



# Clan Munro Australia

## Newsletter of the Clan Munro (Association) Australia

HavHave you visited our Website at <http://clanmunroassociation.org.au>

### Blether

Volume 19 Issue 3

December 2021



#### This Month

Bet & I send Christmas greetings from our family to yours & may the newyear bring you all the joy & happiness you deserve.

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Our Munro Gypsy is still on her trip round Australia by caravan and by her travel reports on facebook is having a wonderful time. She is currently in the south west of Western Australia and loving every minute of it. In this newsletter we look ar her trip through the Northern Territory.

Read about Ross Lambert's wonderful invitation to an event in India celebrating the work of his three times great grandfather, Sir Thomas Munro.

Something I dread – a newsletter returned. This time it is the Meagher family and we haven't been able to contact them. If any of you know of their whereabouts, please let me know

If you are thinking about visiting Foulis Castle here is an update about what you must do. Tours of the castle are conducted on Tuesdays and could you give at least three weeks notice of your intended visit. Times are either 10.30am or 3.00pm. There is no charge for your visit but a donation put in the Clan Munro Association box for the castle restoration fund is appreciated. An appointment to visit the outside and the grounds is not required but please let the Castle when you intend to visit.

Contact our webmaster Ian Munro at [info@clanmunro.org.uk](mailto:info@clanmunro.org.uk) and he will arrange your visit.

Visit the clan Munro website at [www.clanmunro.org.uk](http://www.clanmunro.org.uk) where you will find lots of interesting information about the happenings at Foulis and the Clan in general.

### Welcome

Thought we were going to welcome two new members from WA as a result of The Armadale Highland Gathering and Kilt Run but it was not to be, they seemed keen, took the forms but did not send them in

## *From the Eagles Nest*

Just as we were looking forward to making a comeback to near normality in mid December, along comes another mutation of this horrible Covid virus. Let's hope our fighting spirit once again will endure whatever it manifests. During the lockdown periods my penchant for reading has increased by at least five fold. A recent book that I enjoyed was "Clanlands", covering a trip by two of the stars of the TV series, "Outlander ", namely Sam Heughan and Graham McTavish. It covers their jaunt through the Highlands visiting many historical sites and castles as well as various interesting characters. They visit the Earl of Cromarty, John MacKenzie who is the Clan Chief of the MacKenzies at his residence Castle Leod. You may recall that at our last Gathering at Foulis we were to visit the grounds of Castle Leod near Strathpeffer, however, this was cancelled because of the inclement weather. This was very disappointing as the grounds, I believe, are quite magnificent. The Earl was good enough to join us for dinner at Strathpeffer and spoke very eloquently about Clan matters in general.

Back to the book, which I think is a great read, the two authors banter with one another and discuss a lot of behind the scenes information of the "Outlander " whilst travelling about the Highlands. I believe that they have a new book coming out with their further adventures.

Following on from my comments on the Clearances in the last newsletter I have read a book written by T. M. Devine titled, "The Scottish Clearances ( A History of the Dispossessed)". It is heavy going but an appraisal of a very complicated period in Scottish history.

On a lighter note a new Scotch Whisky Visitor Centre, costing GBP 148m, has been opened in the centre of Edinburgh on Princes Street There will be shops, a whisky cellar and two rooftop bars. A must for your next visit.

And finally a Scottish woman who went viral for helping push a huge dairy truck up a snowy hill has been rewarded with a years supply of milk. It will be welcome as she has three children.

Yours faithfully,

Ray Munro. Chief Officer.

Clan Munro Australia.

## *Sir Thomas Munro*

Last month, our President, Ray Munro, received the following email from India.

