



An Cìrean Ceann Cinnish



# The Clan Matheson Society Australia Newsletter

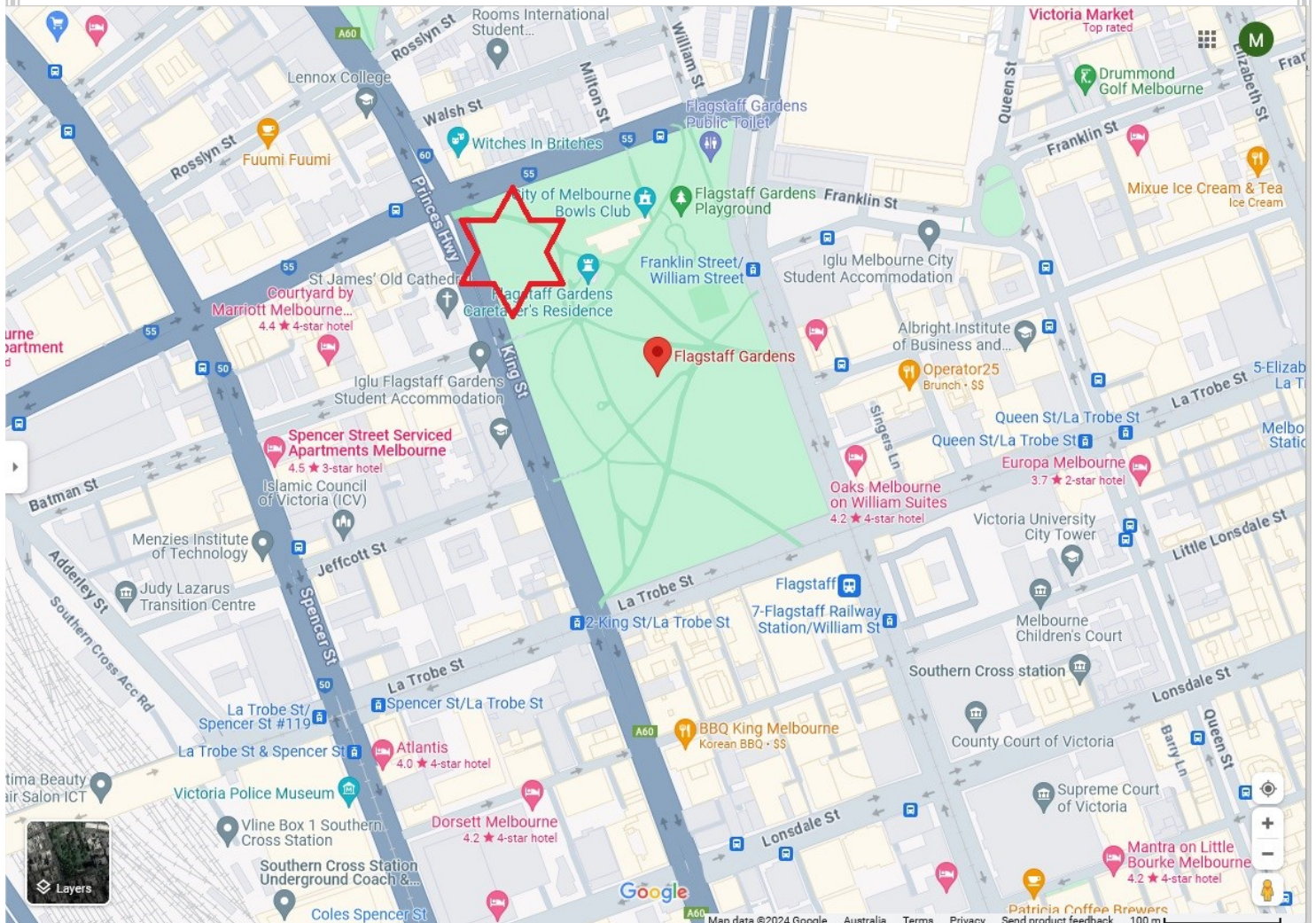
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## Clan Matheson Annual Picnic Flagstaff Gardens, Melbourne

**February 11 starting at 12:00**

We shall be holding our annual Clan Matheson Picnic in Flagstaff Gardens, close to the Dudley St/King St intersection (marked by the star in the map below). Do come if you can and bring your lunch to join us wearing as much Clan bling as possible. Warren usually brings his pipes to entertain us and frighten all the passers-by. We'll also hold a brief meeting around 2pm—so you can have your say then too. Keep a look out for the Clan Banner



## International Clan Gathering July 2024

As previously announced, the next International Clan Matheson Gathering is to be held in Scotland from July 20th to 23rd incl in Lochalsh and Skye. Our Chief (Sir Alexander Matheson) has sent a second version of the information sheet he prepared for the Gathering, as follows...

