



Clan Matheson Society

NEWSLETTER No. 49 Autumn 1994

Chief of the Clan:
Major Sir Fergus Matheson of Matheson,
Baronet of Lochalsh.

Price to non-members £1 or local equivalent

Convenor:	Major General John Matheson, O.B.E., T.D., F.R.C.S., F.R.C.P.
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Editor (Temporary):	The Chief of the Clan

THE CHIEF'S MESSAGE

It has been a great pleasure meeting many members of the Clan for the first time during my first year as Chief, also delving into Clan matters and its history.

Major General John Matheson has generously agreed to become Convenor of the Clan Society. After long and distinguished service to the medical profession, mostly in the Royal Army Medical Corps, in peace and war, he now lives in Edinburgh where he continues to benefit others from his many years of experience. I am sure all Clansmen will join me in welcoming him to this appointment.

Shortly after taking over, Jean and I received an invitation to visit Clansmen in New Zealand which we were glad to accept. In the three weeks there, while visiting both islands, we met scores and scores of Mathesons. It is not practical to list the names of our many generous and long suffering hosts and their many acts of kindness but mention must be made of Gordon and Ailsa Matheson, President and Hon Secretary respectively of the New Zealand Branch. Supported by energetic committee, their enthusiasm was infectious and efficiency second to none. It was a thrilling visit and we were honoured to have the opportunity of meeting so many members of the Clan living in that great country. For us, our departure came too quickly and we were very touched by the many who came to say good bye at the airport.

During the past year, I have received many letters from Clansmen in other countries. Their enthusiasm for Clan matters is just as apparent. I am so grateful to the Hon Secretaries,

Treasurers and Genealogists throughout the Clan Society for all the time they give to Clan affairs; in saying this I am sure I speak for many members. Especially, I thank those in Australia for trying to establish a branch and to cope with the colossal distances involved.

I am still very sad at the way my inheritance has come about and all it has meant to my family but I have enjoyed my first year as Chief of our Clan and meeting and having the opportunity to correspond with so many Clansmen at home and overseas. I apologise to those I have not replied to immediately, it has been due to my other commitments and the size of the mailbag.

An Edinburgh meeting was held last December for members living in Scotland. A similar meeting was held in London during June for those living in England. The latter resulted in the formation of a London Branch which for the time being will administer members in England. Further details will be found elsewhere in the Newsletter. Getting together is one of the objects of the Society, distance being a problem here, just as it is overseas, prevents many members from attending gatherings. Possibly more branches are needed and this may be the pattern from now on. Hopefully they will form in areas where the number of Mathesons warrant it. Anyone interested in helping to achieve this, please will he or she get in touch with me.

Fergus Matheson of Matheson
Hedenham

JAMES MATHESON – THE MERCHANT 1796-1842

by Alexander Matheson O.B.E.
former Provost of Stornoway, Scotland

In the same year as George Washington refused to accept a third term as President of the United States of America and John Adams defeated Thomas Jefferson to become the second President, James Matheson was born in Lairg, Sutherland in the north of Scotland. The second son and one of seven children born to Donald Matheson and Catherine Mackay. He was brought up in the comfortable circumstances of distinguished Highland stock; his paternal great grandfather was Colonel George Matheson of Shiness who had fought for Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden in the Thirty years War. His maternal pedigree included blood and marriage connections with Donald Mackay, 1st Lord Reay and Simon Fraser 8th Lord

Lovat. He was educated at the Royal High School, Edinburgh then at the University in Scotland's capital city and on completion of his studies in 1815, aged 19 years he was granted permission by the East India Company to obtain Free Merchants' Indentures to join MacKintosh and Co. his uncle's Agency House in Calcutta. It is said that this arrangement was not successful and as a consequence the young James was advised to try his luck in the China trade. In 1818 he therefore formed his first trading partnership with an elderly merchant, Robert Taylor and portentously in that same year paid his first visit to China when he went to Canton during the tea season. Unfortunately two years later Taylor died and the partnership

ended. At much the same time Matheson on business in Bombay met socially a resident, but Scots born, shipping merchant, one William Jardine who had until recently been a ship's surgeon with the East India Company. Jardine knew Canton well and although the two merchants did not at that stage become partners it may be that their friendship led to the next phase of James Matheson's career. In 1820 Matheson established himself in Canton, avoiding the necessity of obtaining a trading licence by accepting appointment as Danish Consul in China. In the following year he was joined in partnership by a Spaniard, Xavier Yrissari, of the firm of Larruleta of Calcutta and the two gentlemen formed the trading partnership of Yrissari & Co. of Macao. In 1826 Yrissari died whilst on a business visit to Calcutta. When Matheson went there to wind up his Spanish partner's affairs, he appointed William Jardine who by this time was a partner in the Cantonese firm of Magniac & Co. as his agent. The friendship between the two Scots developed for in 1828 Matheson wound up his own company and became a partner with Jardine in Magniac & Co. which by this time had gained a monopoly of the Indian cotton and opium trade. In 1832, finally setting aside the multiplicity of trading names and joint ventures the two Scots, the older by 12 years from Dumfries-shire in Southern Scotland and the younger more soft spoken Highlander formed, under "joint and several liability" the firm of Jardine, Matheson & Co.

The development of Jardine, Matheson & Co. over the past one and a half century is comprehensively chronicled in that magnificently published volume, "The Thistle and The Jade", which has been the source of much of the above information and supplies the following pen picture, "James Matheson had a great respect for Jardine and usually deferred to his greater experience and judgement – although he himself could be pretty opinionated. Matheson was probably the more widely read of the two and a fervent follower of Adam Smith; one can almost hear his soft Highland voice preaching the Gospel of Free Trade in the

dining room of the factory at Canton. James, considerate as well as knowledgeable, was a great asset to the small self contained community; enthusiastic about new ideas he was an avid reader especially of scientific books and bought Morrison's Grammar of the Chinese Language as well as being founder, in 1827, of the first English language newssheet in China – the Canton Register. He was knowledgeable in Spanish – as a result of his partnership with Yrissari and this proved helpful in developing Jardine Matheson business in Latin America, the Philippines and Europe. He was a man of considerable foresight and in 1836 some years before the event, he proposed the acquisition of Hong Kong Island as 'a factory for British and notably Scottish Traders'." The business acumen and prodigious energy of the partners ensured the success of the company to such an extent that it became a veritable trading colony for expatriate Scots, particularly the following generation of Jardine and Matheson nephews and that by the early 1840s both partners could retire with immense personal wealth and the certainty that their creation was in secure and sensible hands. When Jardine retired home to Britain in 1839 he would under the normal process have taken his name with him but was persuaded by Matheson not to and thus the name Jardine Matheson has been maintained to this day. Then in 1842, Matheson himself after 27 years in the Far East, was ordered home on health grounds and when his former partner William Jardine died in 1843, he succeeded him as Liberal Member for Parliament for the English constituency of Ashburton. "Uncle James" as he was affectionately known within the firm at the ripe age of 46 took himself a wife, purchased a large London home and anxious to maintain his Highland background bought, from the Trustees of the Seaforth Estate, the Island of Lewis in the Outer Hebrides of Scotland.

Not unlike disciples of modern self fulfilment philosophy he at middle age, albeit from the security of a personal fortune, had a complete and profound career change the fruits of which we will consider in a later chapter.

PIPER AT WAR

by James Roderick Matheson of Palmerston North, New Zealand – one time No. 1921 Bombadier, F Troop
4th Field Regiment, Royal New Zealand Artillery.

