

Clan Matheson International Newsletter 2020



Contents

3	The Chief's Message
4 - 9	USA
10 - 12	Australia
13	Canada
14	New Zealand
15 - 16	UK
17 - 18	Genealogy Corner

Front cover image from Grandfather Mountain Highland Games in July 2018.

Back cover image from Grandfather Mountain Highland Games in July 2018.

From left to right: Patrick, Carter and Cathy Massie Keough, Colvin Matheson (Chief's Lieutenant USA), Cindy Matheson (Ed's wife), Macrae Robeson (in front), Mary Ellen Matheson (Colvin's wife), Terry Norburg, Marion Matheson Robeson, Edward Matheson, Matheson (Matty) Robeson

Welcome to the 2020 edition of our newsletter. Once again it has been edited by Tim Speed who has put great effort into producing a top class publication. Well done, Tim! The digital publication is certainly useful and convenient, but I also like having a hard copy of our newsletter, so that it can be kept in view when the soft copy becomes hidden, as can all too easily happen.

Since this time last year, two natural events seem to have dominated our Clan. First, the rest of the world watched the Australian bushfires in dismay, and I imagine that most of you felt what we felt – immense sympathy for those poor people abandoning their homes in the face of huge and unstoppable flames. I had such respect for the Australian firefighters and other emergency services. Mercifully none of our members were casualties. It's important not to forget the aftermath of the fires just because it is no longer in the news every day; the long term effects will be serious for those involved.

And now we are all having to deal with the Coronavirus pandemic which will impinge on our next International Clan Gathering, coinciding with the 2020 Grandfather Mountain Highland Games in North Carolina, USA (Thursday 9 - Sunday 12 July 2020). At the time of writing, worldwide travel restrictions have been introduced and the likely duration of the pandemic is unknown. Whether or not the Games will be cancelled, we do not know. If they carry on, I plan to go; if they are cancelled, we may be able to slip our Gathering to 2021. We are waiting on news from the Games organisers. Being the 'Honoured Clan' affords a great opportunity to attract Mathesons (and all variations of our name) as well as our many well-wishers and supporters. I guess that it will appeal mostly to North Americans, but I hope that others will come from further afield, especially if we are slipped to 2021. The wide exposure which the Grandfather Mountain Games will give us should produce a considerable number of new members. Colvin Matheson, Chief's Lieutenant for the USA, and his team have been doing prodigious work to organise the detailed arrangements for our participation, and he will send planning updates to our Branches. I encourage you to have a look at <http://www.gmhg.org/homepage.shtml>. My family is planning to attend the games too, including my new grandson, Lachie, who was born on 24 November 2019. Keep watching the Clan website for latest news of the Gathering.



Three generations: Andrew, Alexander and Lachie – Christmas Day 2019

My particular thanks go to all those who voluntarily give their time to make our Clan Society function. Your efforts are highly valued. I hope that those who are not yet involved, especially those with expertise in social media, will volunteer their time too. We definitely need more active organisers. Please do give it a thought.

Best wishes to you all

Alexander

Lieutenant Colonel Sir Alexander Matheson of Matheson, Bt. LVO DL
28th Chief

Greetings all. The original version of this USA newsletter was written before the Covid-19 coronavirus was declared a pandemic and our nation entered a state of emergency. That was 3+ weeks ago. Most importantly, please know our prayers are with all our kinsmen and family as our communities navigate this health and now economic crisis. Please, stay healthy.

We have had a busy year and I will try to summarize our activities below. But priority matters first: The planned 2020 Matheson Clan Gathering is (hopefully) fast approaching—but, to be frank, we will not know whether the Grandfather Mountain Highland Games will proceed after their Board meets on April 4th at which time they will decide when to announce their Go/No Go decision. I have asked that they decide sooner—at the Board meeting—and not defer it six additional weeks. At the time of this newsletter, however, we simply do not know, and we are doing the best we can to manage through the uncertainty. By the time you receive this newsletter, the decision should be made, and we will include an updated insert page. Until then, we march forward and the information below is to provide details for you in the event that the 2020 Games proceed and we are able to have our International Clan Gathering. Obviously, our concern is that our numbers will be greatly reduced as many of our Clan may rightly be very concerned about the health and safety of any travel and large groupings of people for many more months. We would ask that you use the email below and let us know your thoughts and feedback.

Our Chief and Chief's Lieutenants were all very excited about what looked to be a strong turnout of Matheson/Mathison/Mathieson (and other variations and supporters) for the 65th Annual Grandfather Mountain Highland Games and Gathering O' Scottish Clans being held in Linville, North Carolina (USA) July 9-12, 2020. Our Chief Alexander and Clan Matheson will be the honored Clan for these games—the most prestigious and largest of its kind in the United States. Should the Games proceed, we look forward to welcoming Alexander, Katharine and their family and we hope that Matheson's from around the world will take this opportunity to unite and enjoy each other's company, make new friends, visit with distant family, and connect with our common heritage.

