



The Clan Matheson Society Australia Newsletter

From the (acting) Editor....

PLEASE NOTE We plan to hold our November Meeting on Sunday 27th November 2022, via Zoom at 2.00pm. If you would like to join in, please let me know by email if possible (to colin.matheson@gmail.com), so I can send you the link by return email. To attend, just click on the link I send you and follow any prompts that appear. It is possible to attend just by phone if you don't want to Zoom—there will be phone numbers to all on the invitation I send.

Many of you will have watched the funeral of HM Queen Elizabeth II in September and seen the spectacular processions that took place before and after it. I distributed a photo sent to us by our Chief (Sir Alexander Matheson) who took part in the processions as Extra Equerry to Her Majesty. During the procession before the funeral from Buckingham Palace to Westminster Abbey for the lying-in-state he marched at the left corner of the carriage. During the procession from Westminster Abbey after the funeral when the gun carriage was drawn by a contingent of RN sailors he marched on the right hand side of the carriage.

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Sir Alexander's photo of his participation in the procession to the lying-in-state before the funeral.

Sir Alexander marching in the post funeral procession, on left with red and white hat plume.



CLAN MATHESON

Summarised report of the Clan Annual General Meeting held by Zoom on 14 August 2022

Last year was a pretty quiet year in the aftermath of the pandemic. However, the March quarterly meeting (at the Melbourne Highland Games) was the first we had held in person since before the pandemic and the first time we had attended a Highland Gathering (Games) for some time, perhaps as far back as the Bundanoon Games, which were a highlight at the time. It is probably worth saying that attendance at meetings/gets-together is generally not good.

There has been no decision yet about what information to include in the members' area of the website. On the Facebook page there is an article about the origin of Scottish kilts, and a proposed future international gathering (see below).

The Treasurer's report noted that the Clan Society's account bank balance was about \$60 better than at the same time last year.

The following members were elected: Colin Matheson (President), Warren Matheson (Vice President), Mary Molan (Secretary), Genevieve Ahearn (Treasurer) and as Committee members; Janet Blainey, Ruth Pearce, Brad Matheson (Facebook), Euan McGillivray (merchandise), Miriam Rimmer, David Mathieson, Roma Jorgenson, Rob Mathieson, Helen Mathieson (Facebook)

It was agreed that the Annual Dues be reinstated at \$25 pa as the Clan Society still needs to cover its costs including insurance and website administration.

Discussion about when to hold next meeting, and about whether to hold it face-to-face or via Zoom. The date Sunday 27 November 2022 was agreed on by all, as was that the meeting should be held via Zoom. However, those present agreed we should try to hold our 'normal' February picnic as a face-to-face picnic 'meeting' next February. This will be discussed at the 27 November meeting. **Please add this meeting date to your diaries: 2.00pm, Sunday 27 November 2022.**

The Chief proposes to have an International Clan Matheson Gathering in Scotland in 2024, most likely to coincide with the Attadale Highland Games in July as has been done before. He is most keen for Australians and New Zealanders to attend also as we have done before. This is a great opportunity to visit Scotland, in particular your ancestral places in Scotland and meet other Mathesons from all over the world. Euan noted the Clan McGillivray is currently arranging an international gathering, to be held in Inverness in July 2023.

Colin Matheson

My University Graduation

by
Jeff Freeman

In July 2017, I commenced my 'mid-life' crisis with tertiary studies at The University of Newcastle in the bridging course 'Open Foundation'. On successful complete and accepted internal application for undergraduate studies, I continued with the 'mid-life' crisis and commenced my undergraduate studies in a Bachelor of Arts history major degree. I am the first of my immediate family to attend and graduate university, and the second grandchild of the extended family to attend university.

After four years of tertiary education, the day of graduation finally arrived on Wednesday 2nd February after cancellations and rescheduling.

Though my degree is a major in history, my special areas of historical interest are in Australian military and war history; local history of the NSW Central Coast region; with additional interests in heraldry and genealogy - including Clan Matheson.

In line with my historical interests, I commenced as a volunteer with the Anzac Memorial, Hyde Park in Sydney 3½ years ago, in its Ambassador program. I continued with this throughout my time of tertiary education, even though it was interrupted with covid lockdowns and restrictions, forcing a year away from the memorial.

