



# Murray Clan Society of NSW Newsletter

December 2013

[www.murray-clan-nsw.net](http://www.murray-clan-nsw.net)

PO Box 407  
WINGHAM NSW 2429  
Ph: 02 6555 9818

Email: [murrayr46@gmail.com](mailto:murrayr46@gmail.com)

## Greetings

Welcome members and friends to our December Newsletter. We hope that everyone will find something of interest. Some important things are happening, and I draw your attention especially to the article by Julie Evans about Bridget Ryan which is a follow-up to a story we ran in October 2012. The story of this young girl appears ever more remarkable as more information comes to light.

## Annual Gathering 2014

At a Committee Meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> November we confirmed arrangements for our 2014 gathering. As we have already indicated, our Annual Dinner will be held in the Hibiscus Room at the Wingham Services Club on **Friday 30<sup>th</sup> May**. Our special guests will be the Rt Hon the 12<sup>th</sup> Earl and Countess of Dunmore, Viscount of Fincastle, Lord Murray of Blair, Moulin and Tillimett, Malcolm and Joy Murray. Malcolm is also the High Commissioner of the Murray Clan in Australia and New Zealand.

The function is being held in conjunction with the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Bonnie Wingham Scottish Festival (29<sup>th</sup> May to 1<sup>st</sup> June). More details about the Festival can be found below and at [www.manninghistorical.org](http://www.manninghistorical.org).

It will be a wonderful evening. We expect the cost to be \$35 per person (to be confirmed in the next Newsletter). Because the proprietors of the Hibiscus Room Restaurant in the Services Club will partitioning off as much as we need of the restaurant for our exclusive use, we will need to have definite numbers a little earlier than usual. We will remind you of this in the next Newsletter.

As part of his welcome to visitors to the Scottish Festival, the Earl has written:

Joy and I once again feel very honoured to be invited back as guests to the Manning Valley Historical Society's 10th Bonnie Wingham Scottish Festival. We were delighted to be part of the 5th Scottish Festival in 2009 along with the wonderful support of the Murray Clan of NSW members. We look forward to spending time with our clan during the festival and also look forward to meeting up once again with all our friends we made in 2009 and getting to know new friends who are proud of their Scottish Heritage.

Please set aside this weekend for a visit to the Manning. We look forward to your company.

## The continuing story of Bridget Murray nee Ryan, now a TV celebrity

by Bridget's great-great-granddaughter Julie Evans

In a previous Clan newsletter I wrote about an episode of the Irish television program, *The Gathering – Homeward Bound*, in which Tadgh Kennelly interviewed Barbara Farrell, descendant of Isabella Murray's third son James. Tadgh and James' wife, Bridget Ryan, came from the same County Kerry town of Listowel.

Bridget arrived in Australia in 1850 as part of the Earl Grey Famine Orphan Scheme. Over 4000 girls came to Australia during the Scheme: <http://www.irishfaminememorial.org/history/earl-grey-scheme/> Bridget was only thirteen when she left the Listowel Workhouse and sailed for Australia. On her arrival she was employed as a domestic servant by a Master Mariner in Balmain. Within a year she had met and married James Murray and moved to the Manning. Here they lived first in Mondrook then on Oxley Island and raised twelve of the thirteen children born to them. Much of their lives is well known to Clan members.

James and Bridget Murray



### What about Bridget's life in Ireland?

My family history research had thrown up lots of questions about her background. She was able to read and write in English and descendants had passed on the story that she was educated by French nuns. Why was she in the Workhouse? Had her parents died and left her destitute? Clues emerged when we investigated. Her father had been sent to Australia as a convict when Bridget was only a small child. Nothing could be found of her mother's fate. These questions remained after a visit to Ireland in 2008.

While researching I was fortunate to have the assistance of two women in Ireland, Mary and Kay, both keen family historians and expert researchers in the field of Family History. The internet and email makes many things possible and we established strong friendships. The first connection with Mary was made in 2008. Mary and Kay are involved in an initiative, North Kerry Reaching Out, which was established in County Kerry. One of the aims of this group, NKRO, is to help the diaspora with research into their family ties to County Kerry. I was lucky to be one whose story was taken up by this group.

