

CLAN MATHESON SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER No. 25

CLAN GATHERING

21st and 22nd September, 1974

I caught the night train from London on Friday evening, the 20th, and travelled very comfortably, if expensively, arriving at the Strathspey Hotel, Aviemore, in time for breakfast next morning. Thus fortified, I introduced myself to Mr. Crawford, the manager, and Mr. Ingle his assistant. There seemed a great deal to discuss but they could not have been more helpful. The same can be said of all the staff and it was truly Highland hospitality the whole week-end.

We had announced the Gathering in several of the Scottish newspapers and some Mathesons, I was told, had made hotel bookings as a result. Others, I thought, might have booked in at other hotels which made forecasting the numbers we might expect for the dinner a little complicated, but the hotel helpfully offered to lay on special tables with room to spare. We also had a special room for the annual general meeting and for the evening party—with its own bar—a facility which always helps.

The remainder of the morning passed very quickly and pleasantly meeting old friends and making new ones. The Chief was also staying at the hotel to welcome everybody, as was Dick, our Secretary, who had made all the preliminary arrangements. But by lunch time I needed a rest and perhaps to escape from the undoubted although not, I would add, sinful luxury of the hotel. The restaurant beside the station was rather full so I bought two pies and a can of lemonade which I consumed on the railway station platform; being later joined by Dick, also, I gathered, in search of the simple life. Country railway stations in Scotland still, I feel, occupy the place in the social scene which at any rate used to be occupied by passenger piers on the Clyde coast.

Greatly refreshed, Dick and I returned to our labours. The first formal business was the Annual General Meeting. The Society's Accounts, prepared by our able Treasurer, Margaret, were approved and are included in this Newsletter.

It has always been my, perhaps rather conservative, policy to regard life membership subscriptions as not available for current expenses and this had meant that we had only been able to produce one Newsletter in the past year, but two I think are essential to keep interest really alive. There was some discussion on the finances and the Committee were empowered to ask existing life members for donations and to increase the annual subscription rates from 50p to £1. Decisions taken by the Committee in the

current year will of course be reported in the Newsletter as they occur, but I would again stress that London where, up to now, all the Officers have resided, is a long way from Scotland, a Clan Society is inherently a Scottish Society and we do need letters and contributions from members in Scotland if Newsletters are to fulfil their purpose of keeping together a rather widely scattered clan at home and overseas.

Gratefully I was able to announce that the Treasurer, Secretary and Membership Secretary were willing to carry on for another year. I had felt for some time that the Convener should be resident in Scotland and I was very pleased to be able to say that Edmond Matheson of Carnoustie had kindly volunteered to take my place as Convener.

This really terminated the formal business of the meeting and we adjourned for refreshment before dinner, the three tables being presided over by the Chief, Major Sir Torquhil Matheson, Bart. (the next in line to the Chief), and by Dick the Secretary.

After dinner we returned to our room, the bar was opened and the festivities began. It is not really possible to describe them in detail, but I would pay special tribute to our piper Duncan Matheson of Brora and to Dick with his violin. With the two we were able to dance an eightsome reel and "Gay Gordons" and, surprisingly, a waltz. I must also mention especially Norman Matheson, a new Glasgow member, Duncan (the same Duncan) and his daughter Edith and Leslie Matheson from Wick who entertained us to recitations and songs. It was all most enjoyable and wonderful how talent appears when one needs it. I would also thank Joyce Matheson of Dundee for guiding me round the floor for the first dance.

Sunday was more restful. The Chief and I took a walk in the morning and no doubt others did the same. The new Convener and I then accompanied Duncan and his family to the chairlift and a most enjoyable lunch at the first stage. It was breathtakingly beautiful on the mountain. After tea I saw Isobel Matheson Dougherty, and her husband, who had taken a special trip over from Canada for the event, off by train to Edinburgh. By this time Mathesons were becoming a bit thin on the ground and Leslie and I had a peaceful evening meal before I too left to catch the night train to London. The stations on the Highland line are fewer than they used to be but the atmosphere was the same and Scotland, in the country districts at any rate, does not seem to change very much. It is still Scotland.

We were only about 40 strong in Aviemore, but from as far South as London and as far North as Sutherland, nothing like the 1,500 or so that the Camerons seem to be able to muster at their gatherings, but it was a beginning. We had, I thought, enjoyed ourselves and I hope that, in these rather "personal" notes, I have been able to communicate something of what it was like.

In my six years as Convener I have made friends—people whom I would like to see again, even if I have to wait until the next gathering before I do, and that means a lot. To the Chief I shall always be grateful for his friendship and encouragement and to the Treasurer, Secretary and Membership Secretary, without whose work the Society simply would not have survived at all, to Isobel Matheson Dougherty in Canada for her enthusiasm as Canadian Representative.

