

Clan Matheson International Newsletter 2022





Contents

3	The Chief's Message
4 - 5	Australia
6 - 7	Canada
8 - 9	Genealogy Corner
10 - 11	New Zealand
12 - 14	UK
15 - 20	USA

Front cover tartan is Matheson Red Muted

Front cover image of Stuart Latto after the UK & Europe Branch 2021 AGM

Contents page image of the view of Grandfather Mountain from the entrance to MacRae Meadows and the games

Welcome to our annual newsletter!



For the first half of 2021, Katharine and I were looking forward to the Grandfather Mountain Highland Games, scheduled for 8-10 July in North Carolina. Clan Matheson was to be the “Honoured Clan” and it would have been our first international clan gathering for several years. These games promised to be a major highlight for us and we intended to make it into a major family holiday with children and grandchildren. Excitement grew as the months went by. How disappointed we were that the Covid 19 pandemic retained its grip on our lives and travellers from the United Kingdom were barred from entering the United States, despite intervention from a senator and a congressman who supported our appeal for exemption from the travel ban. The Grandfather Mountain Highland Games, the biggest such gathering in the world, went ahead anyway and the burden of organising the Matheson element fell squarely on the shoulders of Colvin Matheson, as he relates later in this edition. I am enormously grateful to Colvin and his team for their hard work which made our Clan's involvement into such a success.

I am now looking ahead to our next gathering in Scotland. Covid uncertainties may yet cast a shadow over international travel in 2023, so for planning purposes I am now aiming at July 2024. For those who come from afar, I hope to fix dates which will also allow for attendance at the Edinburgh Tattoo and the Paris Olympic Games. More news on this will come out through the Chief's Lieutenants.

As always, I want to thank all those who give their precious time to make our Clan Society function. Your efforts are highly valued. With so many other demands on your lives, and with so many other opportunities for volunteering, you somehow find the time to assist in promoting our clan. Your contribution is invaluable. I hope that those who are not yet involved, especially any with expertise in social media, will volunteer their time too. We always need more active organisers, and I encourage all readers of this to consider offering up a little of their time.

Best wishes to you all

Alexander

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

This time last year, we were all hoping for better things for us all in 2021. Covid19 had been ravaging the world, but there was the hope that vaccines would provide the protection we all needed. However, the hope was only partially realised, with vaccines patchily distributed among countries and even within countries.

Unfortunately, we were obliged to cancel our 2021 Clan Picnic and other face-to-face meetings during the year, but continued to conduct meetings via Zoom (courtesy of Ali Matheson's Zoom account). We have moved our website www.clanmatheson.com.au to a different platform, and we are in the process of updating it. Brad continues to run our Facebook page www.facebook.com/ClanMathesonSocietyAustralia which has hundreds of followers from everywhere.

We were sad to have to report the death of long-standing member Lance Matheson, whom some of you may remember from the Clan Matheson Gathering in Scotland in 1998. We were sad also to report on the death of Shirley Pearce née Matheson who, among other things, was mother of Ruth Pearce and aunt of Euan McGillivray, both of whom remain active committee members. Shirley's sister Betty (Salathiel) wrote a history of the family called *The Farquhar Matheson History*. Shirley is standing on the right of her cousin, in highland dress circa 1930.



Shirley (on the right) with her cousin circa 1930

At the 2017 Bundanoon Highland Gathering in New South Wales, our piper, Warren, was asked by the Chief of the Day (rock singer Jimmy Barnes) to play for him. Warren, of course, obliged but was prompted to ask our Chief whether there was a pipe tune associated with the Mathesons appropriate for such occasions. Sir Alexander replied that there was not, to his knowledge, and charged Warren with the task of finding one. Warren diligently searched but was unable to find such a tune and instead adapted an unpublished one written by his own pipe tutor many years ago. We have sent this tune around the world in the hope that it will be adopted by the Clan as “our” Clan tune. I am very pleased to report that a piper in the UK (Stuart Latto) has taken the music up and played it at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire UK, for veterans, one of whom was a radio operator on Lancasters during WW2. Stuart is pictured below wearing a Matheson (Ancient) Hunting Tartan kilt on 7th September 2021 at the Arboretum. You can see Warren playing it at our annual Clan Picnic in 2018 in pre-covid days at: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/uk85cufiu3ihrep/AACZ5earfEg8UiznUvVVERXya?dl=0>



Stuart wearing a Matheson Hunting (Ancient) Tartan kilt on 7th September 2021 at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire, UK

March of the Mathesons

March

Composed by Neil Innes
Arranged by Warren Matheson



I am very pleased to be able to report that Sarah Louise Matheson was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia in 2021 for 'for significant services to the law, to intellectual property protection and to the not-for-profit sector'. Sarah works in the area of Intellectual Property and was recently Reporter General at the International Association for the Protection of Intellectual Property (AIPPI). She is a niece of very proud committee member Janet Blainey.