Towards the end of 2012, the Irish National Broadcaster decided to commission a six part television program about the descendants of emigrants. It was to be called *Tar Abhaile (Come Home)* and would screen on the Irish Language Channel TG4. Each episode would be in two parts to feature the stories of two descendants from Australia, the United States or Canada as they traced their heritage. The programs would be made and aired in 2013, the year of *The Gathering* in Ireland, and would bring descendants back to Ireland to walk the paths of their ancestors. The second connection was made when Mary and Kay proposed that my search for Bridget's story be included in the program. Their proposal was accepted and now the television program's researcher set to work to unravel whatever they could find about Bridget and her history.

In April 2013 my husband, Glyn, and I flew again to Ireland. I had two very intense days of filming by Red Pepper Productions in extremely cold weather but found the experience challenging and rewarding. We visited many sites including the Famine Graveyard of the Listowel Workhouse, the Limerick Archives to see newspapers of the times, the Church where Bridget's parents were married and the graveyard at Grange which has possible family connections. I was able to read the Minutes Book of the Guardians of the Listowel

Workhouse and see that on the list of girls to be sent to Australia in October 1849, Bridget's name was the last.

The following photos are from the filming in April this year.

Famine Graveyard at Listowel



In the Limerick Archives



The Grange Church Graveyard



Also this year, as can be seen in the following photos, the Director of the film crew came to Sydney to film at the school where I work and at the Famine Memorial at Hyde Park Barracks with my cousin Barbara.

Working in the classroom



The Famine Memorial at Hyde Park Barracks Sydney



Talking with Barbara at Hyde Park Barracks



All this footage has been distilled into fifteen minutes of a program to be aired on TG4, the Irish Language television channel, on 1 December 2013. It will be available for us to see on the TG4 player service at [www.tg4.ie](http://www.tg4.ie).

And from all the research done for me in Ireland what did I learn about Bridget?

I knew that her father was called Launcelot, or Lanty, Ryan. In my previous research, I had traced him to the transportation lists and knew that he arrived in Australia on the convict ship *Neptune* in 1838. When in Ireland I was able to see a Limerick newspaper of July 1838 and read about his trial and his being sentenced to transportation for seven years. He was found guilty of bigamy when his first wife and children walked into the house of the woman he had recently bigamously married! He was committed to Kilmainham Gaol in Dublin to await his transportation to Australia. His departure would have left Bridget and her mother, (and a brother according to the records, though we can find nothing about him) alone and dependent on help from family.

It appears that in fact Bridget was educated by French Nuns in the Order of the Faithful Companions of Jesus, at Laurel Hill School in Limerick. The Parish Priest, Dean Robert Cussen, was the wealthy younger son of a tobacco millionaire and was known for his philanthropic works. As well as supporting poor parish families affected by the potato famine, he paid for many children of the district to be educated.

The Gates of Laurel Hill School



Dean Robert Cussen



Parish Church in Bruff



As Dean Cussen was connected to Bridget's family through her maternal grandmother, it seems possible that he paid for Bridget to attend the Convent school. He probably also had a hand in getting Bridget to Australia.

At the time of her departure, Ireland was in the grip of the potato famine and thousands of people were dying each week. We had previously assumed that Bridget and her mother were in the Listowel Workhouse but research suggests that is not the case, and that Bridget went in alone as a means to an end. The Listowel Workhouse is not in the same County as the school she attended or the town where she was raised. Perhaps Dean Cussen was able to use his considerable influence to get her into the Workhouse in neighbouring County Kerry and then on to the orphan emigration list.

There is little doubt that this saved her life. I can barely imagine the trepidation she felt and the pain of leaving her mother, and all that was familiar, to go into the unknown.

It is known, in fact, that many of the girls brought to Australia on the Earl Grey Scheme were not orphans as we would define the term. Many were sent by families unable to support them in the time of such catastrophe during the Great Famine.

On Sunday 28 October 1849 the barque *Thomas Arbuthnot* sailed out of Plymouth Harbour on her way to Australia. She arrived in Sydney 3 February 1850. One hundred and ninety four of the passengers were so-called orphan girls between the ages of thirteen and eighteen from various Irish Workhouses. Bridget Ryan was one of them.

