



AUSTRALIA

Clan Munro Australia

Newsletter of the Clan Munro (Association) Australia

Have you visited our website at clanmunroassociation.org.au, our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/ClanMunroAssociationANZ, Instagram at www.instagram.com/clanmunroassociation_anz/ and LinkedIn at www.linkedin.com/company/clan-munro-association-australia-new-zealand

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Blether

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This month I have to give you the very sad news of the passing of our President, Ray's dear wife, Helen. We send our love and condolences to Ray & family

Some good news in that there will be a Clan Munro gathering in July/August 2026, to be held in conjunction with the Dingwall 800 year anniversary of being a Royal Burgh. More details of that as they come to hand.

The Foulis Castle and Garden Tour is generally limited to a group maximum of 50 people. Tour buses can easily park directly in front of Foulis Castle as there is a circular driveway.

Foulis Castle has lift access for the Disabled: The Ground Floor Level has no steps, door clearance to access lift/elevator is 78cm, lift/elevator dimensions are 90cm wide x 94cm deep. Foulis Castle toilets are on the first level. Foulis Castle has

uneven surfaces, loose carpets, uneven stonework and steps. Language spoken on tour is English only.

To make you aware of the other tours we offer, Foulis Castle Tour on a Tuesday 9.30-10.30am is open to the public at a donation of £15 per adult, for smaller individual group tours out-with a Tuesday at 9.30am the cost is £25 per adult with a minimum charge of £100, the duration is approximately 1hr, this tour is generally conducted by myself (Ohma) and occasionally the Clan Chief.

On all tours we have a 48hr cancellation policy prior to the event, with invoicing after the event for number finalising. We are open to any specific requests a group may have and we will do our best to accommodate you. We look forward to making the Foulis Castle Tour a memorable experience for your clients.

Foulis Castle Tours which include the grounds will be organised by emailing info@clanmunro.org.uk, the Munro Family will arrange your visit. You may have to wait a while for a reply as the Family is overworked and understaffed!

Foulis Castle is not on the public transport route so a car or taxi is required.

The easiest way to get to 'Foulis Castle' is Google Maps which takes you directly there.

Visit the clan Munro website at www.clanmunro.org.uk where you will find lots of interesting information about the happenings at Foulis and the Clan in general.

The Clan Munro is having a Clan tent at The Hunter Valley Highland Games, here in NSW on the 24th of August. Why not pay the Games a visit and meet our President & Webmaster, father & son, Ray & Allan Munro, who will be hosting our tent.

Welcome

This month we welcome John Munro From New Zealand as our newest member. John is the son of Burt Munro, who most of you will know from the film The World's Fastest Indian. John is contributing his father's story to the newsletter in instalments, starting this month. John's ancestry and other details are included in the first instalment.

From the Eagles Nest

Dear Cousins,

At present I'm having a difficult time following the passing of my wife, Helen, who died suddenly on the 25th. June. We were married for over 55 years and had a wonderful life together. Many of you, no doubt, have also experienced the feelings which result from the loss of a loved one.

Ebenezer Munroe.

Recently I was reading an article which interested me in connection with the American War of Independence. At the outset it mentioned a Munro who became famous or maybe infamous in history. This man Ebenezer Munroe was one of the famous "Minute Men" who fought for the Continental Army against the British in the American Revolution. Minute men were so named because they were a militia which could be ready at a minute's notice. The very first shot fired by the Continentals was from Ebenezer, the so called, "The shot heard around the world". This first shot occurred on the village green in Lexington, Massachusetts.

This war not only involved the actions between the Continentals and the British but also other nations both directly and indirectly. These included: France, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Russia, Ireland and India. The reasons that these countries were involved mostly had to do with politics and trade.

Involved just before the confrontation was the ride of Paul Revere. Historically it is argued whether the ride is accurate in its heroic description. One thing that is sure that in a statement from a Corporal John Munroe he confirmed that the first shot fired by the Revolutionary Army did indeed come from Ebenezer Munroe.

Scotland's Healing Wells.