This newsletter will provide additional planning information, which is also available on the various branch websites. If you tend toward optimism, then making hotel/lodging reservations now would be advisable as they can always be canceled well in advance. We hope to allow 60-90 days prior notice, which we fully appreciate is short notice, but this is not in our hands. If the Games proceed, Chief Alexander plans to attend and we hope you will feel confident in joining us. If you are planning to join us or have questions, please email us at Gathering2020@clanmatheson.org and let us know your intent so we have a sense of numbers. A registration form is available on the new USA Branch website www.clanmathesonusa.org as well as other branch websites and will be included with the newsletter. We are asking for payment by check (US Dollars only) and I hope to have a PayPal account set up. Our Clan Parliament, Gathering and BBQ dinner will cost US\$75.00 per adult (age 13 and over) and US\$30.00 per child (age 4-12). Children under 3 are free. We will want payments in advance so we can inform the hotel of our banquet numbers.

We are encouraging our Clan Matheson Society members, guests and supporters to locate in and around the very charming village of Blowing Rock, North Carolina, which has many choices for lodging and dining as you make your travel arrangements. We have contracted with the Green Park Inn www.greenparkinn.com for a room block and they will host our Saturday afternoon/evening event. We encourage you to take advantage of this as filling the room block will not only help allay banquet costs for our Saturday afternoon Parliament and evening BBQ, but it will also allow us a central point to gather informally away from the Games. To make your hotel reservation at the Green Park and benefit from the discounted rate, you must call them directly and not book through the web. Please alert the Inn that you are with the Clan Matheson group and room block.

Also, you are responsible for purchasing your own admission passes to the Games and those can be secured online through Grandfather Mountain Highland Games at www.gmhg.org. We recommend you secure your passes soon.

Blowing Rock is about 16 miles east of the Games at Macrae Meadows along a wonderfully scenic mountain highway. Please consider your own transportation needs to and from. Parking is very limited at the Games and public parking at the base of the mountain will be inconvenient. We cannot stress this enough. We will NOT be arranging a shuttle from Blowing Rock. Unless you buy Patron level ticket(s), which provides access to all events plus the Friday evening Sponsors' Dinner, you will NOT be able to park onsite at the Games close to our tents. If you have physical constraints, you should consider the Patron level pass—but it is expensive. Parking for general admission is 2 miles away down in Linville and they run shuttle buses back and forth. This adds inconvenience and time that will need to be factored into your planning and attendance at the various events

with which our Clan will be involved. While our Chief Sir Alexander and Katharine will be at the Sponsor's Dinner, it does not mean that everyone is expected to be there and need pay extra. We will likely end up back in Blowing Rock to end the evening at one of the establishments there.

By the time this newsletter is published, we should have finally rolled out a new USA website! Many thanks to those that have assisted in the technical aspects, particularly Branson Matheson and Jon Fairhurst. For those who would like to volunteer to help keep the site "alive" as a resource, please connect with Colvin Matheson directly.

During 2019 the Clan Matheson USA-East convened tents at the Savannah Scottish Games in May, Grandfather Mountain Highland Games in July, Virginia Scottish Games in September, and Stone Mountain Highland Games in October in Georgia. Many thanks to Terri Norburg (convening Savannah and Stone Mountain and helping at Grandfather Mtn); Ed Matheson and Branson Matheson (convening Grandfather Mtn); and Deputy Chief's Lieutenant-East John Aakesson (convening Virginia and helping at Grandfather Mtn). We hope to recruit new Conveners, so please reach out and volunteer to host the Matheson tent at the highland games in your state.



Marty and Terri Norburg with daughters Leah and Addie with their friend Amelia



Left to Right at Grandfather Mountain Highland Games, July 2019: Convener Ed Matheson, Marion Matheson Robeson, Macrae Matheson, Cindy Matheson, and Georgia Convener Terri and Marty Norburg.



At Grandfather Mountain 2019 with Terri Norburg, Ed Matheson, 2019 Honored Clan Chief Madam Arabella Kincaid of Kincaid, and John Aakesson (Deputy Chief's Lieutenant USA-East)



Terri Norburg assembling with Matheson's at Stone Mountain Georgia in October 2019.



Left to Right at the 2019 Virginia Scottish Games - Lisa Mitchell with Malcolm Matheson, IV, Nancy West with Malcolm Matheson, III (former Chief's Lieutenant USA), Colvin Matheson (current Chief's Lieutenant USA), Alex Aakesson, and John Aakesson (Deputy Chief's Lieutenant USA-East).



Father and Sons: Malcolm IV, Malcolm III, and Colvin
at the Virginia Scottish Games, The Plains, Virginia.

In the Western United States, we continue to benefit from the contagious and tireless enthusiasm of Deputy Chief's Lieutenant USA-West Roger Mathison and our State Commissioners Roland Matteson (Arizona), William Mathis (Colorado), and Shawn Matheson (Utah). Roger has consolidated the Western States' report in the next section.



Roger Mathison ensconced in the bowels of the Queen Mary
Hotel/Ship in Long Beach, CA

and strong supporters of Clan Matheson. Also, Stephanie Mack, a national park biologist from Northern Arizona, promptly applied for Clan membership.

