

Murray Clan Society of NSW

Newsletter – August 2010

10 Banksia Parade
TUNCURRY NSW 2428

Ph: 02 6555 9818

Email: biggles2428@optusnet.com.au

Dear Members and Friends of the Murray Clan Society

Welcome to another Clan Newsletter. Thank you to all who have renewed their memberships for another year, and a special welcome to new members who have signed up for the first time. We hope you will enjoy your association with the Murray Clan Society.

Annual Gathering – 2010

It was good to see so many people turn up for our annual dinner-dance on 17th April. Everyone I spoke to enjoyed the night. The band we hired from Walcha was very well received, and local Federal MP Rob Oakeshott gave an absorbing and informative after-dinner speech about his own Murray ancestors, in particular 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.



Bob Murray and Rob Oakeshott

In accordance with the decision of the Annual General Meeting in 2009, next year's gathering will coincide with the Bonnie Wingham Festival which will be held over the weekend of 2nd-5th June. We are planning to hold our Murray gathering on the Saturday night, 4th June.



Four generations at the Dinner – Vice President Ian Murray with his son, Shaun, mother Joyce and grand-daughters Chloe and Jessica

This matter was discussed at length at our annual meeting. It was agreed that there were many points in favour of meeting on the same weekend of the Bonnie Wingham Festival. Members who travel long distances would have a full weekend of activities from which to choose. The downside is that any Murray activity we hold will clash with a Bonnie Wingham event. For this reason, the 2009 Annual Meeting decided to combine with Bonnie Wingham on alternate years.

Please note these dates in your diaries for 2011. We are only in the early stages of planning but will have full details of next year's activities in our next newsletter. The evening

will include the launch of a new book on the migration and settlement of the Manning Murrays – more details next time.



Fred Murray from Gloucester entertained with a medley of well known songs

(Photos by Timalee Murray)

Annual General Meeting

The 2010 AGM was held on the riverbank at Wingham on 18th April, although the turn-up was a bit disappointing. Interest in family history is certainly growing, and my contact with far flung Murrays suggests strong continuing support for the Clan. Unfortunately, however, it has been difficult to attract new members to the committee.

Colin Murray, our long-serving treasurer, has expressed his wish to retire from the position, but in the absence of any other nominations he has agreed to carry on in an interim capacity. Dorothy Murray, our Secretary, has kindly offered to continue temporarily in the absence of an alternative. The positions of Assistant Secretary and Convenor remain unfilled. Ian Murray accepted re-nomination as Vice President, a task he has carried out with distinction.

Other committee members nominated were Bob Murray, Jean Paterson, Alex Murray, Joyce Murray, Jan Murray, Timalee Murray, Max Hand and Warwick Murray.

My thanks are due to all these committed folk whose efforts keep the Society running.

Keith Longworth

Since our last Newsletter we have mourned the death of Keith Longworth. Keith and his wife Beatrice (nee Murray) have attended a number of our dinners over the years. Keith was a fine gentleman. He was deeply committed to his wider family and was a lifelong servant of God and his Church. With several other members of the Clan Society I was privileged to attend his funeral, which was an emphatic statement of the reality of his faith in God. We express our sincere condolences to Beatrice.

Questions re Future Gatherings

After our last Dinner-Dance, there was some discussion as to what direction we should take in the future. There appears to be some concern about increasing costs, but there is not a lot we can do about that other than to simplify our events.

Assuming we keep to our traditional dinner-dance type of gathering, the choices we have are:

1. Keep costs to a minimum, for example by using recorded rather than live music. Our band this year cost \$400 but they were excellent and were greatly appreciated by those who attended. We don't think we should compromise on the standard of food served.
2. Make the gatherings more attractive to members and guests by continuing with live music and occasionally engaging the Wingham Pipe Band for entertainment, even though this raises the cost of the evening.

At the end of this Newsletter is a brief questionnaire. Please feel free to return it either by post or email. The Committee is very receptive to ideas and opinions offered by members, as we want our functions to be attractive and accessible to all.

