We have Jillian Oppenheimer’s permission to reprint stories from her excellent book on her family’s history and we start this month with the story of her first family before they came out to Australia. Jillian’s very popular book is now out of print so this will probably be the only opportunity you will have to read these very interesting stories. It might even encourage you to write your own - I have started mine!

Ohma Munro of Foulis emailed me looking for photos from the Gathering. I forwarded it to our members who were there, so the photos should all be there by now. Ohma is helping put together a booklet about the Gathering, so that will be interesting to see when it comes out.

At the Gathering Brooke Munro and husband Colin offered to set up a Facebook page and it is now up and running, so check out Clan Munro Association, click on ‘like’ and make a comment. It is constructed on the same basis as their own Facebook page which links to their business website, so ours will link to our website.

By chance we have we have the businesses of two of our newest members highlighted in this issue. If you would like your business included in future issues, just let me know and I will be happy to feature you.

I search the internet for Munro stories for the newsletter but I would much rather tell your story. There must be so many interesting stories out there. Please send them to me.

One new member – Dr John Hindle Jackson from Queensland. John can trace his ancestry back to Janet Munro who married John Bardsley in Sydney in 1848. When I read John’s application form I guessed that he was a retired geologist but I was only partly right - John is a semi retired geologist but he is also a full time artist. Read about John and his art later in the newsletter.
The former oil & gas executive turned artist describes his passion for painting pictures of geological formations, now known as “GeoArt”

Identifying and explaining rock formations are the expected norm for senior geologists, but an innovative, visual way of presenting the geology of petroleum discoveries has proved rewarding for one former oil & gas executive.

Dr John Jackson, known as the ‘Rock Doctor’, decided to use paintings as a way of explaining geological formations to dozens of nationalities while working in South Africa, Uganda and Mali.

'There I found people who had little or no knowledge of what lies below the soil. So to get their attention I introduced them to colourful paintings I made on bed-sheets and told them stories about the rocks that provided their jobs that supported their families,' he says.

'It proved very effective. So much so, that soon I was being asked by the Africans if I could turn my paintings into kaffans.'

A keen painter and former executive with Shell, Santos and Bond Petroleum, Dr Jackson became renowned for his unique combination of geology and art throughout his career, implementing this method on sites across Portugal, the United Kingdom, Canada, the United States and throughout Australia.

Dr Jackson now lives on a small farm in Queensland where he has established a studio to perfect his craft of ‘GeoArt’.

His work has featured at exhibitions at the University of Trieste in Italy, Seattle and Washington and has also been acquired by the University of New England and the Australian Petroleum Production & Exploration Association (APPEA) for their collections.

Dr Jackson’s work has been described as “flamboyant, colourful, or surreal.... (using) art to explain complex geological ideas and processes”;

Detailing landscapes that are hidden from everyday life, his artworks use bright colours to provide a new understanding of the earth.

Along with his previous work overseas, Dr Jackson was Chairman of the Membership Committee for the Australian Petroleum Exploration Association Council (now APPEA) during the 1980s.

He was recently awarded the prestigious Reg Sprigg Medal by current APPEA Chairman David Knox for outstanding service to the industry. This recognised his work with the environment, teaching, art and geological stories, as well as his role in facilitating the first Australian offshore oilfield in Western Australia in 1986.

"Dr Jackson has left a strong legacy in the Australian oil and gas industry. He is an exceptionally good geologist and petroleum executive: an influential industry advocate, a gifted raconteur, and a creative artist and educationalist." Mr Knox says.

"John’s paintings are not only instructive, they are also beautiful".

Dr Jackson still consults for international oil & gas companies, but spends most of his time creating GeoArt and promoting awareness of geology to local school students.
I asked Colin and Brooke Munro for a photo of their two lovely daughters, Ruby and Arkie who were our youngest Aussie Munros at the Clan Gathering and discovered that John Jackson is not our only artist. This is what they told me.