*\*\*If anyone reading this is interested in learning more, or wants to get in touch with me, please make contact through the Editor of this Newsletter.\*\**

**Editor's note:** Since the above article was written, the Irish TV show has been screened and it is well worth a look. Go to <http://www.tg4.ie/en/player.html>, then click on the "Tar Abhaile" link. Then click on the first icon (woman wearing a pink jumper). The first half of the programme (about 15 minutes) deals with the story of Julie and her quest for the truth about Bridget Ryan. I highly recommend it.

### Passing of Alice Gleeson

Since our last Newsletter we have been saddened by the loss of Alice Gleeson (nee Murray), who passed away peacefully on 25th August 2013, aged 96. As many of our members would know, Alice played a leading role in organising the first reunion of the Manning Murrays at Wingham in 1979 which led to the formation of the Clan Society. The first Committee meetings were held in her home and her wisdom and support were invaluable. Alice was a driving force behind the Society in its early days. Despite her advancing age she never lost interest in the Clan Society and was always happy to contribute suggestions and ideas. She attended Clan functions as long as she was physically able, and it was a great privilege to have her present at our 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary dinner in 2009 to share in the cutting of the anniversary cake.



Cutting the cake at the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner in 2009

Alice was a gracious, hospitable and engaging woman whom it was a delight to know. Her contribution to the Society was immeasurable. She was appointed a Life Member of the Murray Clan Society in 1991.

The Society was well represented at Alice's funeral which was held at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church in Wingham.

### Website news

We get some interesting responses to our website. Here are four we have received since our last Newsletter:

#### 1. Russell Murray

Russell Murray wrote to us from South Gippsland in Victoria. He was searching for the book *And so they came: A History of the Haning Murrays from Roxburghshire, Scotland*, written and published by Janet E. McNaught, and asked if we could help him track down a copy. I was able to put him in touch with Janet and he was able to buy a copy of the book.

He wrote: "I look forward to learning more about the Murray Clan and its history from other publications and those with a similar interest. Wonderful site!"

He added: "I just wanted to add to my earlier comment that I welcome any of your members to contact me at the email address provided: [russellmurray78@gmail.com](mailto:russellmurray78@gmail.com)."

Russell sent us this link to an item about his great-grandfather William Cranston Murray, who settled on the Mornington Peninsula where Russell grew up and where most of his family still lives to this day.  
<http://www.morningtoncemetery.com/Denominations/Old-Presbyterian/Murray-W/Murray-William.shtml>

Anyone who would like to contact Russell is encouraged to do so. He belongs to the "Haning" Murrays who are distantly related to the Manning Murrays.

#### 2. Murray DNA Project

We received an email from an Alexandrina Murray in Sydney, who is the Project Administrator for the Murray Clan DNA Research Project at Family Tree DNA. She invited us to peruse her website at:  
<http://www.familytreedna.com/public/murray/>.

The project to compile a family tree of Murray DNA is a fascinating one, although the science of it is a bit outside my expertise. Alexandrina provided a link to a table of results for male Murrays:  
<http://www.familytreedna.com/public/murray/default.aspx?section=yresults>

If anyone is interested in following this up, Alexandrina's email address is [alexandrina@inbox.com](mailto:alexandrina@inbox.com).

She sent another link to a Murray blog site which I found quite interesting: <http://scottish-murrays.blogspot.com.au/>

### 3. Murrays Who Tweet

We received this from Alasdair Murray:

“I saw your website about the Murray Clan and thought you may be interested to know there's a twitter account @murrayswhotweet where over 1500 Murrays from around the world are followers. Feel free to pass it on :-)

Alasdair Murray  
*freelance copywriter*  
Twitter: @Alconcalcia  
Website: <http://www.alasdairmurraycopy.com>”

He sent us a link to an interview about his career at: <http://www.procopywriters.co.uk/2012/10/alsadair-murray/>

I regret to say that I have not ventured into the world of tweets, but the idea of 1500 Murrays all linked up through Twitter does sound compelling. I imagine it could be quite useful for finding lost relatives. If anyone wants to look into this further I'd be interested in your feedback.

