



Murray Clan Society of NSW

Newsletter - February 2018

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Welcome

Happy new year to all our members and friends. We hope that you have had a lovely Christmas break and are ready to tackle another year. We have been privileged to have our two daughters, sons-in-law and our two delightful grandchildren with us during the break. Before that, Philippa and I spent a month touring the beautiful Caribbean (8 islands) and doing a fascinating trip of about 1200 kilometres up the Amazon River, stopping at various villages, towns and cities to explore the culture and nature of the area. It was an amazing experience, but there is nowhere better to live than Australia in my opinion. Our ancestors chose wisely (although quite a few of mine didn't have a choice, if you know what I mean).



Magnificent scenery in the island of St Kitts. The Atlantic Ocean is on the left; the Caribbean on the right.



Bird's eye view of the Amazon forest after a 240 step climb up a steel tower. Sadly, much of this forest is earmarked for destruction to allow for the expansion of the city of Manaus

This Newsletter is somewhat overdue, for which we apologise. We don't have a great deal of news this time, but I would be grateful if you could make a note of the date for this year's gathering (Saturday 2nd June).

Annual Gathering 2017

The 2017 gathering was quite different from anything we had tried before. For those who weren't able to be there, we hired a tent and some tables and chairs for the day and set them up at the Bonnie Wingham

Scottish Festival. People came and went throughout the day and a significant number were able to gather for a very enjoyable lunch together. We met some new people, and were able to help some visitors with tracing their family connections.

A highlight for me was presenting Bob Murray with a framed Life Membership certificate during the Annual Meeting held after lunch.

We will be doing something similar again this year. The Committee has already noted a few ways in which we can improve the organisation of the day, so we hope that this year will be even better. We will probably revert to something a little more formal in the following year, 2019, which will be our 40th anniversary. The Committee will be discussing these things over the next few months and are happy to receive suggestions. The cost of the 2017 gathering was subsidised significantly by the Clan Society, something that we will not be able to do every year.

We had one of the largest contingents for some years in the Festival parade.



Some of our members enjoying lunch at the 2017 gathering



Getting ready for the Festival Parade. From left: Ian Murray, Jessica Murray (Ian's granddaughter), Ross Murray. Background: Dorothy Murray

Annual Gathering 2018

As I indicated above, we hope to follow a similar format this year. The decision a few years ago to link our annual gatherings to the Bonnie Wingham Scottish Festival seems to be working well.

I will be sending out at least one more newsletter before the gathering, with all the information you need about booking, cost, programme etc. In the meantime, please mark the date **Saturday 2nd June** in your diaries and on your calendars.

The programme for the Bonnie Wingham Scottish Festival is not final yet, but you can find the most recent details here: <http://www.manninghistorical.org/bonniewingham2018.html/>.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please feel free to email me at murrayr46@gmail.com.

A Traveller's Tale

Our former Secretary Paul Inwood has recently returned from five weeks in Europe, visiting the Christmas markets in Germany, France, Switzerland and UK. Of course he also visited Scotland, which he describes as "feeling like home".

I am sure that everyone who has been to that part of Scotland would agree with Paul's sentiments. He has also sent the following delightful account of one aspect of his trip. Thank you Paul.

How did **Daidain** na Nollaig get around Scotland in the early days?

Who?

Daidain na Nollaig (Santa Claus) and up until about 800 years ago he could have used reindeer as these were native to Scotland.

"according to the Orkneyinga saga, red deer and reindeer were hunted together in Caithness by the Earls of Orkney about eight centuries ago." Unfortunately they were ultimately hunted to extinction.

In 1952 Mikel Utsi a Swedish Sami introduced a number of Swedish mountain reindeer to the Cairngorm Mountains as it was similar to their environment in Sweden.



Flash forward to November/December 2017 it was time for a return trip to Europe, and of course the obligatory trip to Scotland, just to refresh the senses. We had decided to pursue a Christmas theme and what could be more Christmas than reindeer?

Travelling to Aviemore in the Cairngorm Mountains via Perth and Pitlochry we drank in the sights of snow-dusted hills rising up from the road, and crossing snow fringed rivers. We just had to stop, usually in the middle of the road, to take some more photos.