Our new venture is called ‘Mr and Mrs Munro’. We have collaborated and started a label of handmade furniture and art. While we were away we had pieces published in a local magazine and the Australian magazine Country Style. Things are really starting to kick off, which is very exciting for our little family! We have our web page up and running at www.mrandmrsmunro.com

It is so good to see a young couple making good with a new venture. Colin and Brooke’s rustic furniture and art are so exciting – please visit their website and see for yourselves. This is a little of what you will find on their website.

Mr & Mrs Munro were married in 2008 and have been collaborating ever since. Mr & Mrs Munro are, to their friends, Colin and Brooke. Colin has spent his life working with natural materials, bringing his affection for them into his work building spaces for people to live in. Brooke studied and mastered basketry techniques early in life, and has turned that knowledge, combined with a natural affinity for the outdoors, into contemporary expressions of that art. Together, Mr & Mrs Munro produce unique ‘Mr’ & ‘Mrs’ pieces in their individual mediums, while also collaborating on joint sculptural forms that represent the coming together of the both of them. Passionate about sustainability, Mr & Mrs Munro pieces are primarily constructed from found objects - but little is limited by that (it’s amazing what you can find when you look hard enough). And while all of that may sound a bit wanky - blame the writer - for it is the softness and sympathy of their work that bares the greatest fruit. It is honest, rare, beautiful, and real.

We are fortunate to have Jillian Oppenheimer as a member. Jillian has written an excellent book about her family history called “Munros’ Luck” - from Scotland to Keera, Weebollabolla, Boombah and Ross Roy. She has given us permission to use her family stories and this one is about Donald Munro and Margaret MacPherson. Interestingly, this first story is about their life in Scotland before they migrated to Australia and it describes the life and hardships there that so many of our ancestors would have had to endure before they too, took that huge step that took them to the other side of the world. Their story in Australia will come later.

Until the end of the Napoleonic wars agricultural conditions were favourable to the farmers on the Black Isle. If work could not be found, men went into the army for employment. It was also well positioned for fishing, due to the long estuaries surrounding its land mass, and some Munros combined crofting with fishing. From 1814 however, there was a post-war collapse. Prices dropped and evictions resulted as landowners tried to obtain better returns from their lands through enclosures.

In the 1830s the economic slump increased, with a serious crop failure in 1836-7, and there was a cholera epidemic. The seasonal migration of workers from the Black Isle for the southern harvest became more permanent. Some, however, found their jobs taken by impoverished Irish labourers escaping the Irish potato famine, which was as serious as the failure of the potato crop in western Scotland. The blight, Phytophthora infestans, destroyed most of the Irish and western Scottish crops in 1846 and continued to effect potato crops for the next ten years.
The severe weather in Easter Ross when its potato crop failed in August 1846 was followed by renewed ‘meal riots’ in early 1847, a symptom of the desperation of the farming community. Starving people tried to obstruct the loading into ships of grain to be exported from storehouses or girels. On two occasions the Foulis Rent House, at the ferry crossing on the northern side of Cromarty Firth, was surrounded by people trying to prevent agricultural produce being loaded on ships for sale to other parts of the country.

Against these religious, political and social changes we will examine our branch of the Munro Clan - that is Donald and Margaret Munro of Keera, Bingara in New South Wales, and their family in Scotland.

It is useful to learn something of Donald Munro’s own family background. They had lived on the Black Isle for many generations. His grandfather, John Munro, who was a miller at Bainabean, had married Isobel Macleod in about 1764. Bainabean is a large farm near the main road running east towards Cromarty. It is only a short distance to Alcaig, where a quay had been erected and a ferry to Dingwall established. It was only a short ride across the firth to Dingwall, a distance of about two miles, although it was five miles round the end of the firth over the Conan bridge. Sloops, or small boats with a shallow draft, brought coal and lime to Alcaig and took on timber for return loads. John Munro, the miller of Bainabean, may have been a cousin of the tenant of Bainabean, another John Munro, or just a clansman, but the relationship has not been proved. John and Isobel Munro had two daughters, Isobel born in September 1765, Catherine born 1768 and a son Donald, born in August 1770 before their fourth child, Alexander, was born on 13 March 1772. By then John and Isobel Munro were living at Knocknaftanaig about two miles south west from Bainabean. This farm remained the Munro family home until at least 1839. They grew oats and barley as well as potatoes, turnips and other vegetables, and would have had a few cattle for dairy purposes and possibly a horse for haulage. It is unlikely that they drove a gig and most travel would have been on foot to the nearest village and church.