In Scotland for centuries, using water from the wells spread over many places in the country was thought of a way to banish a malady or restore vitality. Even today every Hogmanay thousands of Scots take a cold dip into the sea as an annual reawakening. People went to healing wells to cure many types of ailments. For example, several wells around Loch Tay and in particular a stone spring across the River Tay from Taymouth Castle was well known for curing toothache. Another well nearby was used for curing whooping cough. I wish I'd known that when I was about eight years old. Another well at Fearnan was renowned for curing measles.

Bronze Age axeheads have been found near many wells indicating that these wells have been used for hundreds of years. People have participated in performing various rituals like leaving offerings of coins, cloth or personal effects nearby or sometimes walking around the well several times before drawing any water.

By Victorian times the use of mineral baths and spas were in vogue and the healing wells mostly fell into disrepair. However, hundreds of wells are still in Scotland although difficult to unearth.

News from Scotland.

The Trees for Life Organisation has managed to save a remote ancient woodland home to Scotland's oldest wild Scot's pines. The pinewood remnant contains 57 pines, including one dating back to 1458. These pines are scattered through Glen Loyne in the northwest highlands. They were endangered by the overgrazing of excessive numbers of deer. The pinewoods have now been protected by a deer-proof enclosure with the co-operation of the land owner.

30,000 oysters have been reintroduced into the Firth of Forth to create a new oyster reef. The oysters were collected from Loch Broom in Ullapool. Oysters in the Firth were fished out 100 years ago.

Installed at Edinburgh Airport is the world's first Walkers Shortbread vending machine. This unique machine is interactive which enables the user to learn about Walkers 125 year history and choose your favourite shortbread.

Former Australian Prime Minister and now Ambassador to the US, Kevin Rudd, has been awarded an honorary degree from the University of Glasgow. Awarded for his long and distinguished career in global politics. All the best, Ray Munro.

Burt Munro – Issue 1

This is the story of Burt Munro who I am sure most of you will know of as his life story was made into a film "The World's Fastest Indian" starring Sir Anthony Hopkins. As told by Burt's son, John.

James Robertson Munro, my great grandfather, has his birth recorded at Paisley Abbey, Paisley, Renfrewshire, Scotland Circa September 05, 1841.

It has been reported that James Robertson Munro, together with his youngest brother, Richard, migrated to New Zealand on the ship "Lady Egidia", landing in Dunedin on May 7, 1862. However, he does not appear on passenger lists for that ship. It seems that he did indeed land in Dunedin. An overland trek took him to Oteramika, approximately 20km east of Invercargill, where he settled and resumed his occupation of farming/ploughman.

In 1867 he married Margaret Grant Leith, eldest daughter of Mr & Mrs Alexander Leith, one of the first settlers in the Oteramika district. On July 16 1870 their son, my paternal grandfather William James Munro, was born at Oteramika.

In 1896 William James Munro married Lillian Agnes Robinson. On March 6, 1899 my father Herbert James Munro was born and he is responsible for this following series of events.

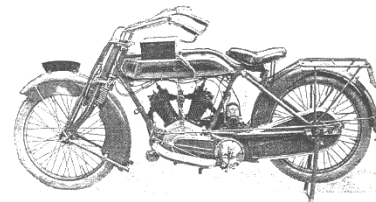
And so, his story begins with his first recorded construction, in 1915, of a canon to ward off any potential invaders of New Zealand during the First World War. This cannon was made using a length (about 1.4m) of 65 mm steel pipe and mounted on a pair of redundant buggy wheels.

Construction consisted of reinforcing the barrel by winding the pipe with three layers of number 8 wire at the butt end tapering to one layer at the muzzle. At the butt a screwed socket and plug closed that off. The winding at the butt end was further reinforced having been dipped in molten lead. At this point a ¼ inch (7 mm) hole was drilled for insertion of a fuse.

The test firing was scheduled for the euthanasia of an aged and sick cattle dog. The dog survived but the stable door about a hundred metres or so away not so. Reports that have been related to me appear that my Granddad was not amused!

