



The Clan Matheson Society Australia Newsletter

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A new flag for the Isle of Skye now proudly on display at Tatura (Vic). (see last page)

Annual General Meeting by ZOOM worked well.

On 23rd August, we were able to hold our AGM successfully using the video conferencing program, Zoom. The Minutes of this AGM are summarised in this Newsletter. There were 11 people present at the meeting and all were able to speak, be heard by everyone else and vote appropriately. We shall conduct our next meeting on 22 November using Zoom.

There are no limitations on the geographical reach of Zoom, so we proposed to invite the Chief (Sir Alexander Matheson) to attend from the UK. I am pleased to be able to say that Sir Alexander is very happy to attend on 22nd November at 8am (UK time) - the equivalent of 7pm our time. This is a change from our normal time of holding meetings, but we are in a very unusual year and all of us have had to put up with many changes in our lives. If you would like to take part, please do let me know by 15 November and I can send you an invitation. Items for discussion are possible attendance at the International Clan Matheson Gathering in North Carolina in June 2021, setting the level of fees (given Covid-19), suggestions for the website, possible activities for 2021—can we schedule a picnic? Annual memberships fell due after the AGM, see below. Your fees are used to pay *inter alia* for the International website (clanmatheson.org), our own website domain registration and hosting (clanmatheson.com.au) as well as insurance and affiliate fees (eg Clans of Victoria) and Newsletter production and distribution costs for those members without email accounts.

You might have noticed a few changes to the website recently. Having looked after the website for some years, Brad has now handed over to Brenton Hayward, an IT teacher who also looks after Warren's Pipe Band website. Many thanks to Brad for keeping the website going and to Brenton for agreeing to take it on.

We have a couple of interesting Family History stories in this Newsletter. One is from Ralph Sinclair. This describes the emigration of Alexander Matheson from Scotland to Australia in 1871. During his life, his name seems to have been spelt Matheson, Mathewson, Matthieson and Mathieson and perhaps other ways not listed in the article. The other story is provided by Lyn Torney and follows on from her story about Donald Munro Matheson published at this time last year. We also have a story about the Skye Flag (didn't you know it had one?).

Congratulations to residents of Victoria, who have successfully shaken off the second wave of Covid-19 and are now able to move about more freely than they have for several months. Our thoughts are also with the residents of the UK who are having to endure levels of Covid-19 infection we are fortunate to have avoided here (so far!).

Colin Matheson (acting Newsletter editor)

MEMBERSHIPS FOR 2020-21 NOW DUE

Please send us your dues now. Do not put this Newsletter aside and tell yourself you will do it later. If you have not done it already, please do it NOW. Annual dues are only \$25 per family—2 adults and children under 18. Direct deposit is the preferred method, but cheques, made out to the Clan Matheson Society, can be sent to the Treasurer, Genevieve Ahearne at PO Box 166 Rye Vic 3941 .

Bank details for online transfer are: Bendigo Bank (Blackburn South Branch) BSB 633 000, Account 145 886 719 Clan Matheson account.

Please use as reference your postcode and as much of your full name as possible to unequivocally identify you—remember many of us have the same surname (some given names too!). Thanks.

CLAN MATHESON

Summary of virtual Annual General Meeting held by Zoom on 23rd August 2020 12:00 pm

Meeting opened at 12:02 with 11 members attending, apologies from Roma Jorgenson and Janet Blainey. Warren introduced Brenton Hayward (IT specialist) to the meeting. Brenton is to take charge of the Clan website. He is a teacher who specialises in IT and websites and already maintains a few community websites free of charge. Brad Matheson has maintained the website for a number of years but has been able to do little except basic updates since his website helper left. The meeting thanked him for this effort and for originating and continuing to carry our Facebook page. Our costs for the website are currently about \$120 p.a., which Brenton advised is 'very good'. Brenton also said the overall functionality of the site was excellent and that he would not recommend much change. He advised that he was prepared to carry out maintenance and updating jobs without charge but that if the website required restructuring not envisaged at this stage he would advise us. The meeting accepted Brenton's kind offer.

The President's report covered activities during the year, including attendance at the Edinburgh Military Tattoo in Sydney and the Daylesford Highland Gathering and our annual Clan picnic in Flagstaff Gardens, Melbourne. It included thanks to the outgoing Committee, in particular Roma Jorgenson who is retiring from her position of Secretary. Roma has been on the Committee for many years even though attending meetings has become very difficult for her.