In 1905, George Santayana remarked; *"Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."* His words were paraphrased by Winston Churchill in a speech to the House of Commons in 1948, even after two world wars. It's interesting how George Santayana's words about remembering the past seem so relevant in today's environment of tensions and division around the world. No doubt as a newly graduated historian, I and my fellow historians will debate and write about the relevance of George Santayana's words to current events in the 2020s. Historians are important on so many levels, not just to remind society of the past as George Santayana did in 1905, but to remind society that without the past, you cannot have a present nor a future.

As to my next move; I was to start post-graduate studies in August last year, but deferred until August this year with the impacts of covid. The aim, at least as I write this, is to start those post-graduate studies, unless what is in stall for my future changes between now and then.



Jeff at his graduation. Congratulations, Jeff, and good luck with future studies (A/Ed)

Kilt to give away

Roma has a size 18 kilt she would like to give away to a good home. She notes that it is made of light-weight material. It is a Stewart of Atholl tartan.



The Stewarts came to the British Isles originally with William the Conqueror in 1066 and are probably of Breton origin. Their earliest ancestor was Alan FitzFlaad whose son William FitzAlan was given lands in England and his descendants became Earls of Arundel. Another son, Walter, went to Scotland and became Steward in the household of the Scottish King David I responsible for the King's revenues. The role became hereditary and evolved into the family's surname. Robert the Bruce's daughter married a Stewart and their son became King David II of Scotland. Hence the 'Royal Stewarts'.

The Stewarts also became Earls of Atholl (in Perthshire) in 1457 although the title passed to the Murrays in the seventeenth century through marriage. The Dukedom of Atholl was created in 1703 to the Murrays. The Atholl brigade, largely from the Blair Castle estates in Perthshire was largely destroyed at the Battle of Culloden in 1746.

The spelling Stuart arose during the time of Mary Queen of Scots because she was brought up in France and there was no 'W' in French then.

I thought that the proper place for such a magnificent garment was with someone entitled to wear it and so I wrote to the Stewarts via their webpage, but have not received a reply. If you would like it please let me know (A/Ed).

Vale Ian Hollingsworth (1931-2022)

By Lyn Torney

We are sad to report the death of a Matheson descendant – Ian Hollingsworth, my father, passed away in August aged 90. His grandmother was Mary Ann Hollingsworth nee Matheson and his great grandfather Donald Munro Matheson. He was born in Heathcote, Victoria and he lived his whole life on the family farm at Derrinal, working the farm and running a livestock transport business. In the local community he was a font of knowledge on the history of the district and he served as President of the Heathcote Historical Society for many years. He became a family history enthusiast after his interest was sparked during trips to the UK, the first in 1995. On one of his trips he travelled to Scotland to visit the Isle of Skye (home to the family Matheson branch) and attended the annual Edinburgh Military Tattoo – also a must to watch the broadcasts on the ABC.

He was the driver behind the preparation of the 2019 articles in the Clan Matheson Newsletter on Mary Ann Hollingsworth nee Matheson (his grandmother) and Donald Munro Matheson (his great grandfather). He was most delighted earlier this year when a descendant of John Matheson (Donald's brother) made contact with me after reading the articles in the Newsletter. He was hoping to meet others in the family but alas that is now up to the rest of us.



Dad in his Scottish beanie

Kay's Story

By

Colin Matheson

Some of you might have seen the TV documentary on the ABC called "Stuff the British stole" anchored by Marc Fennell. A recent episode featured the removal of the "Stone of Destiny", also known as the "Stone of Scone" from Westminster Abbey by four Scottish students on Christmas Day 1950. The last of those four students, Ian Hamilton, died last month in Scotland aged 96. Another of those students was Kay Matheson, who died in 2013 and is clearly someone we, as Mathesons, should remember.

The Stone of Destiny was used by the Scottish kingdom as a symbol during their coronation ceremonies until it was removed by the forces of the English King Edward I in 1296. Although it was agreed in 1398, by the Treaty of Northampton between England and Scotland, that it would be returned to Scotland, this never happened and it remained in England. When James VI of Scotland succeeded Elizabeth I in 1603 as monarch (James I) of England, he was crowned at Westminster sitting directly on the Stone of Destiny set in the Coronation Chair. This continued until the 17th century when a wooden platform was added to the Coronation Chair and monarchs sat on that instead.



Kay Matheson, 2nd from left.



