

# Murray Clan Society of NSW



## *Newsletter - November 2023*

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## Welcome

Greetings members and friends of the Murray Clan Society of NSW. Apart from our gathering at the Bonnie Wingham Scottish Festival in June, there has not been much happening during the year so it has been rather challenging gathering sufficient information for a Newsletter. However, a considerable amount of material has been sent to me recently, so this has turned out to be something of a bumper issue. Please feel free to send me any stories, photos etc that might be of interest to the wider membership. Some of the most positive responses we receive are to stories of family activities, significant ancestors or just items of general family interest.

## Annual Gathering – 3 June 2023

As usual, we operated a tent at the Bonnie Wingham Scottish Festival to provide opportunities for members, friends and enquirers to meet. It proved to be quite a productive day, with old friends (including a couple of childhood acquaintances) meeting up and others interested in sorting out where they fitted into their various families.

We were particularly delighted to welcome Jill Murray from Sydney. Jill and her late husband Rob were regular and enthusiastic participants in Clan activities before Rob's sad passing in 2018 (see our tribute to Rob in our December 2018 Newsletter (<https://www.murray-clan-nsw.net/newsletters.html>)), and this was Jill's first visit since then.

*Ross Murray, Jill Murray and Warwick Murray (Photo: Leigh Murray)*



Although I've been involved with the Clan Society since its inception, I have never felt the need or felt inclined to wear a kilt. As I was waiting to carry the Murray banner in the opening ceremony of the Festival, a gentleman came up and introduced himself. He was Philip Bendeich, not related to the Manning Murrays (as far as we could tell) but was fully kitted out with a Murray Clan kilt (his mother being a Murray). He was visiting the area and had decided to attend the Wingham Festival.

He was pleased to accept my invitation to carry the banner for the ceremony, which he did with aplomb. We had an interesting chat about the Clan and about research his family is doing. I have since corresponded with his sister Therese Campbell who is busily researching their family's history. It was a delightful and unexpected encounter. You never know what is going to happen at a Scottish Festival.



*Philip Bendeich, visitor from the South Coast, was our unplanned banner-bearer at the Festival*

## **Annual General Meeting**

The AGM was held during the Festival in the Murray Tent. The Committee had completed its three-year term so an election was due. As there were no new nominations for any position, a motion was moved and passed that all members of the Committee be reappointed to their current positions. It would be good to see a few new people on the Committee, so if you are interested let me know.

As a matter of interest, two committee members turn 90 early next year, Joyce Murray in February and Alma Murray in May. Several members of the committee have given exceptional service to the Clan Society over many years and Joyce and Alma certainly fall into that category.

## **Next Gathering – 1<sup>st</sup> June 2024**

One matter that was discussed (again) at the AGM was the future format for gatherings. With catering costs having risen sharply, together with declining interest in evening functions, we feel that the days of formal dinners with guest speakers are behind us. Nevertheless, we would like to do more to cater for members and friends who attend the Festival, especially those who travel significant distances to Wingham.

We would be interested in any suggestions or feedback you might have regarding this issue. Options could include a barbecue at a private home or other suitable venue on the Saturday night after the festival, or possibly we could book tables at somewhere like a Club where each person could order and pay for their own meal. I think that most travellers return home on the Sunday, so we would be happy to arrange a get together on the Saturday night if people would like to participate. Please email or ring me if you have any thoughts on this proposal. We'd love to hear from you.

## Membership

We are very grateful for those members who regularly pay their membership dues of \$5 (individual) or \$10 (family). Our main costs each year are insurance (about \$250) and the hire of a tent for the festival (about \$300). We did consider buying our own tent to replace a worn out one, but decided that hiring one each year is a more practical solution. Erecting and packing up is done for us (a big plus given the average age of our committee) and the problem of storage is solved.