The hills soon gave way to taller mountains and we arrived at our intermediate destination, the Cairngorm Reindeer Centre, to register for the tour. The formalities complete, it was back in the car and off to the carpark for a hike to the herd. The carpark was covered in snow and we appreciated the assistance of some of the other "tourists" in pushing us into a parking spot.

Then it was off on the trail in search of the elusive reindeer.

Whilst there is boundary fencing, the reindeer are essentially "free range" and so it was a bit of a walk. Uphill and down, invariably crossing a stream, thankfully with a bridge over it.



Finally arriving at the herd, with last minute instructions on what to do and not do, we were among them, getting up close and personal with these beautiful petite animals. It's hard to tell from these images but they only come up to your waist.....

On previous trips to Scotland we have visited other sanctuaries where they have reintroduced beaver into the streams, and were considering wolves and bears – last two options will take a lot of work.

Scotland is to my mind the most beautiful country I have ever travelled in. It is majestic in every sense of the word, and to experience it, you need to get out of the cities and into the countryside.

Just sitting on the shore of Loch Lomond and contemplating life.....



Murray Stories

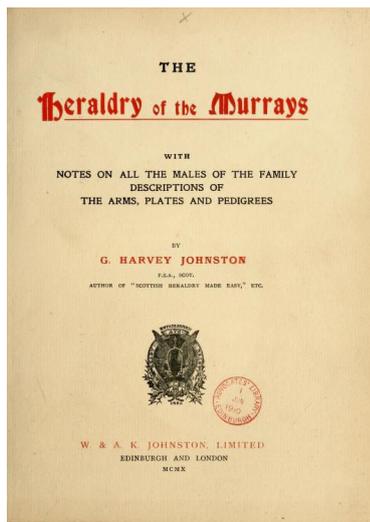
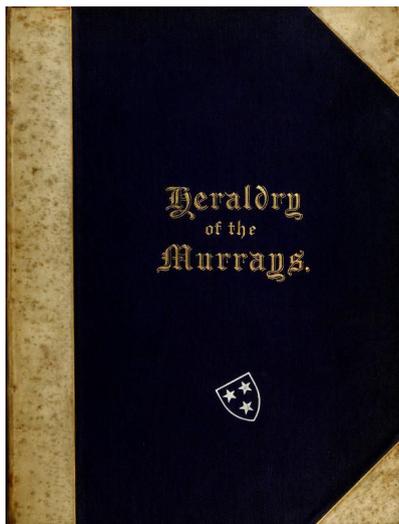
For those who receive the Newsletter by email, here are three links to interesting stories about Murrays. These people are not members of the Clan Society (they probably haven't even heard of us) but their stories are interesting in themselves. For this reason I have decided to include them.

http://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2017-07-12/16-yo-egg-farmer-turns-pocket-money-into-big-business/8693004?smid=Page:%20ABC%20News-Facebook_Organic&WT.tsrc=Facebook_Organic&sf97239444=1

<http://www.sbs.com.au/topics/life/health/article/2017/05/16/meet-dr-anthony-murray-who-set-become-australias-first-indigenous-orthopaedic>

<http://www.camdenadvertiser.com.au/story/5187737/camden-oam-recipient-john-murray-a-proud-volunteer/>

Murray Heraldry



For those on the internet (sorry to everyone else) there is a publicly available copy of a wonderful 1910 publication *The Heraldry of the Murrays* by G Harvey Johnston. It is worth looking at because it details the range of Murray families, some of which are connected to the Manning River Murrays. There are chapters, for instance on the Murrays of Falahill-Philphaugh, Stanhope, Elibank, Blackbarony and Cockpool.

DNA testing has proved that the Manning River Murrays are directly related to all of these branches, the closest being the Blackbarony Murrays.

The book can be found at: <https://archive.org/stream/heraldryofmurray00john#page/n13/mode/2up>

Les Murray On Bunyah

In the Manning Great Lakes area, we receive each month a glossy magazine called "Focus". The issue of November 2017 carries an interview with poet Les Murray about his 2015 book of poems *On Bunyah*.

Les grew up in Bunyah (or as the locals say, "on Bunyah") and returned there in 1985. The book is a collection of poems he has written about the area over many years, together with photographs. Les' great grandfather was a first settler there in 1870.

