



Clan Munro Australia

Newsletter of the Clan Munro (Association) Australia

AUSTRALIA

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Volume 23 Issue 3 December 2024



Blether

This Month

A very Merry Christmas and a happy New Year to everyone

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

Very pleasing to hear that members are enjoying the first Issue of the story of Burt Munro, the “Fastest Indian” and are looking forward to the next episode which is in this newsletter.

Details of how to get on the Foulis Castle and Garden Tour can be found on our website and the Clan Munro website. If you do not have internet access, write to me & I will give you details.

In this issue you will find details of an excellent initiation by our Webmaster, Allan aimed at attracting younger members to the Clan.

Check out the Clan Munro website where you will find out lots of interesting detail about our Clan and its history.

Welcome

New member, The Hon. Jacqui Munro is a member of the NSW Upper House and is the Shadow Minister for the Arts. Jaqui’s ancestors came from Scotland in the mid to late 1800s and settled in Macleay and Macksville.

New member, Riley Munro, from NSW is a youth worker in multiple Schools and up to September was a Councillor on Campbelltown City Council. Riley's earliest ancestors are Donald and Catherine Munro from Breakish on the Isle of Skye, who came to Victoria on the HMS Hercules in 1853 together with their five children. Riley is descended from one of these, Donald MacGillivray Munro, his three times great grandfather, who was born in 1843 on the Isle of Skye. Donald married Catherine Mackinnon in Mortlake Victoria in 1890. *Eds note – I wonder if this was the same Catherine Mackinnon who also came on the HMS Hercules in 1853, as a six year old?*

From the Eagles Nest

Dear Cousins,

Christmas is fast approaching. It seems to come quicker the older you become. Unlike, for me, the 1950's went on forever with not a care in the world; unlike to-day where the world is in chaos. Let's hope that 2025 finds a better place in which we can attack more important matters other than wars, border disputes and other inequalities.

Hunter Valley Highland Games.

On the 24th August we attended the above mentioned Gathering in Lovedale situated in the beautiful wine country of the Hunter Valley. The winery which hosted the Games is owned by people of Scottish origin and reported to be one of the oldest vineyards in the area. Elsewhere in the newsletter is an account of our stall exhibit and the games that took place by our webmaster, Allan. However, we had a wee disaster with our gazebo. During the day the weather changed from rain to sunshine to sudden bursts of gale force winds. We sort of managed the conditions until 2PM when the wind decided to up the ante. The gazebo took off with me clinging to it desperately. I sent an SOS to Allan who was watching the games events. We managed to bring everything under control, then looking around we could see other stalls in a similar predicament. I can see the funny side now but not at the time. Despite the weather the day was more successful than the organisers had hoped even if they did run out of haggis and beer.

Colour Sargeant James Munro, VC.

Recently I came across the story of James Munro, VC. James was born on the 11th. October, 1826. His father, also James, and his mother Effie Ross lived in Easter Ross. James the younger has an unknown childhood.

He joined the 93rd Highlanders on the 27th April, 1846. He was a private for over six years before being promoted to Corporal on the 1st April, 1853 then to Sergeant on the 30th June, 1854. At that time, he was serving in the Crimea. After Crimea he and the 93rd were sent to India where on the 25th February, 1857 was promoted to Colour Sargeant. Meanwhile he married Janet Munro on the 20th December, 1850 in the parish of Kiltearn, Ross-shire.



James won his VC on the 16th November, 1857 for the rescue of badly wounded and in danger of his life, Captain Walsh of the same corps at Secundro Bagh. Unfortunately, James suffered fractured lumbar vertebrae during the rescue owing to the entry of musket balls. Because of the wounds pieces of bone were dislodged and he never really healed.

On the 26th October, 1858 after returning to Chatham in Kent he was declared unfit for service. Over a period of time, he became mentally unstable and was admitted to Craig Dunain, the Inverness District Asylum. By early 1871 he was suffering from paralysis which caused him to slip into a coma. He died on the 15th February, 1871. It is believed that he was buried in the cemetery attached to the hospital without any fanfare. However, there are moves afoot to rectify this, which is only proper for such a man.

News from Scotland.