Sarah Louise Matheson AM and her medal

Covid19 has affected lives all over the world and all countries have had to deal with it one way or another. Governments everywhere have struggled to balance their response to the need for us all to avoid becoming infected with the need to keep economies going so we can be fed and housed. In Australia we have nine governments: six State Governments, two Territory Governments and one Federal Government, each with its own parliament and bureaucracy including health officials. This arrangement is sometimes unwieldy, and it has led to an uneven response to the pandemic. As I write, Western Australia's borders are still effectively closed to the rest of the country, each entity of which still has many thousands of newly-acquired cases each day. The national borders are effectively closed both for us who would like to travel and for those who would like to visit us. Although we can leave if we wish, there is little certainty about being allowed to come home again. Rules change at very short notice, even with New Zealand, our closest neighbour. Even famous tennis players have trouble!

As in many countries, most Scottish events in Australia in the last year were cancelled. The Omicron variant arrived here at a very politically inconvenient time with a federal election looming and many jurisdictions beginning to relax social isolation rules. The consequent burgeoning case numbers has meant that Scottish events continue to be cancelled. We can only hope that new vaccines and medicines will lessen the effects of the disease so life can get back to some semblance of normality.

We warmly wish all Clan members the very best for a healthy and safe 2022.

Colin Matheson

Chief's Lieutenant for Australia

Ear cropping circa 1830's in Cape Breton?! Such actions were meant as a public humiliation of the guilty. I did not know why different branches of my family ended up on opposite ends of the world, one in New Zealand and one branch in Kincardine Ontario. Was the ear cropping the event that triggered my ancestors to separate?

As I continued to investigate my family history, I discovered my Great Great Grandfather's (Hugh Matheson) biographical essay in the attic of the homestead in Kincardine, Ontario. Then, I trip on an 1872 letter from Hugh to his nephew John A. Matheson (son of Angus Matheson, Hugh's brother). Hugh immigrated to Nova Scotia, Canada from Scotland in the 1800's, eventually settling in Kincardine Ontario. After a careful examination of these documents a variety of questions leap into my head. A mystery is afoot. I gather my self and my Watson, (my wife Angela) and we are off on a 24-hour drive to Cape Breton, Nova Scotia for a short two-week bit of detective work.

Our first stop was to meet a local St. Anns, Cape Breton historians, as this is where Hugh's first homestead was. It appears that Hugh is a bit of a celebrity to historians, as he was one of the very few persons who wrote in their contemporary voice about the times and atmosphere in St. Anns, Cape Breton. St. Anns was first settled by Reverend Norman McLeod and his followers including Hugh. The first thing the historians asked us was how much we know about the shunning or the ear-cropping? My curiosity was peaked!

Hugh Matheson and Norman McLeod were both born and raised in Clach toll, Parish of Assynt, Sutherland Shire Scotland. They left with 150 other passengers from Lochinver on July 5, 1818 for the New World arriving some 9 weeks later by ship on September 2 1818, in Pictou Nova Scotia. Hugh Matheson was the Chief Officer of the ship and was one of the favoured members of the followers of Rev. McLeod, commonly known today as "Normanites". Hugh's first wife was a McLeod.