Our financial position is sound, with a balance up a little to around \$6000. Our main expenses are printing and distributing Newsletters to non-email members, public liability insurance and website costs. The last seems to be set to increase as Brad has borne the cost of domain registration for a number of years and this will not continue. Our Clan merchandise has a value of around \$500 and Euan McGillivray has volunteered to take over its distribution from Roma.

The Meeting elected the following as the new Committee: Colin Matheson (President), Brad Matheson (Secretary), Genevieve Ahearn (Treasurer), Warren Matheson (Vice-President) and Margaret Fleming, Janet Blainey, Mary Molan, Roma Jorgenson, David Mathieson, Ruth Pearce, Euan McGillivray, Rob Mathieson and Helen Mathieson as Committee members.

The next committee meeting was scheduled for 22 November.

Meeting closed at 12:55pm

This is the Zoom website. No need to log in to this, though. To join a meeting you just click on the link in the email I'll send you. If you are asked for the password, it will be in the email from me.

Alexander Matheson...From Dunning to Down Under

By Ralph Sinclair

In 1837 James MacLean Mathewson (1795-1847) and Elizabeth Matheson (nee Imrie, 1814-1876) were married, at Canongate, Edinburgh where James was a shoemaker. Their fourth-born son was Alexander born in Perth in 1846.

The 1851 Census indicates that he was living with his mother and three brothers in Dunning, a small village some 17 kilometres south west of Perth. His father had died in 1847.

The 1861 Census lists an Alexander Matthieson as a Haggman on a farm at Madderty a few miles north of Dunning. This listing is probably Alexander, but some doubt exists as the birth place for this Alexander is Methven, not Perth.

In 1871 the Census lists an Alexander Mathieson, aged 25 and born in Dunning, as a "carter" at 44 Alston Street, a tenement building, in the parish of Barony, Glasgow. In July that year he left Plymouth on the *Colonial Empire* and sailed as an unassisted passenger to Melbourne. The Cyclopaedia of Victoria Vol. III reports that he was involved in road making in the Warrnambool district during the mid 1870's.

In May 1878 at a ceremony in the Warrnambool Church of England, Alexander married Sophia Parsons from Adelaide, and residing at that time in Mortlake. Alexander had already ventured east, initially working on the Melbourne Gippsland Railway, then buying some land and establishing a farm between Warragul and Morwell at Trafalgar, some 200 miles south-west of Melbourne. On the Marriage Certificate his residence is detailed as "Moe, Gippsland" and his occupation "farmer". The Cyclopaedia of Victoria Vol. III described the land purchased as "the scrubbiest and swampiest". Yet over time and through diligence, perseverance and hard work, Alexander developed it into a Model Farm. In 1901 it won second prize in the Leader newspaper's competition for the best managed farming property in the state of Victoria. In 1891 he, along with other local farmers, established the Trafalgar Butter Factory. He was one of its pioneer directors.



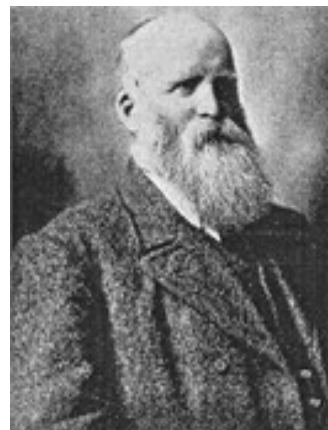
Alexander Matheson and Sophia Parsons

Alexander and Sophia had 10 children, all born in Trafalgar. There were 8 girls and 2 boys. Chronologically they are: Jane 1880, Sophia 1882, Elizabeth 1884, Sarah 1887, Mary 1889, Alexander 1891, Alice 1893, Florence 1895 Annie 1895, and Charles 1898.

Alexander and Sophia stayed on the farm until 1911-12 at which time they retired to suburban Melbourne. Alexander died there in 1931, predeceasing his wife Sophia by three years.

Alexander Matheson's son Charles Cuvet (1898-1955) was a motor mechanic when he enlisted in the Australian Army. He became a "pioneer" aviator after qualifying as a pilot during his war service in Europe. At war's end he was discharged with the rank of Captain and Flight Commander, Australian Flying Corps. After the war he maintained his aviation interests and was associated with Australia's best known airman Charles Kingsford Smith.