With the advent of Armistice Day on the 11th November I was reminded of the 150,000 Scots who died in the First World War. The German enemy on the battle fields named the Scots "Die Damen aus der Holle" (Ladies from Hell or Devils in Skirts). The Scots Regiments were revered by the Germans.

During an archaeological dig in the Moray Fort near the town of Burghead a Pictish ring was unearthed. It is believed to be between 1000 and 1500 hundred years old and features a garnet in the centre.

What next? Johnnie Walker is trialling a paper based 90% bottle of Johnnie Walker Black. It has a very thin plastic liner. The Johnnie Walker Princes Street 1820 bar in Edinburgh are the ones trialling the bottle.

The wild cattle of Europe, the Aurochs, were last seen in Poland in 1627 owing to hunting and habitat loss. Now the Trees for Life organisation is introducing 15 Tauros cattle from the Netherlands to Dundreggan Estate near Loch Ness. The Tauros are very closely related to the Aurochs. It is believed that they will contribute to the ecological well being of the countryside.

The city of Stirling is celebrating this year its 900 year anniversary of being proclaimed as a Royal Burgh by King David 1st in 1124.

A reminder that the last season of the "Outlander" commences on the 23rd November.

Merry Christmas and a Happy Hogmanay to all.

Royal Visit

New member, The Hon. Jacqui Munro is a member of the NSW Upper House and is the Shadow Minister for the Arts and this is her inaugural speech to the Upper House.

Harbouring a penchant for the union is in my blood—or at least hedging my bets to always be on the side of the winning team. When I travelled to Scotland in 2014, I proudly spoke of my Munro heritage, with our castle and clan tartan and the Munro motto "Dread God", because God is the only entity that may judge the Munros. But I soon demurred upon learning that, while details on battles and soldier numbers vary, the Munros most certainly supported the Hanoverian-British Government during the Jacobite risings throughout the early to mid-1700s. What I now know is that a group of Munros also cannily fought in brotherly spirit with the Jacobites. Details about the reasons for the Munro strategy, loyalty to the Crown and to the rebels, are scant. But, like all great Machiavellian calculations, I presume the goal of self-preservation reigned supreme for my ancestral clans men and women.

The Hanoverian-British Government ultimately triumphed and Scottish heroes, like Bonnie Prince Charlie, lived in defeat or exile. The Munros picked the winning side and the Hanoverian-Brits governed over a period of remarkable political stability in the region, allowing the development of a formal constitutional monarchy, the appointment of the first de facto Prime Minister who led for an incredible two decades, the introduction of income taxation and significant reform to enfranchise ordinary people to vote in more fairly distributed representative electorates.

By the end of the Hanoverian period the British Empire covered a third of the globe, including the colonisation of Australia. In a small coincidence of timing, Prince Charles Edward Stuart, last leader of the Scottish Jacobite risings, died on 31 January 1788, just days after Captain Arthur Phillip landed in Kurnell to cement the British Empire's expansion in the Southern Hemisphere and the widespread death of another people, Aboriginal Australians, who had lived unmolested on the continent for over 60,000 years.

The history of our colony and country is rich and also raw, but I will now focus on more current matters. His Majesty King Charles III visited this Parliament four days ago, 200 years since the Legislative Council Chamber's creation. On the occasion, I was excited to shake His Majesty's hand and exchange words of gratitude for his work. Upon realising that many people in this place thought me a

Republican, I want to take this opportunity to set the record straight. As political players in the grand ideological narrative of our time forced to face serious and growing threats from tyrannical communist neighbours and far-reaching radical Islam, I believe it is incumbent upon us all to defend and build the strength of western liberal democratic values and institutions. It is why I now call myself a monarchist. While I have been a yes voter in a referendum and a national postal survey since then, if a referendum for the republic were to be held today I would be a firm defender of our constitutional monarchy.