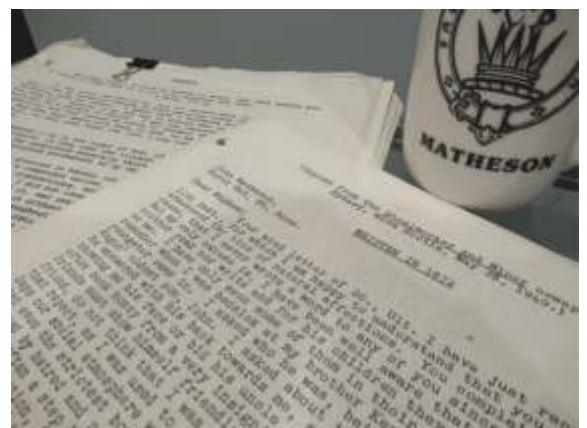
The historian's story unfolded the first clue about how the family became separated. In 1833 while living in St. Anns community, two teenage boys are accused of stealing some money from another neighbour. As the story goes, Rev. McLeod being the area minister and conveniently the Court's circuit magistrate, found the youngest boy guilty of theft. There was no trial, no confession or proof of any wrong doing on the part of the boy. The boy was punished by removing a portion of his ear in front of the congregation. This was commonly known as "ear cropping". Both boys always maintained their innocence, and the money did not resurface. Hugh was vocal about the mistreatment of the boy.

I cannot image how Hugh, a by-stander of conscience, would have felt watching such a spectacle. However, there is no doubt in my mind that speaking out as he did, raised a concern with the Reverend and or his staunchest of followers. A year or so later it turns out the real thief was found within the community. He had the stolen money and eventually confessed to the crime.

Historians show us that word of the youth's mistreatment spread to Sydney and a Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia eventually visited its Cape Breton Circuit and spoke to Reverend McLeod.

It was suggested that the Reverend was disciplined in some fashion by the Justice, and that the Reverend in turn, blamed Hugh for speaking out about the incident. In any event, clearly Hugh had fallen out of good graces of the Reverend. Thus, "shunning" of Hugh, his wife and their young daughter by the Reverend and his church followers including some of his own family members ensued.

Evidence of the shunning and how it affected Hugh is revealed in a letter he wrote to his nephew some 40 years later. "...as I was used to a worst treatment in St. Anns, as in those days our social atmosphere was so much tainted by our religious animosity that even the strictest bonds of natural affections were dissolved, and replaced with hatred and persecution as far as the civil law would permit, and very often a step beyond, and all that caused by "Norman here-say" ...I got my good share of suffering, that I was of necessity alienated from my mother's children without any other crime imputed to me by man, but endeavouring to preserve entirely, the dictates of my own conscience in defending truth against error."

