



An Círean Ceann Cinnish

## The Clan Matheson Society Australia Newsletter

### Clan Matheson Annual General Meeting 20<sup>th</sup> August 2023

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This year's AGM is to be held at the Mail Exchange Hotel, located on the corner of Spencer St and Bourke St Melbourne. We plan to start at 12:00 noon with lunch (own expense) and then begin the meeting at around 1:15pm when things are a little quieter. Margaret Fleming goes there frequently and kindly made the booking for us. The Hotel is located opposite Southern Cross Station and should be quite convenient for members to get there, even on a Sunday. We shall take Office nominations from the floor and will discuss finances as well as Newsletter articles, Gathering attendance (local and International) and merchandise etc.

Do come along and have your say. Membership dues are payable immediately after the AGM (\$25 to Bendigo Bank, BSB 633000, a/c 145886719 and send email to the Treasurer to inform her – email on page 11)

### International Clan Matheson Gathering, Scotland 2024



*Eilean Donan Castle, Skye and the Cuillins in the far distance (eileandonan.wordpress.com)*

International Clan Gathering July 2024...

The next International Clan Matheson Gathering is to be held in Scotland between July 20th and 23rd in Lochalsh and Skye. As you will appreciate, there are some formidable arrangements to be made by the organisers to ensure the event runs smoothly and is enjoyable by all (including the organisers). These arrangements will require that the organisers have a good idea about numbers of Clan members likely to attend. There are to be visits to sites of Clan significance in the Lochalsh region as well as attendance at the Lochcarron Highland Games to be held at Attadale on the eastern shores of Loch Carron. The Attadale Estate was historically part of the Matheson lands that extended west to Skye. It was sold in the early 19th century by John Matheson who had become bankrupt, but was bought back later in the 19th century by Sir Alexander Matheson who had made his fortune trading partly in opium between India and China. He died without issue and the property passed out of Matheson hands then. The Games these days are great fun and well worth attending – as a Clan, we have paraded during the Games when our Gatherings have been in Scotland.

If you would like to come to the Gathering, PLEASE LET ME KNOW. My email address is on the last page of this Newsletter. One of my duties as Chief’s Lieutenant is to tell the Chief how many are coming from Australia.



*Clan members at the Lochcarron Games, Attadale in 1998. Note the late Chief, Sir Fergus Matheson (centre).*

*Clan members at Loch Achaidh-na-h-inich, the traditional place where Clan Matheson gathered before going on a raid. Taken in 1998.*



International Clan Gathering July 2024...

The Chief, Sir Alexander Matheson, has sent the following information about the Gathering. I have added photos (A/Ed)

“The Gathering will take place 20-23 July 2024 inclusive – 20-21 in Lochalsh, 22-23 on the Isle of Skye. The outline plan at this stage is:

Sat 20 July	Lochcarron Games at Attadale all day (for planning purposes, aim to arrive at 11.00am)
	Supper under own arrangements
Sun 21 July	Church service (a shorter one than in 2014!)
	Visit local sites of clan interest, all TBC, bring own picnic lunch
	late afternoon, move to Portree area.
	Clan Council (Chief’s Lieutenants, UK Branch Secretary) in Portree
	Supper under own arrangements
Mon 22 July	Clan Parliament in Portree Gathering Hall
	Organised visits to places of interest on Skye, bring own picnic lunch
	Clan cocktail party in Portree Gathering Hall 6.00 – 8.00pm (drinks & canapés)
Tue 23 July	Organised visits to places of interest on Skye, bring own picnic lunch
	Late afternoon, Gathering ends



*Abigail Butler and Margaret Fleming at the Clan Matheson tent, Holyrood Palace grounds 2009. Margaret is wearing the Australian Tartan, Abigail is wearing the Matheson hunting tartan.*

### International Clan Gathering July 2024...

#### **Cost.**

I shall be trying to keep the costs down wherever possible. Clan Society members should organise their own accommodation and transport, sharing as desired. I want to avoid hiring coaches.