With Britain declaring war on Germany in September, 1939, a strong feeling of necessity to help swept through many young men of New Zealand, and following Government instructions, we posted in our letters of application to join the military forces. At that time I was employed in a grocer's shop in Cheltenham, a few miles out of Feilding, which served a fairly large country area. I soon received notice to report to the Drill Hall, Taihape for medical examination, so I drove there over very rough metalled roads in my trusty 1937 model Morris 8 motorcar. There I met nine other volunteers, including Jack and Bill McMahon who later became members of the 26th Battery, N.Z.A. I remember nine out of ten passed, and we duly signed up, and were told to return home and await calling-up instructions. Of course we retired to the local pub to celebrate the success of the nine, and commiserate with the one who didn't pass.

We didn't wait long, getting notice to report to the Railway Transport Officer at the Palmerston North Railway Station on the afternoon of 3rd October, 1939. I was 28 then, and found that I was older than most, many being under 21, some not very long out of high school. We filled a fairly long train, and nobody slept on the long all night journey to Ngaruawahia and on to the Hopu Hopu rail siding. Stiff and cold we clambered

down to the ground and into the paddock next to the railway.

I have vivid memories of Colonel Ike Parkinson standing there watching us disembark from the train. What a motley crew we must have looked. He said nothing, but stood there tapping his right leg with a riding crop he was carrying in his hand. He looked as if he would like to throw in his hand there and then. However, we were given some breakfast and were allowed to lie about on the grass till they sorted us into some semblance of order. In my original application I had indicated that my previous military experience had been as a member of the 4th Waikato Mounted Rifles, and my first choice was the Divisional Cavalry. True to Army logic, I found myself drafted to the Artillery. I happened to be talking with Bernie MacDonald, also from Palmerston North, as the line of men moved past a table, where we were allotted our places in the Regiment, and were given our Regimental numbers. Bernie was No 1920 and I was No 1921. He went to F Troop as a gunner, and I went to H.Q. Troop to learn to become a signaller.

During our three months training, we found we had a reasonable amount of spare time, which I used to find and get to know men who played the pipes. First was Alan Sperry in Div. Cav. in the next lines to ours. Alan and I had played together in the

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The Trust's Balmacara Estate, which was part of the Matheson's larger Lochalsh Estate in Wester Ross before 1919, is an ideal stopping point for members of The Clan Matheson Society visiting the West Highlands.

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and include a cheque or money order for £2.25 to cover the cost of our booklet and postage. We can also send you details of membership of the National Trust for Scotland.

 The National Trust for Scotland

South Auckland Pipe Band in Hamilton. At the same time I met Gordon Stuart who had been a side drummer in the same band, and I was pleased to find he was a member of F. Troop. We three met in the evenings and decided we would try to get in some practice. At that time I did not own a set of pipes having had to sell my last set to pay a hospital bill a year or so earlier. (No free hospital those days!) In 1934 I had cut the tendon of my left thumb with a sharp axe, and for a long time I was unable to play the pipes, so had taken to the bass drum instead. My hand was now healed and I was able to borrow a set of pipes from a friend in Hamilton for the time we would be in camp. Alan, Gordon and I had lots of fun in the evenings under the gum trees at the edge of the camp.

Two stalwarts who used to encourage us in our playing were Vic Rowland, Sgt. Maj., D. Troop, and Sgt. Mjr. Fitzgerald of Regimental Headquarters, both from Palmerston North, and both Pipe Band enthusiasts. Gordon and I found ourselves taking various groups on route marches, a big part of our training. One day I was invited to Sgt. Mjr. Fitzgerald's tent, where I found all the Warrant Officers of the Regiment assembled to plan a general parade of the whole camp to receive a visit from the Governor General of New Zealand, Lord Galway. I was asked if somehow I could produce a small Pipe Band. This meant some running about, but I was given a free hand to come and go as necessary, and I managed to locate another piper who had his pipes with him. I found a second side drummer for Gordon Stuart to coach, and Bernie MacDonald could beat a bass drum if one could be procured. I shot into Hamilton and managed to borrow a bass and two side drums with slings and sticks from the Hamilton Band, who told me I could have the use of them for two or three weeks. This enabled us to form a band of six, three pipers and three drummers, with a couple of days in which to get in some practice. An area had been set aside, a flag-staff erected, and two quadrants of floor boards used to floor circular tents, was set at the base of the flag pole as a dais. Leo Sinden of H.Q. 26 Battery was trained in the correct manner of "breaking out the flag". White marks were placed in the area, and a couple of rehearsals were held. With the band stationed just off the centre of the parade ground we were able to be heard by all groups during the march past, continuing round to the far side of the square, where the parade was to halt. Then it was left turn to face the dais, officers moving to the front, N.C.O.'s and band to the rear. We were then to advance – "in review order, 15 paces quick march".

The big day arrived, and the parade waited for the arrival of the Governor General's black car. Leo was stationed at the rear of the flag-pole to break out the flag. Lord Galway and his A.D.C. walked from the car to the dais, and took up their positions. Leo, who was the only person within earshot, told us later, that he remarked to his A.D.C., "Not very military, what", tapping his foot on the floor boards. This didn't impress Leo favourably at all. Anyway, the march past went well, without a hitch and it was a long blow for the pipers, but we kept playing till the whole parade was in review order. We cut the band, the order 'left turn' was given, and we all moved smartly to our review positions. Then Colonel Ike Parkinson gave the order to advance and our drummers gave it all they had with a final crash halt! The Colonel continued to advance to within five paces of the dais and threw a mighty salute. I don't think the Gov. Gen. was very impressed; he didn't move but acknowledged the salute. We all thought we had done a fairly good job.

A little bit later we did it all again, this time to meet our newly

appointed chief, General Freyberg. What a difference! Following our advance and crash halt, he stepped right off the dais and came striding forward with hand outstretched to shake hands with the Colonel, and shouted at the top of his voice, "Jolly good show". After talking to us for some time, he congratulated our little band, which thrilled us no end.

One morning I received a message to report to Captain Stewart's tent. With some trepidation I went, and was received very graciously. We sat on his bed, and he told me he was taking the Battery on a route march, and could I play the pipes off and on for about two hours? No problem. So we found ourselves on the march about 1 p.m. We were led towards Taupiri, then turned right onto a narrow unpaved road. Gordon and I played for much of the first 50 minutes when I knew we would get a 10 minute rest. I expected we would be turned round to return the way we had come, to use up the second hour, as I knew this area had no other road to lead us back to camp. I mentioned this to Vic Rowland who said we had better report this fact to the Captain. We found him studying his map with a puzzled look, and he told us he was looking for Gray's Road to take us to the Taupiri-Gordonton Road, with the idea of calling in to the Taupiri Hotel on the way home. I was able to tell him I knew Grey's Road was surveyed right through, but had only been completed half way, and that from the other end. Offered to lead him over paddocks to link up with the end of the road, but he said he would prefer to go right round the block, if I was prepared to make a forced march of it. Said I was game, but we would be late back to camp. I had taken him to a high point and showed him where the road went. He explained he wanted to take the boys past the Taupiri Pub, and stop for a rest before closing time at six o'clock. So away we went for the next four hours, arriving at the Pub at twenty minutes to six. The boys got their beer as promised, but I just flopped on the grass and fell asleep.

At six o'clock we set off on the last couple of miles, and met Major Ainslie in a truck looking for his lost troops. He didn't look very happy but we trudged on, and were met at the gate by Bernie MacDonald with the bass drum, and we marched to our own parade ground with all other units standing at attention lining the route. We formed up and were dismissed, and someone shouted "Three cheers for Captain Stewart", and as that died down I heard another voice shout, "Three cheers for the piper". I'm afraid that was when I collapsed and was carried off to bed. Capt. Stewart brought sheets from his own bed, and had hot soup sent from the officer's mess. I guess he got a fright, and I know he got a blast from above for losing his troops. Not one man reported sick to the M.O., though there were many who soaked their feet that night.

