



11

ion

# Clan Munro Australia

## Newsletter of the Clan Munro (Association) Australia

Volume 24 Issue 1  
AUSTRALIA

April 2025

[www.clanmunroassociation.org.au](http://www.clanmunroassociation.org.au), our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/ClanMunroAssociationANZ](https://www.facebook.com/ClanMunroAssociationANZ), Instagram at [www.instagram.com/clanmunroassociation\\_auz/](https://www.instagram.com/clanmunroassociation_auz/) and LinkedIn at [www.linkedin.com/company/clan-munro-association-australia-new-zealand](https://www.linkedin.com/company/clan-munro-association-australia-new-zealand)

### This Month

Blether	Page 1
Welcome	Page 1
From the Eagles Nest	Page 1
Burt Munro	Page 3
Ian & Bev Frosts visit to Foulis Castle	Page 5
Can you help	Page 7
Membership	Page 8

President  
Ray Munro  
7/33-35 Kentwell Road  
Allanbie, NSW 2100  
  
munro.ray@hotmail.com

### Blether

As this will be my last newsletter, I would like to thank you all for your help and encouragement during the 23 years I have producing the newsletter..... Don

President Ray will be taking over as editor.

### Welcome

Three new members. Tarian Lind (nee Munro) from The Northern Territory. Tarian is a direct descendant of Sir Charles Munro, 9th Baronet of Foulis. Tarian's great, great, great grandfather, Athur Wallace Ledsome Munro emigrated to New Zealand, married a



Tarian with Finian Munro of Foulis

Maori woman named Eina Uaha and from there, 7 generations have followed.

Arthur returned to London where he passed away in 1887 aged 51.

Roslyn Irwin from Caniaba, NSW, Braidly Brailo Otago, New Zealand and Mark Munro from Burnie, Tasmania.

### From the Eagles Nest

Dear Cousins,

In these difficult times in every corner of the world it was very pleasing to spend a friendly day at the recent Bundanoon Highland Games on a warm and sunny day. A full report will be in our next newsletter. The President of our Canadian family association in their last newsletter expressed his and indeed all Canadians concern that the US President had his eyes on their nation. This has resulted in an upsurge of patriotism in Canada. Let's trust that we too can discourage the Chinese to stop circling this great country and buzz off.

RONALD CRAUFORD MUNRO FERGUSON.

Recently I had an appointment with my solicitor in Manly. As I was early, I decided to kill time in the Corso. As happened, I was sitting on a bench close to the Manly War Memorial. I noticed that it was unveiled by our Governor General on the 14th October, 1914 by Ronald Munro Ferguson, the 6th Governor General of Australia. Was it possible that he had a connection directly with the Munro Clan?

After some research the life story of this man is quite special. He was born on the 6th.March,1860 in Kirkcaldy, Fife. His father was Lieutenant Colonel Robert Ferguson and was his eldest child. In 1889 Ronald Crauford married Helen Hamilton-Temple-Blackwood. Before his marriage Robert attended the Royal Military College at Sandhurst and was commissioned into the Grenadier Guards in 1879. He was a member of the Liberal Party and in 1884 was elected to the House of Commons for Ross and Cromarty. In 1886 he was re-elected for Leith Burghs.

Between 1886 and 1914 Ronald held many posts in Government. In 1914 the British Prime Minister, Cook appointed him Governor General of Australia. Munro Ferguson was awarded the Knight of the Grand Cross (K.C.M.G) IN 1914. In 1920 he became the first and last Viscount Novar of Raith then awarded the Knight of the Thistle (KT) IN 1926. Ronald passed away on the 30th.March, 1934.

It is generally thought that Ronald Crauford Munro Ferguson was one of the finest Governor Generals that we have had.

My wife and I attended the Clan Munro International Gathering at Foulis Castle on the 27th.July,2007. Part of the celebrations were held nearby the castle at the Novar Estate. This 20,000 acre property, Ardtalla, is available to guests offering traditional country sports and fishing. Originally developed in the eighteenth century by Sir Hector Munro on his return after serving as a General in the East India Company. The property was consequently handed to his daughter, Jean, who had married Ronald Ferguson of Raith. It is still owned today by the Munro Ferguson family.

To me there is a direct connection between Ronald Crauford Munro Ferguson and the Munro Fergusons of Novar. If any of our members have any information on this matter I would love to hear.

News From Scotland.

Unfortunately, it has been reported by the Kennel Club of the UK that Scottish breeds of dogs, the terriers in particular, are on the decline and are classified as vulnerable. The breeds in danger are the Scottish Terrier, Skye Terrier (Greyfriars Bobby), Dandie Dinmont Terrier and the Gordon Setter. Let's hope this trend will be reversed soonest.

In 1964 I studied Shakespeare's Scottish play, MacBeth. We were very fortunate to study this play in our English course. Now the Perth Museum in Scotland is exhibiting the story of MacBeth, both the reality and Shakespeare's interpretation.

