

CLAN MATHESON SOCIETY

NEWS LETTER No. 19

The Annual General Meeting and Dinner was held at Aman-dini's Grill, Southampton Row, London, W.C. 1, on Saturday, 24th October, 1970. The Chief of the Clan was present and an enjoyable evening was had by all.

Major Sir Torquhill Matheson Bart., was elected to the Committee.

We wish to congratulate Iain Matheson of Plockton, on his success in the Radio "Brain of Britain" contest in July this year and our best wishes also to his daughter, Alison on the occasion of her marriage to Mr. Peter A. B. Mitchell at Plockton on 16th October.

Our best wishes also to Mrs. Rosemary Cornish (nee Matheson) and her husband Leonard on the birth of a son, Andrew, and to Margaret Matheson, our Convener's daughter, on her engagement to Mr. Richard Shaw.

The new layout of the Newsletter, first proposed by Jennifer Mathieson seems to have received the general approval of our Members. Articles for inclusion in the Newsletter are invited on any subject of Clan interest. Family histories and events are welcome and should be sent to the Secretary.

We are pleased to welcome the following new Members since the last issue:—

Mrs. Bridget A. Colvin, Newland House, Withypool, Minehead, Somerset. Born, Petworth, Sussex, 17/10/1915. Life Member.

Miss Isobel Matheson, Monach Villa, Bonar Bridge, Sutherland. Annual Member.

Mrs. Kathleen A. Urquhart, Ardmor, Bonar Bridge, Sutherland. Annual Member.

Miss Agnes Matheson, 125 Needless Road, Perth. Annual Member.

John Monteath Matheson, V.R.D., Stoneleigh, 81 Langside Drive, Glasgow S.3. Stockbroker. Life Member.

The following alterations should be made to the Membership list:—

Life Members, England

Ian M. Matheson, Corby, Hants, new address—20 Richmond Road, Corby, Northants. Tel. Corby 4182.

Norman M. Matheson, Virginia Water, Surrey, for Wentworth read 099-04-2345.

Overseas Members

Ian Ross Matheson, South Africa. Delete Agric. Dip. Gordon Memorial Museum from before address. Place after birth details.

Information is sought on the ancestry of any Mathesons from Torboll, Pittentrail and/or Dalmore, Sutherlandshire. Details to Secretary in first instance.

A remaining few dozen Clan Matheson greetings cards are now being sold at 12/- per dozen (14/- per dozen overseas), crossed cheques or P.O.'s made payable to Clan Matheson Society, should be sent to the Membership Secretary.

Volunteers are required please to send out the Society's new Brochure to Mathesons and Mathiesons, who might be interested in becoming members of the Society. It is felt that this might best be achieved by using area telephone directories, etc. Will any who feel able to undertake this work please write to the Membership Secretary (address on page 1), with an indication of the number of brochures needed and the area it is proposed to cover. Postage will of course be refunded on application to the Treasurer.

Dr. George Matheson

We are indebted to Dr. R. L. Mackay of Wolverhampton, for notes on the life of Dr. George Matheson, D.D., LL.D., F.R.S.E., who wrote the well known hymn "O love that wilt not let me go", perhaps one of the most inspiring and at the same time most sympathetic hymns ever written. Indeed it is possible to read it simply as poetry and to admire its construction, choice of words and restraint in their use.

Dr. Matheson was born in 1842, in Glasgow, of middle class parents. His father, also George Matheson, was born in Dornoch and later was a founder of the business of Wilson and Matheson in Glassford Street, Glasgow.

Dr. Matheson was one of eight children and became a student at Glasgow University, attaining an honours distinction in Philosophy.

His eyesight was never good and latterly he saw only shadows, but he was always cheerful and dictated his essays to his eldest sister, Jane. He wrote many articles and a number of books using Braille and a typewriter.

He was at first Assistant Minister at Sandyford Church, Inellan, and his name became a household word throughout Scotland.

"O love that wilt not let me go" was written in 1882. Apparently he wrote it in little more than five minutes and it did not require any "re-touching", although the hymn committee asked him to change his original line "I climbed the rainbow through the rain", to the version we now know: "I trace the rainbow through the rain". Whatever the reason, one likes to know how he himself saw it and some may prefer the original.

He was called to St. Bernard's Church in Edinburgh in 1886, retired in 1897 and died in 1906. He was buried in the family vault at Glasgow Necropolis and this information may be helpful to those wishing to enquire further. Dr. Mackay has also given us rather more information that it has been possible to reproduce

in this Newsletter and the Secretary will be pleased to send a copy to any member who cares to send a stamped and addressed envelope. His biography *The Life of George Matheson, D.D., LL.D., F.R.S.E.*, by D. McMillan, was published by Hodder and Stoughton in 1907.