Thanks to generous donations which I mentioned in an earlier Newsletter, we were able to renew our website for another ten years for \$560. I am hopeful that I will be able to hand over to a new inspiring and enthusiastic website manager before the next renewal falls due in 2033. Are you that person?

If you would like to renew your membership for 2024, our bank account details are as follows.

**Please use your name as the reference when making a deposit.**

**Account name: Murray Clan Association**

**Bank: Westpac**

**BSB: 032-590**

**Account number: 651482**

## Bridget Ryan

We have previously published articles about the remarkable Bridget Ryan, sent from poverty in famine-stricken Ireland to NSW in 1850 and marrying James Murray. They settled on Oxley Island near Taree. I thank Julie Evans for sending this blog article that adds interesting insights into Bridget's life and circumstances.

### Blog by Mary Cogan

*This is an extract from a blog by Mary Cogan who lives in Listowel, Ireland. Listowel is the place from which Bridget Ryan came in 1850 as one of the orphan girls of the Earl Grey scheme. Bridget married James Murray, (son of our Murray matriarch, Isabella Scott Murray), and lived on the Manning with her husband and their twelve surviving children. James and Bridget are buried in Tinonee Cemetery.*

*Sue Greenway, mentioned in this article, descends from Isabella Scott Murray through Bridget's daughter Johanna (born 1854) who married Joseph Alfred Gordon.*

*Julie Evans 2023*

## Visitors to The Workhouse

In her blog <https://listowelconnection.com/> 3 November 2023 Edition Mary writes:

This is what I wrote in 2011;

### It all started with a Google search in 2008

In a suburb of Sydney, Australia in 2008 a part-time teacher named Julie Evans was researching her family tree. She knew that her great great grandmother, Bridget Ryan, had left Ireland in

Famine times as part of the Earl Grey Scheme. Bridget was one of the “Famine Orphans” who were sent from the workhouse in Listowel to settle on the other side of the world.

The Earl Grey Scheme was devised by the British Government to solve twin problems at opposite ends of the Empire. Workhouses in Ireland were massively overcrowded and struggling to cope with the numbers of starving people arriving daily. Meanwhile, far away in Australia, colonists were decrying the lack of suitable (white) female house servants.

Earl Grey decided to identify suitable girls in Irish workhouses, to kit them out and send them to Australia. The Australian people were to foot the bill for the scheme. The definition of orphan was very loose. Some girls had one living parent and some even had two. Bridget Ryan, it would appear, fell into the second category.

Julie knew all of this when she Googled Listowel Co. Kerry, Ireland and she found this website <http://www.iol.ie/~coganj/> (*link no longer works*) maintained by Jim and Mary Cogan. She sent off an email and thus began an adventure whose latest twist was a TG4 project called Tar Abhaile (Come Home).

When I received Julie’s email in 2008, I knew little of the workhouse and nothing at all of The Earl Grey Scheme. A correspondence began and we emailed to and fro, filling in more and more of the story until 2011. North Kerry Reaching Out was set up and I began this blog. One of the aims of NKRO was to help the diaspora with research into their family trees. Julie was one of this diaspora whose story we took on board.

We soon discovered that Bridget Ryan was no ordinary orphan and her story began to take on many aspects of a soap opera. There was crime and punishment, poverty and wealth but with a little smattering of social grace and ladylike accomplishments.

Through this blog I made contact with an avid historian and genealogist, Kay Caball. Kay grew up in Listowel. She is writing a history of all the Famine Orphans who left from Kerry workhouses. She and Julie formed a partnership to advance research into Bridget’s background.

Fast forward to 2013 the year of The Gathering and RTE is commissioning some TV programmes about descendants of emigrants.



*Julie and her husband, Glyn in Listowel for the making of the documentary*

So, Julie Evans, her husband Glyn, her third cousin, Jeanette Greenway from California and Jeanette’s daughter, Peta arrive in Ireland, Julie to participate in the making of the TV documentary and her cousins to learn more about their ancestor, Bridget Ryan.