### 4. John Murray

John Murray of Castleton in Roxburghshire, Scotland is a descendant of John Murray (1669-1749) and Isabella Turnbull, as are the Manning Murrays, and he is updating the family trees in Peter Ruthven-Murray's landmark book *The Murrays of Rulewater*. He has taken on an enormous task involving thousands of names. He contacted us through our website to try to make contact with the Roxburghshire Murrays who migrated to Australia.

I emailed back to say that there are several thousand of us, with at least two main family groups. No doubt this conversation will be ongoing. A can of worms comes to mind. The Australian and Scottish families kept in touch until the late 1920s through Harold J R Murray, son of the great scholar Sir James Augustus Henry Murray, but there seems to have been no direct communication since then.

#### **Bonnie Wingham Scottish Festival: 29<sup>th</sup> May – 1<sup>st</sup> June 2014**

As mentioned previously, the Festival this year celebrates the 700<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of Bannockburn, a terrible two-day battle between the forces of Robert the Bruce of Scotland and King Edward II of England. The battle took place on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> June 1314 at Bannockburn, near Stirling, and left thousands dead.

For those Murrays who are coming to the Manning district for the whole weekend, you might be interested in a special **Bannockburn Luncheon** to be held on the Sunday (1<sup>st</sup> June). The luncheon is open to everyone, but a special feature will be a gathering of descendants of Robert the Bruce who will sit at special tables. They will also receive a special rosette to wear during the Festival and will be invited to march as a group in the street parade on Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> May. Any Bruce descendants who would like to attend the Festival should contact the committee member co-ordinating the Bruce gathering, Wade King, by email at [wmbaking@bigpond.com](mailto:wmbaking@bigpond.com). Bookings for the Bannockburn Luncheon should be made through the historical society.

Here is the programme for the Festival:

### **Thursday 29th May**

2.00pm Donna's Junior Shortbread School (95 Isabella St)

### **Friday 30th May**

7.30am \* Braveheart Poets' Breakfast (Anglican Church Hall)  
10.00am\* District Bus Tour (Wingham Historical Museum)  
10.30am CWA Shortbread Baking Competition/Judging (CWA rooms in Isabella St)  
Judging of Shop Window Displays (Town centre)

12 noon 9 Hole Clash of the Clans Mixed Golf Tournament (Wingham Golf Course)  
12 noon Mixed Single Entry Social Bowls (Wingham Bowling Club)  
5.30pm Mayoral Reception (Wingham Library)  
7.00pm\* Scots Night Out (Wingham Services Club)

### **Saturday 31st May**

9.00am Market and Clan stalls open (Central Park)  
9.30am Street Parade Starts (Isabella St)  
10.00am Opening Ceremony. Highland Games, Pipe Bands and Dancing begin (Central Park)  
6.30pm\* Cocktail Party (Wingham Services Club)  
7.00pm\* Grand Scottish Ball (Wingham Services Club)

### **Sunday 1st June**

7.30am Lay led Thanksgiving Service and Blessing of the Banners (River Reserve)  
8.00am \* Barbecue Breakfast (River Reserve)  
10.00am Colloquium of Clan and Celtic leaders (Tellers Restaurant)  
12 noon\* Bannockburn Lunch (Wingham Services Club)  
2.00pm\* Scottish Ceilidh/Concert (Wingham Town Hall)

\* Book ahead through Manning Valley Historical Society. Go to [www.manninghistorical.org](http://www.manninghistorical.org) and follow the link to the Bonnie Wingham Scottish Festival, where you will find a booking form.

Any Murrays who are in town for the Festival are warmly invited to take part in the Street Parade at 9.30am on the Saturday. Please meet at the Murray Tent in the park at 9.00am or at the start of the march.

### **Relations with Paterson-Easton Family Association**

Preliminary discussion is taking place as to how we can formalise our relationship with the Paterson-Easton Family Association. Because of the extensive intermarriage among the three families as well as longstanding friendships, we have a great deal in common and many of our members are also members of the Paterson-Easton Family Association. It has been felt for some time that closer cooperation would be a very positive step.

There are some obvious differences in emphasis between our two groups. We have many members who are not related to the Manning Murrays whereas their membership is based on family relationship. Also, our Society has placed more emphasis on our Scottish heritage. However, as the old saying goes, there is much more that unites us than divides us and we will be looking at closer forms of association in the future. We will keep you up to date with any developments.