A first for Clan Matheson West, the 24th Annual Kern County Scottish Games and Gathering opened April 6th and 7th in balmy weather at the Kern County Fairgrounds in Bakersfield, California. Family members of Matheson Clansman Kelly Matheson dropped by with his wife Maria their highland laddie son, Athan, and highland lassie daughter Marjorie. Marjorie is a piper in the appropriately named Highland High School in Bakersfield and in 2019 she will graduate with the title of Pipe Major; she does double duty as a piper in the Kern County Pipe Band. Her brother Athan is a drummer in the same band and this Fall will be snare drumming alongside his sister in the Highland High School Band.

The first venue of the season of Scottish highland games was on February 9th and 10th at the Queen Mary Hotel, floating at permanent anchor in Long Beach Harbor, California.

Roland Matteson, Commissioner for Arizona and his family—wife Barbara, son Michael and his wife Alisha, grandchildren David and Jessica—all participated in manning the Matheson tent at the 55th Annual Phoenix Scottish Games on March 2-3, 2019. Jessica's son, Brent (5 years), with wooden sword in hand and decked-out in a utili-kilt, provided the entertainment around the tent! Recently it was announced that Jessica and Ryan McComb, became engaged to be married and we wish the couple all the best in their life together.

Other visitors at the Clan Matheson tent included Dan Gilpin, an ex-Californian living in Glendale (Arizona) with his wife Pati, both inveterate albaphiles



Maria Matheson with kilt maker
Susan Rose at Kern County Games,
Bakersfield, CA



Highland piper Marjorie Matheson and Roger at Kern County Games,
Bakersfield, CA

The Las Vegas Celtic Gathering and Highland Games took place on April 13th - 14th. Combining all the elements of the medieval carnival - military parade, clan processions, religious blessing of the clans, feasting, masquerade, displays of Scottish country dancing, plentiful imbibing, and musical performances - the LVCGHG was a veritable display of Scottish bacchanalia.

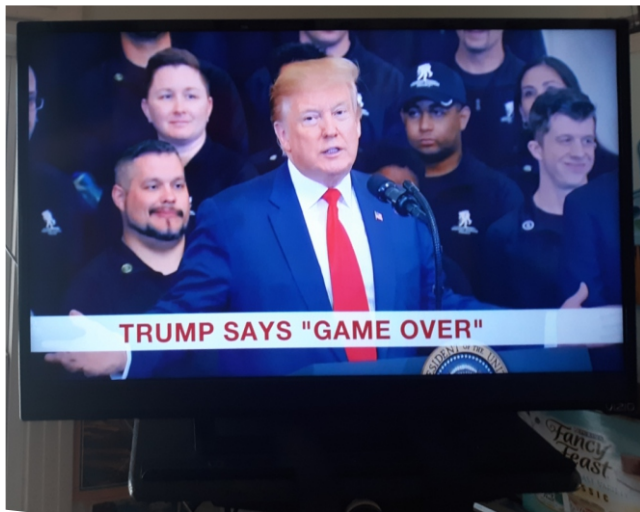
Roger was both delighted and surprised to meet up with Clan Matheson members Kelly and Maria Matheson (from Kern County) in Costa Mesa at the Orange County Fair and Event Center for Memorial Day Weekend, May 25th – May 26th, for the 87th Annual Scottish Fest sponsored by the United Scottish Society. The Costa Mesa Games hosts the second largest Scottish festival in California. Kelly and Maria came to support their children's performances in their respective musical competitions with Marjorie on the bagpipes and Athan on the drums. With the appearance of a second musician at the tent, it was a weekend to be remembered: Helen Matheson Grikokowsky flew down from Edmonton, Canada, as part of the Edmonton Pipe Band with the express intent of competing in the pipe band competition. She availed herself of the opportunity to discover more about her Matheson ancestors, (her mother was born in Stornoway on the island of Lewis), by enquiring about joining Clan Matheson Society USA. Soon after Helen's departure from the tent to prepare for her band's performance, longtime supporter of Clan Matheson in Southern California, John Massie who was born in Shotts, Lanarkshire, in the Central Valley of Scotland, a professional piper and piping-judge, arrived with his partner Kathleen Dunham. Rounding out the Matheson visitors was Clan member Lisa Halterman of Fountain Valley, California, who is the granddaughter of Alice Matheson of St. George, Utah. To all these Clan members who made the effort to travel to Scottish Fest, we thank them for their not so insignificant part in keeping the Clan Matheson name on the map.

The carnival atmosphere of the highland games was very much in evidence at the 45th Annual Utah Scottish Festival and Highland Games held over three days at the State Fairgrounds from Friday, June 7th – Sunday June 9th, and hosted by the Utah Scottish Association. Roger welcomed returning Clan member Lynda Bauman of Pleasant Grove, Utah, the daughter of the late Lydia Amelia Matheson of Mid Valley, Utah, and her daughter Lyndee. Through the effort of Lyndee, the transfer of Matheson tent items from Dallas Matheson Griffith to the Festival went without a hitch. We were pleased to meet up with Dallas in Salt Lake City and meet the new addition to his family.



