



The Clan Matheson Society Australia Newsletter

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Clan Matheson May Muster

On Sunday 21 May, we shall hold our May Muster— actually a lunch at the Radisson Hotel, William St Melbourne at 12 noon. This is a very informal affair, but it is an opportunity for us all to **wear our Clan finery, bling** etc. to enjoy a glass of wine and a meal together. We are required by Consumer Affairs Vic to hold a short meeting, but don't worry, it won't go on too long. So you are welcome to come along and have your say. Margaret Fleming has made a table booking for us but cannot be there herself. I promise to wear my kilt!

Mathieson link to Matheson Church

In the last Newsletter, we reported on the existence of a small church and locality called Matheson in northern NSW, about 19km west of Glen Innes. The Glen Innes Examiner of 22 October 1925 reported on the dedication of this church and mentioned that after the service there was an afternoon tea at Waterloo Station adjacent to the church, some piping, by a company of three pipers, and some highland dancing “daintily executed by Misses Jean and Betty McIntyre”. David Mathieson, a member from Port Macquarie, tells us that these dancing girls were direct descendants of Donald McIntyre, who arrived in the Upper Hunter region in 1825 with David's great great grandfather John Elliott. David says that the McIntyre River is named after Donald McIntyre.

Now, I have a very slight link to this too. I collected some seeds of a lovely *Acacia dangarensis* tree growing in Canberra and am growing them for planting in my garden. *A. dangarensis* is critically-endangered, comes from the Goulburn River region in northern NSW and is named after Mount Dangar, itself named after the first European to see it— Henry Dangar. Henry tried to select some land in the Upper Hunter and got into dispute with the McIntyre brothers Peter, John and Donald (the ancestor of the McIntyre dancing girls) who ended up with the land.

So there is a link between Matheson locality, a Mathieson (from Port Macquarie) and a Matheson (me). I do not yet know the origin of the Matheson name for the locality. If you think you can help with this fascinating story, please let me know... Any other stories also welcome! (A/ed)

CLAN MATHESON

Summarised report of the Clan Meeting held at Flagstaff Gardens, Melbourne, Victoria

Sunday 19 February 2023

This meeting was held in conjunction with the annual Clan Picnic on the King St side of Flagstaff Gardens, Melbourne. It was a beautiful day, sunny and not too hot. Our favourite tree in past years has now been surrounded with plantings, but another nearby is just as congenial.

There was discussion about the proposed International Gathering in Scotland next year – all present are interested in attending. It is to be held at Plockton and on the Isle of Skye between 20-23rd July 2024. Details were sent around in a general email but are posted on the International website (clanmatheson.org). Please contact Colin Matheson (see page 9) if you are interested in attending.

Discussion about the Melbourne Highland Games, to be held in Croydon on 26 March 2023, and setting up a Clan Matheson tent there – Warren and Euan are organised to attend, with Warren agreeing to drive from Bendigo towing the Clan's trailer (the trailer holds the Clan Society's set-up gear for attending highland games, larger gatherings etc.). Euan will also be setting up the Clan McGillivray tent. Colin and Mary will most likely come from Canberra to attend. There will be no Clan Matheson tent at the Bundanoon Highland Games this year.

President's report: Colin thanked everyone for coming to the first face-to-face picnic get-together since February 2020. As our face-to-face gatherings have been severely curtailed since the Covid-19 pandemic took hold, this one seemed all the more special.

Finances: In Genevieve's absence, Colin reported the following main points about the Society's finances – the current bank balance of \$6,747 means we are in a reasonable financial position. This is in spite of most on the Society's membership list, who receive the newsletter, not paying subscription fees. Our main expenses last quarter were a payment of \$231 to the Scottish Australian Heritage Council which includes our Society's insurance coverage, a payment of \$122 to Consumer Affairs Victoria for our incorporation registration, and the domain name registration (\$82.50)

Colin Matheson



Melbourne Highland Games 2023

The Melbourne Highland Games (formerly the Ringwood Highland Games) were held at Eastleigh Park in Croydon, Melbourne on 26th March 2023. As a Clan, we were in attendance and erected our tent there adjacent to the McGillivray clan tent.



Mary Molan, John MacRae, Katherine Moody Matheson (Janet Blainey's cousin), Warren Matheson, Euan McGillivray

This year we had some interest from prospective members, although they have yet to pay their fees or fill in the membership forms I sent them. Several non-Mathesons stopped by to encourage us too. We sold a number of merchandise items to Mathesons and non-Mathesons alike.

We took part in the Clan Parade, in fact, Warren and I were first to line up for the parade, but those with names beginning with letters preceding "Mat..." thought they should have precedence and so led the procession off. Having processed, we were not required to stand and listen to the speeches—perhaps that was a good thing.

There were quite a few stalls selling food and drink, so no-one went hungry. There was even a stall selling Irish beer that was most welcome (non-alcoholic alas, because they did not have a licence).