I would take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to our former President Don Munro for his dedication to the Association and his devotion through some difficult times. After Don stood down as President he has, for the last few years continued as our Newsletter Editor. Personally, Don has been a great mentor to me and I wish him all the best. I will now take on the Newsletter duties so I will have a hard act to follow.

All the best, Ray Munro.

***Burt Munro The World's Fastest Indian***

*We continue with the story of Burt Munro whose life story was made into a film “The World’s Fastest Indian” starring Sir Anthony Hopkins. As told by Burt’s son, John. We will see in this issue, it was not all plain sailing.*



## 1964

On return home the next months were spent restoring the engine to working order and fitting it into the Velo frame for testing. As usual manufacturing many spare sprockets, pistons, valves for replacement at Bonneville for the inevitable problems. New cylinders were enlarged to get closer to the maximum capacity allowed in the Class he was running in. I’m not sure but I think a new shell was built for this year also.

Departure was again from Auckland in June, on the same ship as the previous two years arriving in Los Angeles July 11, 1964. He spent a little time there visiting friends and of course seeking out another car.

In his book “Burt Munro – The Lost Interviews” Neill Birss heads some chapters with “Year of the XXX”. The XXX is the car Dad had that year. So this is the year of the Ford. If you want some first grade reading about Burt’s travels, I highly recommend this book as it is written directly from recorded interviews with him.

As happens anywhere weather is not predictable. At Bonneville, which is some 1300 meters above sea level in a mountainous area, heavy rain and high winds are frequent occurrences. Just before Bike Week 1964 there had been flooding of the lake bed and high winds.

After the water had drained off and evaporated this had left the salt surface very rough and still wet. Running was delayed for some days

and some runs were completed before another storm hit with more rain and so 1964 racing was at an end. Mechanical problems and weather aborted two years of preparation and cost. Determination and persistence are the names of the game!



Ford Mustang

The rough rides that had been encountered on the salt had not only damaged the bike but also Burt’s back. This led to interrupted travels, doctor visits and hospitalisation. He was finally able to sell the car and board

the P&O liner for Auckland where he arrived on November 10, 1964. The bike had been shipped separately on a freighter to arrive a bit later.

Of course, you know by now what he did for the next six or seven months in preparation for the 1965 assault on his records. I haven't mentioned yet that, during preparation of the bike, there was some interruption for racing the Velocette in various locations around NZ. Gotta keep busy.



Here is one of the time trials at Timaru on the Velo. Note the sophisticated racing attire!!

The one on the right shows the sort of damage his "blow-ups" caused.



## 1965

When the bike was fully prepared for this year, it was shipped out of Bluff for the USA on a vessel owned by Hamburg South America Line. I don't have a record of its name.

I'm not sure when he arrived in LA but his passport shows that he went ashore in Honolulu on July 2 so it would have been mid-July. This gave him time to purchase a Dodge van for transport to the Salt. Again, buying cheeeep led to more mechanical troubles while getting to Wendover. However, he made it and was able to do repairs to the car there. (For those not aware, Wendover is the nearest town to Bonneville speed track. About 40 km away.)

With the bike ready to run Burt had decided to change his fuel to alcohol instead of methyl alcohol. Some of his buddies contributed a can of the fuel. This was a disastrous decision. On his first run pistons were holed due to excessive heat. After more runs the same thing occurred and he was running out of the spare pistons he had brought with him. Later he learned that the donated fuel had some nitro in it.

Each year Bonneville has two major events. Hot Rod Week and Speed Week. Burt was able to secure additional runs with some assistance from the Afrons brothers. Burt retuned the bike for his regular pure methyl alcohol fuel and had some fast runs of around 270 km/h but not fast enough for any records in the new Under 1,000 cc (61 cubic inch) Class he was running in with the cylinders bored out to 953 cc.

Another attempt gone down without success. Off home again after spending some 2 months at Wendover. This time he took only the engine and gearbox home with him and arrived in Auckland on October 19, 1965.

## 1966

The usual frantic six to eight months repairing, making new pistons, cylinders etc for the Munro Special ensued. All this being fitted in between racing and repairing the Velo in speed trials and other events. When I say "repairing" that is a gross understatement. Rebuilding and remanufacturing are probably more factual.

This year he was to travel on the new P&O ship the Oriana. She was launched in 1959 so was the latest in luxury cruising.

For some weird reason there is no entry in his passport for arrival in the USA. I have no idea why this is of course but there is an entry of him arriving back in NZ on October 21, 1966.



Upon arrival in LA his friend, Sam Pierce, offered Dad storage and work space at his facility in San Gabriel. He took it up. That year, in January, I had visited LA to purchase some equipment for a business I was developing. Following Dad's example, I bought a car in San Francisco and drove to LA via the inland route. I paid \$125 for the car and left it with Sam Pierce who sold it for \$70. I did a fair distance and had my own transport for a couple of weeks so it was a good deal for me.

This year Sam Pierce purchased a fairly new International van for Burt. For the first time he was able to get to "the Salt" (as it is known in the motorcycle fraternity) without have to do work on his vehicle.

He managed some runs during Hot Rod Week. He was still being plagued by the insistent speed wobble which led to a crash at the end of his first run. Some damage was done to the shell but temporary repairs were done in time for the return run within the allocated hour.