Alexander Munro, son of the miller John Munro, was a farmer and married on 6 May 1812 in the old Urquhart church, Elizabeth Ross, daughter of Elizabeth Forbes and George Ross, also from the Black Isle. At the time of his marriage Alexander was forty years old; such a late age at marriage could be an indication of depressed economic conditions. They had at least six children, of whom Donald was the second child and eldest son.

In a hand written note his grand-daughter, Margaret, has described some family details, which would have been related to her by her parents. She says that Alexander had a farm called Croft-na-Famolth near Dingwall. She described it as ‘a big place as they kept six ploughmen’. Presumably they worked with the old fashioned Scotch plough commonly used at the time, which was made of wood and difficult to work so that it needed a large number of men to operate it. Margaret said that although they believed the farm was held on a 99 year lease, this was not acknowledged after Alexander’s death in the 1830s. Elizabeth took the case to law but the laird won, as the lease was not in her name. It would seem that this farm was one whose name disappeared after it was amalgamated into an adjoining larger farm, or Margaret misremembered the name Knocknaftanaig. She noted that, when the farm lease was withdrawn, the family lost everything and most of them migrated - some to Canada and others to Australia. Margaret also mentioned Ryefield, the principal house on the Ferrintosh estate, where the factor or chamberlain of Ferrintosh resided. At one time he was a Mackenzie but she mentioned the Tullochs, who were family friends, residing there when her family lived nearby and who also migrated to Australia.

Many Scots, receiving encouraging news from friends and family who had emigrated, and reading the newspaper advertisements and reports being published in local newspapers at that time, believed that they could make a better life in the New World. As the situation on the Black Isle worsened for Donald Munro’s family, he became one of those ready to grasp the opportunity to leave.

Donald Munro, the eldest son of Alexander and Elizabeth, was born in March 1817 and baptised in the old church of Urquhart and Logie Wester. Here generations of his family had worshipped and celebrated the important events of their lives. This church, now a ruin, dated back to the earliest introduction of Christianity to the Black Isle and was the site of an important seventh century Celtic church. By the time of Donald’s birth Presbyterianism was the dominant faith on the Black Isle. However by 1842, when he was married, the Presbyterian Church was split with factional disputes, which culminated in the disruption of 1843. He was to discover that these factions were also to split the Presbyterian Church in Australia.
In 1817 there was already misery and economic uncertainty for his family. Donald’s early life was one of struggle and an awareness of his parents’ hard work supporting a young family. With his brothers and sisters he attended school and was taught grammar and to write and read the Scriptures in both Gaelic and English. Many years later when Donald migrated he took with him Bibles in both languages. Other subjects taught included arithmetic, book-keeping, Latin and geography. Attendance at school was most regular in winter and spring, but lessened as summer passed, when all family members were needed in the fields to help with the harvest. During Donald’s childhood and youth, farming life became increasingly difficult. By the time he was married, aged twenty-seven, the security of his father’s croft had been removed. He had worked at many varied jobs including milling at Balnabeen and Alcaig on the Ferrintosh estate and also in the nearby centre of Dingwall. In the 1790s there was no mention of a mill in the parish of Urquhart and Logie Wester, but by 1840 there were seven and more being planned. Donald was willing to try any occupation that could improve his position in the world and became a young man determined to make his own luck.