Lyndee Matheson Bauman of Pleasant
Grove at the Salt Lake Games

Dallas Matheson Griffiths, with his wife Allison, and three daughters Cora Lie, Ruby, and Lucy were on hand again for the Payson Games to pitch the Clan Matheson tent. Though it is only a few miles from Dallas' home in Springville to Payson, it is commendable that he and Allison with their human charges, together with the tent, chairs, table etc., made the effort to attend the festival and man the booth for an entire day. Thank you, Dallas and Allison.



Our Colorado State Commissioner, William Mathis, of Colorado Springs (bottom left) honored by President Trump at The White House

The 46th San Diego Scottish Highland Games took place in Vista, California, was the next for Clan Matheson but there was little traffic at the Matheson tent.

Located at an elevation of 6,009 in the mountains of Northern Arizona, Flagstaff was the site of the 2019, 22nd anniversary of the Northern Arizona Highland Games sponsored by the Northern Arizona Celtic Heritage Society. We thank all the Matheson attendees at the tent including Roland and Mike Matteson and Dan and Pati Gilbank.

The 154th Scottish Highland Gathering and Games, held in the City of Pleasanton in Alameda County on August 31st – September 1st sponsored by the Caledonian Club of San Francisco, is one of the largest ethnic celebrations in the United States. The Matheson tent was hosted by Convener Diana Matheson Satele and husband Robert, their son Philip Arroyo, and Diana's sister Frances Renteria. A new recruit to Clan Matheson Society was Cathy Matheson of the City of Santa Clara, California. Later in the day her husband, Damian, and 16-year old daughter Lauren dropped-by and briefly commented that their relatives hailed from Margaree in the county of Inverness, province of Nova Scotia, Canada. Another new recruit in the Clan, Pamela Stanley hails from Castro Valley, California. Welcome to Clan Matheson, Cathy and Pamela.

The Middle Tennessee Highland Games opened its gates on September 7th at a new venue at Warner Park in Nashville. Bob Matheson Hooker, resident of Mt. Juliet, Tennessee, arrived with his pal Pat Murphy to engage in good-natured banter. Two fresh recruits joined Clan Matheson Society: Jeffrey Lynn Vann, a retired Baptist minister, is a grandson of a Martin Thomas Mathis of Graves County, Kentucky. Also, Murfreesboro resident Jonathan David Wickes with his wife Amy and daughter Faith, all dapperly attired in their Matheson tartans, approached the Matheson Tent to introduce themselves and sign up for membership in the Clan. Welcome to both families!

Normally at this juncture in the Matheson International Newsletter there would be a report on activities in Colorado from our Colorado Commissioner William Mathis. However, owing to two family bereavements early in 2019, William thought that in such circumstances it would be better to have an extended mourning and put Clan Matheson affairs in abeyance. On behalf of the entire family of Clan Matheson USA, we extend our sympathy to William and his family. But that does not mean that there is nothing to report from Colorado as far as newsworthy Matheson affairs. In mid-year, William was invited to The White House by President Donald Trump to honor those veterans wounded in the Iraq War and subsequent conflicts and who are now involved in the Wounded Warrior Project.



Dan Gilbank with wife, Pati, carrying the Matheson flag in Flagstaff, AZ in July, 2019

So ends Roger's thorough and busy update of activities during 2019. Take note of these games and make sure to visit with Roger and our conveners at these games in 2020. Now, back to other business...

Thanks to the 50% of USA Clan Matheson Society members who annually renew their memberships by paying their dues. As an organization we do have costs and these modest membership dues are funding our website development, subsidizing the 2020 Gathering, annual newsletter and mailing, and other initiatives that will improve our communication and outreach. We have several Life Members (a category no longer offered) who continue to send their support, and we are very grateful! I would like to especially note the incredible support of Marlyn Lewis, Charles E. Matheson, Sr., and Ruth Peebles for their very generous and outsized contributions. Dues remain \$30 for individuals and \$75 for families with young children. After this year, the newsletter will only be mailed to members that are current in their dues.

Lastly, let's welcome new Clan Matheson Society USA Branch members and their families: Stephanie Mack (Arizona); David Matteson (Arizona); Lisa Halterman (California); Lindsey Mathison (New York); Daniel Matheson (Utah); Mary Matheson (California); Dan Gilbank (Arizona); Heather Jayne Brown (Utah); Kevan Matheson (Arizona); Margery Warren Janowski (Michigan); Scott Mathieson (Maine) and sister Kelly Mathieson (New York); Sarah Matheson Harris (Virginia); Traies Roe (Florida); Heather Matheson Ryus (Massachusetts); Brandy Matheson Greiner (Missouri); Holly Hight (Florida); Clayton Mathieson (Oregon); Norma Matheson Pepperworth (Hawaii); Perry Hiltz (Michigan); Sheri Johnson (Idaho); Pamela Stanley (California); Cathy Matheson (California); Jonathan Wickes (Tennessee); Jeffrey Vann (Tennessee); Julia Wannamaker (New York); and, Marjorie Matheson Hanson and her daughter Marci Hanson Haskell (Washington).