There was piping all day, heavyweight lifting by Scottish strongmen (aren't we all), Scotch pies, caber tossing and lots of tartan around. The Games were much better organised than last year, even accounting for the change of venue from Ringwood and hiatus due to the pandemic. A good day all round!



Margaret Fleming, prospective member Faye McArthur (nee Matheson) and Mary Molan



Colin Matheson (sans kilt), Warren Matheson, prospective members Peter, Phoebe, Lincoln and Emma Matheson.

Clan Matheson Tartans

Our former Chief, Sir Fergus Matheson, defined our official tartans as follows:

“The Dress Tartan is generally scarlet. The Hunting Tartan is generally dark blue. Although some may prefer to wear other shades of red and blue, the approved background colours of our tartan are as displayed in the book *"The Clans, Septs and Regiments of the Scottish Highlands"* by Frank Adam FRGS, FSA. (Scot), and in *"The History of the Mathesons"* by Mackenzie & MacBain. These are the colours displayed on the official Clan website.”

The image from *The History of The Mathesons* is reproduced below. You can see that it looks familiar even though the printing is not particularly clear. It was printed in 1900 and was pretty good in its day.



Here, also, are the notes about the tartan in Appendix H of *The History of The Mathesons*:

APPENDIX H.

THE MATHESON TARTAN.

Duncan Matheson, the missionary, in 1844 calls the Matheson tartan a “splendid” one; it is both splendid and chaste. Clan tartans at best are a thing of yesterday, but territorial tartans are old—Martin (1700) says different islands and districts favoured certain tartan combinations—and tartan itself is as old in history as the Celts who wore it. Most tartans are inventions of this century, many made by well-known "tartan" firms. The tartans of the minor clans mostly all belong to this century [i.e. 19th - ed]. Some light is thrown on the history of the Matheson tartan by Duncan Matheson’s correspondence. Writing in November 1844, he

Clan Matheson Tartans continued.....

says: "I am not so much concerned about the original tartan as you seem to be, for I feel extremely proud that there now is a splendid tartan which the Mathesons can call theirs. Ten thousand thanks to (Sir) James Matheson, the father of the tartan!" a month later he writes wittily about the original tartan : " Mr Macdougall can tell you what it is, especially if you were to purchase any from himself." A palpable hit! In January 1845, he has the following remarks:—"You think Achany (Sir James Matheson) had no right to call it the clan tartan without consulting his chief, and his nephew (Bennetsfield). But I cannot see why he should consult either of them concerning doing what he likes with his own. If ever the Mathesons had a tartan and that tartan being lost, I cannot see that any man on earth has a right to call him to account for doing that which no other man would have done for the clan, viz., giving them a tartan which they can claim as theirs. There was a time when no clan had a tartan, and if the Mathesons had no tartan till now every patriot of the name will feel grateful to that distinguished man, who gave them a new tartan, or who had dug their old tartan from the rubbish of old times."

This seems to suggest that it was designed or "dug from the rubbish of old times" by Sir James Matheson of the Lews. Also known as Achany after one of his properties near Lairg, he was the Matheson who built Ardross Castle, Duncraig Castle and Stornoway Castle with the profits from Jardine Matheson & Co who traded in China.

There was an article about tartans in the handbook accompanying the 1981 Clan Matheson Gathering held at Duncraig Castle adjacent to Loch Carron. It describes some different versions available then and gives threadcounts (the definitive weaving pattern) for these tartans. Here is the article:

THE MATHESON TARTANS

by Dr. Micheil MacDonald, F.S.A. Scot.

The Scottish Tartans Society is the official body for recording and distributing information on tartans and highland dress. Inaugurated by the Lord Lyon King of Arms in 1963, the Society has been sited in Comrie, Perthshire since 1976 and with its award-winning museum attracts visitors from all over the world.

In its records of every known tartan the Society has six Matheson 'setts' on record. They date from 1805-1977. The earliest of these survives as a small piece in the archives of the Society. We are informed that it was used by Sir Alexander of Ardross and Lochalsh (1805-86) for his servants. This may well be so, but there is also a specimen in the MacBean collection in Inverness labelled 'Matheson - ancient Camissary' (said to be from Camasunary - Skye) which is the same sett with the red changed to maroon. (Thread count 1)

In 1850 the brothers William and Andrew Smith of Mauchline in Scotland published their Authenticated Tartans of the Clans and Families of Scotland and here we find the predominately red, Matheson tartan usually worn today. This sett has been repeated in several subsequent works and has given rise to several variations. (2)

A pattern consisting of only part of the normal Matheson sett appears in McIntyre Norths' book The Book of the Club of the True Highlanders 1881. North obtained this sett from James Logan, author of The Scottish Gael 1831, and depending on how long it had been known to Logan it may well pre-date the Matheson tartan worn today. This sett has an internal balance of design lacking in the pattern of 1850. (3)

Clan Matheson Tartans continued.....