### CLAN MATHESON GATHERING 2024 INFORMATION SHEET – VERSION 2

#### General.

The Gathering will take place 20-23 July 2024 inclusive – 20-21 in Lochalsh, 22-23 on the Isle of Skye. The plan at this stage is fluid and will, to an extent, depend on the numbers attending:

#### **Sat 20 July**

Lochcarron Games at Attadale all day. We plan to have a tent for registration—see page 5.

Supper under own arrangements. [NB I shall try to arrange an Australian members' evening meal at Strathcarron Hotel, not far from the Games site—Ed]

**LOCHCARRON HIGHLAND GAMES 2023  
PROGRAMME OF EVENTS**

Introduction by Chair - Joanna Macpherson

**HEAVY FIELD EVENTS** All prize money generously provided by

12.40 Open Shot Putt  
13.10 Open Heavy Shot  
13.40 Open Light Hammer  
14.10 Open Heavy Hammer  
14.40 Open Light Weight for Distance  
15.10 Open Heavy Weight for Distance  
16.10 Open Caber  
Caber Challenge

**BAKKAFROST**  
ESTABLISHED 1988  
The Finest Salmon from  
**SCOTLAND**

All Timings are approximate

**FUN EVENTS**

There will be a range of activities for all the family running throughout the day including some races on the track. There will be slides, bouncy castles, mini-games activities, crafts, face painting & balloons ... with more to come.\*

16.00 Raffle Draw  
16.15 Haggis Hurl

\* subject to change

**TRADITIONAL EVENTS**

Displays by Isle of Skye Highland Dancers.  
Pipe Bands from Isle of Skye and Ullapool.  
Falconry throughout the day.  
Keep your eyes open and listen for announcements.

Opening Speech - Chieftain Ewen Macpherson

**TRACK EVENTS**

12.15 100 Metres Open, (prize money from **MULEDD**)  
Ladies, (prize money from **MULEDD**)  
Boys (12-15), Girls (12-15)

12.35 Ladies & Men's High Jump  
12.55 Open 800 Metres British Championship  
13.00 Boys (12-15) 600 metres  
13.05 Girls (12-15) 600 metres  
13.55 Open 400 Metres (prize money from Lochcarron Food Centre)  
14.00 Ladies 400 Metres (prize money from Lyndy's Laundry)  
14.10 Ladies & Mens Long Jump  
14.15 200 Metres Open (prize money from Mr & Mrs Troup)  
Ladies  
Boys  
Girls

14.40 Ladies and Mens Triple Jump  
15.00 Hill Race: Open (prize money from New Lodge, New Kelso)  
Ladies (prize money from Nicholas Wills)  
Veteran (prize money from Lochcarron Weavers Shop)  
Junior (prize in memory of Gibson Fleming)  
First Local Winner, male and female (prize supported by Sheila Fleming)  
(All competitors must register by 14:30)

16.10 Ladies & Men's 1600 Metres  
16.25 4x100 Metres Relay  
16.30 Tug O' War (prize money from **FERGUSON**)  
& Ladies (Teams must register by 15:30)

All Timings are approximate

The program for 2024 is likely to be similar to this...

International Clan Gathering July 2024...

### Sun 21 July

**1000** Church service (the church plan is far from settled as parishes nearby are merging in Jan 2024, and the Minister cannot yet say what the programme of services might be. If there is a service, it is likely to be in Inverinate.

**1115** Meet at Kirkton Church. Several Matheson graves here.

**1145** Move via Carr Braes road to the Fort. Bring own picnic.

**1300** Possible visit to view Duncraig Castle, then move to Duirinish Village.

**1400** Walking tour of Balmacara Coastal Path (1.5 hr easy walking), led by Ian Turnbull, Scottish National Trust. Also shorter walking tour of Duirinish Village led by Morag Mackenzie.

**1630** Tea at Nell Matheson's house in Duirinish. Move to Portree area.

**1930** Clan Council (Chief's Lieutenants, UK Branch Secretary) at Chief's house near Portree. Supper under own arrangements.



*Mathesons at 'our' fort up the hill from Balmacara —Loch Achaidh na h-Inich behind*

### Mon 22 July

Clan Parliament in Portree Gathering Hall.

All day - 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

All day - organised visits to places of interest on Skye, bring own picnic lunch.

Late afternoon, Gathering ends.

Evening, optional meet at the bar of the Cuillin Hills Hotel, Portree, to say final farewells

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.

### **Numbers**

I will ask Chief's Lieutenants 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 I recommend that you get organised sooner rather than later and, for peace of mind, before the end of 2023. Possible websites 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.

I recommend that you do an online comparison of 2024 accommodation, menu and bar prices before booking. Some establishments in Lochalsh have become highly priced.

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.

