



The Clan Matheson Society Australia Newsletter

Clan Matheson Annual Picnic

Flagstaff Gardens , Melbourne

From 12:00 noon Sunday 19 February 2023

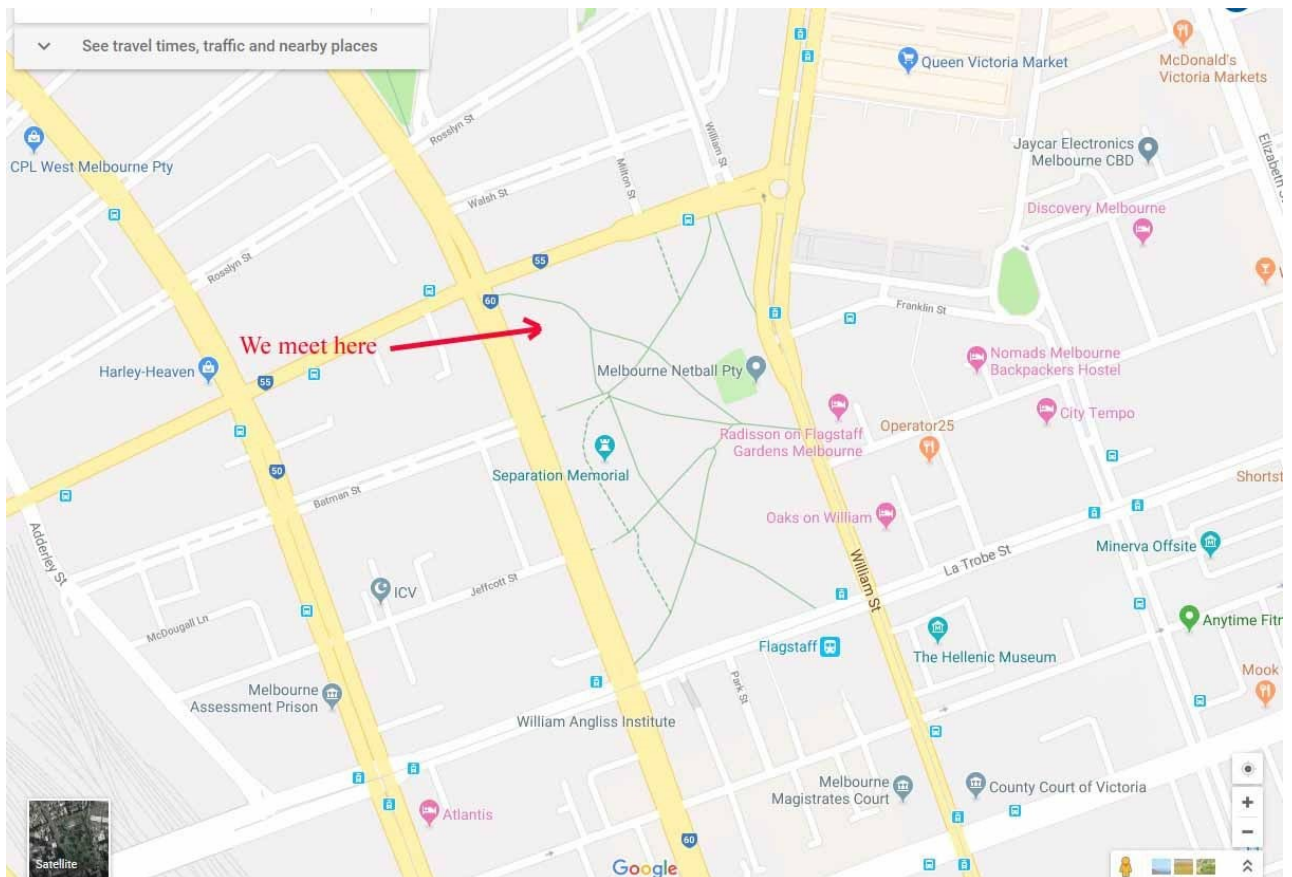


First time for two years!

Most years we hold an Annual picnic (bring your own) in Flagstaff Gardens and meet together under a Eucalypt tree in the northwest corner of the Gardens (see map below). **Do come and meet** other members of the Clan and exchange gossip, food, drink, news etc. (not necessarily in that order). Warren usually brings his pipes and plays a little for us. **Wear tartan** if you have some (perhaps a kilt; I hope I can fit into mine—A/Ed), a **Clan badge**, a sash or whatever else you like. We were forced to cancel this event for the last two years due to Covid-19, but we think it is safe to hold it now. The event is outside and you can wear a mask if you wish.