Over two days last week we filmed hours of footage which will be distilled into 12 minutes of a Tar Abhaile programme to be aired on TG4 in September or October. Don’t worry, I’ll keep you posted.

I can’t spoil the programme by telling you the story, but I can tease you by telling you that it is an interesting tale with a few elements to illustrate the adage that truth is often stranger than fiction.

As they say in the worst journals, “Watch this space”.

Long story short...Bridget Ryan's father was a bigamist; her mother's family were respectable and used influence to get her on the Earl Grey scheme. She arrived in Australia in 1850, married and had a big family whose descendants are now scattered around the world.

**That was 2011. Fast forward to 2023.**



*Sue Greenway (left) and friend Barbara*

One of those descendants, Sue Greenway, with her friend Barbara, came to Listowel to see what they could of the places where Bridget left from and to get a sense of what life was like in the Ireland Bridget left behind.

We went to the hospital chapel, the last remaining section of the workhouse. The ladies posed for me beside a giant sunflower, a symbol of the hopeful future that awaited Bridget and the other "orphan" girls in Australia.



*Barbara, Sue and the sunflower*

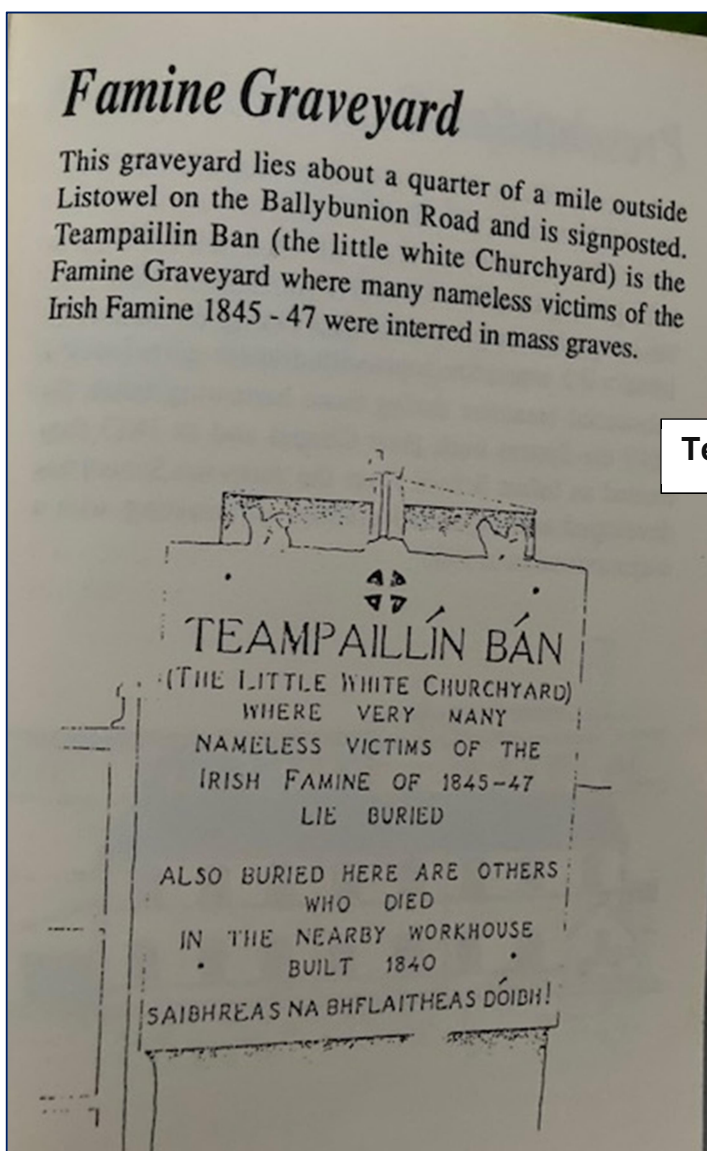
They sat beneath the tree of contemplation (pictured) surrounded by the unmarked mass graves of so many who were left behind when Bridget set out for her new life.