Please join us in North Carolina July 9-12, 2020. We are very excited to have our Chief, Alexander, Katharine and their family join us. They are very eager to meet Matheson's (and other variations of the name) from around the United States and we hope that you will all be able to make Grandfather Mountain and the North Carolina Highlands part of your summer vacation plans! Also, please reach out to us and let us know of your desire to volunteer and/or contribute items during the Gathering (i.e., snacks, water, etc. at the tent).

Colvin Matheson,
Chief's Lieutenant for the USA and
Roger Mathison,
Deputy Chief's Lieutenant – USA West



Jonathan, Amy, and Faith Wickes family whose Matteson ancestors came from Lochalsh, Wester Ross, Scotland

The highlight of this year was clearly our attendance in October at a performance of the Edinburgh Military Tattoo in a huge sports arena in Sydney. This was a travelling version of the famous Military Tattoo in Edinburgh. This version had a cast of around 1600 performers and also involved local pipe bands and clansfolk who provided a prelude parade to the show. Although the pipers knew what tunes were to be played, this local parade had to be rehearsed otherwise no-one would have known what was expected. There were four Tattoo performances, three in the evenings and one matinee. We Mathesons opted to attend the matinee as we had planned another event in the evening.

It turned out that the matinee was the least-well-attended session of the four, partly because it would be less spectacular as fireworks and flares aren't as bright during the day. It was also less popular because the rehearsals began at 7.30 in the morning at the stadium. Although there were to be 21 Mathesons at the Tattoo, 15 lived too far away to get to the Stadium in time to rehearse (mostly David Mathieson's family from Port Macquarie). This left a most valiant six Mathesons to represent the Clan. It turned out that no other Clans had made the decision to be represented at this particular performance and so our six Mathesons represented not only ourselves, but all Clans. Our involvement was to precede the bands, marching (all six of us) just behind the drum majors but before the bands, and with our Clan Matheson banner held high. Our own piper, Warren, played with one of the bands before joining us for the Presentation.



Colin, Mary, Warren, John and Danuta before the rehearsal



Colin, Warren (piper), John (with banner), Danuta, Joan and Mary before the Presentation

Out in the centre of the huge football arena, in front of 25,000 people, we were introduced to the Distinguished Presence and each given a dram or two of Glenmorangie whisky (particularly appropriate as this distillery was founded by a Matheson) before marching off to the applause of the crowd. The marchers then joined the Matheson non-marchers and watched the Tattoo from the stands. The Tattoo itself was enjoyable, with performers from countries close to Australia as well as from other parts of the world.



Mathesons about to be presented



Colin leads Mathesons out of the arena



The entire Tattoo cast in the arena



John and Danuta standing in front of the 'Castle'



Piper Warren, Joan, Danuta, John, Steve & Chris (behind), Mary, David and members of David's family to the right during the main performance.

Earlier, in February this year we had our annual picnic in the Flagstaff Gardens in the centre of Melbourne, a May Muster in a Melbourne hotel and our Annual General Meeting in August at the regional city of Bendigo, about 2 hours drive from Melbourne. We also held a meeting at the Highland Games at Daylesford in early December. These meetings are informal affairs with a reasonably modest attendance. The most commonly discussed issue, being addressed now, is trying to make sure that our website is properly maintained. At the AGM, we elected the following officers:



Brad Matheson, Janet Blainey and Roma Jorgenson at the Clan Picnic in February 2019

Colin Matheson (President), Warren Matheson (Vice-president), Roma Jorgenson (Secretary), Genevieve Ahearne (Treasurer), Margaret Fleming, Ruth Pearce, Euan McGillivray, Brad Matheson, Janet Blainey, Robert Mathieson, Ross Matheson and Mary Molan (Committee members).

Many of you reading this will have seen images of the terrible bushfires raging in Australia this southern summer. They are the worst fires the country has ever seen, perhaps not surprising as the summer is the hottest we have ever had and the drought has been very severe for a number of years. Bushfires are not unusual in this country but not this severe or this early in the season. This year, they began around September in the Great Dividing Range to the north of Sydney and by December had reached Queensland. Then we had three disastrously hot days, Christmas Eve, New Year's Eve and 10 January when we experienced very strong, hot and dry northerly winds. At this stage, small fires in the southern ranges to the south of Sydney and in the forests east of Melbourne lit up and were blown towards the small coastal resorts where very many families were on holidays. Several townships have been totally destroyed and in two cases, occupants were taken off the beaches by Naval ships as there were no avenues of escape by land. You may have read of the billion or so wild animals killed and the millions of hectares of forested land destroyed as well as the many hundreds of homes burnt as well. Relatively few people have lost their lives, but some of them were heroic firefighters, fighting to preserve lives and properties of others. We are indeed fortunate and grateful to have had our own volunteer firefighters assisted by others from USA, Canada, New Zealand, PNG and other Pacific neighbours.