If you are renting a self-catering property and wish to buy food, there is a good Co-op in Kyle and a SPAR shop in Balmacara. On Skye, there are first class Co-ops in Portree and Broadford.

### **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/>).

### International Clan Gathering July 2024– getting there

**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>

### Lochcarron Games, Attadale.



*Start of the Hill Race 2014—to the top of the rightmost ‘hill’ in the range to the left. Younger Mathesons acquitted themselves well in this race!*

This will be the first day of our Gathering. We plan 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. NB the organisers wish to avoid the congestion and delays experienced in July 2023, so the gates will open at 10.00am. For planning purposes, please allow time to get in, share cars where possible, and aim to arrive at our tent **before** 11.00am for registration; we will then do a clan photograph and expect to march on as a clan behind the pipe band at 12.00pm (all timings TBC).

International Clan Gathering July 2024...

20 July—Lochcarron Games...

**Tickets** Prices for the Games in 2024 will be confirmed in December. In 2023 tickets cost £10/adult: there was no charge for children. The Secretary expects any changes to be minor. To ease traffic congestion, it will help if Clansmen arrive early and share cars where possible: there is no additional parking fee. The Secretary of the Games encourages us to purchase tickets in advance online. The Games website <https://www.lohcarrongames.org.uk> will allow tickets to be purchased from January. Tickets can be purchased on the day, Cash Only.

**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.

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.

**NB** Dress to keep the weather and midges out!

Food is available from stalls all day.

There will probably be a number of stalls selling clan merchandise. Check carefully for accuracy before buying (last time there were several items, eg wrong motto on clan badges, ill-designed clan badges, spelling mistakes etc).

**Lohcarron Weavers** <https://www.lohcarron.co.uk> is a reputable firm which will have a stand at the Games. The manager, Joy Moran, has agreed to give a 10% discount on any items from their website to any Clan Matheson supporter, **as long as an order is placed before the end of February 2024**. Quote “Clan Matheson” and use her personal email [joy@lohcarron.com](mailto:joy@lohcarron.com). She will arrange for items to be packed and taken to their stall at the Lochcarron Games on Sat 20 July 2024, so that you can collect from there; or you could make your own delivery arrangement with her. **NB** this will be a private arrangement between Lochcarron Weavers and clan members, the Clan Society will not be involved.

### **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).



*Telephoto of hill during the Hill Race 2014—just to prove some of them did make it!*

International Clan Gathering July 2024...

## 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.



*Garenin, Blackhouse Village,  
Lewis*



*Matheson Rd, Stornoway, Lewis*

- 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:
  - Skye Highland Games 7 Aug 2024. <https://www.skye-highland-games.co.uk/information.html#:~:text=The%202024%20games%20will%20be%20held%20on%20the%207th%20August.>
  - 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>

International Clan Gathering July 2024...

And further afield don't forget:

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

If you want to research family links, you might find <http://www.rosscromartyroots.co.uk/index.asp?pageid=53913> to be helpful.

## Congratulations to Margaret Fleming

On 18<sup>th</sup> September 2023 Margaret Fleming celebrated her 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday with 60 of her friends and relations at the Fairfield Bowling Club in Melbourne. She says it has been amazing to reach 80 years and to receive the best wishes from so many of her friends and family.



*Margaret cutting her cake with nephew, Les McLean, in the background.*



*Daughter, Claire, opening the speeches, with the party watching on.*



*Margaret with her two bridesmaids some 58 years later. Barbara Davey and Jeannette Gregson.*



*Cousins on the Fleming and Houston side. Margaret Fleming, Barbara Davey (her first cousin), Dorothy Fleming (Margaret's sister), and first cousins Janice Houston and Marion Houston (Margaret's third cousins).*



## **Clan Matheson Annual General Meeting Royal Exchange Hotel Melbourne 20 August 2023**

### President's report.

This year we were able to feel a part of major events in the UK with the death and funeral of HM Queen Elizabeth II last September. Our Chief was a visible part of the funeral ceremony in his role as Extra equerry in the Royal Household. He marched just behind the gun carriage upon which the coffin rested during the spectacular military march to the lying-in-state at Westminster Hall before the funeral service and after the ceremony when the gun carriage was drawn by RN sailors from Westminster Abbey back to Wellington Gate. Many of us watched the processions on live television and the sharp-eyed Jeff Freeman was the first to email me with an image of our Chief taking part.

We held our Annual Clan picnic in Flagstaff Gardens, Melbourne in February. This was our first face-to-face meeting since before the pandemic. During the pandemic we were able to continue to meet via the internet using Zoom. There were more participants in the Zoom meetings than face-to-face because of the tyranny of distance we experience in this country. In particular, David Mathieson was able to participate from far away (to us) in Port Macquarie (NSW). The day of the picnic was clear and fair, with lots of sunshine and not too hot. Our favourite tree from past years has now been surrounded (protected) by garden plantings around it, but a nearby one was used instead.