There was one more event which was outstanding in its way, before we embarked for overseas. That was the final parade through Queen Street, Auckland. It was an early start that day, and I received a message from Major Ainslie that he expected me to take my pipes with me. I was surprised at the request, but complied. We travelled by train from Hopu Hopu to Auckland Station, and by Army truck to a park. Most of us were strangers to Auckland and were quite lost, but we were eventually mustered into our various units, and headed for we knew not where. Major Ainslie placed me at the head of 26 Battery, and I blindly followed the unit in front, keeping a uniform distance from them. This was one of the hardest street marches I have ever done, wearing heavy Army boots with steel toe and heel plates slipping and sliding on tram lines. We didn't go far before I real-

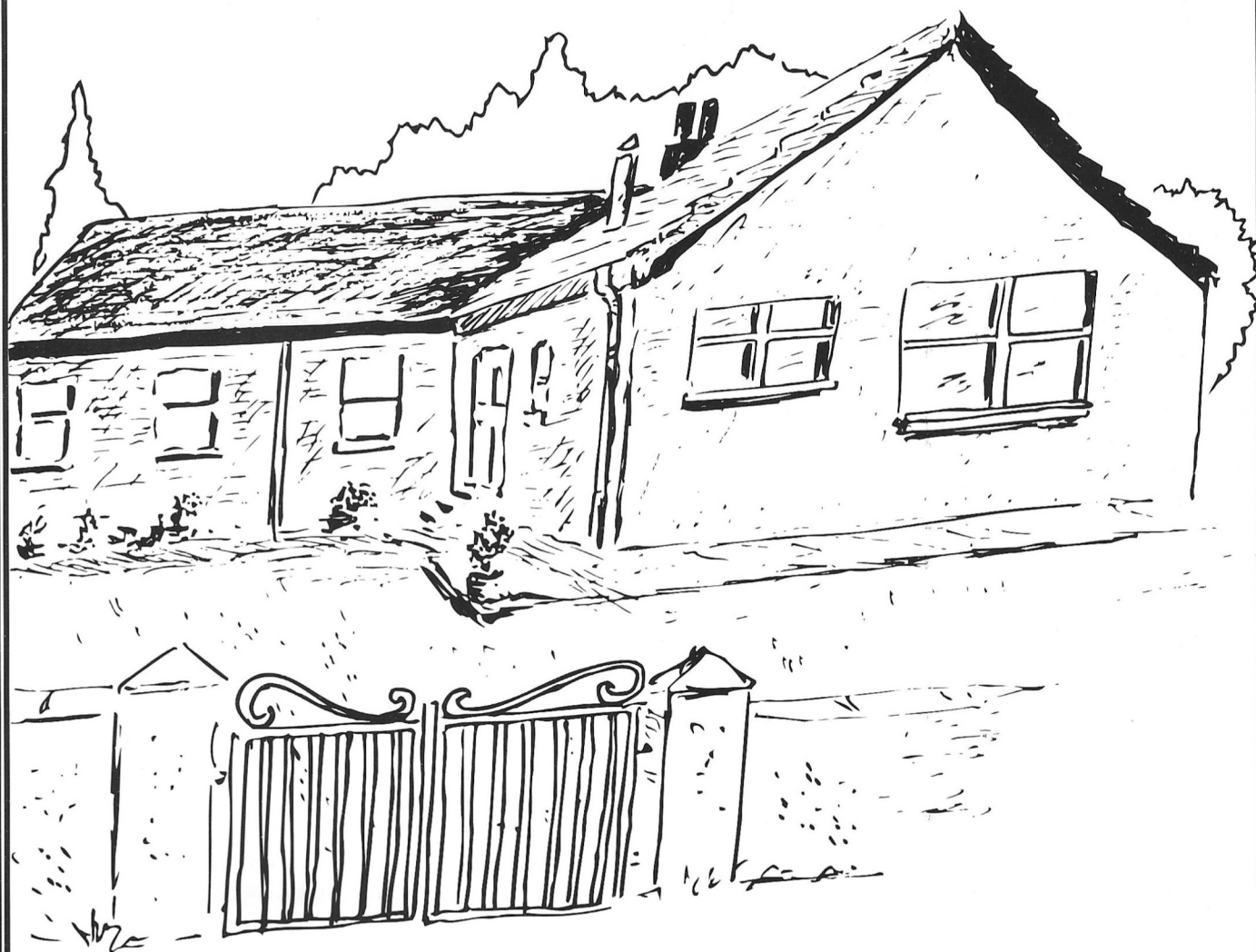
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ized we were at the top of Queen Street, and I played all the way, changing tunes as we went. It is amazing what a piper can hear above his own playing, and I was fully aware of the cheering of the crowds all the way. I have a cutting from the "Herald" mentioning the lone piper in the parade. On returning to the park we were re-formed to listen to speeches from the mayor and other dignitaries, all of which the average soldier could well do without. It was a relief to get back to camp and enjoy a well earned meal.

Time to embark for overseas was drawing closer, and we were granted our final leave. On the morning of the first day's leave, Sgt. George Sutherland of H.Q. Troop brought me £15 which had been subscribed by the members of H.Q. Troop, and I was instructed to purchase a set of pipes to be taken with the Battery when we embarked. So my final leave was used in searching for a set of pipes. Nobody would sell me a good quality set with no guarantee of ever getting them home again, but eventually I persuaded a friend who had a second set to part with them. They were very old, and had been in the possession of a family in Dunedin for several generations, but not used for over 50 years. Nearly all the metallic mountings had corroded and broken, but George Robinson had done a great job of restoration by having brass mountings made and chrome plated. He told me he understood this set of pipes had been played during the Crimean War, and had been brought to New Zealand sometime about 1860 or earlier by a minister of religion who enjoyed playing. I have not been able to confirm this, but the set is very old. A close examination of the wording on the chanter states the maker as "W. WEIR LITHGOW, LEITH". I have not been able to find anybody who ever heard of this firm, so it seems to prove the age of this set. The lowest price I could wangle was £25, and I borrowed £10 to clinch the deal. This was later refunded to me from Regimental funds. A jeweller friend in Hamilton fitted a silver ferrule to the base drone stock with my Regimental Number, Name, and 26 Battery, 4th Field Regiment, N.Z.A.

The next part of the story finds us on board the "Empress of Canada" berthed at the Wellington wharf. I have a snap in my album of Gordon Stuart and myself playing the drum and pipes high up on the top deck overlooking the wharf. We were moved out to the middle of the harbour, and anchored there all night. Sailed away next morning, 4th January, 1940. Called in to Sydney harbour to drop off General Freyberg. No way of getting off the ship. Within the hour we are full speed in pursuit of the rest of the convoy. Ten days from leaving Wellington brought us to Fremantle. Next day ashore; back by midnight to find our Chinese crew on strike. Ten more days to Ceylon. We are taken ashore, and marched from the waterfront to the town centre. Stu and I are called upon to lead that march which was exceptionally hot, and we arrived saturated with sweat. A further ten days sailing brought us to the top of the Red Sea, and we could see our destination, Port Tewfik. It was now 12th February, 1940. The Empress of Canada was the flagship of the convoy bringing the first troops from New Zealand and Australia to the Middle East. None of these big ships could come close to the wharf in the small port, so it was necessary to disembark the troops from ship to shore in barges. Before this could be done, our ship was visited by General Freyberg and British Government officials. I remember seeing Anthony Eden, and Sir Miles Lampson among the visitors. Of course the press and news cameramen were there in force, including newsreel cameramen. We lowly Gunners were herded into these cat-

tle barges complete with our kit bags and everything we owned, and what seemed like hours of waiting for something to happen. During our trip I had become very friendly with the ship's sanitary engineer, a Scot with a braw accent, who used to sit and listen to the pipes when I got a chance to practice after sunset. He came to the hatchway in the side of the ship, through which we had clambered into the barges, and called out, "What about a farewell tune from the piper?" I agreed and unpacked the pipes and played his favourite tunes to him. He was only about ten yards away, a little above us, and I could see him clearly tapping his foot, and the tears were running down his cheeks.