*Dear Members of the Munro Clan,*

*It is a great privilege to get in touch with you. After nearly two hundred years of his death, we in south India still benefit from the policy of education and administration of Sir Thomas Munro.*

*Among his many valuable contributions is his role in founding the First Hill Station of India, Ootacamund or Ooty in the Nilgiri mountains of south India. Munro visited this place in 1826, a year before his death. He was a family friend of John Sullivan who was the founder of this hill district.*

*Ooty, the hill station that Munro and Sullivan founded will be celebrating its bicentennial next June. I am attaching a Special Calendar we are issuing in connection with the occasion.*

*How wonderful if any or more of the descendants of Sir Thomas Munro could visit Ooty to take part in the celebrations.*

*With warm wishes,*

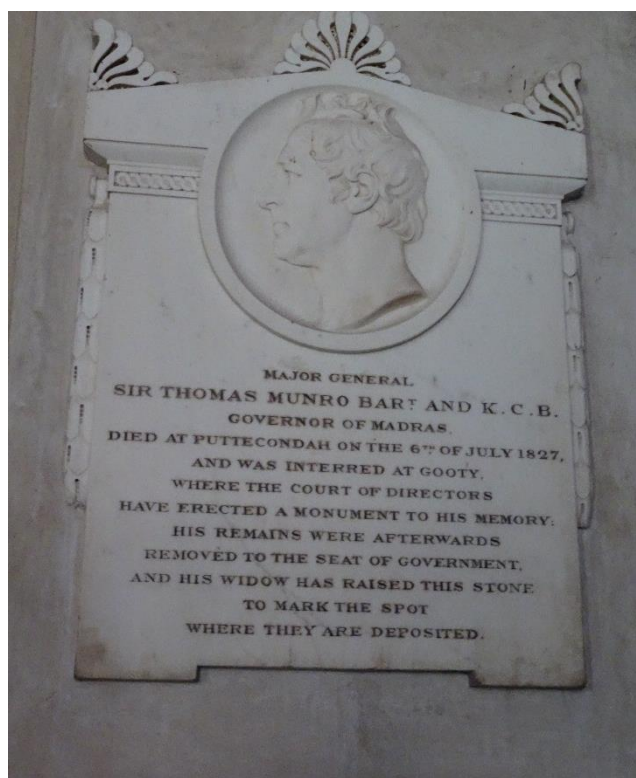
*Dharmalingam Venugopal*

*Honorary Director*

*Nilgiri Documentation Centre*

*The Nilgiris*

*South India*



You might think that the chances of one of our members being the descendant of such an important man in India's history would be remote but that is not the case. Back in Newsletter No 46, I printed the story of our member Ross Lambert's three times great grandfather, none other than the same famous Sir Thomas Munro. What a wonderful invitation to receive and should Ross be able to accept the offer we can look forward to another excellent story from him. He has been to India six times already but has not visited Ooty as he did not know of Sir Thomas Munro's connection with the place.

## Bonny Scotland - Gairloch

*With covid restrictions being relaxed, many of you will be travelling again and there is no better place to visit than the land of our ancestors, the very bonny Scotland. So I thought I would have a trip round and show you a few of the beautiful places you might like to visit. We start with Gairloch and one of the first places you should visit is the museum where you can find out about Gairloch past and present so I contacted Eilidh Smith at the museum and this is what she very kindly sent me.*

### Gairloch – The North West Highland's Hidden Gem

"Gairloch lies on the coast of Wester Ross in the north west Highlands of Scotland, roughly in line with the top end of the Isle of Skye. Many visitors make a beeline for Ullapool – as a jumping off point for the Outer Hebrides – or Kyle of Lochalsh to visit the Isle of Skye. Often the loop of road that would take you to Gairloch is overlooked, but it is a worthy destination on any travellers' itinerary. The area has many tales to tell, but one story from its more recent chapters has a genuine fairy tale quality to it.

Gairloch Museum was founded in the 1970s and has largely been run by volunteers over the decades, employing a Curator to



*Proud winner of museum of the year in 2020*



*There are many intriguing items in the museum. I could not start to guess what curator Karen Buchanan is holding – but she explains;*

*"My favourite object is this Mùdag – it was used for holding fleece while spinning, so it wouldn't blow away. It's carefully made - and as I spin myself I can see how useful an item it is."*

professionally manage the collection and direct project work. Karen Buchanan who took over the reins seven years ago had some immediate and immense challenges on her hands – not least, a crumbling building that the collection had outgrown and the desire to meet the expectations of visitors who were increasing in number year on year.