In 1943 Dad recovered the canon barrel from the old farm and had another test by placing it at an angle against the 7 wire fence around our property. The shot was across the paddocks to the bush on the far side of the farm. It went well but that leads to another story for another time!

The next step for my Dad was to get involved in motorcycles. In about 1915 he borrowed his first motorcycle ride on a Douglas. In 1918 he progressed by purchasing a second hand Clyno which I understand was a 1914 model like this one.

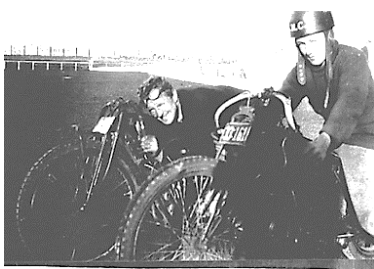


However, the Clyno was overshadowed when Burt spotted an ad in a local store. This was for the new Indian Scout which was soon to be released. An order was placed and delivery was taken in mid 1920.

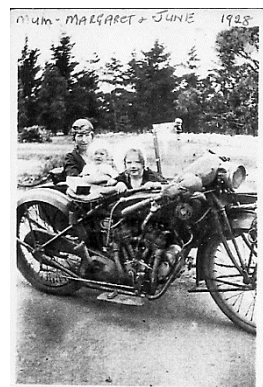


It appears that the new Scout was to remain unaltered for a couple of years. After all who would want to interfere with such a magnificent example of modern engineering? It seems that about 1923 some changes began to appear. Some photos were taken late 1923 or early 1924 which show the main difference being the turned down handle bars.

In 1925 Dad and Mum married and went off to Aussie. The precious Scout was left behind. They spent about 2 years in Sydney with Dad working as a carpenter. It was here that Dad bought another Indian Scout and became involved in local racing and hill climbs.



Substantial changes are apparent on the Aussie Scout with the removal of guards, carriers etc. However, there was still the requirement of Family Duty for the bike as shown with the hand built sidecar carrying Mum and my two sisters in 1928.



In 1928 they moved from Sydney to Melbourne. Dad joined the Northcote Motorcycle Club there and this led to participating in beach racing at Inverloch Beach. Some records exist apparently but I have not been able to track them down. In March 1929 they returned to NZ on the ship Manuka. The now 9 year old Scout was retrieved in parts and reassembled.

There is a period where records of Dad's achievements are scarce. However, in 1938 he set his first New Zealand speed record. Over the years, he went on to set a total of eight New Zealand records. Perhaps the most notable of these was set in 1966 for the NZ National Speed Record of 270.476 kph (168.066 mph) in the under 1,000 cc class.

In 1940, on the Munro Special, he set a New Zealand Speed Record of 194.4 km/h (120.8 mph) which he held for 12 years.

In 1957 he set a New Zealand beach record of 213.045 km/h (132.38 mph).

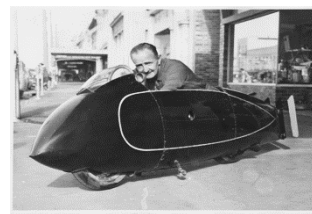
Other New Zealand records were set during the period 1940 – 1960s.

In 1957 Burt paid a visit to the USA and visited Bonneville. It was becoming apparent to him that if he was to achieve his target of 200 mph on the Munro Special this was the place to do it.

On his return to his home at 105 Bainfield Rd in Invercargill, his attention now turned to construction of a streamliner for the Special. This is the first attempt completed in 1959 using aluminium for the shell. However the result was too heavy and it was never raced. A second shell was built using fibreglass and preparations were made to ship to San Francisco.



This photo shows the bike ready to be placed into the purpose made crate to be shipped on the freighter where Dad paid for his passage by being the ships cook for the voyage.



The photo on the left also shows the shed where

Dad lived for 23 years. This was restricted in size due to post war building restrictions for garages. It was 5.8m x 2.75m internal dimensions. Sixteen m2 of floor space!

And so, the next chapter in the life of Burt Munro begins in 1955 and will continue in our next newsletter..... John Munro, July 2024

2024 AUSTRALIAN CELTIC FESTIVAL

This is John Munro from Tamworth's excellent annual report on the Glen Innes Australian Celtic Festival.