To my knowledge, no members of the Clan have died or lost their homes as yet, but there will no doubt be Matheson non-members who will have suffered some losses. Our summer is only half over and we expect there will be significant hot weather until late March or April with more lightning strikes between now and then. Many of us will never forget the sense of dread, waking up on New Year's Eve and expecting strong and very hot northerly winds and the very real threat of fire, even in the big cities. The summer is not yet over and I am sorry to say that neither is the threat. We hope that in the two-week's respite since 10 January, cooler weather will allow the firefighters to build protection lines for properties, villages and towns that were saved earlier.

Colin Matheson
Chief's Lieutenant for Australia

Greetings from Canada

During the 2019-20 year, Clan Matheson Canada has erected a Facebook page in an effort to relaunch the Clan's Canadian presence. A Canadian webpage is under construction and should be up and running by May 2020. Visit and like our Facebook page!!! Watch for our announcement that the webpage is live. A Membership drive will begin once the webpage is up!!

We are at <https://www.facebook.com/clanmathesonca>

This summer (2019) we were able to visit the eastern province of Nova Scotia and the two most popular Canadian ports of entry for our Scottish ancestors.

First we visited the largest port of entry, Halifax. The Halifax Citadel, the Churches and the surrounding graveyards were fantastic resources should anyone wishing to research who the early residents living in the city in the early 1800's. A another great site was Pier 21 and the Canadian Museum of Immigration, a short walk from the Citadel... but first you have to get by the Alexander Keith's brewery/museum .



The Hector replica ship at dock side,
Pictou, Nova Scotia

As a competitive piper for the past 40 years, I was unable to pass up the opportunity to visit the Gaelic College in Nova Scotia located on Calbot Trail Road. The dancing, singing, piping and fiddling were second to none. While at the College in the Great Hall of Clan's Museum we found a map of the local area sliced and diced into the various municipal lots. Each lot had a reference to the settling Clan family with notes as to what other countries family members eventually moved to. Several Matheson families settled within walking distance of the College. More research is required!!!!

Chuck Matheson
Chief's Lieutenant for Canada

The second port of entry was that of Pictou, Nova Scotia. Here we found a replica of the ship Hector which was a ship famous for having been part of the first significant migration of Scottish settlers to Nova Scotia in 1773. The replica is located at the Hector Heritage Quay, a heritage centre run by local volunteers, in Pictou, Nova Scotia. I am told that this is where my family originally landed, thank you Glen Matheson.



Chuck standing under a Clan Matheson banner on a light post,
Pictou, Nova Scotia

At our annual meeting in July, members talked about setting achievable targets for the branch's activities for the next year, to be built on as time goes by to further strengthen the branch. These ideas have been further developed and adopted by the committee, which will work together — with members' support — to achieve them.

In no particular order, the eight priorities are:

- · Outreach and profile building: institute an award scheme; support attendance at the 2020 international gathering; plan for a future visit by the Chief; develop the website.
- · Membership activities and services: meet at local and regional gatherings; continue development of the newsletter.
- · Organisational: investigate ways of streamlining membership renewals and subscription payments; research whether it is worthwhile establishing the branch as an incorporated society.

The purpose of Clan Matheson New Zealand Award is to foster: interest in and awareness of Matheson heritage; links between those with Matheson connections in New Zealand, and between those in New Zealand and others worldwide; knowledge of and interest in New Zealand's Scottish heritage; and knowledge or skills related to Scottish culture, customs, traditions and history.

Activities or projects specifically related to Clan Matheson will receive preference for an award, provided they have sufficient merit to be funded. The first recipient of the Clan Matheson New Zealand Award is Patsy Matheson, to support her attendance at the New Zealand piping summer school in January 2020 in order to further develop her piping skills.

Our new-look branch newsletter has had its first birthday, and members have appreciated the fresh approach of this A4 colour publication. It's an important way for members to share family stories, and swap notes on successes and 'brick walls' as they explore their Matheson heritage.

The New Zealand branch's website (www.clanmatheson.org.nz) is both our shop window and a resource for people interested in things Matheson. One innovation this year is a crowd-sourced [collection](#) of photographs of headstones, memorial plaques and other items of remembrance for Mathesons in New Zealand cemeteries.



New Zealand has a strong heritage of Highland games, and committee member Rodger Matheson is very active in promoting the branch at some of the key events. This year he was at the 148th games at Waipu (a small town still very proud of its Scottish heritage), and the 155th games at Turakina (which is thought to be the longest-running such event in the country). Rodger, often accompanied by his daughter Eden and branch secretary Chris Binns, also attended games at Paeroa, Hororata and Auckland.

The Chief's Lieutenant, Andrew Matheson, took over as branch chair at the 2019, after Blair Matheson stood down. He is supported by a committee of seven members across the country.