As a Clan, we participated in the now-renamed Melbourne Highland Gathering in March. These Games, formerly the Ringwood Highland Gathering, were held in abeyance during the pandemic, and had been troubled by the lack of a suitable venue as the long-standing Ringwood venue was no longer available. Warren brought the Clan Trailer from Bendigo with our tent and most of the merchandise so we had some shelter. We took part in the Parade of Clans that was more enjoyable than in 2022 because we didn't have to stay for the Official Speeches. There was piping all day, heavyweight lifting and throwing by strongmen, caber tossing and lots of tartan all round. The new venue was more successful than 2022 with better placement of Clan tents, more food tents and even a beer stall, even if it was non-alcoholic and Irish. We sold quite a lot of merchandise to members and non-members alike, particularly stubby-holders, so a good day was had by all.

The May Muster was held at the Radisson Hotel, Melbourne in May followed by a committee meeting. As discussed in the Minutes of this meeting, we have had an enquiry about Septs of Clan Matheson. Septs of many clans are listed on the Electric Scotland website and those listed for us are: MacMath, MacPhun and Mathie, the same as listed by the Chief on the Clan website ([clanmatheson.org](http://clanmatheson.org)). The family name Burnie (Burnie, McBurnie, MacBurnie etc) claim to be septs of ours and I have had an interchange with the Chief about it. I accepted Brian McBurnie into membership of the Society on the basis that he was willing to support our chief as have others with little evidence of genetic links to the Clan. The question of septs remains, however.

We have had a successful year and are looking forward to participating in the International Clan Matheson Gathering in Scotland in July next year.

Colin Matheson

President, Clan Matheson Society of Australia.

The Treasurer reported that last year our bank balance was \$6708.14 and is now \$6848.25 with incomings from merchandise and memberships, outgoings to insurance, website maintenance and registration.

The Following were elected: Colin Matheson (President), Mary Molan (Secretary), Genevieve Ahearne (Treasurer), Warren Matheson (Vice-president), and Janet Blainey, Ruth Pearce, Euan McGillivray, Rob & Helen Mathieson, Brad Matheson, David Mathieson, Roma Jorgenson (committee).

## **Clan Matheson Committee Meeting Royal Exchange Hotel, Melbourne 20 August 2023**

Brad raised the possibility of a Matheson memorial at Culloden, inspired by the memorials put there in the 19th century to mark Clans who fought there. He has done some research into what would be involved—it could not be on the battlefield itself, but could be near the information centre. Colin noted that there were only four or five Mathesons who are known to have fought there—on both sides and not representing the Clan. There might have been others we do not know about so it would be difficult to put names on any memorial. Brad has enquired about funding through the National Trust for Scotland and has suggested he raise the issue at the Clan Parliament next year.

As a response to enquiries about purchase of stubby holders, we invested in 50 plain coloured ones (with the crest) and 50 Matheson tartan ones (with the crest).

We need to update the central Clan Matheson email addresses with actual officeholders. We agreed that the next Clan Meeting (26 November) should be via Zoom to enable farther flung members to attend. We were happy with the Royal Exchange Hotel as a venue.

Action items: Brad (Newsletter articles on Alexander Percival Matheson, and on his new granddaughter. Colin to contact John Faid about Mathesons at Culloden. Euan to provide book details on Culloden by Murray Pittock. Mary to order stubby holders. Colin to arrange Zoom meeting for 26 November 2023.

## **Clan Matheson Meeting Zoom 26 November 2023**

Much of the discussion centred on members' plans for attending the International Gathering in Scotland next July. Members known to be planning to attend are: Colin and Mary, Warren & Joan, Janet Blainey, Margaret Fleming, Brad & Joyce (perhaps), Rob & Helen, Euan McGillivray, Ruth (possibly), Kim Bowman (& 3 family members).

Colin and Mary are planning a visit to Scandinavia before the Gathering, Warren and Joan plan a visit to England.

Promised articles for the next Newsletter (*i.e. this one—Ed*) are: Janet's recent entry into, and prizes from the Australian Marmalade Competition, Margaret's recent birthday, Janet's celebration next week, Brad's promised article on Alexander Percival Matheson (senator in the first Australian Parliament).

Next meeting to be held at Flagstaff Gardens on 11 February 2024.



## Clan Matheson Merchandise 2023



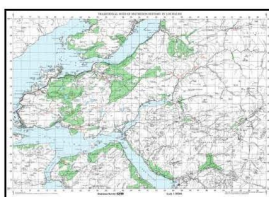
Ladies Polo Shirt  
 Sizes 12, 14, 16  
 White, beige \$25



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***

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