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CLAN MATHESON

Summarised report of the Clan Meeting held by Zoom on 27 November 2022

There was discussion at our July meeting about whether to re-introduce subscription payments; at AGM in August this was decided – subscriptions were re-introduced. Colin noted he had a list of 10 people who had paid their subscriptions before the last newsletter went out, and another 7 people since then (the newsletter accompanying email urged those who had not done so to pay their subscriptions). We were in a relatively healthy position because of recent subscription income. Payments have been made to Dept of Consumer Affairs Vic, and to Brenton Hayward for work on our website. Current bank balance = \$6,928, up from \$6,708.14 at end of 2021/22 financial year.

We found out about a new website-naming suffix: “.au”, which did not need to use “.org” or “.net” as well as “.au”. Our Website Manager (Brenton) has secured the name www.clanmatheson.au, at a cost of \$80, for the Clan Society.

The Chief has asked us about possible numbers to attend the proposed international gathering in Scotland in 2024 – At this stage, Warren, Rob and Helen, Janet, Margaret, Euan, Colin and Mary are all interested. Euan noted his Clan McGillivray gathering is also to be held 17 – 20 July 2024, to coincide with Inverness Highland Games in Scotland.

There was discussion about whether we should try to hold our ‘usual’ February picnic at Flagstaff Gardens this coming February 2023, as we had not had a face-to-face gathering for some time, due mainly to Covid-19. Flagstaff Gardens are easily accessible in the centre of town, and there is easy parking on weekends. Although the Melbourne Highland Games are to be held on 26 March 2023, Croydon is a more difficult venue to access so it was decided to hold the picnic at Flagstaff Gardens on Sunday 19 February 2023, a week earlier than our usual February meeting, to make it easier for us also to attend the Melbourne Highland Games on 26 March 2023.

Colin mentioned some coming events, including: St Andrews Day Ceilidh 1 Dec 2022, Daylesford Games 5 Dec 2022, Hallam Tattoo 10 Dec 2022, Hogmanay 31 Dec 2022, Maryborough Games 1 Jan 2023, Burns Night 25 Jan 2023, (our) Clan Matheson picnic 19 Feb 2023, Celtic Festival 17 March 2023, Melbourne Highland Games 26 March 2023, Bundanoon 1 April 2023.

Colin spoke about “The 1819 Key Pattern Book – One Hundred Original Tartans” book by Peter MacDonald, in which information about very early tartans is published as threadcounts, i.e. headings then colours. Is there a weaver who could decipher the information—Euan knows of one in Tasmania.

Next meeting: Sunday 19 February 2023 Picnic at Flagstaff Gardens, Melbourne, 12.00 noon
BYO picnic, rug, chairs

Coming meeting: Sunday 21 May 2023 May Muster, potentially face-to-face – to be confirmed.

Picnics past

We have been holding picnics at Flagstaff Gardens in Melbourne since the early days of the Society. Here are some pictures from times past (please note that some pictured members are now deceased)



Lance, Society founder Ron, and Ella Matheson



Picnic group 2002



Gerald Matheson (L) and son Warren (R) 2002



Gerald, Ron, Colin and Warren Matheson 2002



Group portrait 2003



Warren (L) and Gerald Matheson 2003

... Picnics past...



Group Portrait 2004



Group at Picnic 2005



Group Portrait 2006 (note different tree!)



Group 2012



Audrey Matheson and Janet Blainey (rear) 2012



Colin Matheson, Abigail Butler and Warren Matheson 2016

Voyage of the SS Atrato from Plymouth to Victoria 1873

Material from Roma Jorgenson

This family history is a little different from others we have published because it relates to the non-Matheson part of Roma Jorgenson's family. We all have non-Matheson parts of our family trees but the Clan Matheson Society naturally concentrates on the Matheson part. We publish this side of Roma's family because of the interesting voyage one of her ancestors made to Australia on board the SS Atrato. We hope those of us whose ancestors travelled in early steamships or sailing ships might be interested in what these voyages were like. We had an earlier one from Brad Matheson about the plague-ship Ticonderoga, which had a horrific journey in 1852. This is less horrific, but it shows the frailty of these ships compared with modern travel.

Roma's great grandmother Hulda Amelia Erikson was born in Gothenberg, Sweden in 1847. She and two brothers emigrated to Australia in 1873 on board the SS Atrato. Amelia is listed as H Emilie Erikson on the passenger lists for the Atrato, a single female foreigner of 26 years and accompanied by her two younger brothers Hans Albert (aged 24) and John E. (aged 22). She married Nickolas Herman Larson at St James' Church Melbourne on 24 April 1874, a day which was described as a fine Saturday with a southerly wind (the things we record!).

Amelia's marriage to Nickolas Larson produced three children, Hanna Emilia Larson (b 1875), Charles Herman Larson (b 1877) and Albert Herman Larson (1879). Hanna Larson married Henry William Howlett in 1903 and their daughter Florence Howlett married Murdoch Matheson in 1935. Roma Jorgenson (née Matheson) herself was born to Florence and Murdoch Matheson in 1939.