CONVENER.

MAJOR PATRICK GRANT MATHESON

(Father of the 12th Chief)

He was the 2nd son of Colin Matheson of Bennetsfield, tenth chief, and his wife Grace, 4th daughter of Patrick Grant of Glenmoriston.

A short biography of him appears on pages 47 and 48 of the clan history by Mackenzie and Macbain (2nd edition), but it is not detailed and there would appear to be an inaccuracy concerning his wife's family and of the date of his death. To quote "He married in India, Hannah Mills Butler, daughter of James Major Orde, an officer of the Commissariat Department. . . ." And again ". . . at Delhi, where he died in 1835. His death is referred to in the obituary of the Bengal 'Englishman' of January the 17th, in that year; and in the Delhi 'Gazette' as follows:—on Wednesday 15th, inst., Captain P.G.M., Commissary of Ordnance. . . ."

Recently, I came across a book "List of Officers of the Honourable East India Company's Bengal Army, 1758-1834", by Mr. V. Hodson (published in London, 1927). In it there is considerable detail of P.G.M.'s service and of his marriage, which I give below in an edited form.

"P.G.M. (1789-1834) was baptised at Knockbain, Co. Ross, on 8th August, 1789, and was the 2nd son of Colin Matheson of Bennetsfield, a Lieutenant in the Gordon Fencibles, and Grace his wife, 4th daughter of Patrick Grant of Glenmoriston. P.G.M. married, in Dinapore, India, on 10th July, 1813, Hannah Mills Butler, daughter of Alexander Aird, a Conductor of Ordnance and sister of Robert Abercrombie Aird (to whom there is a reference in the Appendices of the book. There is no reference to children, though his eldest son J. B. Y. Matheson has an entry in his own right as a distinguished officer in H.E.I.C. service).

P.G.M.'s promotions and services, together with the references, are summarised as follows:—

Born: 28th July, 1789.

Cadet: 1808.

Fireworker: 24th September, 1808 (an artillery officer, who has to do with explosives in War.)

Arrived in India: 16th November, 1808.

Lieutenant: 23rd October, 1811.

Captain: 12th December, 1821.

Died at Delhi: 15th October, 1834.

Nepal War, 1814-1815: Pursa; Lieutenant 6th Company, 2nd Battalion Foot Artillery with the 4th Division.

Third Maheratta War, 1817-1818: Lieutenant, 2nd Troop Horse Artillery. At Jawad (blew open the gate).

Appointed to charge of Ordnance Commissariat at P.W.I., 27th February, 1819.

Commissary of Ordnance: 25th September, 1819.

Returned to India: February, 1821.

Appointed to charge of Delhi Magazine: 2nd March, 1821 and to Allahabad: 5th November, 1823.

Returned to Delhi Magazine, 1833.

References: History of the Mathesons, Alex Mackenzie, p. 30.

(Note: this must be the 1st Edition.)

Burkes Landed Gentry: s.n. Grant of Glenmoriston.

Stubbs ii, 27-8. A.J.N.S.. XVI. 272.

Will dated 9th May, 1816; proved 10th January, 1835.

In conclusion it would appear that Mackenzie and Macbain made a mistake over P.G.M.'s wife's maiden name, and that P.G.M. did in fact die on 15th October, 1834 and not 15th January, 1835. Neither the month nor year of the Delhi Gazette is mentioned—only 15th inst., which is a figure agreed within the H.E.I.C. officers' book. Coupling the Delhi Gazette date with the Bengal "Englishman" of 17th January, 1835, was unfortunate. Finally, wills are not normally proved before death.

To complete the story for those not fortunate enough to have a copy of the clan history, P.G.M. pre-deceased his elder brother John who was the eleventh chief and who was married to Ann, daughter of the Rev. Robert Arthur, minister of Resolis in the Black Isle. John died without issue in May, 1843.

P.G.M. had 3 sons and 3 daughters.

1. James Brooks Young, already referred to and who succeeded as chief on the death of his Uncle John in 1843.
2. Thomas Theophilus Metcalf, a Lieutenant in H.M.'s 39th Regt., who died in India in 1839.
3. Ian Grant, a Colonel in H.E.I.C. Service. His story is somewhat of a mystery at the moment, and I hope to unravel it.
4. Susan Eleanor, died in infancy.
5. Isabella Maria Grant, who married Major James Charles Claud Hamilton of H.E.I.C.'s Bengal European Light Infantry.
6. Hannah Grace, who married Lieutenant Colonel H. King, of H.E.I.C.'s 13th Bengal Native Infantry.

TORQUILL MATHESON.