with a lunch at the Bonnie Wingham Festival rather than a formal dinner in the evening. The idea, raised at the AGM, is to make the event less expensive and more child-friendly. Depending on its success, we will look at perhaps having such a function every second year, with a more traditional function each other year. There will be more information on this in the next Newsletter.

For information on next year's Bonnie Wingham Scottish Festival, see <http://www.manninghistorical.org/bonnieingham2017.html/>.

## Invitation to “Gowan Brae” Centenary – Sat 1<sup>st</sup> October 2016

Robert Easton was the third child of Robert Easton and his wife Elizabeth. Robert senior had migrated from the same village in Scotland as the Murrays. The two families were close friends and there were several marriages between the families. In 1916, after raising their children, Robert Easton junior and his wife Isabella (the daughter of William and Agnes Paterson, nee Murray) built a home on their Burrell Creek property which they called “Gowan Brae”, meaning “hill side covered in daisies”.

The home was described in the Wingham Chronicle as “the latest Queen Ann villa type ... [with] nine large rooms, laundry, pantry and bathroom, 190 feet of verandah space and a large vestibule. The dados and interior fittings will be of red and white polished cedar.”

To celebrate the centenary of “Gowan Brae”, the family will be holding a **100<sup>th</sup> birthday morning tea and family picnic at the homestead on Saturday 1st October from 10.30am.**

All members of the Murray Clan, especially those who have been associated with Gowan Brae over the years, are invited to attend. Please bring a folding chair and light lunch. Morning tea will be supplied.

You are invited to bring stories, photos, memorabilia etc to share.

For more details contact Rosemary Murray at [rosemary.murray@bigpond.com](mailto:rosemary.murray@bigpond.com) or 65820385.

## New Committee

At the Annual Meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> May, the following were elected to the Committee for the next three years:

**President:** Ross Murray

**Vice President:** Ian Murray

**Treasurer:** Timalee Murray

**Secretary:** Julie Evans

**Committee members:** Dorothy Murray, Darryl Murray, Joyce Murray, Jean Paterson, Jan Weekes, Glyn Evans and Alma Murray.

The positions of Patron (Alec Murray) and Commissioner (Warwick Murray) did not require re-appointment.

## Bob Murray Appointed Life Member

The Annual General meeting saw the retirement of one of our foundation members, Bob Murray. Bob was one of the original Committee that met on 29<sup>th</sup> December 1979 at the home of the late Alice Gleeson to put in place the plans for the Murray Clan Society. Bob has been a stalwart of the Society and has been a valuable member of the Committee. Coming from Gloucester, he has had to travel further than most to get to meetings and the Clan owes a great debt to Bob for his years of service to the Clan. His wife, Annette, has been a great support both to Bob and the Clan, and we thank her too for her involvement over many years.

As a fitting tribute to Bob, the Annual General Meeting voted unanimously to confer on him Life Membership of the Murray Clan Society of NSW.

## Dorothy Murray

Special mention also needs to be made of Dorothy Murray, who has faithfully served as Secretary for several years. Dorothy did not renominate position of Secretary although she will remain on the Committee. We thank Dorothy for her longstanding service as an officer of the Murray Clan Society.

## Alec Murray



As I mentioned earlier in the Newsletter, we mourn the loss of Alexander (Alec) Murray, who passed away on Thursday 1st September 2016 at the age of 81. Alec lost his own father at the age of 16, when he took over the family dairy farm *Camphouse* at Killawarra outside Wingham. Many members would be aware that Alec lost both his children, Allan and Fiona, as well as his loving first wife Heather, to car accidents. At his funeral on 7<sup>th</sup> September, Rev Michael Deal pointed out that despite these tragedies, he maintained his quiet but strong Christian faith.

Alec was deeply committed to his Church, the Presbyterian Church in Wingham and was also involved with several other community organisations to which he freely contributed his skills, especially as a treasurer. We express our sympathy to Alec's wife Pam, who has also been a great supporter of the Clan since her marriage to Alec, and to her family, as well as to Alec's wider family, especially his sister-in-law Dorothy.