Donald had to help his parents on the farm as soon as he could walk. He learnt to feed animals, to milk, plough and harvest crops, and to do all the numerous tasks on a small farm. He grew to be a tall man over six feet in height and incredibly strong. These physical strengths enabled him to obtain work: particularly at the nearby mills where bags of grain had to be lifted. At times his occupation was given as miller, and also grocer when he worked in Alcaig, the nearby village within walking distance of Balnabeen, Knocknafanaig and Ryefield, all farms on the Ferrintosh estate. He was obviously contributing to the family income before his marriage.

There is no doubt that by the time Donald Munro married in 1842 the family was landless. In the 1841 census he is described as a farmer at the mill in Dingwall and the following year his occupation is given as grocer at Alcaig. At the 1841 census there is also a widow Munro living at Alcaig, who may have been Donald’s mother Elizabeth. Donald could have lived on the Black Isle but travelled daily or weekly to Dingwall to work in the mill there. Between 1843 and 1845 when his children were born in Dingwall Donald and Margaret had moved there to live.

Their first child, Alexander George Forbes Munro, was born in Dingwall on 1 July 1843 and baptised at the new Free Presbyterian church on the Black Isle. He was named after his paternal grandfather, and possibly his maternal grandparents, George and Forbes. There could also have been a gesture to the Forbes, the long term owners of the Ferrintosh estate. Two years later on 20 March 1845, a daughter, Margaret, named after her mother and maternal grandmother, was born also in Dingwall.

As the 1840s progressed life became increasingly difficult for dispossessed farmers and cottars. The shortage of food was not as acute on the east coast of Scotland as on the west but as time passed the famine had become serious. Epidemics of typhus broke out in 1847, and in 1848 a second burst of cholera brought above average numbers of deaths throughout the country. Fear of its effects on their young family would have been

Dingwall as Donald Munro would have known it, 1824 [Postcard from painting of I Clark]
one of the factors which prompted Donald and Margaret to leave home. Some landless farmers had found work as the railway was extended north but by 1848 much of this had been completed and unemployment increased.

Within a year the problems of Scotland’s depressed agricultural conditions became particularly serious for Donald as milling also was effected and wages fell. Donald and Margaret could see no hope for improvement of their situation and decided to leave the Highlands permanently to seek work in the lowland area between Glasgow and Edinburgh. Their third child, a daughter Elizabeth Ross, named after her paternal grandmother, was born on 8 July 1846 at West Calder west of Edinburgh. Within two years a fourth child and second son, John Macpherson Munro, named after his maternal grandfather, was born on 2 April 1848, this time at Kirkliston, further east towards Edinburgh. Less than a fortnight after John’s birth the family embarked for Australia.

Having made the first and most difficult decision to leave home, Donald and Margaret were already mobile and once in the Lowland area, discovered that their prospects were not much better than in the Highlands. Within a year they decided to leave Scotland and wrote to Donald’s kinsman Alexander Munro, by then a successful businessman in Singleton, New South Wales. Mails took several months between Scotland and Australia so it would have taken about a year to settle details of the arrangement with Alexander Munro. They were offered a position managing one of his rural properties beyond the limits of settlement in the colony and saw it as the opportunity they needed to escape from the depressed conditions in Scotland. They were determined to grasp the chance to improve their situation in Australia and accepted his offer to pay their passage to New South Wales. In return they made a commitment to manage Alexander Munro’s newly acquired pastoral run of Tariora on the Liverpool Plains. They had little idea of what the future held from in Australia but it could not have been worse, they believed, than the bleak prospects of Scotland at that time. They determined to seize the opportunity to make their own luck in a new country.

With their young family, varying in age from five years to a few weeks, Donald and Margaret embarked as steerage passengers on the John Gray, which sailed from Glasgow on 12 April 1848. It was to be a long and tedious journey of five months in cramped conditions with poor food and their second son John’s lifetime of poor health may have been caused by his poor nutrition as a baby during the voyage.