Listowel Tidy Towns have done us all a great service in keeping this sacred place so beautifully. Everyone I visit it with is truly impressed.

If you want to know more about the orphan girls and the Earl Grey Scheme, Kay Caball's book, *The Kerry Girls, Emigration and the Earl Grey Scheme* is a great read.



*In Teampall Bán the ladies were saddened to read the awful account of Famine Times in Listowel*



Teampall Bán in the 1980s guide

This interview was transcribed from  
<https://www.facebook.com/VADundee/videos/186958517207269>.

## Talking Tartan

Earlier this year, Keren Guthrie, Head Archivist at Blair Castle, uploaded a short talk on Murray tartans. Doug Murray, who edits the North American Murray Clan Society Journal "Aitionn", has kindly transcribed the talk and has graciously sent it to me for our Newsletter. Here it is:

### Blair Castle: Home of the Murray Tartan

From an interview with Keren Guthrie, Head Archivist from Atholl Estates and Blair Castle

Hello. I'm Keren. I'm from Blair Castle. I'm the archivist here.

So, the castle dates back to 1269 and the current family date back to 1457 when the 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Atholl, who is related to the Murray family that we have today and the Murray tartans that you will see in the castle today [occupied it].



*Keren Guthrie. Image screen captured from interview video tape recording.*



*Lord George Murray dressed in Tullibardine tartan.*

The first mention that we have, in the archives, of tartan comes from 1719 which is a list of purchases and necessities, as they say. And there were seven rolls of tartan bought then.

So, the three tartans we have [in our archives are] the weathered Murray tartan and the ancient tartan. And the weathered one is probably the one that we would have expected for a very early tartan where they've used berries and lichens from the estate.

The Tullibardine tartan is a deeper and a redder tartan. So that would probably have been more for the family to wear. Because of the colours and brightness, that makes it a much more expensive tartan to dye.

Some of the plaids that the Atholl Highlanders wear are over 150 years old. You'll see them. They parade on the last weekend in May. And we have the gathering on the Sunday where they have a mini-Highland games that the Atholl Highlanders take part in, in field dress, tartan, plaids, and jackets.



*Wearing both Tullibardine and Atholl tartan is Sir John Murray, 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Dunmore, in a painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds*



*Ancient tartan*



*Atholl Highlanders wrapped in fly plaid of weathered Murray tartan*



## Scottish £100 Banknote

The Scottish £100 note features Dumfriesshire born Dr Flora Murray, one of Britain's early woman doctors and a prominent suffragette. The polymer note entered circulation on 9th May 2022 – a day after Flora's birthday.

Dr Flora Murray began her career as a probationer nurse at the London Hospital, Whitechapel, aged 21, and from there studied at the London School of Medicine for Women, the University of Durham and, eventually, the University of Cambridge.

She founded the Women's Hospital for Children in London in 1912 with her fellow doctor and partner, Louisa Garrett-Anderson. She received a CBE in recognition of her work during World War One.

The hospital provided healthcare for the children of factory and shop workers who were low paid, so accessing health care was difficult. When war broke out in 1914, they founded the Women's Hospital Corps, a feminist organisation, and opened two successful military hospitals in France, staffed entirely by female suffragettes. In 1915, the British War Office provided them with premises in London where they set up Endell Street Military Hospital, the first hospital in the UK established for men by female medical professionals.

Until the start of the First World War, women doctors were only permitted to treat women and children and could not study general medicine or surgery either. This is one of the reasons why Flora – already a staunch women's rights advocate – believed so passionately in women's suffrage.



Alongside delivering medical support to suffragettes recovering from hunger strike and other injuries sustained through their activism, Flora spoke regularly at public gatherings and became one of the key figures for the movement in Scotland.