#### **Numbers.**

I will ask branches for expressions of interest in December 2023, firmer numbers in February 2024, and final numbers in approx April 2024 to enable me to conduct planning, especially for catering. Please will Clan Society members keep their Chief's Lieutenants informed of their intentions.

#### **Accommodation.**

Book early! Short-let rentals often get booked up quickly for the high season (May-August). NB tough new Scottish Government legislation for the owners of short-let rentals comes into force on 1 October 2023, which *may* lead to fewer rental properties being available, so I recommend that you get organised sooner rather than later and, for peace of mind, before the end of 2023. Possible web-sites include:

Airbnb <https://www.airbnb.co.uk>

VRBO <https://www.vrbo.com>

Islands & Highlands Cottages, Portree, Isle of Skye IV51 9ER. +44 1478 612123 / 312123.

<https://www.ihcottages.com>

Or you might want to go to a hotel. Worth looking at <https://www.booking.com> or similar.

If you are wondering whether or not to find different accommodation for the Lochalsh and Skye phases, my recommendation is that you should. The car journey (there is no rail link) between the Kyle of Lochalsh and Portree is approx 1 hour. While this journey is certainly feasible, you may not wish to do it 4 times in 2 days, and anyway Portree itself is most picturesque and enjoyable.



*Our member Rob Mathieson on the crags behind Duncraig. Plockton and its harbour in the rainy distance, Loch Carron and the Applecross Peninsula behind*

*Our Chief playing his pipes on the crags above Duncraig Castle. Lochan Dubha and Loch Nan Gillean behind.*



## International Clan Gathering July 2024...



*Painting of Plockton by J Campbell Kerr from the cover of "The People's Friend" of July 8 2000. Thanks to Ruth Pearce.*

**Getting to Lochalsh and Isle of Skye.**

**Air.** The closest airport is Inverness, from which you can either get a bus/train into Inverness if you want to use the Inverness-Kyle of Lochalsh railway, or hire a car and drive to Kyle. There are more air connections to Glasgow, the next nearest airport, but it is a longer road journey from there to Kyle.

**Car Hire.** It is easy to hire from Inverness airport (Dalcross) or Inverness railway station, but you might also be lucky with:

Stephen Morrison in Portree (07810 560977, 01478 612688, <https://www.morrisoncarhire.co.uk> ).

Kyle Taxis (01599 534323, <http://www.lochalsh.net/taxi/>).

**Rail.** The quickest rail journey would be to get a train to Inverness (main line service from anywhere in the UK). From Inverness you could either change to the Kyle of Lochalsh line (a famous scenic journey and one to be savoured) or hire a car (approx 2¾ hours). Or you could travel to Glasgow which has more travel links from the rest of the UK, but it is a longer car journey from Glasgow to Kyle (approx 4 hrs).

If you have time to spend in Inverness railway station, keep an eye out for the memorial tablet on a wall, which names the Directors of the railway company which pushed the line through in the late C19<sup>th</sup> (chairman Sir Alexander Matheson) and for photographs in the waiting room of Duncraig station in the 1900s.

**Buses.**

[https://www.lochalsh.com/bus\\_services\\_in\\_skye\\_and\\_lochalsh.html](https://www.lochalsh.com/bus_services_in_skye_and_lochalsh.html)

<https://bustimes.org/localities/kyle-of-lochalsh>

<https://www.geopunk.co.uk/locality/ES002246>



*Kyleakin (Skye), Loch Alsh and the Skye bridge (right) taken 2004.*

International Clan Gathering July 2024...

### **Lochcarron Games, Attadale.**

This will be the first day of our Gathering. The organisers have not yet held their first meeting (the 2023 Games were only a few days ago), but we hope to have our own tent as a focal point, and to march on as a clan behind a pipe band at the start, for which we need to arrive punctually. For planning purposes, arrive no later than 11.00am, clan photos 11.00-11.25am, the march steps off at 11.30am (all timings TBC).



*Mathesons at the Lochcarron Games 2004. Note Einar Matheson in his kilt (centre). The Hill race in which some Mathesons performed so well climbed one of the hills behind!*

Share cars wherever possible to keep delays to a minimum.