They were not the only members of their Munro family to migrate. Donald and Margaret’s move perhaps encouraged others to follow their initiative. Donald’s eldest sister, Catherine, who married William Urquhart, had a family of seven children and emigrated to New South Wales under the bounty scheme in 1856. They lived at Glennies Creek near Singleton where her husband died. Some of her children later lived in Bingara. Her sisters Ann, who married Donald Mackenzie and Christina, who married a cousin Andrew Ross, both migrated with their families to Canada. Several of them came to New South Wales but later returned to live in Canada. Her brother Hugh married his cousin Ann Ross and emigrated with his seven children to St James Island, British Columbia in Canada. He too lived for a short time in Australia near Tamworth before settling permanently in Canada. The third brother Alexander, who did not marry, remained with their mother until her death at Alcaig in Scotland, when he went to Canada and is said to have been killed fighting in the American Civil War.

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Although Donald and Margaret and their young family were part of the 282 Scots migrating to Australia in 1848, this number increased over the following decade as government and non-government schemes assisted the payment of passages of Scottish migrants. The attraction of gold discoveries brought more new settlers. In 1852, 5,450 Scots emigrated, or 15 percent of the annual number of emigrants from Scotland went to Australia in that year. However the distance and the costly passage between Britain and Australia prevented numbers reaching the heights which North America received during the nineteenth century. Migration to the United States and Canada by the easiest, cheapest and safest route was taken by most Scots, including many Munros. Migration to Australia was an exception to the major pattern of emigration and needs an explanation. In the case of Donald Munro and his related families, the explanation is clear. A kinsman, Alexander Munro, paid their passages and offered work on their arrival. But why was Alexander Munro in Australia? He started a chain of migration but we must ask why he was in Australia to start the chain.

The chain migration, begun by Alexander Munro in 1831, followed by Donald Munro and his family in 1848, was to continue with other Munro kinsmen who were assisted in various ways to start a new life, with greater opportunities, in New South Wales. These dispossessed Scots were land-hungry and had a burning ambition to succeed in a way that was impossible for them in the Scotland they left behind.
To follow the links in the chain we must next look at the story of Alexander Munro, who was personally responsible, in the mid nineteenth century, for a large number of his clan members migrating with their families to Australia, and particularly to northern New South Wales.

**Old Obituaries**

This is another in our series of Old obituaries. This one is from the Northern Star Lismore, NSW, on Monday 6 July 1931 and is for Mr Donald Munro. As usual, let me know if Donald is one of your ancestors.

The death occurred of Mr. Donald Munro, at the age of 97 years, at Maclean, early on Friday morning. The late Donald Munro, from the time he first arrived on the Clarence River in 1854 until he retired in 1918, was closely identified for a period of 6 1/2 years with the farming and grazing industries of the district. He was born at Snizort, in the Isle of Skye, Scotland, and was the eldest son of the late Charles and Mrs. Munro, who came to this State with members of their family on December 19, 1852. Two years later he arrived at Grafton where he soon obtained employment clearing a block of land in Dobie Street, the site being where Weippep’s orchard stands. On the advice of the late W. A. B. Greaves, who was a surveyor at that time, he was prevailed upon to take a five years’ clearing lease of farms at Clarenza, owned by the late John Piper McKenzie, of Sydney, who in the early days was well known in Sydney as official assignee. After he had completed his clearing lease and rented the farms from Mr. McKenzie at Clarenza, Mr. Munro sent for his parents and brothers and sisters, who arrived on the river early in 1860 and assisted him in working the farm.

"With the introduction of the Sir John Robertson Act, Mr. Munro selected two further blocks on the South Arm, being the property now held by Mr. R. Page. His brother, Hugh, at this time had selected a property on the Woodford Dale side of Woodford Island and was the first selector under the Act.