Incidentally, our next Committee Meeting will be held on Saturday, 14th August at 10am at the Tinonee Anglican Hall. Any members who would like to come along and contribute to a discussion of next year's activity would be most welcome.

Lavinia Murray

Last newsletter I mentioned Lavinia Murray, whose contribution to the Great Lakes region is recognised in the naming of the Lavinia Murray Bridge which was opened at Bunyah in 1958. After the death of her husband Thomas (the son of the original Hugh Murray), Lavinia represented the people of Bunyah on the old Stroud Shire Council. As the region's first female Councillor she was well ahead of her time, and she served the Shire with distinction throughout the 1950s. The naming of the bridge after her was a rare honour for a still serving Councillor.

Lavinia's legacy lies not only in the bridge. A portrait photograph of her hangs in the Great Lakes Council Chambers. Her name also lives on in the Lavinia Murray Prayer which she composed in 1951, her first year as a Councillor. It is still read at the opening of meetings of the Great Lakes Council which incorporates the old Stroud Shire. The prayer has been modernised over time, and in its current form, reads:

Heavenly Father, to whom we owe all honour and obedience,
Bestow on us your guidance and your compassion
As we deal with the matters which may come before us here,
So that we may discharge the responsibility you have laid upon us
in ways which are to the benefit of all.

Subdue in us all selfish thoughts and create in us a spirit of goodwill towards each other.
Bless us all, and forgive us our sins so that in the end we may have eternal life with you.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Information about this remarkable woman can be found in the book *One Hundred Years of Local Government: Stroud Shire Council – Great Lakes Council*, by Sandra Finn, Forster, Great Lakes Council, 2006 p. 51.

Upcoming Scottish Festivals

28th August - Toukley Highland Games

18th-19th September - Clans on the Coast, Port Stephens

7th November - Castle Hill Highland Games

How it all Started

As so many members have joined since the Clan Society was established, I thought it might be of interest to recount the story of its beginnings. No doubt if I have anything wrong, there will be those who will very graciously correct me. In 1979, some 131 years after the arrival of the first Manning Murrays, a family gathering was planned. By this time, of course, Isabella Murray's descendants had multiplied and, with an increasingly mobile society, had spread far beyond the Manning Valley.

The initiative can be attributed to a small but committed band of people. One of these was Fred Murray of Taree, a sales representative who travelled throughout the NSW north coast. On trips to Ballina he met with his distant relatives Frank and Kath Murray. Kath was very active in Clan McLennan and did much to inspire the Murray initiative. A close friend of Kath's and fellow historian of the Clan McLennan, Eunice Capple, gave considerable assistance, although she was not a Murray.

Another of the prime movers was Alice Gleeson. Alice was a friend of Kath Murray and in 1978 had visited Scotland where she attended a Clan Gathering. Discussions with Kath on her return inspired her to pursue the idea of a reunion. Other important figures were Evie Martin, Lily Sambell and Joyce Kidd.

The reunion took place on the river bank at Wingham on 10th November, 1979. The weather was magnificent, and about 600 of Isabella's descendants, according to the Wingham Chronicle of 15th Nov, 1979, "came from many centres including the New England area, several Sydney suburbs, both the South Coast and North Coast of NSW, the Hunter Valley and Manning area."

Alan Martin was the marshal for the day.

Although primarily a family reunion, there was a Scottish flavour to the occasion with the Scottish Standard being flown, along with the Australian Flag, and the Crest of the Duke of Athol being on display. At a huge open air meeting, it was agreed to form a branch of the Murray Clan in NSW as the best means of maintaining contact and planning future gatherings.

A committee was elected for this purpose, consisting of Alex Murray of Killawarra, Jan Murray of Tinonee, Fred Murray of Taree, Alice Gleeson of Wingham, Angus Murray of Tuncurry, Lily Sambell of Gloucester, Bob Murray of Gloucester, Joyce Kidd of Taree, Les Murray of Chatswood, Joan Murray of Newcastle, Malcolm Murray of Tamworth, and myself.