To strive for good relations and celebrate the best parts of our institutions, to reject isolationist patriotism in favour of passionately moderate values-based connection to our network of similarly minded nations is, I believe, the best way to avoid the not inconceivable Fall of Rome 2.0. Our most trusted multilateral relationship—the five eyes—is based on the mutual trust and respect of deeply held liberal democratic values, all spawned from British colonisation, with the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. That is no accident. It is dangerous to take a Pollyanna-ish approach to foreign affairs, because those who seek to destroy the institutions that make our way of life enviable—free speech, open democratic elections, independent media—are working hard. They are using cyber attacks, AI bots, social manipulation via social media platforms and algorithms, data harvesting through electric vehicles, misinformation and disinformation and election interference. Make no mistake: These are serious, pernicious actions designed to undermine our security and cohesion on a micro and a macro level.

Those who seek to threaten our way of life—our free, open and progressive societies—are active and working, sometimes very publicly, together. The BRICS bloc of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa is meeting right now in Moscow, and they are not alone. A new acronym is required because the bloc is expanding, now formally including Iran, Saudi Arabia, Ethiopia, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates. We have something stronger than the ad hoc groupings that are based on what they are against rather than what they are for. Our longstanding reach to the United Kingdom extends to Commonwealth nations full of hope with young citizens. We must be circumspect and realistic about what our ties to the British have offered us, for the better. Unlike my Munro forebears, I do not wish to hedge my bets on our relationship with the monarchy. Long live the King.

Burt Munro – Issue 2

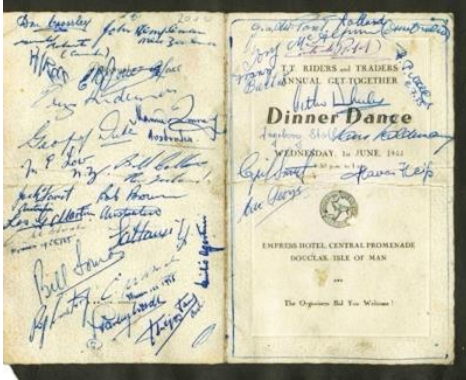
We continue with the story of Burt Munro whose life story was made into a film “The World’s Fastest Indian” starring Sir Anthony Hopkins. As told by Burt’s son, John. We will see in this issue, it was not all plain sailing.



To carry on from Issue 1 of this series I need to mention that Burt travelled overseas several times before his first ride at Bonneville Salt Flats as a competitor in 1962.

He returned to Australia for a couple of months holiday and to see old friends in 1947. As with most of his travels there are stories to tell about that trip.

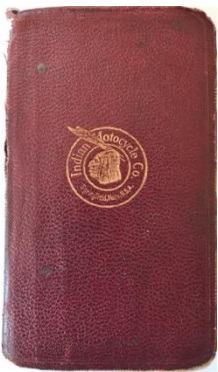
In April 1955 he left NZ on the ship *Rangatira* bound for Britian. On this trip he was to attend, as a spectator, the Isle of Man, Dutch TT, Brands Hatch and several of the Continental track and road races.



Here is his invitation to the dinner dance after the Isle of Man TT. You will note many of the well know riders signatures he collected. One of note is that of Geoff Duke. Burt returned to NZ in October 1955.

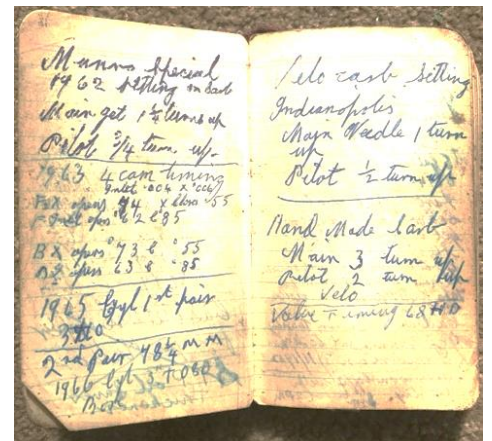
His next foray was to the USA in 1956. He specifically wanted to go to see NSU run at Bonneville which he did. In August at Speed Week, Wilhelm Herz became the first man to ride a motorcycle faster than 200 mph. After Bike Week Burt went to

Los Angles where he purchased a 1940 Chev coupe. He travelled around California, Nevada, Utah, New Mexico and ventured down into Mexico before returning home.