Aviemore was ideal, I think, for a gathering but the fact still is that it is a long way from London. Perth is really as far North as one can travel by train or car in a day and arrive in time for dinner. We really need to know what others think about a place for the next gathering and I hope that they will write with comments and suggestions. This was our first attempt. Next time I hope we shall do even better and more will feel encouraged to come.

RONALD MATHESON.

Christmas Cards

Colin Matheson, the Membership Secretary, still has a supply of these for sale at 60p a dozen including postage. With the Chief's shield and crest in full colour they are attractive.

New Members

J. D. Matheson, Epsom, New Zealand.
Mrs. Janet M. Dorn, Miami, Florida, U.S.A.
Mrs. J. Aston, Auckland, New Zealand.
E. R. Ross, Port Huron, Michigan, U.S.A.
George and Joyce Mathieson, Dundee, Angus.
Mrs. Henrietta Robertson, Nairn, Inverness-shire.
Butler Dougherty, Montreal, Canada.
Norman Matheson, Glasgow.

Photographs of Gathering in Aviemore

We secured the services of a professional photographer for the festivities and three group photographs are available. 60p each including U.K. postage only. Application should be made direct to Pavel Satny, Aviemore Photographic Shopping Development, Main Road, Aviemore, Inverness-shire, PH 22, Scotland (Telephone : Aviemore 371). Overseas applicants should add postage to cover an unmounted photograph.

Publicity in the United Kingdom

An article about Clan Matheson and notes about the Society appeared in Scotland's Magazine last year and were referred to in an earlier Newsletter.

Brief reports on the Gathering in Aviemore were sent to "The Times", "The Scotsman", the "Inverness Courier", "Dundee Courier", "Glasgow Herald", "Scotland's Magazine", the "Scots' Magazine", the "Ross-shire Journal", the "Northern

Times", the "Oban Times" and West Highland Press. This, the Committee feels, is one way of putting the Clan Matheson Society "on the map".

Contributions

We are indebted to Leslie Matheson of Wick for the following ballad.

MATHESON'S GATHERING

Frae a' the airts ye'd think of cam Mathesons galore
Tae hau'd their annual caleidh in the toon of Aviemore.
Receptionists went ravin' mad, the niver as they swore
Had sic a shoo'er o' Mathesons a' stayin' there before !
Wi' violin an' piano, an' the mighty bag-pipe's skirl
They verra nearly raised the roof, an' garred the rafters dirl.
The wee sma' oors were lichtened wi' strathspeys, jigs an'
reels,
The other guests got frichtened an' wished us tae the de'il.
Alas all things must sometimes end, and on the Sabbath day
Oor tents an' tartans folded we sadly stole away.
Full mony friendships there were formed (that coin o' human
wealth),
Here's hoping that next year we'll meet tae drink oor chief's
good health.

As a contrast and with respect to Ronald's (the retiring Convener) obvious affection for railways, we also print a railway poem by another member. Contributions of any kind in light-hearted or serious vein are always welcome and will be published when ever possible. Ronald says he did not feel at all like this when he got off the train at Aviemore, but may have done on his return to Euston, at any rate until he had had breakfast.

NIGHT JOURNEY

Is it this and nothing more,
Tangle of lines crossing,
Then branching separate and,
On to their own destiny.
Somewhere ahead by day and night,
More points, junctions,
A passing train, a shriek,
A roar, then gone.
The traveller stirs and wakes,
Blurred by sleep, seeing,
For a confused instant,
Then sleeps again.
And at the end, what then.
This is his destination.
He stands alone,
In complete and utter emptiness.

Editor of Newsletter

Colin Matheson has offered to combine being Editor of the Newsletter with his present office as Membership Secretary and contributions should be sent to Colin direct at 8 Stambourne Way, West Wickham.

The Clan in Canada and the U.S.A.

The Committee hope that members in Canada and U.S.A. will write to Mrs. Isobel Matheson Dougherty, our Canadian and U.S.A. Representative, at Apt. 58, 3911 Cavendish Boulevard, Montreal, 261 P.Q., Canada.

Isobel has been tireless in making the Society better known in Canada and the United States.

An excellent article of hers on the Society appeared recently in "The Highlander" (P.O. Box 397 Barrington, Illinois 60010). The current subscription is \$3.50 in the U.S.A. and Canada and \$4.00 elsewhere. The publishers have kindly agreed to donate 50c of each subscription to the Clan Matheson Society Funds.