With the support of the local community, fundraising began and through an incredible amount of hard work, effort and generosity, monies were raised to transform an ugly, eyesore of a building into a reciprocal for the museum collection. The building itself had been built in the 1950s, during the Cold War, as an Anti-Aircraft Operations Room - built to withstand a nuclear blast. It never became operational and instead became a place for Highland Council Road's department to store vehicles, road signs, equipment and tools. The transformation to the architecturally



stunning white building that houses the Museum Collection, retail area, café, education room and galleries is almost unbelievable. From ugly duckling to swan. Almost a fairytale.

The Museum has a gallery featuring the area's natural history and geology, a reconstructed croft house showing how people used to live and much, much more – enough to draw the accolade of being one of five Museums in the UK to share the title “Museum of The Year” as COVID hit.



*In the classroom*

As well as the Museum, visitors to Gairloch are treated to beautiful beaches, stunning lochs and mountain landscapes – wildlife and birdlife, fishing and mountaineering are what many who visit the area come for. More and more, the Highlands are being recognised as a destination to unwind and to relax – but somewhere to tread gently, with understanding and respect for the past and awareness of the fragility of the natural environment.”

You will find beaches where the sand is tinted red, just check the photo on the right. There are beautiful camping grounds and there is also glamping; you will be able to cruise on loch Gairloch and even



find glass bottom boat tours so that you can see the wild life under as well as on top of the water.

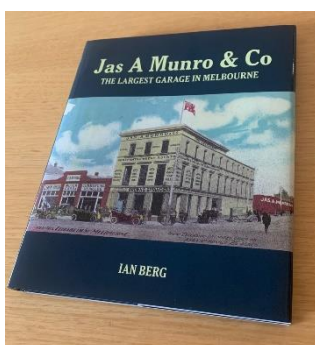


No matter where you go, you will see some of the local wild life. Dolphins, porpoises, whales and puffins abound, You play golf? There is a nine hole golf course but be warned, the views are so spectacular that you might not be able to concentrate on your game. Walking is your thing? Then there are many walks

around the village and there is even an archaeology trail at the back of the museum.; You like a wee dram? Then visit the Badachro distillery, which produces whisky, gin and vodka.

### ***Jas A Munro & Co: The Largest Garage in Melbourne***

*Margaret Delane has sent me an update on her ancestor's garage and here it is.*



Despite Melbourne's extended lockdown periods over recent times, most of its residents would be well aware of the extensive Munro site currently being developed as part of the Queen Victoria Market Precinct Renewal Program. The site is being promoted by the City of Melbourne as the city's largest new community hub and one of Australia's most sustainable mixed-use developments.

The Munro history behind this outstanding site has been published

this year in a book by Melbourne author, Ian Berg. A quality, hard cover book, it includes many glorious photographs which have never previously been published.



Source: [www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/munro](http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/munro)

Ian's book tells the story of James Angus Munro, a Scottish coachbuilder who immigrated to Australia in 1891. After early successes in bed and spring-manufacturing businesses, Munro took up motorcar production a big way in 1910, operating from premises he purchased adjacent to the Queen Victoria Market. At about 2.5 acres, this site was large and versatile, with frontages on both Elizabeth and Therry Streets. It remained in the Munro family as



one of Melbourne's largest private land holdings until its acquisition by the City of Melbourne in 2014 and is the location of the current Munro development

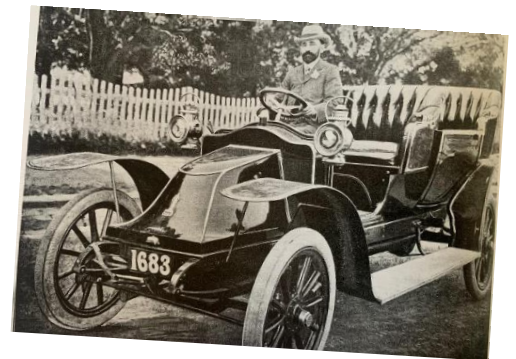
James had grown up in a coach-building family in Edinburgh, so he was quick to recognise the potential of the motorcar, having been smitten by the emergence of these 'horseless carriages' in the early 1900s. In 1907, he imported his first car, a French Bayard, for £900, for personal use. He soon became a keen motorist and an active member of the Automobile Club of Victoria.