She also joined the 1911 census protest – where Emmeline Pankhurst rallied women suffragettes to refuse the 1911 census in protest of the government's unwillingness to give women the vote.

Adapted from articles on the websites <https://www.dgwgo.com/> (dgwgo stands for "Dumfries and Galloway – What's Going On"), and BBC News. For more see <https://www.pennchurch.uk/murray-anderson/>

## Murray Clan Society's Coat of Arms

The following is an article by **Keith Murray-Heatherington, JP, FSA Scot, Captain of Castle Cluggy on the Dry Isle and Head Trustee (Chairman) of the Castle Cluggy Charitable Trust**. Keith was the initiator of the Murray Clan Society Coat of Arms, **and has written this to record for posterity the origin and meaning of these arms**. Keith was made a life member of the Murray Clan Society (Edinburgh) in October 1981 during the International Gathering of the Clans. He later served as Convenor between 1987 and 1990, and designed and matriculated the Society's Coat of Arms with Lord Lyon King of Arms. Some of the terminology will be unfamiliar to many, **but it is an important record of the establishment of our coat of arms and the reasons why we have it**. I thank Doug Murray of the Murray Clan Society of North America for permission to copy this article.

The design of the Shield is based on the undifferenced Arms of Murray, that is to say, Azure three mullets Argent (three silver stars on a blue background). The symbol used to indicate the supportive and co-operative nature of the Clan Society is interlaced annulets (circles/rings) and Lord Lyon granted five annulets on a band in the middle of the Shield.



The Motto must in some way answer or reply to that of the Chief - **"Furth Fortune and Fill the Fetters"** - an instruction by King James II in 1475 to "go forth, good fortune go with you, and fill the chains with your prisoners". Lord Lyon was happy to approve my suggested wording: **"FORWARD WITH FORTUNE"**, which reflects the aspirations of the Society. The Crest was approved as a tower Argent masoned Sable on the Wreath (a white and black tower symbolising Comyn's Tower, part of the original Blair Castle), charged with a ducal or crest-coronet Azure (a blue coronet representing the patronage and noble status of the Chief).

On 25th March 1988, my proposal to petition Lord Lyon King of Arms for a grant of armorial bearings was agreed at the Annual General Meeting of the Murray Clan Society in Edinburgh, subject to a separate fund being established, and subject to approval from the Clan Chief, His Grace the 10th Duke of Atholl, who wholeheartedly supported the proposal stating that that he was "convinced that it is a good idea for the Society to petition Lord Lyon King of Arms and I certainly approve of the decision taken". Donations to the fund reached £1,030.45.

On 15th May 1990, the Murray Clan Society was granted the Ensigns Armorial with the following proclamation:

## TO ALL AND SUNDRY WHOM THESE PRESENTS DO OR MAY CONCERN

WE, Malcolm Rognvald Innes of Edingight, Commander of the Royal Victorian Order, Writer to Her Majesty's Signet, Lord Lyon King of Arms, send Greetings: Whereas, Keith Murray-Hetherington, Convenor, for and on behalf of **THE MURRAY CLAN SOCIETY** having headquarters at Blair Castle, Blair Atholl in the County of Perth, having by Petition unto Us of date 28 October 1988 Shewn; **THAT** the objects of the said Society are to promote social links among people bearing the name Murray, and to stimulate interest in the history, culture and traditions of the Clan; AND the Petitioner having prayed that there might be granted unto him and on behalf of The Murray Clan Society such Ensigns Armorial as might be found suitable and according to the Laws of Arms, **KNOW YE THEREFORE** that We have Devised, and Do by These Presents Assign, Ratify and Confirm unto the Petitioner for and on behalf of The Murray Clan Society, the following Ensigns Armorial, as depicted upon the margin hereof, and matriculated of even date with These Presents upon the 14th page of the 75th volume of Our Public Register of All Arms and Bearings in Scotland, VIDELICET: Azure, five annulets conjoined in fess Argent between three mullets of the Last. Above the Shield is placed an Helm suitable to an Incorporation (VIDELICET: a Sallet Proper lined Gules) with a Mantling Azure doubled Argent, and on a Wreath of the Liveries is set for Crest a tower Argent, masoned Sable, charged of a crest-cornet Azure, and in an Escrol over the same this Motto "**FORWARD WITH FORTUNE**", by demonstration of which Ensigns Armorial the said Society is amongst all Nobles and in all Places of Honour, to be taken, numbered, accounted and received as Society Noble in the Noblesse of Scotland; **IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF** We have Subscribed These Presents and the Seal of Our Office is affixed hereto at Edinburgh, this 15th day of May in the 39th Year of the reign of Our Sovereign Lady Elizabeth the Second, By the grace of God, of United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and of Her Other Realms and Territories, Queen, Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith, and in the Year of our Lord One Thousand Nine Hundred and Ninety.