The article describes the book as "the history of Les' beloved home through the eyes of its residents – human and non-human – in a way that shares the colour and charm of the area".

When asked what he most loved about Bunyah, Les replied: "I guess it's the overwhelming, simple, rich ordinariness of it. It's utterly familiar – although it's slowly developing over time, the way things do. I'm getting older, scenes change, roads acquire asphalt, but it never progresses too fast."

Les talks about how intensive farming has been replaced by raising horses or cattle, with many of the owners having jobs in Taree or Forster, although timber is still an important industry.

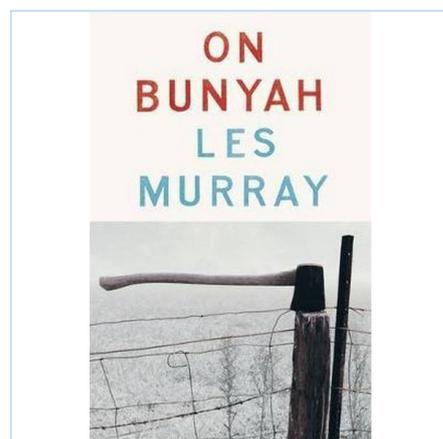
The subjects of the poems in the collection move chronologically from earliest times to the present.

At one point the interviewer comments: "The subjects you've covered with your poetry in this book are very diverse. They cover everything from broad beans to milk lorries to kangaroos."

Les' response is that yes, "kangaroos do make an appearance, at the entrance and the end of the book. Humans don't even enter those scenes at all – at times I write poems completely outside the human range. I taught myself to write about non-human creatures – even about domestic creatures. There are poems in the book all from the point of view of cattle, or horses – because they're part of the community too, and they're also making a living for us."

Les reflects on how his interest in poetry was sparked by teachers at Taree High School who pointed him to poets like the Australians Judith Wright and Kenneth Slessor and the English poet Gerard Manley Hopkins, who enabled him to see poetry as "a universal way of describing the very particular".

As Les says in the interview: "The history of the book does centre



information. What I should have written was that Tom was survived by his former wife Colleen and their two sons Thomas and Brenden.

Murray Clan Society of North America

In recent years we have developed a very friendly relationship with the Murray Clan Society of North America. Their quarterly journal *Aitionn* contains some very good articles which may be of interest to members. I have decided that when I send out email copies of our Newsletter, I will attach also the most recent copies of *Aitionn*. I would appreciate any feedback on this.

Incidentally, "Aitionn" means "juniper", the plant badge of the Murray Clan.

Mystery Book

We have a copy of a book of poems by Lord Tennyson, published in about 1900. According to inscriptions in the front of the book, it was owned by Alice Annie Murray of *Edgerston* in 1906, who gave it to her Aunt Agnes on 27/4/1907.

I have not been able to find an Alice Annie Murray from that period, or an Agnes who had a niece named Alice.

The property name is interesting as well. Edgerston was a sister village to Camptown in Scotland where Isabella Murray and her family lived. People from Camptown would go to school and church in Edgerston. It would be quite natural for members of the Murray family to name their property in Australia after this village, but I have not come across it. Can anyone shed any light on this?

Just for fun

A Scotsman, an Englishman and an Irishman went into a bar. As the men started drinking, a fly landed in each glass. The Englishman was disgusted. He emptied his glass and ordered another. The Irishman simply blew the fly away in a cloud of froth. The Scotsman carefully picked up the fly by the wings and yelled, "Spit it out. Spit it out ye wee devil."

There was a Scotsman named Fergus who nick-named his father-in-law "the Exorcist", because every time he came to visit the spirits disappeared.

A Scotsman went into a bakery and asked: "Is that a macaron or a meringue?"
"Naw, yer not wrong, it's a macaron," replied the baker.

A Scotsman went home and told his wife, "I went tae the barber's today and he said to me, 'Dae ye want yer hair cut round the back?' I said, 'Naw mate, in here's fine.'"

The Scots have an infallible cure for sea-sickness. They lean over the side of the ship with a ten pence coin in their teeth.

Warm regards to all,

Ross