Alexander's other son, another Alexander (1891-1970) was, like Charles, initially a motor mechanic. He moved from Trafalgar to Melbourne and was involved in an Auto Grinding business in Carlton, a suburb of Melbourne, as an engineer. His sons Geoffrey Alexander Matheson (1920-1996) and William Douglas Matheson (1921-2009) followed in the family business. His other son Murray (1929-1999) went to England in 1953 and had a career in design.



Alexander Matheson (1846-1931)

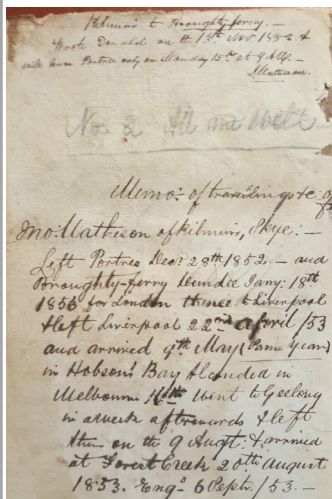


Charles Cuvet Matheson on left

John Matheson – brother of Donald Munro Matheson

By Lyn Torney (nee Hollingsworth)

My last article on Donald Munro Matheson (my 2 x great grandfather) published in the November 2019 Clan Newsletter mentioned his brother John. This article provides a little more information on John, including a correction on how he arrived in Victoria – it was not via California. An entry in the “Matheson” Notebook held by the family has been translated as follows:



Kilmuir to Broughty Ferry

Wrote Donald on the 13th November 1852 and will leave Portree only on Monday 15th at 9 AM *{signed} J Matheson*

Nov 2 All are well

Memo of travellings and expenses of:

John Matheson of Kilmuir, Skye:-

*Left Portree Dec 28th 1852, and arrived Broughty Ferry {suburb} Dundee January 18th 1853 for London thence to Liverpool and left Liverpool 22nd April 1853 and arrived 9th May (same year) ** in Hobson's Bay and landed in Melbourne 16th went to Geelong in a week afterwards and left then on the 9th August and arrived at Forest Creek {Knowsley, home of brother Donald} 20th August 1853. Engaged {employed} – 6 September 1853.*

**** No ship in 1853 could travel from Liverpool to Melbourne in approx. 20 days so there is an error in these dates which makes it difficult to identify which ship John travelled on.**

A trawl through various dates in the ledgers of Donald’s hotel at Knowsley paints a picture of some of the things John purchased on arrival in the colony. It appears John paid for the goods with labour:

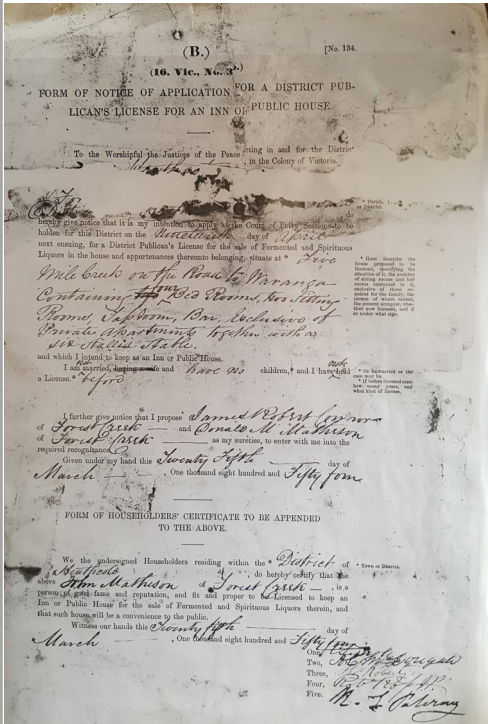
Date	Page	Items	Amount
Nov 5 th 1853	118	2 coats 21/-, 1 hat 12/-, 1 pair boots 30/-, 1 over coat	£ 1-13-0
Nov 26 th 1853	133	3 glasses	4-6
Dec 27 th 1853	157	4 glasses Porter	6-0
Dec 29 th 1853	159	7 glasses	10-6
Feb 11 th 1854	189	1 pair cotton cord trousers	15-0
Mar 11 th 1854	204	3 glasses	4-6
Mar 26 th 1854	215	1 pair Blucher boots and 2 glasses gin (3-0)	£ 1-8-0
Apr 21 st 1854	229	1 pair cotton drawers	
July 3 rd 1854	270	To cash (for horse)	£ 18-0-0
Aug 14 th 1854	282	To cash £ 10, watch £ 2	£ 12-0-0
Feb 26 th 1855	342	1 feed hay (5-0) and cash	£ 4-7-0
May 17 th 1855	373	Cash to Mr John McKay Kilmore, Loan	£ 2-0-0
July 10 th 1855	385	Cash for horse	£ 5-0-0
June 30 th 1855	383	Cash for horse	£ 21-10-0
Aug 9 th 1855	389	Powder flask – shot (8-0) and 3 shirts (15-0)	£ 1-3-0
Dec 28 th 1855	423	Pair socks	2-0
Jan 19 th 1856	430	Ointment for horse	4-0
May 23 rd 1857	507	9 head of cattle	£ 95-0-0