It is with sadness that we report the death during 2019 of Doug Matheson, former Chief's Lieutenant for New Zealand, branch chair and committee member. Doug had been involved in the branch since it was founded in 1989 by his cousin Roy Matheson and Ailsa Matheson, and was made a life member for his commitment and service to the branch. Though Doug had relinquished his official roles, he stayed very supportive of the clan. Just a month before his death he was at the branch's annual meeting in Auckland, keeping in touch with members, making suggestions and encouraging the group.

The branch looks forward to continuing work on its objectives during 2020, to foster interest in New Zealand in Matheson heritage.

Andrew Matheson
Chief's Lieutenant for New Zealand,
Chair, New Zealand branch



Greetings from the UK

David Mathieson retired at the end of 2019 having joined the Royal Air Force as a navigator in 1980. He had flown operationally most marks of Canberra and the Tornado GR1, until he took up instructing navigator trainees in 1992. In 1997 he left the RAF to become one of the first civilian aviation instructors teaching both navigators and pilots at the Royal Air Force College Cranwell. After 27 years of instructing, he is looking forward to less free time that goes with retirement.



Bomber Command Memorial Spire, Lincolnshire

wingspan. The names of bomber aircrew who fell during the Second World War are stamped on to metal plates that circle the Spire, here is a picture of one of two plates listing Mathesons who lost their lives.



David Mathieson (right) receiving his certificate of exemplary service from the Commandant, Group Captain Jon Nixon

In June this year, the UK Branch are hoping to visit the International Bomber Command Centre, just south of Lincoln. Details will be posted on the UK Branch website, so please have a look if you might like to come and to keep up to date on decisions regarding accessibility of the centre due to the Coronavirus. With immediate effect the exhibition is closed until further notice, but the outside Memorial is still open. The Bomber Command Centre's website is a good resource of facts, figures and stories, which we are told is updated often. The Spire is 102 feet high and is the representative length of the Lancaster bomber





Picture of one of our kinsmen in Military dress, we are not sure of his name other than he is a Mathieson.

And speaking of genealogy, here is a transcript of a handwritten note found with things belonging to a late relative. Hopefully it might fill a few gaps for some of our readers regarding the tracing of one's ancestry, its origin is unknown:

Erected by Peter Mathieson, Joiner and Elizabeth McAlister his wife in memory of their children

Neil who died 1st March 1864 aged 2 years

Angus who died 14 June 1864 aged 12

John who died 7 May 1889 aged 27 years

Also Maggie his wife who died 16 November 1879 aged 25 (?)

Mary, wife of Walter Jenkins died 6TH December 1888 aged 33 Years

Catherine, wife of Neil McNeill who died 29th October 1889 aged 32

The above Peter Mathieson died 22 January 1896 aged 74 years.

Erected by Archibald Mathieson In memory of his wife Mary McNeil died 13 November 1903 Aged 50.

Also son John who died in Canada 1st September 1909 in his 20th year.

The above Archibald Mathieson died 23rd Feb 1930 Aged 77.

Also daughter Mona, wife of David Todd, died 30th August 1964.

Also William McAlister died 31st April 1971, son of Archibald Mathieson.

The above Elizabeth McAlister died 8 November 1907 aged 63.

Also their son Peter who died Riverton New Zealand 21st May 1916 aged 65 years.

Their son James died 29th June 1926 aged 59 interned at Paisley.

David Mathieson

UK Branch Treasurer

Documentary and other physical evidence of past events have been the staple source of Clan histories as of other historical efforts, and this is set to continue as historians continue to extract more and more information from a Scottish archival inheritance depleted by wilful destruction over the centuries. This note seeks to illustrate how far DNA Y chromosome testing can add to the documentary approach by looking at two projects as examples, both exploring the links between Clan Donald and their traditional ancestors, the 12th century Somerled of the Isles, and Colla Uais, traditional but formerly suspect High King of Ireland in the 4th century.

Both projects built up their main findings relying on tallying and mathematically extrapolating from the varying numbers of Short Tandem Repeat markers (STRs) at numerous points on the Y Chromosome of the individual DNA testers in order to discriminate the degrees of relatedness between the testers and their historic progenitors. The earlier project produced two striking conclusions from examining the DNA of several contemporary Chiefs of Clan Donald. First, analysis confirmed with strong probability the claims in old Irish and Highland pedigrees that the chiefs shared a common descent, through John of Islay born about 1380, from Somerled, the great King of the Isles in the 12th century. A second and, for many, unexpected conclusion was that the Chiefs' male ancestors were of Viking rather than Gaelic origin, as shown in traditional pedigrees showing his descent from one Colla Uais an elusive 4th century High King of Ireland.

So far so good, or so it seemed. But DNA research in Ireland on the self-same Colla Uais and his two brothers – “The Three Collas” – then produced equally striking results cutting across these Clan Donald conclusions. Tests of the DNA examined, much of it from contemporary members of various Irish princely and clan lineages, vindicated claims in certain traditional pedigrees of the testers' converging ancestral lines back to Colla Uais, or one of his brothers; and the probable historic existence of the hitherto unlikely three Collas. Tests also convincingly identified a clear Gaelic DNA heritage. Crucially those testers linked to the Colla Uais DNA type included four Irish MacDonalds and a Scottish MacDougall all with serious pedigree descents from Somerled himself.