I was privileged to be asked to speak at Alec's funeral on behalf of the Murray Clan. Here is the essence of what I had to say:

*In late 1979, a Murray family reunion was held on the river bank here in Wingham. The event drew about 600 people and was indeed a great occasion. As a way of keeping in touch, it was decided to form the Murray Clan Society of NSW and an interim committee was elected to make the necessary plans. Alec Murray was elected to that interim committee. At the meeting called to formally constitute the Society on 26<sup>th</sup> April, 1980, held at the home of the late Alice Gleeson, Alec was elected inaugural Treasurer.*

*Alec served in that position until 1991, when he was elected President following the death of our first President, Harry Murray, from Dyers Crossing. Alec then served as President until he retired from the position in 2007, although he remained on the committee. In January 2008, he was appointed Patron of the Society. In other words, he was there at the start and served continuously until his death.*

*It's an impressive record of service. However, important as it is to acknowledge this commitment over some 37 years, it is the way in which he fulfilled these roles that I want to focus on for a few minutes today.*

*Alec was held in enormous respect within the extended Murray family and by members of the Clan Society, and there are several reasons for that.*

*1. First, this was because of the kind of man he was. Emails I have received in the past few days have described him as "Such a gentleman, to my mind Alec is the epitome of the Murray male. I hold him in such high regard"; "A great bloke"; "I met Alec only the once, and was impressed by his calm wisdom"; "Alec has been a stalwart of the Murray Clan and has given tremendous support to the Clan in all his various roles, which have been carried out with quiet distinction"; "I appreciated the contacts and conversations we had years ago with Alex; he certainly was not Mr Average but a positive thinker*

*and high achiever”; “My heartfelt sympathy to his family and the wider clan family as he made us all feel like part of a bigger clan family”.*

*One wrote: “My sincere condolences Ross to you, Dorothy and all the family members at the loss of our dear Alex. His smiling face will live on in our hearts and minds for as long as we live. He was one of nature’s gentlemen and we are all richer for having known him.”*

*Alec had a gracious, easy-going and genuine nature which endeared him to everyone.*

*2. Another reason he was so respected is that he was a link with the family’s origins in Australia. Alec lived at “Camphouse”, one of the original Murray properties and one closely associated with Isabella Murray, the matriarch of the family, who migrated to Australia in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century from Scotland, with her ten children, nine of them boys. Over the years, Alec and his wonderfully gracious wife Heather opened their property, and their hearts, to the many members of the extended family who came to visit to see the beauty of the place where their ancestors and relatives had first settled when they came to this country. The Clan picnics at “Camphouse” were legendary, with crowds of Murrays bringing their lunches and fold-up chairs and enjoying the sense of history and heritage that prevailed there. Many distant relatives became firm friends. Alec and Heather were wonderful hosts at these picnics, and those of us who attended them will always value those experiences.*

*3. Alec had a great love for his family and its history. He had an encyclopaedic knowledge of who lived where and who was related to whom, and seemed to know the maiden name of every Mrs Murray in the district. I was privileged to draw on that knowledge on more than one occasion. One event that I greatly value was a heritage tour of early Murray properties that Alec hosted in 2011 in conjunction with the Murray gathering that year. His enthusiasm for sharing his knowledge of people and places and his love of the family’s heritage was infectious, and everyone who participated realised what a privilege it was to learn from someone so well informed and so keen to share what he knew.*

*He loved the district and loved showing people around. I received an email a few days ago from Malcolm Murray, the Earl of Dunmore, who is based in Tasmania but who has visited this district on three occasions. Malcolm wrote:*

*Dear Ross,*

*Thank you for letting me know of the sad passing of Alex. He was wonderful to Joy and me when we visited the Clan, showing us around the area and taking us for a lovely drive to the coast and showing us that lovely part of NSW. Please pass on my condolences to his family and I will be thinking of you all on the 7<sup>th</sup>.*