From the first notes another activity began on board the ship. Press and movie cameras appeared all along the ship's rail. I was told later that I had begun playing during the middle of the speech-making among the top brass, with cameras clicking like crazy, but they all deserted the group and made for the ship's rail. We know they made a feature of the piper who played the first troops ashore in Egypt, with pictures in dozens of papers and magazines. But that was not all. Eventually a tug arrived and took a string in barges in tow. I happened to be in the one next to the tug, so to avoid a crush I jumped into the tug and was soon joined by Gordon Stuart who had the F. Troop drum with him. We decided to be first ashore, throw our gear in a heap, and play the troops ashore.

Quite a long trip from ship to shore, and a civilian who was riding on the tug came and sat by us, introducing himself as a war correspondent from Reuters News, and asking for an interview. We told him how we came by the pipes and the drum, and he assured us our story would be flashed round the world, and our folks would know all about it the next day – and it was so. Our barge was first to touch the ground and we threw our bags ashore, but we were beaten to land by Lt. Stan Nolan, who made a mighty leap past us and was first ashore. We were second and immediately struck up and played till all were ashore. (The troops from the other ships in the convoy did not disembark till the next day, 13th Feb.) A long tramp through deep sand with our gear to where a troop train waited on a siding. Our Battery Sgt. Mjr., Rex Bartley, asked us to play the troops from the train to the camp, and this we were prepared to do, but when we at last pulled into Maadi siding, there was a pipe band already playing a welcome. I was so excited I leaped out before the train stopped, and joined in and finished the tune with them. It was the band of the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders, who were stationed in the military barracks in Cairo. I visited them often later, till they were moved elsewhere.

We soon settled into our area which our advance party had prepared for us, and training began in earnest. No time for playing pipes for some time, and I found myself a member of a twenty four hour guard, from 0800 hours to 0800 hrs the next day. Had to do something about this, so discussed the problem with Gordon Stuart, and we decided to put a proposition to our Battery Sgt. Mjr. We were prepared to play the new guard on and the old guard off each day provided no fatigues or guard duty for us. Reluctantly he agreed, and we carried out this duty with the daily guard change as long as we were in Maadi Camp. We chose as our Regimental tune, a lively 6/8 march, "Captain Towse, V.C.", which was written to honour a hero of World War I, who was blinded at the time of winning his Victoria Cross.

Visits to Cairo at night was everybody's delight, and we once stumbled on a dance at the Cairo Y.M.C.A. Their orchestra played classical tunes which were most difficult to dance to, so

MACKINNON HATHWAY

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the next week I took my pipes and played every kind of dance I could think of, as we used to do at home. It was agreed the evening was a great success. I must say the orchestra members took it well, and said they now understood the tempo the dancers wanted.

We had been in Egypt about two weeks, when I was asked to bring the pipes, and H.Q. Troop were taken in trucks to the foot of the great pyramid, where we formed up and marched all the way back. Fortunately it was morning with a reasonably cool breeze, and we made good time. From memory I think it would be about twelve miles, and I played much of the way.

Eventually the Regiment moved to Bagush in the desert for further training. No more playing guards on and off duty, but I enjoyed slipping away into the hills and playing to myself. We were informed we were to go forward and engage the enemy. I asked my mates if I should send the pipes back to Base, but they were adamant that the pipes go with us wherever we went, so I rigged up a sling inside the roof of the cab of M1 signals truck.

The pipes survived till our next big move, which was to Greece. We enjoyed this new climate, and I often played on the back of our truck as we made our way slowly north for several weeks. But when the crunch came, and we were hastily withdrawing, there was no time for playing. But one day our water cart men told me they had just come from a village up in the hills, where the occupants spoke English with a strong Scottish accent. Our men told them we had a piper in the unit, and would bring him back to play some tunes for them when they returned for their second load of water. We got permission to do this and set off, but we didn't get through; some German troops have moved in and cut us off. I was disappointed to miss meeting this remote Scottish settlement.

In the confusion of our withdrawal I got parted from my vehicle and for several days wondered where my mates and my pipes were. About a week later we found each other and there were the pipes safe and sound. Then we had to get out of Greece. We were on our beach awaiting the Navy to evacuate us, and we were ordered to throw away everything but essential equipment, and I was planning how to get my pipes through. At last our turn came, and we filed down to the water's edge in the dark. I sneaked my leather pipe box along and sat on it whenever we stopped. A big Tommy Military Policeman grabbed my arm and said he had a job for me. He led me to the front of the great column of men where there was a vast heap of boxes, each containing two 4-gallon tins of aviation fuel. I was to break those boxes open and hand a tin of petrol to each man to carry aboard the landing vessels which were to take the troops to Crete. I toiled at this all night, and lost contact with my own unit. Those of us left began to worry when the sky began to lighten in the east. However, a small boat arrived rowed by two sailors and picked us up. There were about six of us in our small group. I tied my pipes to my back to leave my two arms free, and when we reached our Navy Cruiser, was able to clamber up the rope ladder. Two hefty sailors at the top were hauling us over the rail one by one, and when my turn came they grabbed me, then stopped in mid air demanding to know what I had on my back. Without thinking I replied, "Secret signalling equipment", and they pulled me in. I scurried down some ladders to sailors sleeping quarters and hid the pipes under a bunk. They were not discovered, and I was able to take them ashore in Crete.

There I searched out my own unit, where we rested up for the next ten days. Every evening I used to wander off among the

olive trees and play to cheer myself up, and I soon discovered that the troops were looking forward to my nightly concerts, and realized that it was good for us all. One night, two soldiers came out of the darkness attracted by the sound of the pipes. They had walked a long way to find the piper. Then there came another, limping and leaning on a stick. He was an Australian and was a piper himself. I offered him the pipes to have a go, and he sat on the edge of a ditch dangling his legs, and played till about midnight, when my three visitors drifted off into the darkness. Because of the shortage of wood for burning, I tore up all my manuscript music; using the paper to boil the billy. To lighten the load, I discarded the leather case, and wrapped the pipes in a piece of blanket so that I could make a bundle to carry on my back. There was a quantity of equipment in a great heap waiting to be transported back to Egypt if transport could be found, so I packed my pipe-case full of small items and addressed it to myself care of the 4th Field Regiment, never really expecting to see it again. But it turned up months later at British Ordnance Dump in Cairo.

Just before the airborne invasion, some of us were drafted to return to Egypt on one of the last ships to leave Crete. Gordon Stuart and I were both on that ship. In Egypt the Regiment was rebuilt, with fresh reinforcements and new equipment, and much training. We were to lose Colonel Parkinson who was promoted. A big parade was organized out of camp in a vast hollow, out of sight of other units, and the pipes and drum were called into use once more. We marched to our places to await the Colonel who was to give us a farewell speech. We waited for a long time but nobody came. My pipes were drying out in the hot sun so I asked for permission to go over the hill to see to them. Permission granted, but to return immediately if I saw any movement. So I went and re-tuned the pipes. Then I saw a car approaching. Plenty of time so I watched for a while. The car stopped and the driver got out. I recognized the Colonel's driver. They seemed to be arguing, then the car turned round and drove away. I reported what I had seen, and after a long time the parade was broken off. We heard later that Ike could not face his troops which had been his responsibility for so long.

The Regiment was undergoing a different kind of training in Syria, when suddenly we were called upon to make a dash for the Western Desert. The tide was turning against us and we were to meet the enemy again. The pipes were again slung in the cab of the M1 truck. Once that truck got badly shot up, and after travelling on flat tyres as far as possible before being abandoned, the driver rescued the pipes and it was many a day before I found them travelling in another vehicle.