The Atrato was built in 1853 for the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company at the Caird and Co shipyard, Greenock, Scotland. The RMSP was a shipping line aimed at running tours and mail to the Caribbean and South America and its ships were designated RMS (Royal Mail Ship). Before the Atrato was built, RMSP had trouble with wooden-hulled ships that caught fire and sank, so they specified her to be steel-hulled. She was designed to be a sailing ship in which paddle-wheels were added for flexibility and increased speed of about 10 kts. She was used successfully on runs to the Caribbean and South America.



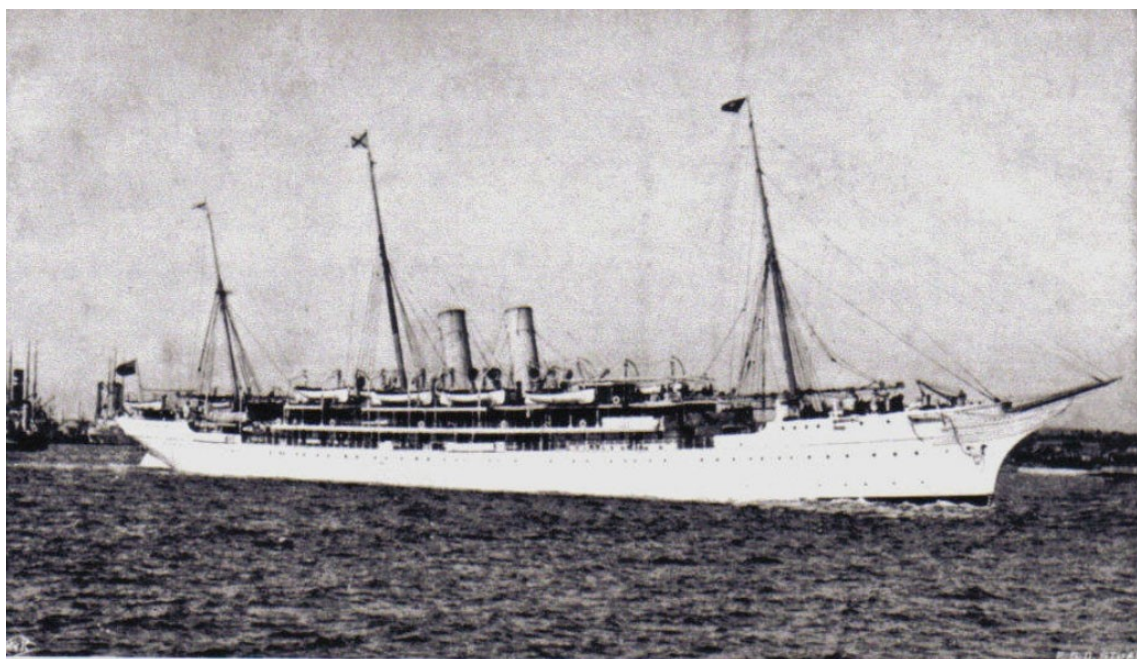
RMS Atrato was originally rigged as a barquentine with auxiliary steam-powered paddle wheels.

Voyage of the Atrato continued...

She became outdated for the Caribbean and South American market by 1869 and was sold, losing her RMS prefix and became the SS Atrato. She was re-engined and fitted with a screw rather than the less-efficient paddles and her first voyage in her new form was to Port Phillip in 1873. There was great interest in reducing the transit time for travelling between Britain and Australia. Before the advent of steam, the fastest ships on the run were clipper ships; the Cutty Sark achieved 72 days from Plymouth to Sydney and the Thermopylae achieved 61 days from London to Melbourne in 1868. It was thought that putting an auxiliary engine in the clipper ships would make them faster, but the vast quantities of coal required to run the steam engines at that time meant less space for cargo or passengers.

The Atrato was described in Melbourne newspapers of the time as having beautiful lines and imposing appearance, well-adapted for speed. She was rigged as a barque (three masts) and fitted with a new type of steam engine; a two-cylinder compound engine fed by three double-ended boilers. Her screw had blades 11ft (3.3m) in length driven by a shaft from the engine room, itself nearly 20m long. She seems to have been regarded as pretty luxurious for her time, with a saloon capable of seating 100 passengers at half-a-dozen tables.

The SS Atrato left Plymouth in September 1872 but was barely into the voyage when, off the SW coast of Cornwall, she lost the blades of her propeller and had to put back to Plymouth for repairs. She left Plymouth again on 1st October and ...