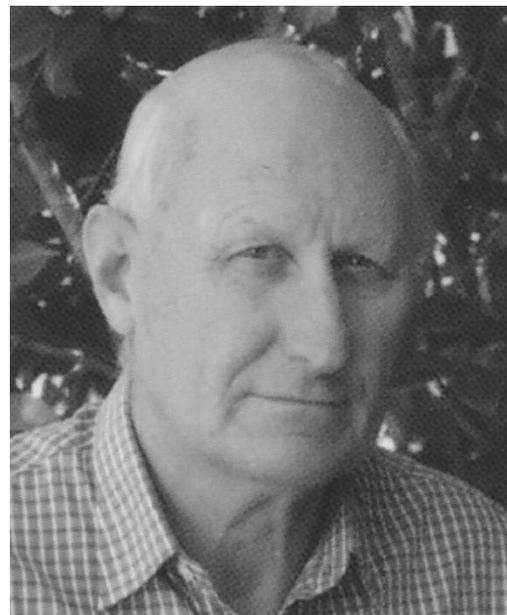
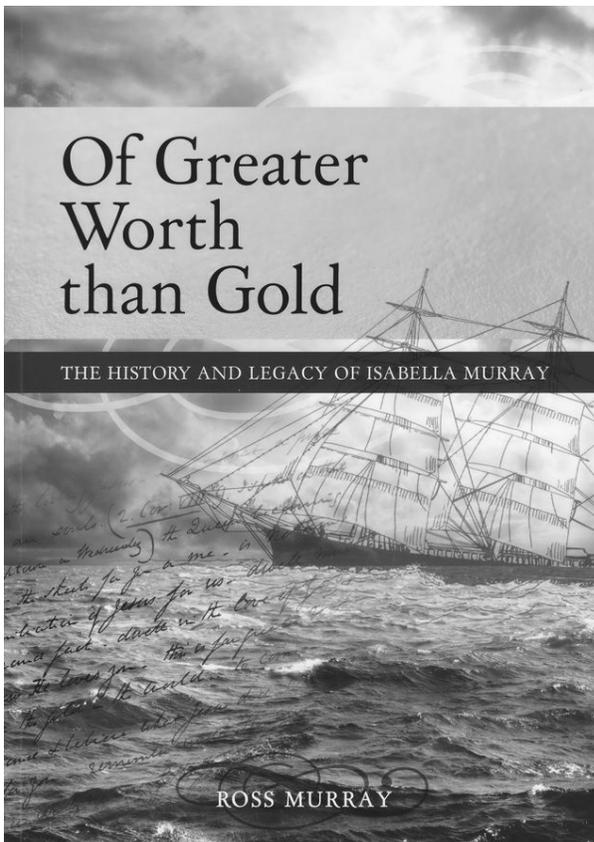
## Book Review

The book *Of Greater Worth than Gold: The History and Legacy of Isabella Murray* was reviewed recently in “Church Heritage”, the historical journal of the Uniting Church in NSW / ACT.

The review was written by the editor of the journal, Professor Malcolm Prentis, a History professor whose important book *The Scots in Australia* was reviewed in this Newsletter in August 2010. For those who might be interested, the review appears below. I thank Prof Prentis for his permission to reproduce the review.

Copies of the book are still available directly from me or from the Wingham Museum.

**Ross Murray, *Of Greater Worth than Gold: the History and Legacy of Isabella Murray*. Taree NSW: Ross Murray, 2012, pp 96, illus., ISBN 978-0-646-57720-3, RRP \$25**



**Ross Murray**

Ross Murray was born on the Manning, in Taree. He taught History, English and Studies of Religion in schools in the Upper Hunter and Tamworth before retiring to Tuncurry in 2004. He augmented his historical skills by completing the highly regarded local and applied history course at the University of New England. He is also the President of the Murray Clan Society of NSW.