Success!! A new Class record for the Munro Special for under 1,000cc of 270.476 km/h (168.066 mph) with engine now out to 920cc.

With more lessons learned it was then back home again to prepare for a return to the Salt in 1967. This was to be THE year for his runs.

John Munro.....September 2024

## FOULIS CASTLE – SEAT OF THE MUNROS OF FOULIS, THE CHIEFS OF THE CLAN MUNRO

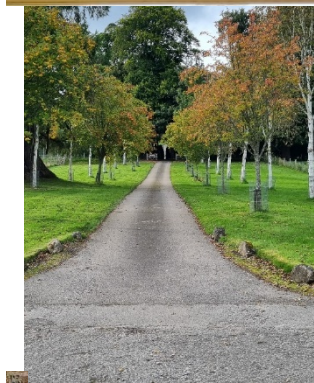
*This is the story of Ian & Bev Frosts visit to Foulis Castle*



In September of last year, 2024, my wife and I enjoyed a much-awaited trip to Scotland. On Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> September after a busy day exploring Loch Ness and Urquhart Castle on a Jacobite Cruise, we returned to Inverness and then made our way past Dingwall towards Evanton. Crossing over the Cromarty Firth Bridge and passing the Storehouse of Foulis Restaurant and Clansman Museum we had our first glimpse of Foulis Castle. On the entrance gates were two pillars each with an eagle on top. Our accommodation for the night was 'The Courtyard', Foulis Castle. Our BnB stay was organised

by Ohma, wife of Finnian Munro who is the son of Mr and Mrs Hector Munro of Foulis, Chief of Clan.

The Courtyard was a very private self-catered apartment set within the castle precinct in a tranquil garden and wooded areas. As guests we enjoyed unlimited access to the landscaped gardens and ponds.

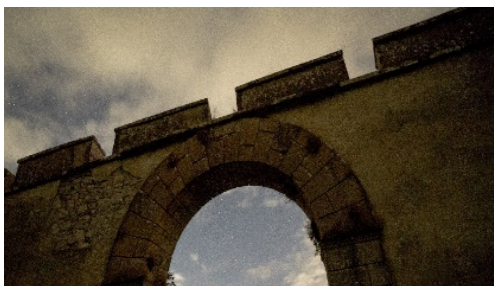


A late afternoon walk via the Foulis Burn took me close to the Cromarty Firth. Ambling along a brook amongst greenery provided many opportunities for photographs along with plenty of bird life.





Of course, it was also important to remember that this was a family home and to respect the owner's privacy. It was a privilege to be permitted access to areas of the house and garden.



We did briefly meet Finnian Munro before he apologised having a number of tasks to attend to on the property. Foulis Castle is also a working farm property.

In the evening, the castle provided interesting silhouettes against the darkening sky. It was a very peaceful setting.



The next morning, Ohma met us along with other visiting 'Munros' to guide us through their 'house'. We had an instant connection with others who shared their family interest in the Munro lineage. As



expected, Foulis Castle housed much of the Clan history including artworks and memorabilia from the past. We were very grateful to Ohma for sharing her stories and widening our knowledge of our past.





This painting hangs proudly in the castle.  
It is Sir Hector Munro, 11<sup>th</sup> Baronet of Foulis. He was appointed the 32<sup>nd</sup> Chief of the Scottish Highland Clan Munro.



My family connection to the Munros comes through my mother's ancestors stemming back to my great great grandfather Benjamin Berry Munro (1857-1940) and his father William Livingstone Munro (1807-1868). My grandmother's great great grandfather was William McKenzie Munro (1776-).

My thanks to Ohma for providing further insights into my ancestral research.

Ian Frost

### *Can You Help*

Allan Munro, our webmaster, was asked this question on Facebook so, if you can help, contact Allan on [website@clanmunroassociation.org.au](mailto:website@clanmunroassociation.org.au)

Hi there, just wondering if you could help me.

I am trying to help a gentleman from the UK locate the closest living relative to William Ranald Munro who was a Captain in WW1.

We know he had 2 sons, Dugald and I forget the other name atm.

He has something he would love to give back to the closest living relative to William Ranald Munro.

Is anyone able to assist us please? .....Deb Sweeney

*This one came from Julian Littler. We had quite a few members from the Isle of Skye so hopefully, someone will be able to help. Let me know if you are able to help Jullian*

Julian wonders if anyone knows about Donald Munro who arrived in Melbourne in 1853 on the Hercules from Scotland, originally from Lower Breakish on Skye. In particular he wonders if anyone knows details of where he spent his time between 1853 and 1865.

Contact Julian Littler on [julian.littler@gmail.com](mailto:julian.littler@gmail.com)

### *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*

**Editor**

Don Munro  
18 Salter Road  
Mt Nasura WA 6112  
Phone 08 9390 5065  
donmunro36@hotmail.com

The stories printed in this newsletter are as presented by the writers and are accepted by the editor on that basis Where necessary they have been abridged to fit the newsletter