Towards evening on the 12th July, 1942, we were shelled and I copped the last one for the day. Had to be evacuated, and spent the next six months in the N.Z. No 1 General Hospital in Helwan. About a month after leaving the Regiment, I was delighted to see two dusty unshaven soldiers, straight out of the desert, visit me. There, with great grins, stood Jimmy Litchwark and Bob Mountfield of F. Troop. They were the first of our unit to get back from the desert, and their first priority was to bring me my pipes. They came into the ward carrying the old leather pipe-case, and slid it under my bed. This was the first of many reunions.

The pipes came home on the hospital ship with me, labelled "wounded man's kit", and were silent for several years. However, little by little I improved in health, eventually being able to play again for short spells. From time to time we had Regimental re-unions, and each time I was able to play a lament

at the Cenotaph, sometimes in Auckland and other times, Wellington. Now at 9 p.m., when we hold our functions in the evening, I play again. To me it has been a way of life, and I know the members of the 4th Field Regiment Association appreciate the part played by the pipes and the F. Troop drum. I wonder how much longer we can continue to do this.

The above was written in September, 1988. I was able to play

the pipes a little till 1992, when I piped in the New Year at the age of 80. With my family's consent, I offered the suggestion to the 4th Field Regiment Association, that the pipes be presented to the Waiouru Army Museum. This will be done on 27th April, 1994, together with the F. Troop drum, and other mementos of the Association.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CLAN MATHESON

by Lyman W. Matheson

Hon Secretary United States of America Branch

Whether the Mathesons emigrated from Denmark to Scotland before they went to Ireland, and from there to Scotland, we do not know, but they are an old race in Ireland.

In Ossian's Poems mention is made of a Calmar MacMahon, an Irish Chieftain who assisted Fingal in one of his wars in Ireland.

Ossian, the aged Scottish bard, whose works flourished between the third and fourth centuries of the Christian era, so that the time when his father Fingal fought his battles in his youth must have been a number of years previous to that period.

The Englied name Matheson was previously MacMahon, MacMathan, Mahon and in Gaelic other spellings not pronounceable.

When Kenneth III, King of Scotland (alias Kenneth MacAlpin), was at war with the Picts in the ninth century, a MacMathan came to his assistance. After the war, which almost totally eradicated the race of the Picts, the King of Scotland rewarded his followers and allies with gifts of lands. In this distribution Lochalsh was bestowed on MacMathan.

MacMathan's successors cannot be traced till the twelfth century. At that time of his descendants, Kenneth Matheson of Lochalsh, had a daughter who married Colin Fitzgerald (son of the Earl of Desmond) who fought with the Scottish King at the Battle of Largs in 1263. As a reward for his services he obtained the lands of Kintail.

Matheson of Lochalsh gave Colin Fitzgerald a portion of Lochalsh as his daughter's portion on condition that Colin would call his first son Kenneth.

Also of possible interest – during the reign of Alexander III, King of Scotland, from 1249 to 1286, MacMathan of Lochalsh (Kenneth) (or Coinneach MacMathghamhna) was asked to keep order in that part of Scotland and to build Eilean Donan Castle to help defend the area.

Kenneth lived in the castle after it was finished until his death in 1304. He was then buried in Iona, alongside the Kings of Scotland and chiefs of the most important clans. This Kenneth (Coinneach MacMathghamhna) was an ancestor common to the Mathesons and the MacKenzies and later on was the second chief of Clan Matheson.

For the next 200 years we know little about the Mathesons, but in 1427 "Makmakan" who appeared before the King of Inverness, was described as leader of 2000 men and chief of the Mathesons. The crime for which Matheson had to appear before James I at Inverness was for his part in the Battle of Drumnacoub in Sutherlandshire.

About 1450 the Earl of Ross, who now owned all the lands of Lochalsh, after years of the area being fought over by the MacKenzies and the MacDonalds, gave Lochalsh lands to his son.

The Mathesons were split-up during this period – some fighting with the MacKenzies and some with the MacDonalds.

This Matheson split within the clan extended for many years and in 1539 one faction loyal to MacKenzies represented by Iain Dubh, who had married a widow of a MacKenzie who was Constable of Eilean Donan Castle, thus then became constable of the castle. The other faction loyal to MacDonalds was represented by Murchadh Buidhe as their leading figure.

In 1539 the MacDonalds attacked the MacKenzies' Eilean Donan castle and Mathesons were fighting Mathesons. The castle Constable Iain Dubh Matheson was killed and his successor later was killed by the MacDonalds of Glengarry. Thereafter the Mathesons were united as the MacDonald interest prevailed and Murchadh Buidhe became Chief of the Mathesons.

This is the person from which all Matheson lines originate in modern times. For the next 20 years, starting in 1580 the MacKenzies and the MacDonalds were again at war, until in 1607 the MacKenzies were awarded a crown Charter for the lands of Lochalsh area. This forced the sons of Murchadh Buidhe, who with their father had for years been loyal to the MacDonalds, to throw in their lot with the MacKenzies. However, not all the Matheson clan followed this lead.

In 1745 John Matheson of Bennetsfield followed the Earl of Cromarty in support of Prince Charles and fought on that side, with some of his brothers, on the fatal field of Culloden.

Later in 1838 a labourer on the field of Culloden accidentally dug up a label which marked the small of the butt-end of his musket. It bore a crest and motto which he had assumed and changed from his family's ancient motto of "O'chian" (of yore) to "Fac et Spera" (do and hope) with a hand dexter, bearing a scimitar, and under this crest and motto was "John Matheson of Bennetsfield, 10th April 1746". This makes it appear that the musket had been made for the mode of Highlanders' fighting which was to fling away his firearms after the first discharge and rush on with sword and targe. Then after the battle recover the musket. John Matheson of Bennetsfield was a survivor of Culloden and finally retired as a captain of the 78th Highlanders.

James Sutherland Matheson was born at Lairg, Sutherlandshire in 1796. After the University of Edinburgh he joined Jardine and formed the firm of Jardine Matheson and Co. They became a famous shipping and mercantile house in India and China. After amassing a large fortune he returned to Scotland in 1842. In 1844 he purchased the Island of Lewis from Mrs Stewart-Mackenzie of Seaforth for £190,000 and spent £329,000 on improvements. In 1851 he was titled a "Baronet of the United Kingdom" in recognition of his providing food and services to the inhabitants of Lewis during the severe famine of 1845-46 and the following years. He also built Lews Castle near

Stornaway on the Island of Lewis.

In 1866 he was appointed Lord-Lieutenant of the counties of Ross and Cromarty. He died in 1887 without children, and left his Island principality and the estate of Achany, Sutherlandshire to his widow Lady Matheson of the Lews. His philanthropic efforts were not appreciated by the islanders, for whose material well-being he sacrificed so much.

Sir Alexander Matheson, Bart. of Lochalsh, Attadale, and Andross was born 1805 and died 1886. During his father's lifetime the family was in 1825, forced to part with the last remnant of heritable possessions in the West by the sale of Attadale. Alexander began life afresh without position or wealth previously held by his family.

His uncle, the above mentioned Sir James Matheson of the Lews, Bart. was at the time engaged very successfully in the then famous mercantile house of Jardine, Matheson and Co., of which he was co-founder, operating in India and China.

A place was found for young Alexander to go to work in this firm and he later was responsible for the original development of Hong Kong from a tiny fishing village.

About 1839 Alexander Matheson returned to the Highlands with a large fortune and began the purchase of lands in the Highlands, including the lands his family had lost in his younger years. He built his castle Duncraig (across the water from the village of Plockton, as well as acquiring Ardross Castle and grounds. In total he purchased over 200,000 acres in the county of Ross, at a total cost of £773,020 plus £300,000 in improvements and building in Ross-shire. In addition to this he also bought extensive properties in Inverness Burgh.

In 1882 his public services were acknowledged by the Crown, a Baronetcy having been conferred upon him (1st Baronet of Lochalsh).

During the last four years of his life Sir Alexander had to part with a large portion of his estates before his death in 1886.