Mr. Munro had his troubles and losses through floods, but being a man of indomitable will, persevered and, besides farming, turned his efforts to breeding and grazing. In addition to breeding cattle, Mr. Munro was a noted breeder of Clydesdale draught horses and the “D.M.” brand of horses was noted throughout the State. Mr. Munro exhibited horses and cattle bred by him at the early Grafton shows. He was one of the original members of the C.P. and A. Society, being one who went around with a list to get the society established at Grafton. He married Susan McDonald, a daughter of the late Allan and Mrs. McDonald, formerly of Maclean and Palmer’s Channel. Mrs. Munro survives also three sons and one daughter. Mrs. Alexander Munro, of Steve King Plains, Richmond River, is the only survivor of the Munro family who came out to Australia in 1852.

**Can You Help?**

Our member, Daphne Grinberg has her finger in many pies, one of which is indexing for Family Search. Doing this she came across this entry which, hopefully, will help someone.

Birth, Bahamas, District of Long Island
13 December 1856, Eliza GARDNER, Female
Father, Archibald Gardner, Mother, Mary Ann Gardner formerly MUNRO

John Collins tried to access us through our now defunct website – wish I knew how to delete it!!

This is what John said - My great grandfather on my maternal side was George Lumb. His sister, Rachel Lumb married Frederick Seymour Munro 11/11/1883 in Sydney. Their marriage notice attached states he was second son of the late Hor. H. Munro and grandson of Sir Charles Munro. Bart K.C.M.G. of Fowlis Castle, Dingwall, Scotland and Ardullie House, Ross-shire.

I have consulted a book, History of the Munros of Fowlis by Alexander MacKenzie (pub. 1898). On page 156 it mentions Harry as the son of Sir Charles and that he had a son George Hamilton – no mention of Frederick Seymour. Interestingly, Harry had a brother, Frederick, born 1832, who married in Australia. The Frederick Seymour Munro, I am referring to was born, according to his marriage certificate at Dingwall, Scotland in ca 1853.

Frederick Seymour Munro seems to have had an adventurous life. He is shown as a seaman on his marriage certificate. I found a record in the National Archives, UK of a Frederick Seymour Munro, born 5/11/1853 at
Kennington in Surrey (not Dingwall, Scotland, although this may have been lack of knowledge or subterfuge on someone’s part). I have not found any birth record for him in England or Scotland. He served on the ship “Impregnable” in 1873, having volunteered in 1869. There are 2 records of a seaman Munro arriving by ship in Sydney from UK. One on 3/2/1879 was a Fredrick, said to come from “Duczwall”, which could be Dingwall. The other a P S Munro from Dingwall on 24/6/1883, could be F S. This would tie in with the marriage to Rachel on 11/11/1883. Finally, an F S Munro departed Sydney for London as a passenger on 20/4/1910, but I think this one is doubtful.

I have just been in contact with an Enrique Munro, who lives in Chile, who has sent me various documents relating to a Frederick Seymour Munro from whom he is descended. It appears to be the same one. He really did have a busy life. He also married twice more in Chile and had 7 children by the third wife. I have not found any record of him divorcing my ancestor, Rachel Lumb, although this doesn’t mean he didn’t. I have also found no record of any children by Rachel. It appears he worked for some years as a store keeper for Chile Exploration Co. at the famous copper mines at Chu Quicamata in Chile. On a document Enrique has provided to me, Frederick Seymour gives names of his parents as Harry and Mary Browne, his brother as Harry? and cousin as Sir Hector Munro of Fowlis Castle, Dingwall. I have attached the part of the document with these names. I couldn’t decide what the brother’s second name was.

I realise this person, Frederick Seymour Munro could be a fraud or at least have embellished his past. However, I suppose he could also be a second son disowned and gone off to start a new life. Can anyone shed any light on this story please?

You can contact John on johilcol@iinet.net.au and you know where to contact Don.

Annual Membership: $25.00  Spouse or children of member under 18 years $8.00**
Three Years: $55.00  Spouse or children of member under 18 years (3 years) $20.00**
Ten Years: $160.00  Spouse or children of member under 18 years (10 years) $70.00**

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Up to Age 40: 3 X 10 Year Dues $480.00
Age 40 to 50: 2 X 10 Year Dues $320.00
Age 50 to 60: 1½ X 10 Year Dues $240.00
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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.