To be a Celt, you claim to have connections to at least one of the areas of Scotland, Wales, Cornwall, Brittany in France, Spain's adjoining provinces of Galicia and Asturias, Ireland or the Isle Of Man.

The last two were the focus of this year's Australian Celtic Festival held in Glen Innes from the 2nd to 5th May. However, this didn't stop the followers of the white cross on blue background being right out there, on show and playing a huge part of the proceedings.

Some preliminary events took place around the middle of the first day. These included the opening welcoming ceremony, speeches and a parade of flags and banners. Following were performances by local school children. The next few hours were spent listening to buskers, checking out the shops with appropriately decorated windows, eating and the occasional pub stop to bend an elbow.



Come Friday night, the decibel level of music increased markedly. Our destination was the Ex-Services Club where we bopped along to the sounds of Murphy's Pigs. Other venues in town provided more sedate and intimate performances. The night was topped off in the public bar of the pub where we were staying, listening to performers coming together for an improvised jam session. It was remarkable how they were able to enter as individuals and

quickly and easily combine their talents to play as one.

Saturday started off brilliantly. I had promised myself to make the Dawn Lone Piper and Flag Raising Ceremonies; maybe next year it will be warmer and I'll follow through with my pledge.

After donning my kilt, tartan tie and scarf, Munro badge and cuff links, I headed down to the assembly point for the parade up and down the main street. This event consisted of hundreds of people in bands, groups behind clan banners, dancers and interest groups. Along the paths stood an audience of people, clapping and cheering as each new section came into view. Now and then the Munro banner I carried, raised proudly, brought on cheers of recognition. The downtown excitement reached a crescendo when all the bands came together and performed as one outside the town hall.

Most of the action then moved to the Australian Standing Stones, a circular collection of 36 stones, each 3.7 metres above ground level and averaging 17 tonnes.



A prepaid weekend pass allowed us to wander around rows of store holders exhibiting mainly craft style goods. There were also clan representatives ready and willing to answer questions from the public. The aromas generated from the food and coffee outlets filled the air. Exhibitions were scattered around the area. These included jousting, a knights' school, Medieval and Celtic arts and crafts, dog handling, dancing and Highland Games. Different bands piped and drummed away throughout the day. Two very large marquees were set up allowing various artists and bands to perform on stage to full houses. The vocal and instrumental skills on show were outstanding.



All these comings and goings were a distraction to what was happening weather-wise. The darkening heavens that had gradually edged their way in weren't immediately noticed. There was an increase in the movement of the canvas marquees as the wind intensified. This was soon followed by the rhythmic beat of large raindrops on the roof. For a while this seemed to complement and chime in with the sounds coming from the stage. As it became heavier and the wind angled itself from the side, it became necessary for those on the perimeter to move inwards to avoid the puddles developing from the water running down the side and entering underneath. The discomfort must have been only a mild distraction as most of the audience remained until the end of the scheduled final act.

It was a soggy ground that greeted us as we joined other patrons dashing to their cars to head back to their base camps. On arrival there, wet clothing was discarded, we hit the hot shower, and readied ourselves for some night action.

In past years we have walked to different venues but because of the persistent heavy rain we took advantage of the Festival bus service to provide transport. It was back to the Ex Services Club for a meal and entertainment from a variety of performers we hadn't seen throughout the day. At the conclusion the bus boomeranged us back to that same public bar from the previous night for another gig session. The Guinness went down a treat.



After a night of persistent heavy rain, on Sunday morning word began to spread around the hotel that the Standing Stones site was out of action and the scheduled 8 hours of ceremonies and performances could not go ahead as hoped. A Plan B came into action where as many events as possible were moved to indoor venues in the town centre. The individual Celtic ceremonies transferred well into the Glen Innes Town Hall. I attended the Scottish one, where, along with the other clans, I presented our tartan for blessing. Some performers managed to find downtown locations to entertain, but others, along with the service providers, cut their losses and packed up in the slush and the mud.