His heir, the eldest son Sir Kenneth James (2nd Baronet of Lochalsh) had to further part with large portions of the estates, retaining Lochalsh, Attadale and Ardintoul – and the small estate of Gledfield, and the greater portion of the Inverness estate.

Sir Alexander was married three times. His first wife Mary Macleod died after one year in 1841; – his second wife in 1853,

the Hon. Lavinia Mary Stapleton, mother of Sir Kenneth James died in 1855; – his third wife in 1860, Eleanor Irving Perceval who died in 1879 was the grand-daughter of the Rt. Hon. Spencer Percival, Prime Minister of Great Britain who was assassinated in the House of Commons in 1812.

General Sir Torquhil George Matheson, K.C.B., C.M.G. (1871-1963) fifth and youngest son of Sir Alexander and fourth son of Eleanor, became the 5th Baronet upon the successive death of each of his brothers (George his immediate elder brother died in infancy). He served in the Coldstream Guards and in 1923 married Lady Elizabeth Keppel, A.R.R.C. (1890-1986). He was succeeded by his elder son Torquhil Alexander.

Colonel Bertram Heylin Matheson of Matheson, M.C. (1890-1975), succeeded his father Heylin Fraser Matheson as the Clan Chief in 1945. He served in the 54th Sikhs (Frontier Force) Indian Army. Being the last of the house of Bennetsfield, by tanistry he nominated Sir Torquhil George to be his successor, followed by Torquhil Alexander and then Fergus John. Sir Torquhil George having pre-deceased him, he was succeeded as Chief of the Clan by Sir Torquhil Alexander.

Major Sir Torquhil Alexander Matheson of Matheson, 6th Baronet (1925-1963), served in the Coldstream Guards. In 1977 he was appointed to Her Majesty's Body Guard of The Honourable Corps of Gentlemen at Arms later becoming Clerk of the Cheque and Adjutant. In 1954, he married Serena Francesca, only daughter of Lieutenant Colonel Sir Michael Peto, 2nd Baronet and also a former Coldstream Guards officer. After 18 years as Chief of the Clan, he was succeeded by his younger brother Fergus John.

Major Sir Fergus John Matheson of Matheson born in 1927 also served in the Coldstream Guards and is one of Her Majesty's Body Guard and was appointed Standard Bearer in 1993. In 1952 he married the Hon Jean Elizabeth Mary Willoughby younger daughter of 11th Baron Middleton, K.G., M.C. They have one son, Alexander, a Major in the Coldstream Guards and two daughters, Matilda and Fiona. All are married with children.

"A salute to our new Clan Chief Major Sir Fergus John Matheson of Matheson, 7th Baronet of Lochalsh and The Hon. Lady Matheson of Matheson."

NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

UNITED KINGDOM

EDINBURGH

Norman Matheson, Dunkeld, for many years Hon Treasurer and latterly Hon Secretary as well, recently asked to resign due to ill health. His service to the Clan Society stretches over many years and his jovial approach to life will be sorely missed by the many members who have had the good fortune to meet or write to him. He certainly has earned a rest from his work for the Clan and before that the Royal Bank of Scotland. I feel all Mathesons around the world will wish to join with me in thanking Norman and Betty for the wonderful job they have done for the Clan Society. We wish him well and hope he will soon be back with his rod on his favourite beats of the rivers within reach of Dunkeld.

A meeting was held in December 1993 by kind permission of The Scottish Council for Development and Industry in their Head Office in Edinburgh. The office of Hon Secretary was not filled and as reported above that of Hon Treasurer is now also vacant.

Minutes were sent out to all members living in Scotland. A meeting in Edinburgh in the Spring 1995, has yet to be arranged. Details will be sent out to all members living in Scotland and all other known Mathesons and Mathiesons living in and around Edinburgh.

LONDON

A meeting was held by kind permission of Messrs Jardine Matheson & Co in one of their offices in the City of London in June, followed by a buffet supper. A London Branch was formed and the following officers appointed.

Hon Secretary: Campbell Matheson, 32 Ickburgh Road,
London E5 8AD

Hon Treasurer: Leslie K. Matheson, 1 Cotswold Green,
Enfield, Middlesex EM2 7HE

Minutes were despatched to all members living in England.

A Clan dinner took place on Thursday 13th October at Sutton House, London. The committee are to be congratulated for laying on such an enjoyable function so soon after the formation of

the branch. Among those who attended was Richard Matheson, a founder member of the Society. Newsletter No. 27 records the origin of the Society as told by him. It dates back to 1961 when he had a chance meeting with Piper John Matheson, a judge of piping contests at a Highland Gathering on Clapham Common. A few days later, he was discussing the project with the late Robert Matheson, landlord of the Admiral Nelson Inn at Gravesend. A meeting followed in that hostelry attended by the brothers Murdoch and Allan Matheson who were elected Secretary and Treasurer respectively. The Society then moved to the Royal Scottish Corporation Headquarters and when Murdoch emigrated to Australia in '62, Dick became Secretary. We have much to thank him for and we were delighted to have him with us at the dinner.

AUSTRALIA

Grateful thanks are due to Frank and Mona Matheson, 14 Carlton Street, Port Vernon, Queensland 4655 for distributing the 1993 Newsletter, also for all they have done to try and establish a Branch of the Clan Society. The difficulties associated with forming a committee have not been overcome, however Judy Tottle has kindly offered to take on where Frank and Mona left off and will arrange distribution of the 1994 Newsletter.

Mention must be made, as appears elsewhere, that due to inflation, previous life membership fees no longer cover the increasing cost of printing a newsletter and postage. A copy is now mailed to Australia for photo-copying and distribution. If the recipients wish to continue to receive the Newsletter, please will they send some sort of re-imbusement to the distributor to cover costs.

Judy Tottle has also offered to act as Clan Genealogist in Australia and hopes this will appeal to Australian Clan Members who read her notice alongside and that they will communicate with her so she can gather more information and ascertain their views and needs.

LETTERBOX IN AUSTRALIA

ATTENTION ALL MATHESONS WITH ANTIPODEAN LINKS

As genealogy is of particular interest to many of us, an Australian Register of Descendants is being established to facilitate the research of family historians tracing Mathesons/Mathiesons who settled in Australia.

The Register will record the data on computer and hopefully those interested will respond and submit their names and addresses and a genealogical outline of their Matheson research to date. Researchers will then be put in touch with one another to establish contact and trace common links.

If you would like to participate, the Registration form can be obtained from members, Colin Lewis, 20 Crofton Court, Hoppers Crossing, 3030, Victoria, or Judy Tottle, 32 Raby Esplanade, Ormiston, 4160, Queensland. Please return postage and a small donation to cover photo-copying expenses.

This opportunity will provide us with a network of people with a vital interest in the Matheson Clan throughout Australia and may lay the foundations for a Clan Gathering to be held in Australia at some future date.

CANADA

Hon Secretary: Joel R. Matheson, Q.C.

30 Robert Allen Drive, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada B3M 3G8

The past year has been one of many Clan activities and speculation regarding a Clan Gathering in Nova Scotia in 1995 in conjunction with the Provincial International Gathering of the Clans and a visit from Chief Fergus and Lady Matheson. Our plans were put on hold when we were advised that the 1995 Gathering had been cancelled. But never underestimate the power of the Clans! A forceful presentation by Provincial Scottish Federations, Societies and Clans has resulted in a commitment of support from Government and a decision by the Clan organizations to hold an International Gathering during the first two weeks of July 1995.

The good news for Clan Matheson is that Chief Fergus and Lady Matheson will be able to attend for the first week and we are now commencing with plans to hold our Gathering from July 1st to 8th inclusive. This will coincide with the spectacular

International Tattoo, Highland Games and Scottish Festival in Halifax, N.S. We will also be planning events in Cape Breton and other parts of Nova Scotia. More details will be available after the Federations and Societies finalize their plans. We hope to have Mathesons from all our worldwide branches join us in 1995!