*Most sincerely,*

*Malcolm  
Earl of Dunmore*

*Alec also travelled to Scotland to visit places associated with our family over there.*

*4. Alec’s commitment to the Clan Society never flagged. All of you would know of the tragic car accidents that took away his entire family, yet he was able to continue to serve as President of the Society. His leadership was marked by integrity, dignity, humility and service, and a desire to do what was best for the Clan. Never once did he glory in his position or do anything to draw attention to himself. He was unassuming and quiet by nature, yet could be very strong when standing for an issue of principle.*

*He would always be one of the first to arrive to help erect the Murray tent at the Bonnie Wingham Scottish Festival. He would always turn up for the street parades, wearing his Murray trews as a mark of identification with his Scottish family heritage.*

*I mentioned earlier that Alec was on the original Murray Clan committee. My involvement was not as continuous as Alec's was because I lived outside the district for some years. Nevertheless, I have greatly appreciated belonging to the Clan Society, and one of the main reasons for that has been the fact that I have had the immense privilege of knowing Alec Murray, a man I would probably never have otherwise met. It has also been a great privilege to know Heather and Pam, both wonderful people.*

*I would like to finish with a personal comment. My wife Philippa and I have a friend named Fay Walking who has spent much of her life as a Christian missionary in Thailand. At this moment, at the age of 81, she is running a boys' home in a remote village in northern Thailand. About three years ago she read my little book on Isabella Murray, and when she read about Alec she realised that she had once been in his class at Wingham District Rural School. She remembered him as a very quiet, shy boy, but one whom she greatly respected. Fay happened to be taking a break in Australia in September 2014, and I drove her up to Wingham from Forster for the Wingham School sesquicentenary. She had not been to Wingham for many many years. We met up with Alec during the day, and he introduced her to people from her era and generously took us for a drive around the town, showing her where she used to live, then driving to a couple of scenic spots outside the town. Fay thoroughly enjoyed the day. This week I received an email from her which included these words:*

*Dear Ross,*

*Thank you for your e-mail ... I just wanted to say how sad I was to hear about Alex. He has a special spot in my heart, and the day he took us around Wingham was a special time for me and a memory I will always treasure. Fancy meeting all those years ago in school, around 65 years, and then finding such a treasure in him years later. Trusting it will be only a temporary loss, for we will meet again in Heaven where friends and loved ones will never have to say good-bye.*

*Thank you for letting me know, I so glad you are speaking on behalf of the Murrays at his funeral. I will be praying.*

*Love, Fay.*

*This is just one example of the countless lives, including mine, that have been enriched through knowing Alec Murray. Thank you for the privilege of sharing these thoughts with you this morning.*

## **Archibald de Moravia**

In Scottish history, the name "Murray" is derived from the names Moray and de Moravia (of Moray). Some Murrays can trace their direct ancestry to Archibald de Moravia, probably the earliest known ancestor of any Murray family. We don't know a lot about him, but he is believed to be a descendant of a family of Morays, Lords of Bothwell, who, by marriage to a daughter of Sir David Olifard, acquired considerable possessions in the county of Selkirk. We know that in 1296, Archibald was one of 2000 Scots nobles and clergy who were forced to swear fealty to Edward I of England, signing what became known as the 'Ragman Roll'. We know that he died during the reign of Robert Bruce, who reigned from 1306 to 1329, leaving a son and successor Roger de Moravia. Other details are sketchy.

Archibald de Moravia, however, is of some interest to the Manning River Murrays and their descendants. Alexandrina Murray, an Australian historian now in America, administers a world-wide project to study Murray family history through DNA analysis. At her invitation I sent a DNA sample which, when analysed, proved that the Manning River Murrays were directly descended from Archibald de Moravia. He is also an ancestor of Winston Churchill and Princess Diana, so we will be distantly related to the next King of England (extremely distantly, along with probably millions of other people!).