The first committee meeting was held on 29th December at the home of Alice Gleeson in Wingham. Interim officers were elected and a decision made to seek advice from the Duke of Atholl as to the proper procedure for establishing a branch of the Murray Clan in Australia. Harry Murray of Dyers Crossing was elected President, Joyce Kidd Secretary and Fred Murray Treasurer. Three research officers (Joan Murray, Angus Murray and Les Murray) were appointed to gather information and coordinate research into the history and genealogy of the Murrays.

At a second meeting on 26th April 1980, again at Alice Gleeson's home, the Murray Clan Society of NSW was formally constituted. A dinner was organised for 20th June, 1980, establishing a tradition of annual dinners which have become the main activity of the Society since then. Following the dinner, the first annual general meeting was held which confirmed Harry Murray as President, Joyce Kidd as Secretary and Earl Kidd as Vice-Secretary. Fred Murray did not seek re-nomination as Treasurer in order to devote time to gathering research for a book on the history of the Murrays, which was ultimately published in 1881 with Joan Murray as joint author. He was replaced by Alex Murray. All other members of the original Committee were confirmed, and a Constitution was formally adopted.

Although the Murray Clan Society of NSW began as an organisation of Manning River Murrays and their families, it has been a great delight to see so many unrelated Murrays and others with connections to that name join over the past thirty years.

“The Scots in Australia” – A Good Read

I am currently reading Prof Malcolm Prentis' book "The Scots in Australia" (334 pages), published by UNSW Press in 2008. Malcolm Prentis is a Professor of History at the Australian Catholic University in Sydney. He came originally from Brisbane, but although they don't rate a mention in the book, his ancestors include several early settler families in the Wingham district, such as the Allans, Birds and Gollans.

Prentis describes in detail the kinds of economic, social and political reasons why so many Scots migrated to other countries, and shows why Scottish immigrants to Australia have exerted an influence out of all proportion to their numbers. He demonstrates that the Scots punched above their weight in areas such as business, politics, medicine, education, sport and culture.

Prentis' writing on the Scots in education particularly interested me. He explains the pioneering role of the Scottish immigrants in education, and the influence of people like J D Lang, and John McGarvie. However, it was often the common people who were determined to set up schools wherever they settled. The local Church was invariably associated with a school.

Scots played a very significant role in Primary, Secondary and University education, and Prentis documents this in a readable and informative way. In NSW in 1901, over 18% of school teachers were Presbyterian, well above their percentage of the population.

The reasons go back to the Scottish Reformation of the 16th century, when Calvinist Presbyterianism transformed the country. Fundamental to the program of John Knox and his fellow-reformers was the right of every person to be educated. This was partly so that everyone could read and understand the Bible, but there was also the element of equality. All were equal before God, and therefore all had rights. Calvinism was essentially democratic.

Prentis writes "It was one of the cardinal points in the program of the reformers that every parish should have its school, so that all might be able to read the Bible and have the opportunity to better themselves. The aim and achievement of the parish school was to help to create an ideal of citizenship that was relatively classless" (p. 19).

As a result, centuries later, we find that even poor, working class Scots frequently took an active interest in areas like science and history. This meant that when they came to places like Australia they were ready to make a contribution to their societies.

Prentis notes that Scottish universities were "cheaper and more open, and there were four of them for nearly 300 years before England had three. As late as the 1920s, Scotland had three times as many university students per head of population as England."

Reading Prentis' book helps to explain why the early Manning Murrays, like most Scots, took such a passionate interest in the education of their families and made such a significant contribution to their community. It also provides a wonderful insight into the turbulent and rapidly changing society they left behind. More on this another time.

A Reminder

If you received this newsletter by post, but would be willing to receive it by email, please email me at biggles2428@optusnet.com.au and we will add your email address to our database. Sending the newsletter by email cuts down greatly on our costs and reduces the time required to get them out (plus you get coloured photos).

We send out about 90 newsletters and want to make sure that all members receive them. *If you are aware of any member who has not received a newsletter, please let me know.*

We also send out newsletters for a limited time to people who are no longer financial. If you are receiving a newsletter and have no wish to do so, please let me know and I'll delete your details from our database.