So taken together, studies point strongly to an unknown Viking progenitor of the present Clan Donald chiefs intervening in the paternal line between John of Islay, b 1380 and Somerled, but tend to confirm traditional accounts of Somerled's Gaelic origins. The studies also illustrate the power of STR tests to discriminate degrees of relatedness. But the Three Collas study also points to the limitations of STR testing in showing the structure of the deeper ancestry of the testers in a study aiming to reach 40 plus generations back to Colla Uais. It is here, in charting deeper ancestry, that SNP (Single Nucleotide Polymorphism) testing on the Y-chromosome can make a difference, and in this case subsequently has. SNPs consist of individual markers that accumulate at a slow rate within ancestral male lines, and that together effectively form an embedded pedigree chart of DNA descents, as they define successively later and smaller groupings down to the immediate tester. Accordingly, with the rich and dense DNA material available to them from Irish sources, the Colla Uais researchers have been able subsequently to apply SNP data (whether from predictive or laboratory results) to give structure and greater definition to their project findings on the early medieval lines of descent.

Overall, we can see how the case of the Macdonalds is a parallel to the Mathesons in that we know that back to Murchadh Buidhe, if not earlier, the line of Chiefs of the Mathesons has had a Viking DNA signature while some clan lines, such as that of the Chiefs of Shinness, have borne a Gaelic DNA signature. This poses the question whether earlier chiefs were indeed of Gaelic origin, but that question then immediately poses the wider question: what significance should we attach to that?

Of course, male line inheritance remains to this day a strong and highly valued tradition not only in the Chiefship of Clan Matheson, and is indeed the norm in the sloinneadh – traditional genealogies governed by Celtic, not UK domestic, law – which the Scottish Courts have been ready to interpret and enforce in adjudicating disputed claims to inherit Chiefships. But Clan researches, including studies on naming patterns, now show that in earlier times chiefship sometimes passed through a female line in cases of practical necessity or force majeure, without the Clan necessarily regarding it as a breach of continuity of the line. One historic example is that of Clan Annrias, a Clan probably out of the same 12th century stable of Gilleoin of the Aird as Clan Matheson, and whose Chiefship seems to have passed in this way to the Chiefs of Clan Ross in the 14th century. So we should beware of treating amiss cases where Viking chiefly forbears take over Gaelic lines as with Clan Donald and – most probably – Clan Matheson.

So what of SNPs and Clan Matheson? As we have seen Clans contain lines of various hues, amply demonstrated in the findings of the Clan Matheson DNA project. Genealogical interest extends to all elements as far back as the trail will take us. Here the disclosure of particular earlier SNPs can flag up key ancestral divisions – deep ancestry – which can then sharpen the focus on enquiries for earlier origins. Within Celtic DNA results Haplogroups L21 and DF13 stand over a series of genetically parallel markers or subclades all dating back well over a thousand years. Within Ireland, these Haplogroups serve to separate, conveniently if only broadly, groups of the various ancient Irish royal and princely kindreds from which so many Scottish Clans stem: for example Eoganachta of Munster (CTS146); Dal Cais of Munster (Z253, Z2534, L226); Laigin of Leinster (DF41); Ui Neill and Connachta (DF41, M222); Airghialla and Three Collas (DF210).

Let us take, by way of example, the results of the Matheson of Shinness family. We find (unless I am out of date) that the Shinness subclade is L643 and that this falls under earlier SNPs Z253 and Z2534 SNPs. As indicated in the previous paragraph this puts the Shinness signature alongside L226, the ancient dynasty of the Dal Cais, who became Kings of Munster and, with Brian Boru in 1002, High Kings of Ireland. I am unaware how close the Shinness DNA signature is in DNA terms or years to the Dalcassian signature, but the following pointers together suggest that further enquiries on a Matheson link to Dalcassians could well be productive. Thus there were close dynastic links between the Dalcassians and the house of Dalriada: King Brian Boru was father in law of King Malcolm II, last of the Clan Gabhran Kings of the house of Dalriada. And this was only a generation before the rule of the last of all Dalriadan kings, Macbeth, 1034 – 1056, gave way to the intruding dynasty of Malcolm Canmore which ruled for some two hundred years. Next, it was the Aird, lying within Macbeth's province of Moray, that became the cradle of our Matheson ancestors. And to cap it all, Brian's brother was Mathghamhain, founder of the great Irish Clan MacMahon of County Clare. Is it too fanciful to suggest here that the Mathghamhain name, unfamiliar in the Highlands, may have passed from a Dalcassian father in law with the agreement of his obliging son-in-law, a Shinness forbear, to a grandson, Mathghamhain, who became the progenitor of our clan?

NOTE: We are now clarifying with FamilyTreeDNA some uncertainties on the current DNA tests on offer. We will update the present DNA notice on the Clan Society website <http://clanmatheson.org/information.html> when that has been done.

John Faid,
Clan Genealogist