By 1910, taking advantage of the surge of interest in motor vehicles, James began assembling and selling the popular Clement-Bayard cars, which he imported from France. James' brother Robert lived in Paris and was a key connection in the process. He soon expanded to other luxury cars imported from Europe including the French *MORS* and the Italian *S.C.A.T.* In 1912, he exhibited cars at the Victorian Motor Exhibition in Melbourne and he was a regular exhibitor at the Royal Society Show Grounds each year, continuing even throughout the First World War when some makes of cars became impossible to procure.

After James' death in 1947, the Munro site remained in the family and the Munro archives were lovingly preserved by his grandson Bob. Through family connections, Ian Berg made contact with Bob Munro in 2018, and was given access to extensive Munro records and images which had remained undisturbed and unseen for decades.

These records have now enabled the story of Jas A Munro to be told, clearly illustrating his significance as an influential figure in the motor trade in Australia and the big legacy he left in the Melbourne motoring world.

James Angus Munro in a Clement-Bayard  
*Source: Ian Berg from Victoria's Leaders in the Motor Car World*



*Jas A Munro & Co: The Largest Garage in Melbourne* is testament to the life of an enterprising man in early twentieth-century Australia.

The book was released this year. It is self-published by the author Ian Berg, and it is of a very limited print run. The cost is A\$50, plus \$15 postage within Australia which includes an individual protective carton. International postage can be confirmed. The posted cost for the UK, Europe or the USA/Canada would be A\$105, and payment can be made by PayPal. New Zealand would be A\$85. If you would like a copy, please email Ian on [bergathol@gmail.com](mailto:bergathol@gmail.com)

Further information about the book can be found at : <https://www.ianberg.org> and about the Munro development at: [www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/Munro](http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/Munro)

*Note: James Angus Munro was a descendant of William Munro and Jean/Janet (nee Leslie) who lived in the Invergordon area of Ross-shire from about 1795 to at least 1806. James' father, Alexander Munro, ran a coach-building business in the Broughton Markets of Edinburgh from 1842 for at least four decades. If any readers can throw any light on this branch of the Munros, please contact Marg Delane, great granddaughter of James Angus Munro, on [marg.delane@hotmail.com.au](mailto:marg.delane@hotmail.com.au)*



## A Munro on the Move

*This is the second episode of our Gypsy, Cynthia Munro on her travels round Australia and she is having a great time. She has left us way behind as she is, as I write this, in the south of Western Australia. But let us read today of her travels in the Northern Territory*



It's been a busy few weeks. We've travelled a lot of kms almost always on the bitumen but I have to say, my old impression of NT roads being beautiful wide thoroughfares has taken a knocking. There's been many wonderful roads, don't get me wrong, but we've also travelled a lot of country that is single lane, with 'overtaking lanes' signposted as how many kms away they are! Only in Australia would you see a sign saying 'Overtaking Lane in 45kms'. I think the biggest one we saw was 60kms away! We've also come across some one lane bridges where one bank has right of way and you simply wait until there's no one left on that side before you head across. It all works very well and I understand that when there's so

few people, Governments don't like spending \$s on infrastructure, but it's a bit of a shock when you come across it sometimes.

And talking about signs, there was another 'only in Australia' one at the dinosaur museum on the jump up at Winton. It was about the flies! It rated the fly problem, ending with 'Free Protein' when they are so bad all you seem to do is swallow them. I had to assure some lady there that the flies weren't bad at all while we were there. She was complaining about how many there were, but honestly, your food was not in danger, nor were you in danger of swallowing any just because you were talking – but they have been that bad. A few years ago, I was in Winton and the flies were unbelievable – even dogs were wearing fly veils!



We've spent a week in Darwin and tried to see all the usual touristy things. It was a great visit. I spent quite a bit of time in museums so of course got a huge history lesson on the bombing of Darwin. They really have done a great job with the museums there. I don't mind reading stuff but you really don't have to, they are set up so well with video clips and audio clips.