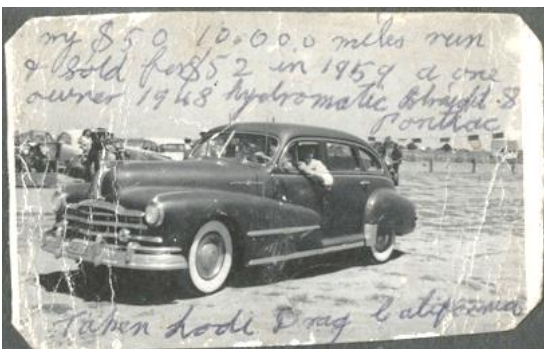
The following year, 1957, he returned to the US and purchased a 1940 Plymouth sedan. On this trip he intended to see as much as he could. I have the map he used, with his route, covering some 18,000 km. One of his visits was to the Indian factory in Springfield. I have the tiny (120x70mm) note book he was given. It was his constant companion for the years till he passed. There are several notations regarding engine settings such as valves, cams, gearing etc. Typical

from 1962 on right.



Burt managed to stay home for a couple of years working on the Indian and a 1936 MSS Velocette he had acquired. At this stage he had not considered taking the Special to Bonneville.

In 1959 the USA beckoned him again with a desire to see the X-15 Air Force rocket plane, a little more of Mexico and Canada. Transport this time was a one owner 1948 Pontiac automatic.



He covered some 15,000 km in this car and achieved his goals of seeing the X-15 and others, all with some difficulties which have stories of their own. He returned to NZ and it was then that he was finally persuaded to visit the Salt (Bonneville salt flats) as a competitor.

1962 After completion of the first fibreglass shell the bike was shipped on the *Cap Ortegale* to San Francisco from Bluff while Dad went there by P&O liner from Auckland. Arriving in San Fran he purchased a fourth car, a 1946 Nash. He also built a trailer so he could tow the bike.

The *Cap Ortegal* was running several days late and would mean not leaving enough time to get to the Salt so he headed to Seattle where the ship was to unload cargo and he planned to take the bike off there. After a lot of difficulties this was achieved, including problems with Customs.

After clearing the bike, he was able to travel the 1400 km to Wendover arriving there with less than a day to spare.

On that trip, after many difficulties, he finally had two good runs to set his 1962 record:



Class: 883cc (53.9 cubic inches) record of 288 km/h (178.971 mph) with his engine bored out to 850cc.

He had not been able to do any test runs on the new shell. On the handling demonstration trials he was required to do, he found it had a tendency to get into a speed wobble in some circumstances. This led to him getting a serious burn on his thigh from contact with the exhaust after one run.

This burn took some 2 months to heal. After speed week he elected to stay on at Wendover and work on the bike to see if he could solve the problems. After 2 months healing and work he packed up the bike and returned to LA for shipping back to New Zealand. As I was living in Auckland then I was able to farewell departures and greeting him on return after his trips. I was always regaled about his adventures, many of which I am able to record in these notes. This was the case on his multiple trips to the USA.

Over the coming months at home, he worked on the bike to improve some of the problems encountered at Bonneville.

1963 With many modifications to the frame, the engine and the shell it was off to Speed Week again. However, all is not easy when you have to be economical with costs. Shipping of the crated bike this time was on a ship which sailed from Lyttleton as there was not enough cargo to visit Bluff. This meant a bit of a panic to get to Lyttleton in time. Fortunately, he made it and carried on to Auckland to depart on the P&O liner *Orcades* I think it was. This put him in LA in plenty of time to meet the freighter and gave time to search for and purchase another car. This time a 1946 Chrysler which was to give him a good deal of trouble. This required a complete overhaul of the bottom end. (For the non-engine savvy readers this means the crankshaft and main bearings.)

Once again there was a delay of 13 days of the ship arriving. Another interception was necessary which required a dash to Eureka where some cargo was to be unloaded. A search of the ships' hold revealed that the bike crate was tipped on its side and was buried under 20 or 30 tons of bagged fertiliser. After a great deal of difficulty, the crate was removed only to reveal that considerable damage had been caused to the shell. However off to Bonneville where repairs could be made.

This trip was to be a disaster as on the first run the engine blew up with major damage to the whole engine. He was unable to do repairs so made the decision to leave the bike behind in storage and take the engine back to New Zealand for the rebuild.