Time Capsule

Branches of the Manning Murrays have long been associated with the John Knox Free Presbyterian Church in Tinonee. On 3rd March, 1880, the memorial stone of this church was laid by Rev D K McIntyre and a time capsule was planted. Amongst the newspapers it contained was the issue of the Manning River Times printed on the day of the laying of the stone. It presents a delightful picture of district life 130 years ago. On the following page is an advertisement for John Murray's store at Tinonee. The original was hard to read in places, so it's been re-typed on the computer in a similar print and layout to the original. What an incredible range of goods they stocked!

NOTICE

J. MURRAY & Co.,

Has just returned from SYDNEY with one of the best selected STOCK of GOODS that ever arrived on the

BANKS OF THE MANNING RIVER,

Consisting of - Finest Flour, Sugar and Tea, Groceries of all Kinds, Tobaccos of various Kinds, Yankee Doodle &c a Splendid Assortment of Genuine Meerschaum and other Pipes, Ferrules, Atubers &c &c. A large Assortment of

MEN'S CLOTHING, OF ALL QUALITIES.

With Ladies' Dresses, Dress Pieces, Ribbons, Trimmings, Kid Gloves, Trimmed Hats, &c &c. A Fine Assortment of Crockery, Lamps, Oils &c.

18 CARAT GOLD Wedding Rings and Keepers, Earrings, Brooches, and Chains, Fancy Goods and Cutlery.

I R O N W A R E

Boilers, Pots, Pans, Kettles, Spades, Shovels, Saws, Hammers, Locks, Bolts, Screws &c &c.

AN ASSORTMENT OF TINWARE

A Large Quantity of the Best Boots and Shoes that could be bought in Sydney.

And as the whole of the above Goods has been bought without Cash, we kindly invite the Public generally to give us a Call, as we are enabled to give rare Bargains, for we are determined to sell, and sell we must, and that is when the Bargains are to be got. Hoping our Customers will avail themselves of this chance, and they will be treated on Liberal Terms. An Early Call is Solicited.

J. MURRAY & Co., TINONEE

Thank you

My thanks again on behalf of the Committee to all our members whose interest and participation make this such a friendly and productive organisation. We do appreciate your support, especially those from afar who make the effort to come to our functions.

Through the wonders of email I have been in touch with a number of distant members over the past year. It was a privilege at last year's dinner to meet descendants of one of my grandfather's brothers from far northern NSW whom I did not previously know existed. We have sustained a very productive and enjoyable correspondence since then, exchanging family history details and anecdotes, and forming what I believe will be a very lasting relationship. This would not have happened had it not been for the existence of the Murray Clan Society, and I know that other members have had similar experiences.

Remember that any member is welcome to contribute news or other items to this newsletter.

Please make a note to keep clear the weekend of 2nd to 5th June, 2011

Warm regards,

Ross Murray

President

Questionnaire re Dinner-Dances

1. Are you generally happy with the traditional format of the annual dinner-dances? Yes / No
2. Do you believe that the cost of these events is too high? Yes / No
3. If "Yes", what do you believe to be a reasonable cost for the evening? \$.....
4. Would you be more attracted to the evening if we included more entertainment? Yes / No
If "Yes", please indicate the kind of entertainment you would like:
 - Pipe band / pipers
 - Scottish Dancing
 - Other
5. The Committee is discussing possible after-dinner speakers for future functions. Is the identity of our guest speaker a significant factor in influencing whether or not you come to the function? Yes / No
6. Do you feel that you have sufficient opportunity to mix with relatives and friends at the gatherings? Yes / No
7. At the last two functions we have opened up the dancing to the public after about 8.30pm as a way of reducing our costs. Do you agree with this practice? Yes / No
8. Would you approve of recorded music instead of a live band as a means of reducing costs? Yes / No

9. Please add any other comments you would like to make about the annual gatherings or indeed about any other aspect of the Society.