Following in his brother’s footsteps, John prepared an application for a district publican’s license. The copy held by the family is dated 25 March 1854. The description of the location is “Five Mile Creek on the Road to Waranga containing four Bed Rooms, two Sitting Rooms, Tap Room, Bar, Exclusive of Private Apartments together with a six stalled stable.” Sureties were provided by Donald and Donald’s brother-in-law, James Robert Connor.

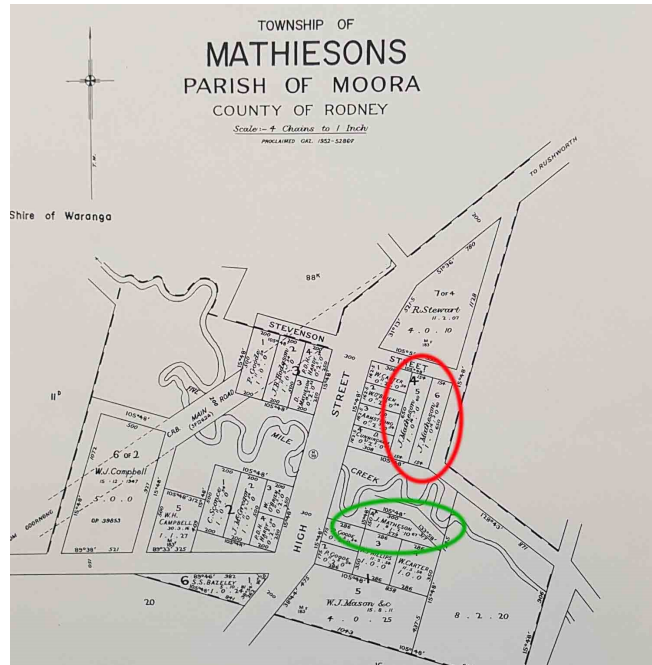
In various documents the hotel’s name is recorded as the Victoria Hotel or the Moora Hotel, but was often just known as Matheson’s.

This picture of the hotel is from Joyce Hammond’s book ‘The Golden Years of Rushworth and Whroo’





Research to identify the site of the hotel concluded that the building work would have commenced on vacant "crown" ground in 1854 prior to the Moora area being surveyed. John formally purchased the blocks, 5 and 6 (red circle on the map below) on 16 March 1860. It is thought the hotel was probably built in the centre of the blocks and faced in a northerly direction towards the High Street.



On a recent visit to the map section of the National Library of Australia, another surprise awaited - the town of Moora, west of Rushworth, in Victoria has at times been known as the "Township of Mathiesons". Although I have no records of John ever spelling his name with an 'i' in it.

John purchased another block (green circle) with creek frontage in 1867. This would be beneficial for the resting of horses as the hotel was a stopping place for mail coaches and other travellers passing through the district. Records over the following years show that John also purchased more town blocks and several other parcels of land in the surrounding area.

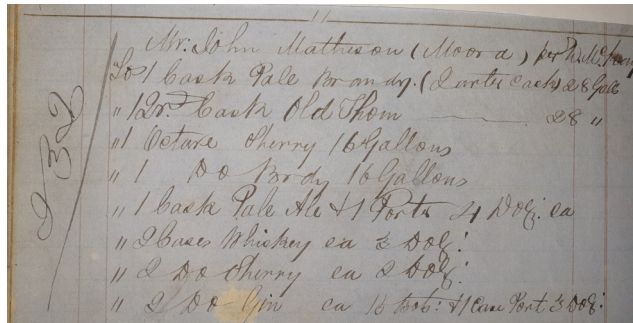
Annual licensing meetings for the district were held in Heathcote. The record of the meeting held on 24 June 1856, as reported in the Bendigo Advertiser of Thursday June 26, 1856 shows that John was successful in gaining a liquor licence.