Although this is a family history, it has been researched, written and produced in a thoroughly professional manner – a labour of love in the best sense. It is a very attractive book, not only because of its graphic design but also because it is a superior example of the genre in its substance. Its greater appeal arises also from the way Murray has contextualised his study. The Scottish heritage of his immigrant ancestors is traced back two centuries and analysed very helpfully as a case study in the dynamics of Scottish emigration and of

Australian immigration. The importance to these people of their faith is not avoided as in some family histories. It is seen in its properly central relation to the lives of the people. Interestingly enough, however, the two famous contemporary Murray descendants celebrated in text-boxes in this book are both Roman Catholics rather than Free Presbyterians – poet Les Murray and Justice Murray Gleeson. Back in 1984, Les Murray remarked to the reviewer, rather acerbically, that the Scots on the north coast had a tough religion of extreme Calvinism, adding that the men only had culture when they were drunk but the women couldn't drink, so they had no culture but religion. Whilst I am sure this reflects Les's personal experiences, and no doubt contains truthful insight, it is hardly fair to all the pioneers introduced to the reader in this book.

Ross Murray is well read in "the literature", as serious scholars are wont to say. So the primary research on his own family is confidently placed against the broader backcloth of the so-called "lowland clearances". He also provides a rich account of the shipboard experiences of emigrants, including his own ancestors. The faith and world-view of the matriarch Isabella are explored deeply, in relation to changes in Scottish Presbyterianism in the 18th and 19th century. There is also a reproduction and the transcript of a long letter to Isabella Murray in Australia from a Christian friend at home. The chapter concerning settlement on the Manning is relatively short but, again, presents the family story in context and Murray is unafraid to deal honestly with the displacement of the Biripi people, so it is not just the usual story of the triumph of white pioneers over adversity.

This book is very thoroughly and helpfully illustrated with photographs, many of them in colour, documents and tables. It might then seem churlish to complain of the lack of maps of Roxburghshire and the Manning valley to show the location of the many places mentioned in the text. Fortunately, the reviewer knows some of the places (including The Bight) because of his wife's Manning River roots.

**MALCOLM PRENTIS**

### **Milestones**

Longstanding Committee member Joyce Murray turns 80 in February 2014 and shows no signs whatever of flagging in her enthusiasm. Her contribution to the Society is indeed valued and appreciated.

Our Treasurer, Timalee Murray, turns 21 on 12<sup>th</sup> December. Congratulations Timalee.

Norman and Vera Murray (nee Lamb) celebrated 57 years of marriage in September. They now live in retirement in Taree after a varied life of farming (Pampoolah, Camden and the family farm at Bunyah) and being heavily involved in Country Music (President of Manning Valley Country Music Club, recording several albums).

### **Scottish Stories**

An Arabian Sheikh was admitted to Hospital for heart surgery, but prior to the surgery, the doctors needed to store his type of blood in case the need arose.

As the gentleman had a very rare type of blood, it couldn't be found locally, so the call went out.

Finally, a Scotsman was located who had the same blood type. The Scot willingly donated his blood for the Sheikh.

The Sheikh sent the Scotsman, as appreciation for giving his blood, a new BMW, diamonds & \$100,000, happy that his surgery could now go ahead.

A couple of months later, once again, the Sheikh had to go through a corrective surgery.

His doctor telephoned the Scotsman who was more than happy to donate his blood again.

After the second surgery, the Sheikh sent the Scotsman a thank-you card and a box of Quality Street chocolates.

The Scotsman was shocked that the Sheikh did not reciprocate his previous kind gesture as he had anticipated.

He phoned the Sheikh and asked him: "I thought you would be generous again, that you would give me a BMW, diamonds & money, but you only gave me a thank-you card and a box of chocolates."

The Sheikh replied: "Aye laddie, but I now have Scottish blood in ma veins."

In a letter to the editor of a London newspaper, a Scotsman wrote: "Sir, if you print any more jokes about Scotsmen I shall cease borrowing your newspaper."

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

After discovering they had won ten million pounds on the National Lottery, Mr and Mrs McKenzie sat down to discuss their future. "After twenty years of washing other people's stairs to earn money," said Mrs McKenzie, "I can at last throw away my old scrubbing brush."  
"Of course you can," said her husband. "We can easily afford to buy you a new one now."

### **Christmas Greetings**

We wish all our members and friends a happy Christmas and look forward to seeing you at the big gathering in May 2013. Please feel free to get back to me if you have any feedback on the Newsletter.

Warm regards,

Ross Murray  
President