Our Clan members from all across our large country will be contacted and urged to join us. Our Gathering will include participation in general events as well as our own special functions including a Clan Parliament, Clan Dinner, Ceilidh, Kirkin' of the Tartan at a Church Service and general socializing. We are gearing this up to make a happy event with fun for all.

Thanks to Beverly Matheson and Brenda Cochrane who provided us with much of the information for this Newsletter. As you can see, their Branches have been very active.

MAINLAND NOVA SCOTIA

President and Clan Genealogist: Glen Matheson, R.R. #1,
Debert, Colchester Co., Nova Scotia B0M 1G0
Secretary: Beverly Matheson, 88 Beaumont Drive, Lr.
Sackville, Nova Scotia B4C 1V6
Treasurer: Verna Matheson, PO Box 796, 107 Stellar Street,
Stellarton, Nova Scotia B0K 1S0

Our Clan functions in Mainland Nova Scotia included participation in three Highland Games and Scottish Festivals where we set up our Clan tent alongside those of other Clans and helped forge new Clan bonds and make many new friends, including visitors of various nationalities.

On August 6th, an annual general meeting was held and officers appointed. Following the business meeting, Truman Matheson introduced those present to some Gaelic phrases and sentences. He was kind enough to say we had performed well.

The summer season ended again this year with a large gathering at Vaughn and Donna Matheson's cottage at Shortt's Lake. This is now becoming a traditional event including the fund raising auction conducted by Al, husband of Beverly Matheson. The Pot Luck supper that evening included many recipes from the Branch's new cook book "Cooking with our Clan". It contains 350 fabulous recipes shared by Clan members and friends and a brief history of the Clan. The first printing was sold out and a second order has been placed. A major Clan effort, that warrants a vote of thanks to all those who made it happen.

Another happy event was the wedding of Trueman Matheson and Laurinda MacGillivray on May 28th at St. Ninian's Cathedral, Antigonish, N.S. The wedding was in Gaelic with the participants attired in Highland garb.

Again, this year, a bursary is being sent to the Gaelic Cultural Association for use in their children's programme. For the year ahead, we will be working with all our Nova Scotian Clanspersons to put together an attractive and fun-filled programme for our 1995 Gathering.

CAPE BRETON

President: Judge Lewis Matheson, 57 Tain Street, Sydney,
Nova Scotia B1P 1Y5
Secretary: Brenda (Matheson) Cochrane, 56 Birch Street, Port
Morien, Nova Scotia B0A 1T0
Treasurer: George Matheson, 21 Murphy Street, Nova Scotia
B1A 1X1

Piper: Steven Matheson, Nova Scotia

Again the Cape Breton Mathesons have been very active throughout the year. Their Christmas party, with exchanging of gifts, singsong and Pot Luck supper was a tremendous success. This was followed by a Flea Market and Home Baking Sale in February and a large gathering at George Matheson's Cottage in Mira Gut. A day of fine food and fellowship!

In September a meeting was held in Whycocomagh, Cape Breton, which was the home of many early Matheson settlers on Cape Breton Island. The meeting was followed by a Pot Luck supper and a liberal portion of wonderful Cape Breton hospitality.

In keeping with our practice of supporting Scottish Culture in our Province and recognizing those who strive to enhance our heritage, a number of presentations were made.

These included:

1. Crystal candle holders being placed in the South Haven Community Hall in memory of a Clan friend and helper, Catherine MacDonald.
2. A Clan Matheson Gaelic language bursary being presented at the Gaelic College, St. Anne's, C.B.
3. A piping bursary in memory of Sir Torquhil being presented at the Gaelic College.

These awards were made by Judge Lewis Matheson and George Matheson.

The year was saddened with the passing of two Branch members, Christine Matheson Weeks and Norma MacDonald.

Our plans for 1995 will include our usual Clan activities, also plans for the Cape Breton portion of our Clan Gathering. We look forward to the visit of Chief Fergus and Lady Matheson and the chance to share our hospitality with fellow Mathesons from all parts of the world.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Hon Secretary: Lyman W. Matheson, 12126 Rhett Drive, Houston, Texas 77024 USA
Genealogist: Charles Mathieson Otstot, 5124 North 33rd Street, Arlington, Virginia 22207-1854 USA

FUTURE EVENTS in USA

1994 December 10 Christmas Walk & Faire, Volcano, CA
1995 January 14 Sarasota Scottish Games & Festival, Twin
Lanes Park, Sarasota, FL

January 15 Scottish American Society of Palm Beach
County, Kirkin of the Tartan, Lakeside Presbyterian Church,
West Palm Beach, FL

January 21 Scottish American Society of Palm Beach
County, Robert Burns Dinner Dance. Hilton Hotel, West Palm
Beach, FL

January 22 St Andrew's Society of Sarasota Burns Tribute,
Michael's On East Sarasota, FL

January 28 Southern Arizona Scottish Society Robert Burns
Dinner, Tuscon, AZ

February 4 Mid-Ohio Scottish Heritage Association, Robert
Burns Dinner, Monaco's Palace, Columbus, OH

February 25-26 Arizona Highland Gathering and Games,
Valley of the Sun, Mesa, AZ

March 3-5 National Winter Games, Sarasota County
Fairgrounds, Sarasota, FL

March 11-12 Scottish Heritage Festival of Panama City,
Grace Presbyterian Church, Panama City, FL

I have been asked on several recent occasions about the possibility of holding a US Branch Gathering and would like those interested to write to me now, suggesting willingness to participate in duties and suitable locations, preferably to be connected to Highland Games. The approximate date to be a year in advance to allow for proper arrangements. Positive or negative replies to this suggestion will be much appreciated immediately as a decision must be made soon. I would also like to know of any US Branch Member, who is an outstanding, competent player of the bagpipes.

Please will US Branch Members who have not yet paid their annual (1994) dues of \$7.50 do so now. Checks to be made out to the Clan Matheson Society and forwarded to me at the address shown above. In 1976 the worldwide membership of the Clan Society was 110 (86 GB; 12 Canada; 12 in USA) and I am confident it now exceeds 500. I ask each US Member to accept a challenge of finding one new member in 1995. (Editor's note: Any correspondent wishing to join in on this subject, please reply to Lyman Matheson and not the Editor!)



SIR FERGUS & LADY MATHESON
AT MEMORIAL SEAT
MATHESON BAY

NEW ZEALAND

Chairman:
Hon Secretary:

Piper:
Genealogists:
Local
Representatives:

Gordon Matheson
Ailsa Matheson
(nee Matheson)
Norman Matheson
John & Monica Kidd
Christchurch
Dunedin
Invercargill

Palmerston North
Rotorua

Taranaki
Wanaka
Wellington
Whangarei

138A Pembroke Street
HAMILTON
Ph: (07) 834-0918

Graeme Matheson
Vilma Nelson
Lorna Rodgers
Wayne Matheson
Edward Matheson (Piper)
Rod & Ian Matheson
Georgina Limbrick
Margaret Vahua Matheson
Alex Matheson
Chris Murray
Donald Mathieson Q.C.
Lily & Melvin Matheson

The New Zealand Branch was formed in June 1989 led by the late Rev. Roy Matheson and Ailsa Matheson. Since then many successful gatherings have taken place. These have been in the form of picnics, ceilidhs and family interest meetings.

Membership in the South Island has been based on two groups – one in Invercargill and the other in Christchurch. An enthusiastic group has been gathering in Taranaki.

With the prospect of a visit from the Chief, local contact people came forward in Dunedin, Palmerston North, Rotorua, Wellington, Wanaka and Whangarei. These groups represent the main areas in New Zealand of Matheson family settlement and the interest is high.