HEATHCOTE ANNUAL LICENSING MEETING.
 The annual licensing meeting for this district was held to-day, before T. G. Arnold, Esq., S.M., Dr. Carkeet, J.P., and T. W. Manly, Esq., J.P.
 The following were the applicants:—

D. M. Matheson, Matheson's Hotel, Bendigo Road.—Granted.
John Matheson, Victoria Hotel, Moora.—Granted.

What supplies were required by a new hotel in the colonies? The ledgers of Donald's Knowsley Hotel show Donald delivering a grog supply to John in Moora in September 1856:

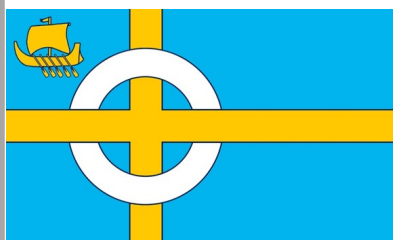
Mr John Matheson (Moora) per W McKay:	
1 Cask Pale Brandy	2 only casks, 28 gallons
12 Casks Old Thom	28 gallons
1 Octave Sherry	16 gallons
1 Octave Brandy	16 gallons
1 Cask Pale Ale & 1 Porter	21 dozen each
2 Cases Whiskey	each 3 dozen
2 Cases Sherry	each 2 dozen
2 Cases Gin	each 15 bottles
1 Case Port	3 dozen



John disposed of the hotel at some time prior to his death in 1897 as it is not recorded in the Probate list of assets. The hotel is no longer in existence, Joyce noting in her book that it is thought part of the hotel may have been dismantled / moved into Rushworth.

Editor's note: I visited the area last year in an attempt to find out why the place seems to have changed its name. It seems the district (parish) was originally named 'Moora' and the township that came later was named 'Mathiesons', and was on maps as recently as the 1990s. The exact reason for the change of the town name remains a mystery.

A new flag for the Isle of Skye



Rob and Helen Mathieson, ever eagle-eyed, noticed that a flag for the Isle of Skye had been revealed at a ceremony at the Nicolson Memorial in Portree (Skye) on Monday, 24th August 2020. Rob's Scottish forbears came from Skye and so he procured a flag and the photos show it flying proudly at Tatura (Vic). As you will see from below, the ship is for MacDonald of Sleat.



While checking to make sure Rob had not made this up, we found there was also an official blazon for Skye and Lochalsh. The description (!) is as follows:

'Per fess in chief per pale Azure and Vert and in base Azure: in chief a pale Or charged of a lymphad, sails furred and oars in action Sable, flagged Gules, all between dexter, a castle triple-towered and embattled Argent masoned Sable, windows and port Gules, and sinister, a boar's head erased holding in its mouth a shank-bone of a deer Argent, and in base a stag's head cabossed Or; overall on a fess wavy Argent a barrulet wavy Azure.
Above the Shield is placed a Coronet appropriate to a statutory District Council, videlicet:- a circlet richly chased from which are issuant eight thistle-heads (three and two halves visible) Or.'

The arms were granted on October 6, 1987.

The arms show a wavy bar, which symbolises the Kyle of Lochalsh, the channel separating Skye from the mainland. The upper part represents Skye, and shows elements of the arms of the three main clans; the silver castle for MacLeod of MacLeod, the ship for Macdonald of Sleat and the boar's head holding a shankbone for Mackinnon.

The lower half represents Lochalsh on the mainland and shows the stag's head from the clan Mackenzie of Kintail.

Notes:

- 1. We have not included a forthcoming events list in this Newsletter because of the uncertainty about when such events may be possible in the future.**
- 2. The February picnic meeting is currently scheduled for 21st February at Flagstaff Gardens, starting at 12:00 noon. We hope Covid-19 restrictions will permit it to take place. I shall contact you by email should this be the case. Keep watching the website (clanmatheson.com.au) for updates.**

Colin Matheson
Acting Newsletter Editor

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