In the big City Museum, there is a section dedicated to Cyclone Tracey. Again, they've done that so well, and there are many audio clips available, recorded from people who experienced it. It was obviously a very different city then to what we see today. I remember so well on Boxing Day, hearing that Darwin had been wiped off the map and wondering how that could be. There were great areas of what was Darwin in the day that that was reality. 25,000 people were air lifted out within days and I know some of them have never ever been back.



I wanted to share a funny story about our time at Doctors Gully in Darwin. It's a fish sanctuary, open to the sea and you go there to see fish feeding. It's amazing and fun. We'd been there over an hour and I was just checking I had all the photos I wanted before we left when a family arrived that a teenage son and his mate. Teenage son was complaining that he didn't want to be a part of the 'dumb fish feeding' and his mate just sat back on the concrete benches and was silent. You could almost see him thinking 'I'm not a kid. They can't make me do stupid fish feeding.' With family encouragement, the son

took a piece of bread and went into the water to feed the fish with a drooping manner that reminded me of some

old hound dog in cartoons when I was a kid. Well, within minutes, with the fish piling up around his feet and fighting over the bits of bread in his hands, he'd forgotten all about how dumb this fish feeding lark was and was almost laughing. There was pure joy written all over the son's face. Only minutes after that, his silent mate up in the viewing area had taken a piece of bread and was headed down to join him. In such a short time, there were two young men, grinning from ear to ear and having the time of their lives. It was an illustration of the simple things in life giving so much joy. Their joy was infectious and many of us, certainly all the parents there were also grinning fit to bust at their simple joy. Age is no barrier to the fun they learnt.

Stay well everyone.

### ***Murder of the Duke of Sutherland***

*Last newsletter I wrote about the murder of the Duke of Sutherland. I didn't have room to include a poem that was written about the murder, so here it is now.*

Tw'as in that golden Western Land,  
Where the hardy diggers toil,  
And, with their strong and sturdy hands,  
Wrest the treasure from the soil.

Where the mulga plains stretch far and wide  
With golden reefs between  
There, scattered tents and houses form'd,  
The township of Nannine.

Tw'as on the bright and summer day,  
At the noontide, hot and clear,  
Two pistol shots rang out apace,  
And closed a bright career.

Yes! Tw'as done; the ghastly deed,  
And none could it recall,  
For there were found poor Sutherland  
His heart pierced by a ball.

But, still the brutal murderer,  
As if for blood did yearn,  
Smote again as his victim lay,  
And fiendishly did him spurn.

No remorse this murderer felt  
For the cruel deed he'd done,  
But calmly walked he to his tent,  
And there a note begun.

"Tw'as I who shot John Sutherland,  
So therefore no one blamed",  
Such was the note the people found  
When to his side there came.

But though remorse he did not feel  
Yet he, with fear did quake,  
And dreading vengeance that would come  
His own life he did take.

Tw'as thus that awful tragedy  
Took place in the light of day,  
And two of God's

own image pass'd  
From his bright world away.

H E F Mulga Lodge, Nannine 28 February 1895

### ***Vale Graham Gates***

It is with sadness I have to announce the passing of another of our long time members. We send our condolences to Graham Gates family. Graham will be sadly missed.

## ***The Armadale Highland Gathering and Kilt Run***



Bet, Don & family at the Munro Table

With about 20,000 people attending this year, the Armadale Highland Gathering & Kilt run gets bigger and better each year. The number of participants in the Kilt Run doubled this year but we are not yet ready to beat the record in the Guinness Book of Records. The Scottish dogs are always a big hit as are the lovely highland dancers. The heavy events and the Medieval performers in their costumes recreating historical Scottish battles drew the audiences in. The highland cattle attracted crowds, The pipe bands are always a big attractions and the people in the Clan Village would have been rushed off their feet with people looking for



Don & Cynthia

their ancestors, what clan they belonged to and what tartan they could wear, if it was not for the fact that we had seats to sit on. Haggis, square sausage and all sorts of Scottish food was on sale for us to taste and enjoy and the craft section was great. The Town Crier was big hit letting everyone know what was on. A special happening was a visit from our travelling Munro, Cynthia. I had a special big hug!!

### ***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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By the editor on that basis Where necessary they have been abridged to fit the newsletter