Current membership is 160 households including 12 Life Members of the parent United Kingdom Society.

A quarterly newsletter keeps all of the membership in touch, and the contributions sent in make the publication very topical.



AUCKLAND COMMITTEE:

Back: Gordon Matheson,
Sir Fergus,
Ailsa Matheson,
Rita Matheson,
Donald & Pamela
Matheson.

Front: Norman Matheson,
Joy Weeds,
Anne & Doug Matheson



OFFICIAL INVERCARGILL PIPER
EDWARD MATHESON
WITH SIR FERGUS

The undoubted highlight of 1994 was the visit in March to New Zealand of our Chief, Sir Fergus and Lady Matheson of Matheson .

The Auckland Committee had planned for this visit, with whole-hearted support from all the local groups throughout the country. Every effort was made to hold functions where Matheson folk could meet the head of the Clan. Over the last 150 years Mathesons came from their Highland homes and from Nova Scotia, to settle in places such as Matheson Bay, Waipu, Queenstown and Lake Matheson. Opportunity was taken to include a visit to these places of interest.

What a delightful and exciting visit it proved to be, with an estimated 700-800 Matheson descendants meeting their Chief for the first time. The three weeks passed all too quickly, with Sir Fergus and Lady Matheson entering fully into the spirit of the event.

The generosity of the hosts at all the venues was outstanding and greatly appreciated.

In turn, the diligence of Sir Fergus in thanking his hosts has added to the warmth of a period of great family togetherness.

It was good also, to have 3 Australian Clan members here for some of the visit – Queenslanders Judy Tottle, her daughter Suzan and Gwen Smith.

The visit has been well recorded by camera and video, but everyone involved will remember with pleasure, what an enjoyable time it was.

The enriching friendships made with the visitors, and with each other, will continue to be valued.

That the New Zealand Clan Genealogists, Monica and John Kidd, were able to meet Sir Fergus was most rewarding. This couple have devoted recent years to compiling extensive Matheson family records. Among other achievements Monica has produced a really unique tree, based on the book "The History of the Mathesons", published originally in 1882 then again in 1990. Monica's work is invaluable and greatly appreciated.

An Auckland Gathering on 11 September, recorded appreciation of the part Ailsa and Gordon played in co-ordinating such a successful tour.



GENEALOGISTS
MONICA AND JOHN KIDD
AT THE WELCOME TO
SIR FERGUS AND LADY MATHESON

CONGRATULATIONS TO

Monica Kidd, New Zealand Genealogist, wife of John who has just completed an index tree compiled from the Mackenzie "History of the Mathesons". It is 18 foot long and supports 36 branch trees, some of which in turn are each two to three feet long. Begun at the request of our late Chief, it sounds a wonderful accomplishment.

Christian Matheson, eldest son of Mette and Einar, a Norwegian soldier in His Majesty the King's Guard, for taking part in the 1993 Edinburgh Military Tattoo. He is a Musician in the band, playing the cymbals and various percussion instruments and is also trained as a combat soldier. He hopes to return to Edinburgh in the autumn of 1994 to study at the University.

Sergeant Niall Matheson, Queen's Own Highlanders, Inverness, for winning the Highland Society of London's Silver Medal Piping Competition, playing "Sir James MacDonald of the Isle's Lament".

Major Leslie Matheson (Jnr), United States Air Force Reserve, for being awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and an Air Medal, both for gallantry. He carried out over ten combat and other special missions in the Gulf War.

Alexander Matheson, Inglewood, New Zealand who is about to retire after 30 years service in the New Zealand Police, for the award of the Police Silver Medal for long and valued service.

Edward Mathieson, a former soldier of Lawton Road, Dundee, Scotland for winning the title "Daddy of the Year" and a family holiday in Texas. He gave up his job to care for his 33 year old disabled wife Gail, confined to a wheelchair with arthritis, and their two children.

Fiona-Jean Campbell, the granddaughter of Chief Inspector C. J. L. Matheson of the New Zealand Police, for taking part in the New Zealand Police Travelling Tattoo Spectacular 100.

Mary-Katherine (nee Matheson) and Dave Mackay, for a son Duncan McLean Stuart Patrick, born 24th January 1994.

IN THE NEWS

No. 7 Company Coldstream Guards, commanded by Major Alexander Matheson Yr of Matheson, was recently selected to be the first British unit since the collapse of the Warsaw Pact, to carry out training with the crack 62nd Mechanised Infantry Brigade of the Hungarian Army. They were presented with a white goose as a mark of respect on completion of their training together by Hungarian Brigadier General Csorba and you may wonder why? Early in the 19th Century whilst one of the Battalions of the Regiment was serving in Canada, a goose given the name of Jacob attached itself to the Guards Battalion. It alerted a sentry and gave warning of an impending attack and so saved the day. Jacob returned to England with the Battalion and was to be seen on duty, daily beside the sentry at Wellington Barracks in London wearing an officer's gorget suspended on a blue ribbon around its neck. Sadly in 1846, Jacob was run over by a tradesman's cart. His preserved head can be seen in the Guards Museum at Wellington Barracks. Hopes are strong that Jacob II, said to have blue eyes and to be very friendly, will soon overcome UK quarantine restrictions and report for duty at Chelsea Barracks, London.

OBITUARIES

It is with deep regret the following deaths are recorded and the sorrow of our Clansmen are conveyed to the bereaved.

Rolf Hofseth of Norway in mid-December 1993. Father of Kirstan, Marie and Rolf. He was a true patriarch of the extensive Matheson Clan in Norway.

Dr John Gunn Matheson of the Tott House, North Loaming, Alson, Cumbria, UK. He leaves behind Jean his second wife and his children from his first marriage, Ann, Rosemary, Desmond and Nigel, and 10 grandchildren and brothers, The Very Reverend Doctor Jim Matheson, Dunvegan, Isle of Skye and Norman Matheson, Dunkeld.

NOTICES

As I understand Members like to receive their copy of the Clan Society Newsletter before Christmas, next year efforts will be made to despatch it overseas nearer the 1st October. Members of all Branches are encouraged to submit material for publication to their Branch Secretary. Copies are distributed to members all over the world and there must be many who have an interesting story to tell (not more than 2,500 words) preferably relating to the Clan or the Highlands.

The 1995 edition will follow the same format. Branch Hon Secretaries are again asked to send in Branch News, Events for the Forthcoming Year, Congratulations, Hatch, Match and Despatches, avoiding routine matters and lists of members etc, unless they are thought to be of general interest to other branches. Size is limited by budget, so the Editor will have the final decision which articles are included.

Membership of the Clan Society is open to all Mathesons or Mathiesons and those whose parents or one of their grandparents spelled their name similarly. Other spellings of the name can be considered for membership if the applicant can establish the Highland origin of his or her family. Applications for membership should be sent to the appropriate Hon Secretary listed in this newsletter.

After 16th April 1995, the area codes of all telephone numbers in the United Kingdom starting "0" will change to "01", e.g. 0234-5678 will become 01234-5678. UK exchanges are geared to accept the change now.

Advertising has been introduced to try and help overseas visitors when visiting here. Also it helps provide revenue to help offset the rising cost of printing this newsletter and postage. If it is possible I hope to have a more comprehensive list of advertisers in the 1996 issue, including firms that can be persuaded to produce the correct patterns etc. Possibly overseas Hon Secretaries may like to take advantage of this offer also.

IF UNDELIVERED PLEASE RETURN TO ANY OF THE ADDRESSES BELOW

Clan Matheson Society:

UK	The Old Rectory, Hedenham, Bungay, Norfolk NR35 2LD
Australia	32 Raby Esplanade, Ormiston, Queensland 4160
Canada	30 Robert Allen Drive, Halifax, Nova Scotia B3M 3G8
New Zealand	138A Pembroke Street, Hamilton
USA	12126 Rhett Drive, Houston, Texas 77024

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