As a consolation and with lots of time to spare to catch the ship home he then went on another 10,000km tour and visited the old silver mines in Nevada among other places. There was apparently an old-timer he met with who lived on site and sustained himself by getting some silver from an undisclosed location. Dad had a small bottle with sand like material with grains of silver quite visible.

After this tripping around it was back to Los Angles to catch the ship home with the bike engine for repairs.....John MunroAugust 2024

The Hunter Valley Highland Games

On Saturday the 24th August, Ray, Allan & Emily Munro & Tanya Carlisle attended The Hunter Valley Highland Games at Saltire Estate in Lovedale, NSW. You can see their photos in the article. The other photo is of The Highland Rose: Jacobite Living History Group who had the surgeon's name as Dr Munro for the day. That photo is very close to the mark as there was a dynasty of three Munro physicians in Edinburgh in the 1700 & 1800s. There was also a Donald Munro Bonesetter of Knockancuirn in the Highlands in the 1700s.

Saltire Estate has a connection to Scotland and Scottish immigration to Australia with the majority of the regions' vineyards having been propagated from cuttings brought from Europe by James Busby, the proud Scot known as the father of Australian wine.



Ray, Allan & Emily Munro & Tanya Carlisle

The day started off early and we set up our tent in the freezing cold and overcast conditions. As people started filtering in, claiming a spot in-front of the area marked off for The Stone Put and Caber Toss events, the men and women competing in the day's events began to warm up for the first event, the Stone Put.

Meanwhile, from the staging area you could hear the sounds of the day's first pipers warming up, along with the rapid fire rat-a-tat-tat of the drummers providing the marching beat. After a brief commencement speech by the master of ceremonies, the pipe bands began a steady stream of performances to an ever expanding sea of people setting up on the small slope in front of the Pipe Band Marching area as the sun came out for it's first appearance.

Over at The Heavy Lifting Area, the Stone to Shoulder event got underway, however, in fine Scottish tradition the sun made way for a brief bout of rain and the remainder of the event was forced to be called off due to the safety of the participants.

After another small patch of rain, we had a glorious day of spring sunshine and temperature. From late morning to lunch time, hundreds of people arrived, the 18+ bar area came to life as guest sampled Saltire Estate's best wines, the pipe bands were the soundtrack to endless merriment as the Highland Dancing got underway and the athletes came back out for the Keg Toss.

Now, I'm not sure how many of you have ever tossed an empty steel keg high in the air, backwards over your head and try to clear a metal crossbeam several metres up in the air but let me tell you it's not an easy task, even for these young, built athletes. Only one of the male competitors was able to constantly toss 5/5 kegs over the top like he was throwing cushions. The women all tossed half kegs, the less seasoned of them between the top and middle bar, with one of them managing to clear the top bar a couple of times. Something to definitely look out for if you decide to take up this sport, and lacking eyes in the back of your head is moving forward after each throw, a large percentage of kegs coming bouncing back in your direction if you fail to clear the crossbeam. After a short break, while the pipe bands and highland dancers kept everyone entertained and the guest ate and drank, the athlete's returned for perhaps the best known event of any Highland Games,



Dr Munro

the Caber Toss. You've probably thought, yeah, it would be quite hard to lift a bit log like that and throw it but I could maybe pick it up? Alas, while strength is certainly a bit part of this event, the real trick to this event is balance. The athletes that did best in this event methodically set themselves, balanced the Caber against their shoulder and slowly walked their hands down to the bottom before lifting and trying to maintain enough balance to get a run up in preparation for a toss. After many valiant attempts, one of the male competitors managed to execute this perfectly, the Caber flipping end over end as the crowd erupted with applause and cheers. The women put in several fantastic attempts at this process, cheered on by a big crowd, half of them managed a run and a toss but unfortunately on this day, they were unable to flip it end over end.



Allan & daughter Emily

Over at the Highland Dancing stage, it was time for a Country Dancing Workshop. Near twenty revellers, perhaps loosened up by a few wines, and some children also wanting to get in on the fun took to the stage to receive some instruction and a run through before putting what they'd just learnt into practise to music. Participants and onlookers alike all enjoyed the fun.