The Stone of Destiny



The Stone was returned to Scotland in 1996

In late 1950, four students at the University of Glasgow got together and planned to "liberate" the Stone of Destiny from England and return it to Scotland. They were all Scottish Nationalists and felt that the identity of Scotland was becoming lost in the aftermath of World War 2; indeed, it had been referred to as "North Britain" in many quarters since the 17th and 18th centuries. They felt that some grand gesture was needed to help Scotland find its identity – what better than rescuing the Stone of Destiny? The four students did succeed in removing the stone from Westminster Abbey, but it broke into two pieces during the process. Although not originally planned that way, Kay Matheson's job was to drive away one of the two cars involved, containing the smaller of the two pieces. The whole enterprise is described by Ian Hamilton in his book (*The Stone of Destiny* – also made into a film), where it all reads rather like a great student prank. So many opportunities for things to go awry occurred that it is surprising they succeeded. He recounts that Kay Matheson drove off with the smaller piece of the Stone in the boot of her car, but, having stopped at the next set of traffic lights, the boot opened and the Stone piece weighing about 50kg fell out onto the road as

Kay's Story continued...

she accelerated away. She somehow managed to get it back in and was able to take it to a safe place in Birmingham from where it was retrieved later and taken to Scotland. The larger piece was buried in a field in Kent for temporary safekeeping. The two pieces of the Stone were reunited, mended and eventually returned by being left, draped in a Saltire flag, at Arbroath a couple of months later in 1951. From there it was whisked unceremoniously back to London. None of the people involved were prosecuted and Ian Hamilton even became a QC later.



Kay, proudly wearing Matheson hunting tartan (ancient colours), at the ceremonial return of the Stone to Scotland in 1996



Three of the 'vandals' who took the Stone: Gavin Vernon, Kay Matheson and Ian Hamilton

Kay Matheson's family had been cleared from the Scottish Highlands to the coast and settled on the southern side of Loch Ewe. She was born there and made a life as a schoolteacher locally, making a couple of unsuccessful forays into political elections. She attended the return (on loan) of the Stone to Edinburgh in 1996, where it remains, on the understanding that it may be used in future coronations (watch this space). The story of her Police interrogation is given in a video posted on the Gairloch Heritage Museum website (largely in Gaelic with subtitles, but well worth watching).

The book 'The Stone of Destiny' was originally written soon after the events as 'The Taking of The Stone of Destiny' and revised with later thoughts in 2007. In the new edition, Hamilton writes very warmly of Kay's part in the events and how her demeanour was vital to its success. Because of all the unexpected and unplanned variations to the plan, most of the decision-making was ad hoc and reactive to potential disaster. Where Ian and his mates left behind with the larger piece of the Stone had each other to consult, after she drove off with the smaller part in the boot of her car, Kay had to do all this and face every challenge on her own—and succeeded magnificently. The book concentrates on the larger piece of the Stone and how it got from Westminster to Scotland; Kay's vital part with the smaller piece does not receive enough attention, in my opinion.

Many others than these four had a hand in the events after the Stone returned to Scotland before its 'return' via the altar at Arbroath; from the mason who repaired it to those who looked after it while it was hidden. Ian Hamilton says he never saw her again after the tumultuous events of 1951. She became a teacher of domestic science, Gaelic and other things in local schools around Gairloch but never married. She died in Aultbea in 2013.



Clan Matheson Merchandise 2021



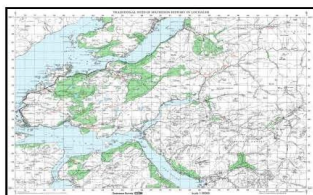
Ladies Polo Shirt
 Sizes 12, 14, 16
 White, beige \$25



Men's Polo Shirt
 Sizes M – XXXL
 Navy, Maroon \$25



Caps Black, Sand \$15 One Size Fits All - Knitted Beanie Navy, Black \$15 One Size Fits All
 Bucket Hats, Sand \$15 Sizes S/M or L/XL - Polar Fleece Beanie Navy, Black \$15 One Size Fits All



Maps of Matheson sites-
 Based on Ordnance Survey
 With place-names booklet
 Small \$5 Laminated \$15
 Large \$10 Laminated \$20



Sew on Clan Crest
 Patches, Blue, Green
 \$5 each



BBQ Apron
 Black /green \$25



Mugs, white, \$10 each
 Drink Bottle, white, \$5
 Stubby Holder, Black, \$5

 To order:
 Contact Euan McGillivray
euanmcgillivray51@gmail.com
 0438 133770

 Postage not included



Clan Matheson Society Australian Branch Office Bearers

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