### Did You Know?

At the 6<sup>th</sup> Scottish Hospitality Awards, the most prestigious event in the Scottish hospitality industry, which took place on Tuesday 16 May 2023 at the exquisite *DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel* in Glasgow, Blair Castle was named "**Tourist Attraction of the Year**".

The awards celebrate the outstanding achievements of businesses and individuals who have made

exceptional contributions to the hospitality sector in Scotland.



*Photo of Blair Castle taken from an advertisement for its Christmas markets*

## Andrew de Moray Statue Proposal

*We have received an invitation from Darin Yawn, Social Media Manager for the Murray Clan Society of North America, regarding a proposal to erect a statue of Andrew de Moray in Scotland. De Moray, regarded as one of the earliest identifiable Murrays, fought alongside the legendary William Wallace and many believe that his role was in fact more significant than that of Wallace. The Murrays are seeking to rectify the injustice.*

*I would be delighted if any of our members would be interested in supporting this project. As a Clan Society we do not have the resources to support financial appeals, but I would be interested in any responses from members. It seems as though Murray Clan Societies elsewhere are getting behind it.*

*Darin writes:*

As you may be familiar, there is an effort in Scotland to restore the prominence of our clan ancestor, Andrew de Moray, to his rightful place beside William Wallace in the story of Scottish Independence. For several years supporters have been working on building a large statue near the site of the Battle of Stirling Bridge called 'Brothers in Arms' showing Wallace and de Moray shoulder to shoulder. I would like to coordinate a fundraising effort for the Guardians of Scotland Trust (<http://www.guardians.scot/>) from the proud diaspora within the Murray Clan Societies.

I've been in contact with Ted Christopher who is one of the trustees and a long-time worker on this project. I also just received a detailed plan on their project which I'm sure they would be willing to share with you if needed.



I am working with my council on determining our contribution but I am also working on an open crowd source campaign and T-shirt design we can sell to our membership and to the public. If you're up for it, I would like to brand these as simply MCS and share the shirt design with you for however is easiest to produce shirts/collect funds on your side of the world. I am working with a heraldic artist friend to work up the design. Coincidentally, he is based in Australia. He recently did a design of William Wallace at Stirling (pictured). I still need to discuss his fee/licence for the image but he is very eager to work with us on this project.

As you can probably tell, we are in the very early stages of this project so please let me know if you have questions or concerns and if you are interested. Thank you very much for your time.

Yours Aye,

Darin Yawn, FSAScot

Social Media Manager MCSNA

[darin.yawn@gmail.com](mailto:darin.yawn@gmail.com)

## Final Thoughts

Thank you all for your patience in awaiting this Newsletter. There is a lot to read but I hope you have all found something of interest.

It only remains for me to wish you all the very best for the Christmas / New Year season. We hope as many as can make it will be able to attend our gathering next year on 1<sup>st</sup> June.

Ross Murray

President