Meanwhile, at the same time, the final challenge for our Highland competitors got underway in the heavy lifting area, the Natural Stones of Strength. Five wooden barrels were spread out, each with a rock on opposite sides, one for the men, one for the women. Alternating competitors, male after female ran the gauntlet lifting ever increasing weights of natural stones to their knees and then one final big effort to deposit them on top of the barrel. The women really shone in this event and the hard work and training of all of the athletes really showed as they capped off their day.

As the final pipe band of the day, started wrapping up, they invited all of the children to come up on the field in front of them to dance to their final song. After a bit of hesitation, three brave, young girls (including our young member Emilly Munro) got up and started dancing and it only took a matter of moments until a sea of kids with wide smiles on their faces enjoyed the music and brought the music and dancing portion of the day to a close.

The final event of the day was another fun one for kids and adults alike. The Highland Rose: Jacobite Living History Group put on a demonstration of weapons and fighting techniques that were used by clansmen fighting in the highlands, as well as firing off a few blank rounds of gunpowder from some Brown Bess muskets to the enjoyment of the crowd.

All in all, it was a great day out with something for everyone. I'd thoroughly recommend you attend next year if you are able to.

Clan Munro Youth Engagement

This is an excellent innovation by our Webmaster, Allan Munro. Please do as Allan suggests and download it and share it with your children & grandchildren.

Greetings Clan Members! Leading up to the Hunter Valley Highland Games, I created a Clan Munro Kid's Activity Booklet that can be downloaded for free at <https://clanmunroassociation.org.au/kids-activity-book>. It has some basic info about our crest, tartan and castle mixed in with some activities such as find a words, mazes, colouring in and a quiz. If you have young children or grandchildren, please download it, print it out and have a conversation with them about their heritage.



With our ANZ Association now focusing on our longevity, we are welcoming discussions and suggestions on gaining younger members. As such I've been corresponding with Chloe Welwood-Harris who has become the Vice Chair of Youth for the Clan and Scottish Societies of Canada, who is herself a university student tasked with increasing youth membership among children and young adults. We've been exchanging ideas and our Kid's Activity Booklet will be featured in their next newsletter.

As you may know, we offer a Junior Association Membership and if we can increase these numbers, we will be able to tailor more content towards the Junior Members. If you have any thought or ideas on engaging youth members, please email me at website@clanmunroassociation.org.au ...Thanks, Allan

DNA Unleashed

A free short-cut for checking your Munro male line, if you've done a general DNA test - Men Only!

Men inherit their Y-Chromosome from their purely paternal line, but there have been many branches of this since "Adam". These can be distinguished by minor variations which have occurred over the generations.

About 75% of Highland men, including those called Munro, belong to a male line called R-L21, part of "Haplogroup R" which arrived in the British Isles in the Bronze Age. A few have more recent Scandinavian (Viking) or other male ancestry. However, the founder of the Munros of Foulis was different. He and his male descendants belong to Haplogroup I, which had been in Britain much longer, since the Early Neolithic period.

Some DNA testing companies such as 23andMe report Y Haplogroup information, but others choose not to. However the data is there, so if a man has already taken a DNA test at [Ancestry.com](https://ancestry.com), [MyHeritage.com](https://myheritage.com), etc., it is possible to extract some Y chromosome information. To do this, follow the links at the test company to download the "raw data" to your computer, go to <https://cladefinder.yseq.net/>, then use the (2) File Upload option. The programme looks for certain Y-chromosome variants in positions sampled by the particular chips used for testing.

In a couple of moments, you will receive an analysis which begins: "Most specific position on the YFull YTree is", and a Haplogroup branch name such as R-L21. In the case of the Munro of Foulis male line, the result will be one of successive branchings of Haplogroup I from which they arose. Positive results may include I-M423, I-L161, I-BY1749 and I-PF4135, e.g

It's free, and anonymous as the data is neither identified nor stored. Of course, YSeq prompts further tests based on the result, but for a more accurate assessment of your relationship with other men called Munro etc., or in the case of the Munro of Foulis line, a more precise position within it, Y-DNA tests at FamilyTreeDNA are more likely to be informative.

Membership

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|--------------|---------|---|---------|
| 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