Despite all the drama, the Festival was still memorable for the entertainment and the formalities.

If you happen to find yourself looking for something to do next April/ May, why not think about the Australian Celtic Festival in Glen Innes. It starts on the 1st May and ends on the 4th, 2025. The theme will be Brittany, Cornwall and Wales. However, the Scots and the Irish, as per past years, will play a major part.

The Gallant Mrs Taylor

I look for ladies from the early days in Australia and found this one in Outback Family History, an excellent website based in Kalgoorlie with stories based on the goldfields. This one was taken from a WA newspaper in 1940 and was headed "The Gallant Mrs Taylor – a woman in a man's game," this woman runs a mine.

Mining for gold is usually looked upon as a man's game in which muscle and endurance are needed to wrest the gold-bearing stone from the earth and to keep the machinery moving. It calls for grit, a brave heart and the ability to withstand all the disappointments of the elusive search.

Out on the goldfields bush, 40 miles west of Menzies, a woman is showing that the "weaker sex" can be mine owners, too and that manning a battery is not the exclusive work of man. This gallant woman is Mrs Mabel Taylor, who owns the Mabel Gertrude Mine at Morley's Find and takes her turn at operating the small battery on the property. Mrs Taylor's husband, James Alexander Wilson Taylor, and a mate discovered the mine and worked it until Mr Taylor died about two years ago aged only 34yrs. Undaunted by this tragic blow, when only married six years ago, the wife carried on the huge task of extracting the gold from the reef.



Mrs Mabel Jean Taylor nee Black

Today she is probably Western Australia's only woman mine owner. Her mine is worked to a depth of 900ft and has yielded valuable crushings, "About 800 oz" was her reply to a question concerning the quantity of gold she has taken out in the past eighteen months.

Mrs. Taylor has two miners in her employ, but she looks upon the running of the battery as her special job. The engine which operates the three-head stamp battery, also provides electric light for Mrs. Taylor's neat little home fifty yards or so away. She watches the running of the treatment plant, seeing that the gold-bearing stone is feeding properly to the stamps and in between this does her household work and the cooking of meals.

There was a time when engines and batteries were a deep mystery to her, and she recalls an occasion when all her efforts to "start-up" the engine failed. "They thought that this was one job a woman couldn't do" she related with a smile of satisfaction, "but I learned the knack next morning, and now it's an easy job." And although Mrs. Taylor is "on gold", she had many a struggle against the obstacles associated with life outback. There is the cartage of food and supplies even water ... and the operation of the mine has required many trips into Kalgoorlie, 125 miles away.

One night she had a five mile walk when something went amiss with the truck: another time she had to complete the last sixty miles of the journey home by foot, when a bad blow out occurred. But through it all this gallant woman has "kept her chin up". She has mined the gold her husband found, and has displayed that endurance and grit that makes the Australian woman of the outback such a fine personality.

Not that she has always been away from the bright lights of the city and the conveniences associated with the modern city home. She travelled extensively while her husband was alive and has brushed shoulders with London's millions and participated in the gayness of Blackpool. In fact, she made her



Mrs Taylors 3 head stamp battery

home in England for seven years. Today, in 1940, she carries on nobly where her husband left off, her mine, the Mabel Gertrude-named after her mother, contributing a small but useful contribution to the States wealth.

Scottish Sailors

I discovered that we have had quite a few important sailors over the years, so I will bring them to you in the coming months.



Admiral Andrew Wood 1450-1538

Scotland's Nelson was born in upper Largo in Fife and owned two ships trading from Leith. Wood was also a privateer who preyed on the English ships and was the personal captain to James III. In 1488, Wood captured five English privateers and became an admiral in the Royal Scots Navy. In 1511 he took command of the Navy's flagship, Great Michael, then the largest ship in Europe and commanded the Scottish fleet against the English in 1513

Membership

Annual:	\$25.00	Spouse or children of member under 18 years	\$8.00
Three Years:	\$55.00	Spouse or children of member under 18 years	\$20.00

*Clan Munro (Association) Australia
Newsletter*

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