NB that Attadale is a halt on the Inverness – Kyle railway line. The park where the Games are held is a short walk from the halt.

The entry fee in 2023 was £10 a head for adults and free for children. This may be reviewed for 2024.

At our last attendance at the Games, Clan Matheson acquitted itself remarkably well in the Hill Race and other athletic events, so please encourage those who would like to take part. See <https://www.lohcarrongames.org.uk> for information as it comes out.

There will probably be a number of stalls selling clan merchandise. Beware of any who sell unapproved items (last time there were several, eg wrong motto on clan badges, ill-designed clan badges, spelling mistakes etc). Lochcarron Weavers will almost certainly have a stand and they are trustworthy. We hope to arrive at an arrangement whereby those clan members who order items (a number of days) before the Games will benefit from a discount, and the items will be brought to the Games for you to collect. More news of this will be coming out over the coming months. See <https://www.lohcarron.co.uk/visit-us/lochcarron-visitor-centre/weavers-shop>

NB Dress to keep the weather and midges out! Food is available from stalls all day.

International Clan Gathering July 2024...

### **Transfer from Lochalsh to Portree at the end of Day 2.**

35 miles by road; the journey normally takes 50-60 minutes.

Skye is joined to the mainland at Kyle by a major road bridge – no toll to pay and no ferry required.

The railway terminus is at Kyle; there is no rail link to Portree.

There is a bus service (see link above).



*Portree (Skye) harbour with the Cuillin mountains in the background—photographed in 1998*

### **Clan merchandise.**

The UK Branch is presently considering items of clan merchandise for sale to members attending. It is likely that pre-orders will be taken during the months to come, so that members can collect on arrival.

### **Weather.**

Fine weather is not an everyday occurrence on the west coast of Scotland. Most important to plan on wet weather, have rainproof clothing and be pleasantly surprised if the sun shines. Work on the old saying “There is no such thing as bad weather, only inadequate clothing”. Midges can be a nuisance; you should consider insect repellent and perhaps a midge net to cover your head and hat down to neck level; if you don’t have to use the net, consider it a bonus!

### **Other activities.**

If you want to spend more time in the area before or after the Gathering, here are some ideas for visits:

The Outer Hebrides, especially Lewis (Stornoway Castle built by Sir James Matheson) and Harris.

The west coast railway from Kyle to Inverness, 4 trains per day, >2.5 hours journey time. <https://www.scotrail.co.uk/train-times/inverness-to-kyle-lochalsh>

Lochalsh:

Eilean Donan Castle <https://www.eileandonancastle.com>

Isle of Skye:

Kinloch Lodge Hotel <https://kinloch-lodge.co.uk>

Three Chimneys Hotel <https://threechimneys.co.uk>

Talisker Distillery <https://www.malts.com/en-gb/distilleries/talisker>

Skye Weavers <https://www.skyeweavers.co.uk>

Oyster Shed <https://www.theoysterman.co.uk>

Dunvegancastle <https://www.dunvegancastle.com>

And further afield don't forget:

- Fri 26 Jul – Sun 11 Aug, Olympic Games in Paris.
- Sat 3 – Mon 26 Aug, Edinburgh Tattoo.”

International Clan Gathering July 2024...

Places and things to see around Lochalsh and Skye...



*The Cuillins taken from the Sligachan Hotel Skye in 2004*

*Mathesons Shoe shop,  
Portree, Skye. Taken in 2001.*



*The Quiraing, Skye. (ITV.com)  
You can walk to this spot*

*Dunvegan Castle, domain of  
the MacLeods.  
(Dunvegancastle.com)*





International Clan Gathering July 2024...



*Museum of Island Life, Skye, taken in 2001*



*Sgurr Alastair (Cuillin mountains) and Coire Lagan near Glen Brittle, Skye. Taken 2004.*



*Talisker Distillery, Skye. With the snowy Cuillin mountains behind. (scotchmaltwhisky.co.uk)*

## **Clan Matheson Society Australia Meeting**

**Radisson Hotel, Melbourne, Victoria, Sunday 21 May 2023**

Previous meeting minutes (19 February 2023) were accepted by all present.