A sett that would appear to have escaped attention until recently has come to light in the research of the late MacGregor-Hastie on the collection of the Highland Society of London (c1810-30) It is clearly based on the tartan shown by the Smith brothers, but the green is substituted for red, and blue for green in only one section. (4)

The normally-accepted hunting sett follows the patterns of numbers one and two closely, only substituting blue for red and black for blue (6). There is also a more recent version of the hunting Matheson which was received from Messrs Kinloch Anderson in 1977. It may be one of the recent 'rush' of new fashion tartans and is merely a variation on the established hunting sett. (5)

(1) Green 16, maroon 8, green 4, maroon 4, green 4, maroon 94, blue 18, green 8, maroon 4, green 4, maroon 4, green 8, maroon 14, green 4, maroon 4, green 4, maroon 8, blue 14, green 14, maroon 6, green 12.

(2) Green 16, red 8, green 2, red 2, green 2, red 48, blue 16, green 8, red 2, green 2, red 2, green 8, red 16, green 2, red 2, green 2, red 2, blue 16, green 16, red 4, green 8.

(3) Red 4, green 4, red 24, green 20, red 4, green 4, red 4, green 20, azure 6, blue 20, red 24, green 4, red 4.

(4) Blue 8, green 4, blue 2, green 4, blue 2, green 44, blue 12, green 4, red 4, green 4, red 4, green 4, red 8, green 4, red 4, green 4, red 4, blue 12, green 8, red 4, green 8.

(5) Yellow 14, blue 6, yellow 4, blue 4, yellow 4, blue 60, black 18, yellow 6, blue 4, yellow 4, blue 4, yellow 6, blue 10, yellow 4, blue 4, yellow 4, blue 4, black 18, yellow 10, blue 6, yellow 8.

(6) Green 16, blue 8, green 2, blue 2, green 2, blue 48, black 16, green 8, blue 2, green 2, blue 2, green 8, blue 16, green 2, blue 2, green 2, blue 2, black 16, green 16, blue 4, green 8.

I have corrected a couple of typos, and fed the formulae into a "design your own tartan" program and here are the results:

Tartan 1



Clan Matheson Tartans continued.....

Tartan 2



Tartan 3



Tartan 4



Clan Matheson Tartans continued.....

Tartan 5



Tartan 6



The colours available in the palette of the computer program were limited and so they are not exact in the images (e.g. the blue is not dark enough). I have made no attempt to alter the colour palette to reflect the "Ancient Colours". The patterns of alternating colours is essentially the same in all these tartan patterns (i.e. the "sett"), just with different colours. Maroon instead of red in Tartan 1, for example.

Tartan 1 is listed in the Tartan Register as Matheson (Lochcarron) 3461. It is very similar to my own kilt, made from "Muted Mathieson" still available from Kinloch Anderson who quoted me £92 including postage for a tie made of it!. Dr MacDonald says this Tartan was used by Sir Alexander Matheson (the then Chief) for wear by his servants. We do not know what Sir Alexander wore himself.

Tartan 2 is listed as Matheson Dress 860 and is the tartan illustrated in McKenzie and MacBain (The History of The Mathesons) above, is approved by the Chief and is worn by most of us today.

Tartan 3 is listed in the Tartan Register as Matheson (Logan 1831), even though it is not listed in Logan's book. It came from McIntyre North in his book The Book of the Club of the True Highlanders where the author says he got it from Logan, the author of The Scottish Gael. The pattern is not in

Clan Matheson Tartans continued.....

Logan's book, so North must have consulted Logan personally. I have not seen it worn as a Matheson tartan either, even though it might have predated Tartan 2, the official Matheson tartan.

Tartan 4 is listed as Matheson Hunting (Highland Society of London) 3460. It may have found its way there at the time the Society was calling for examples of tartans without taking enough care about where the authority for it came from.

Tartan 5 is listed as Blue Matheson Hunting (Kinloch Anderson) 3459, but is not in their current catalogue.

Tartan 6 is listed as Matheson Hunting 693 and is the familiar blue hunting tartan commonly worn, but the blue colour seems rather pale in the image, reminiscent of what we call the ancient colours. The blue colour in the image of Tartan 6 above was as dark a blue as was available in the app I used to generate the images. The dark blue hunting tartan we are familiar with is not listed on the Tartan Register website.

Colin Matheson

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Clan Matheson Merchandise 2023



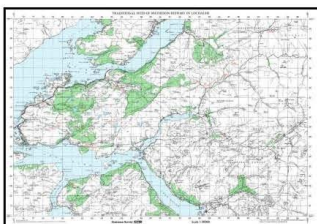
Ladies Polo Shirt
 Sizes 12 ,14, 16
 White, beige \$25



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
euangillivray51@gmail.com
 0438 133770

 Postage not included