The results also show that the Manning Murrays are closely connected to other significant Murrays such as the Murrays of Falahill - Philiphaugh, Blackbarony and Cockpool Murraythwaite, and are connected as well to the Earls Annandale and the Elibank Murrays. All descend from the same common ancestor, Archibald de Moravia.

The Murray Clan committee has agreed to send DNA samples from two other descendants of the Manning Murrays in order to provide further information. If we are ever able to establish with documentary evidence how our ancestor John Murray (1669-1749) was related to the Blackbarony Murrays, we would have a family tree going back to about 1250 AD.

Any male with the surname Murray is able to participate in the DNA project. Its website is <https://www.familytreedna.com/public/murray/>.

## Family History Queries

The Clan Society does not have the resources to conduct family history research, although we do receive requests from time to time. If any member can throw light the query below, please feel free to get in touch:

I am descended from Murrays who lived in Pembrokeshire, Wales, at Ludchurch. Do you know of any Clan Murray descendants who have their 1750 or so roots there as well??

My part of the Clan hails from Kyogle, where my Grandfather and Grandmother came from Wales in 1920.

Geoff Murray

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## Clans on the Coast

Clan Commissioner Warwick Murray represented the Clan at the Nelson Bay "Clans on the Coast" Scottish Festival on Saturday 17th September. The Festival is held at the Tomaree Sports Centre just west of Nelson Bay. These days are excellent for making new contacts, renewing former ones and putting the Clan "out there". People with Murray connections are always welcome to drop in at the Murray Clan tent for free morning tea and a chat.

## Website News

We have recently added an interactive map to the website, displaying the ancestral lands of Scottish clans, including the Murrays. The map allows users to hover over each clan name and discover the clan history, motto, and tartan specific to this clan.

Remember that past issues of the Newsletter can be found on the website.

## Just for fun

An old Scottish golfer standing on the first tee turns to his caddy and says.  
"Caddy. Are ye any good at finding balls?"  
"Aye, sir," replies the caddy.

"Good," says the old Scottish golfer. "Go and find one and we'll get started."

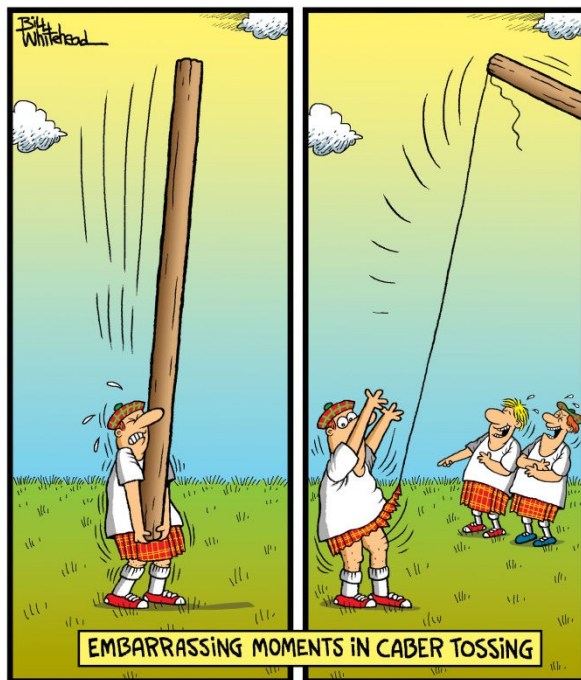
(One of Peter Fitzsimons' "Jokes of the week" from his weekly *Sun-Herald* column)

Winters can be extremely cold in northern Scotland, so the owner of the estate felt he was doing a good deed when he bought earmuffs for his farm worker, Archie.

Noticing, however, that Archie wasn't wearing the earmuffs even on the coldest day, the owner asked, 'Didn't you like the earmuffs I gave you?' Archie replied, not wishing to upset his employer, 'Och, they are a wondrous thing.'

'Then why don't you wear them then?'

Archie explained, 'I was wearing them the first day, but somebody offered to buy me a drink and I didn't hear him.'



Warm regards to all,

Ross Murray

President