Warren reported that he has presented a bottle of Glenmorangie to our website co-ordinator, Brenton Hayward, as requested.

Warren, Euan, Margaret, Colin and Mary all attended the Melbourne Highland Games on 26 March, and had interest from several new people at the Games. None of these have paid membership fees as yet. Several items of merchandise were sold on the day. Our thanks to those travelling long distances to attend, and to transport the Clan paraphernalia in the Clan trailer, enabling the Clan Matheson tent to be set up.

Colin spoke of some enquiries he had received via our website, including one enquiry about septs. He spoke about the late Chief's view about what septs were accepted by Clan Matheson, and noted he has asked our current Chief, Sir Alexander, for assistance. Different Clan Matheson Society sites around the world have different lists of Clan Matheson's septs.

Colin urged all present, and any other members reading these minutes, to consider contributing to the newsletter.

Finances: Colin noted we have a balance of \$6,823.25 in our account and are in a healthy financial position.

Brad proudly announced the arrival of his new granddaughter, Daphne June in March this year. He will provide more information, photo for the newsletter.

Brad has been researching information about Alexander Percival Matheson, one of Australia's founding fathers. He will provide an article about this for a future newsletter.

Brad spoke about the possibility of erecting a monument to Mathesons who fought, on either side, at Culloden. He would like this discussed at the next Clan Parliament. Brad mentioned the Monuments Authority could be approached for funding. He is thinking of a stone monument with a plaque on it. He will make enquiries about regulatory issues involved.

Some discussion about where to hold next meeting (AGM) in August

Coming meetings:

Sunday 20 August 2023 AGM – venue, date TBC

Meeting closed: 2.30pm

Action items:

**Brad** to investigate Facebook information appearing, then disappearing off the site.

**Brad** to provide information, photo of his new granddaughter for the newsletter.

**Brad** to provide information about his research into Alexander Percival Matheson for a future newsletter.

**Brad** to enquire about regulatory issues, other issues involved in possible erection of a monument to Mathesons at Culloden.

**Colin** to investigate possible venues for next meeting (AGM) on 20 August.



## Clan Matheson Merchandise 2023



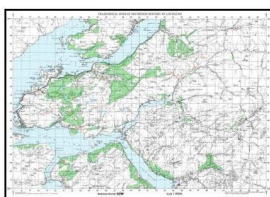
Ladies Polo Shirt  
 Sizes 12, 14, 16  
 White, beige \$25



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](mailto:euanmcgillivray51@gmail.com)  
 0438 133770

Postage not included



### ***Clan Matheson Society Australian Branch Office Bearers***

Chief's Lieutenant	Dr Colin Matheson	<a href="mailto:colin.matheson@gmail.com">colin.matheson@gmail.com</a>
President:	Dr Colin Matheson	<a href="mailto:colin.matheson@gmail.com">colin.matheson@gmail.com</a>
Vice-President:	Warren Matheson	<a href="mailto:warrenmatheson@bigpond.com">warrenmatheson@bigpond.com</a>
Secretary:	Mary Molan	<a href="mailto:mary.molan@gmail.com">mary.molan@gmail.com</a>
Facebook:	Brad Matheson	<a href="mailto:brad@domaincapital.au">brad@domaincapital.au</a>
Treasurer:	Genevieve Ahearne	<a href="mailto:rillwater@gmail.com">rillwater@gmail.com</a>
Piper:	Warren Matheson	<a href="mailto:warrenmatheson@bigpond.com">warrenmatheson@bigpond.com</a>
Genealogist: (acting)	Dr Colin Matheson	<a href="mailto:colin.matheson@gmail.com">colin.matheson@gmail.com</a>
Newsletter: (acting)	Dr Colin Matheson	<a href="mailto:colin.matheson@gmail.com">colin.matheson@gmail.com</a>
Website:	Brenton Hayward	<a href="mailto:t1blhayward@outlook.com">t1blhayward@outlook.com</a>