R.M.S. Atrato. J.H. chief of her firm. July 1902 - July 1903

“All went well until the sixth day (Sunday), when off Madeira; the weather was fine, and the Atrato was steaming at half speed, with some sail set, when, shortly before two o'clock in the afternoon, an appalling crash and a tremendous shaking from stern to stern threw all on board ship into a consternation.”...” The chief engineer was on the bridge with the captain, and he at once rushed to the engine-room, when the truth was discovered that the propeller shaft had broken, and the engines, which were 400-horse power, freed from the strain of the screw, were working at the top of their speed. Added to this, the lead shaft, acted upon by the propeller, threatened to

Voyage of the Atrato continued...

seriously injure the vessel's bottom. After great difficulty arrangements were made to return to Plymouth under sail; and on the night of the 20th, as two seamen were endeavouring to secure the jib, which had broken loose, a heavy sea washed them overboard, as well as the third officer. The conduct of Captain Husband, the commander of the Atrato, was so praiseworthy that on the arrival of the vessel at Plymouth a testimonial, signed by a large number of saloon passengers, was presented to him" (The Age, Melbourne; 16 December 1872)."

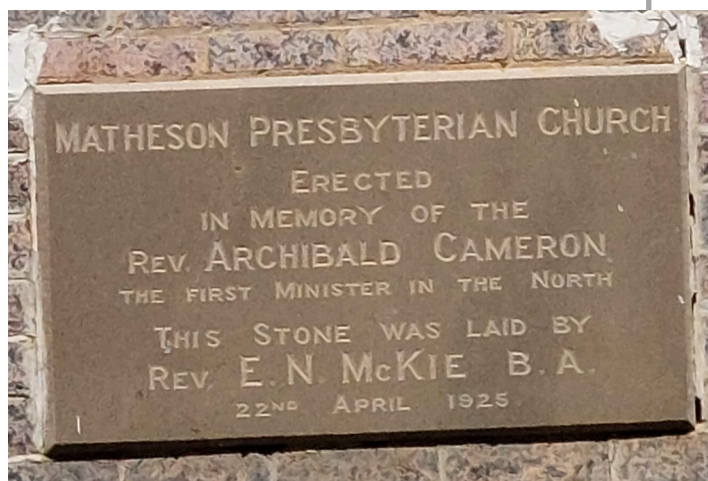
During the time Atrato was being inspected by the Board of Trade for sea-worthiness and being repaired, the passengers were accommodated in "the depot", entertained by concerts of local talent and allowed "every other day the luxury of beer" (!). The men were allowed to work in the depot at their trades for mutual benefit. There were 31 married couples, 124 single men, 198 single women, 26 boys, 19 girls and 8 infants.

The Atrato set off again from Plymouth on 22 December 1872. Captain Husband was a man of prudence and went at a leisurely pace to Capetown in order to be sure of his ship and arrived there on January 28th 1873. There she took on coal and other supplies and left again for Melbourne on 4th February and arrived in Port Phillip on 3 March. The whole voyage thus took 71 days, including a leisurely voyage to Capetown and a week there. The Weekly Times reports that the voyage from Capetown to Port Phillip took 21 days (4th February to 3rd March ???) – a very short time for more than half the total distance. It seems that a passage time of 50 days or less was certainly possible in a vessel like the Atrato, compared with a sailing ship record of 61 days and 90 days for the Ticonderoga only twenty years earlier. Less than 100 years later, in 1960, the transit time from Southampton to Melbourne was 26 days in a postWW2 diesel-powered liner of 23,000 tons.

Matheson Church NSW

By Robert & Helen Mathieson

About 19 km west of Glen Innes there is a small Presbyterian Church in the township (perhaps village-ship) of Matheson. Not only is there a church, but also a Rural Fire Service depot – but not much else.



Matheson Church continued...



It took an eagle eye to notice that, excellent firefighters though the team might be, their spelling needs some attention! Although a legitimate spelling of our name, it isn't the name of the township.

There were great hopes for the development of the district that were perhaps not realised. The Glen Innes Examiner of 22 October 1925 reported on the dedication of the then new church. It had been built by Mr Sinclair (the local landowner of Waterloo Station nearby) and presented to the Presbyterian Assembly of NSW as a memorial to the then current minister's father, who had arrived in the district in 1854. The report stated that

“The new church will not only serve the present generation, but it is built on lines that will constitute it a place of worship for future generations, allowing even for that closer settlement which nature intended for the rich Waterloo Valley.”

There was a service conducted by the current minister (Mr A.P. Cameron) assisted by two others followed by afternoon tea at Waterloo Station, some piping, by a company of three pipers, and some highland dancing “daintily executed by Misses Jean and Betty McIntyre”.

Clan Matheson Society Australian Branch Office Bearers

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Clan Matheson Merchandise 2021



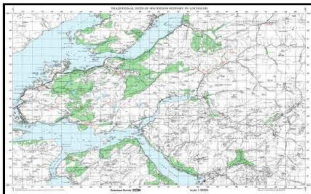
Ladies Polo Shirt
Sizes 12 ,14, 16
White, beige \$25



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