Isobel has also pointed out that the Clan Gathering could be combined with a holiday in Scotland and how reasonable are British Rail "Freedom of Scotland" tickets. Tours are also available. "The Highlander" gives lots of information about other Clan Societies and their gatherings.

"The Clansman News", P.O. Box 282, STN-AMF, Montreal International Airport, Dorval, Quebec. Subscription rate is £1.20 which may be paid direct to "The Clansman News", External Deposit Account 02524173, Bank of Scotland, 34 Reformer Street, Dundee. Canadian and U.S. rate is \$4.50 (Can.). But prices of both magazines may have increased in the meantime.

Donations

The Committee are most grateful to those members who were present at the Aviemore Gathering and gave donations to the Society's funds.

Matheson News

Our best wishes to the Revd. James G. Matheson, of Portree, Isle of Skye, who has been chosen as the next Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

More from Canada

Mrs. Isobel Matheson Dougherty has written as follows:—

"It was wonderful to be able to attend the Gathering in Aviemore, especially for me as I am one of the very few Mathesons with direct roots in the town. My father was born in the Parish of Rafford in Morayshire, but spent most of his life

in Aviemore, and from there emigrated to Canada in 1907. He returned to the U.K. at the start of World War I, as did so many of Scotland's native sons, which accounts for the fact that I also happened to be born in the British Isles. I have always been told that my first journey was at the tender age of one month, when my mother brought me from Berwick-upon-Tweed to Aviemore to meet my Grandmother Matheson. So, you see, for me it is by way of a homecoming to go there for our Gathering.

"I will not try to repeat what the retiring Convener has already written about the Gathering, except to add that it was unfortunate that the curling rink was not open because we found on the spur of the moment that it might be possible to put up two rinks for the "roaring" game. However, perhaps another time we can arrange something. And, please do not forget the fact that from March 17th to 23rd inclusive the Air Canada Silver Broom Competition will take place in Perth to determine the world championship. Last year's event in Berne, Switzerland, proved that Europeans have taken to this ancient game with great gusto and while the accommodation at Perth will not allow as many spectators to watch, it is my understanding that there will be television coverage.

"The Clan has been fortunate in getting some valued publicity in North America, and as a result several new members who are listed elsewhere in the Newsletter have joined. There is still more work to do, and if only I had more time perhaps I could do more, but I hold down a full time job in addition to looking after a family of four, a dog and a deep freeze which, I hope, will beat inflationary costs.

"While there are no definite plans to have a Gathering next year, I think it would be nice if we did, especially from the North American point of view. In 1976, we who live on this side of the water are due for two big events, and at some time or other while they are on it is quite likely that traveling will be on this side of the Atlantic. One is the World's Expo at Philadelphia to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the founding of the U.S.A., and the other is the Olympic Games to be held in Montreal. Because of those two events, I think a Gathering in Scotland in 1975 would be a good idea.

"I am investigating ideas along this line, wherein an all-inclusive week in Inverness, which would include coach travel (with day tours) and meals and accommodation could be provided, with the objective of putting this package across to North American Mathesons to go over. It goes without saying that all Mathesons would be welcome to join and we could have the annual meeting with those that live in Scotland joining for an event similar to the one at Aviemore. Further details later, but

a final word, the cost would be kept as low as possible, and we might have to know very early in the New Year if we can do it. As far as timing goes, I suggest August because that is the month when North Americans usually take vacations, and also the Edinburgh Festival and Tattoo are on."

Editorial Notes:

Isobel also enclosed a most interesting letter from Charles Mathieson Otstot of 5124 North 33rd Street, Arlington, Virginia, 22207, U.S.A. Mr. Otstot's mother emigrated with her mother from Glenboig, near Glasgow, in 1916. His father's family have lived in America for 200 years. If any member has any connection it would be a nice gesture if he or she were to write to Mr. Otstot.

No decision has yet been taken about next year's gathering. Would members please write to the Secretary with their ideas.

CLAN MATHESON SOCIETY

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CLAN MATHESON SOCIETY

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 30th JUNE, 1974

[illegible]

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30th JUNE, 1974

£	£	£		£	p	£	p
16			Annual Membership Subscriptions	15	03		
6			Building Society Interest	8	92		
—			Donations	16	00		
—	22						39 95
			Less				
16			Postage and Stationery	12	91		
23			Printing Newsletter	27	10		
—			Donation to Drumbuie Fund	10	00		
—			Subscription to Scotland's Magazine	2	60		
1			Bank Charges and loss on exchange	1	27		
—	40						53 88
£18			Excess of Expenditure over Income this year				£13 93

MARGARET SHAW, Hon. Treasurer.
RONALD MATHESON, Convener.