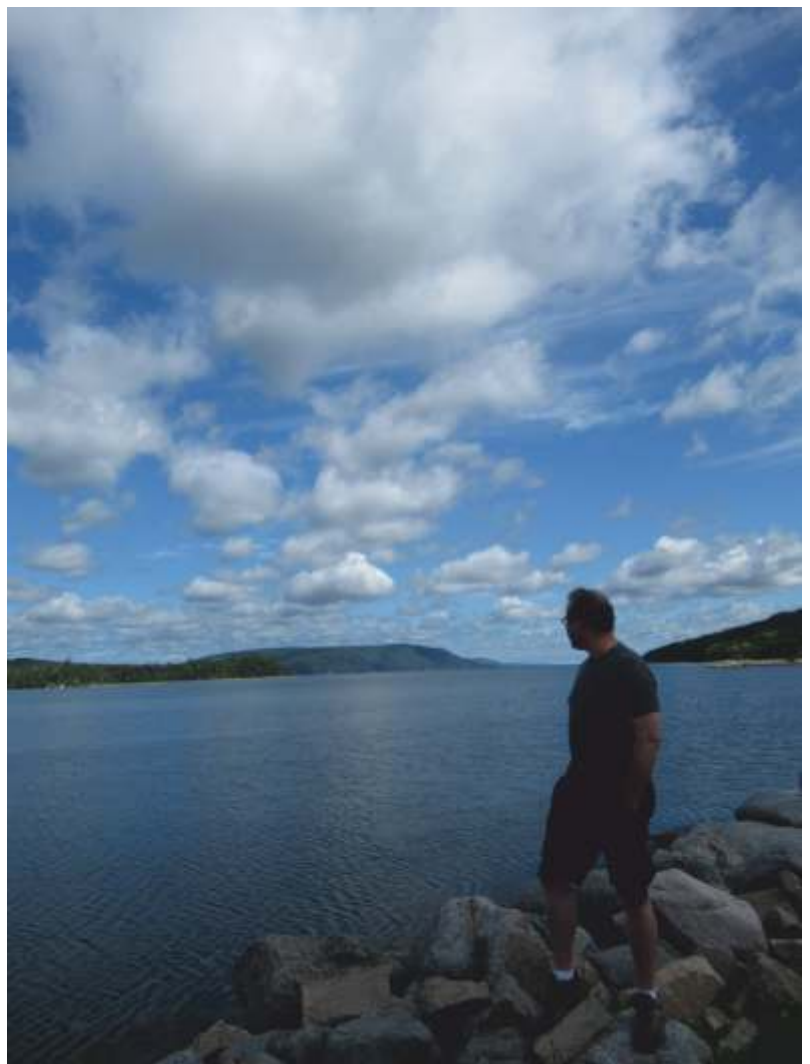


Copies of Hugh's letters

By 1851 the potato famine hit Nova Scotia, and after the Reverend's own potato crop failed, he decided to take his followers to Australia, where his son had immigrated to ten years earlier. They eventually settled in Wiapu, New Zealand. Hugh stayed in Aspy Bay, Nova Scotia, until 1851 eventually immigrating to Ontario looking for good farm land. Hugh began a homestead in Kincardine at age 60, his youngest son being born when he was 63.

I now understand why Hugh left St. Anns. The ear cropping and the ensuing shunning by his own family affected him so deeply he started a new beginning on his own without family supports in Kincardine a distance of 2200 km away. John Matheson, Hugh's eldest son started his own homestead in Kincardine at this time. This is my branch of the family. Matheson's still reside on this Kincardine farm to this day, all thanks to a cropping of an ear.

Chuck Matheson
Chief's Lieutenant for Canada



Chuck at the edge of the "South Gut of St. Anns Bay" Nova Scotia.
The view is some 500 meters from Hugh's property.

This issue looks again at the Mathesons in Sutherland, this time with more emphasis on Matheson clerics than on lay clansmen. I ask members' indulgence for selecting the clerics less for their pastoral prowess than for some unusual or striking characteristic of social or historical interest.

It will be recalled that in contrast to Mathesons of Lochalsh and the west, the Mathesons of Sutherland made a late appearance in the surviving historical record. Before the late Reverend William Matheson's time our clan historians Mackenzie and Macbain cited as the first Sutherland on record, Alexander Matheson, bailie of the Earl of Sutherland in 1497, closely followed by William Matheson, burghess of Dornoch in 1512.

It was the Reverend William, Reader in Celtic Studies at Edinburgh University, who discovered two earlier Mathesons in Sutherland. Genealogy Corner has earlier dwelt at length on Iver (Iomhair) MacMathain, a principal follower of the Earl of Sutherland and apparent first Laird of Shinness. His active recorded years coincided with the period of royal persecution or proscription of the Clan, ever loyal to the Lords of the Isles, after the Battle of Inverlochy in 1431. But the Reverend William also identified our first clerical subject, Alexander Man, "Man" representing "MacMahan" and medieval Latin records usually omitting "Mac".

Alexander rose to be Archdeacon of Ross and, from 1381 to about 1415, Bishop of Caithness. His diocese not only extended to the Earldoms of Sutherland and Caithness but also to the Lordship of Strathnaver in the north west, over which he also exercised a secular lordship. The inhabitants of Caithness were fractious and violent and had already caused the see to be relocated in the 13th century from Halkirk in Caithness to Dornoch in Sutherland. One suspects that Alexander's hand was behind the introduction of Mathesons to Shinness a few miles to the west, as a useful protective presence, especially as the parish of Lairg paid a substantial charge to the cathedral chapter.

The link with Caithness is maintained with the next cleric, John Matheson, who was diocesan Chancellor between 1544 and 1554, and hence the key adviser and enforcer of the Bishop of Caithness, faced with similar problems of disciplining the flock that had faced Bishop Alexander. In 1554 John was "incorporated" as a member of St Andrew's University, after the award of the degree of master. These were the regular steps in the qualification of a regent, the tutor who guided a student through his studies, but it was also, as here, a customary way of honouring and bringing to bear the influence and counsel of a prominent cleric or official on important public and church issues. It did not imply a lack of comparable qualifications: John would no doubt have proceeded from his earlier bachelor degree, also recorded at St Andrew's, to a degree on canon or civil law required by his job, possibly in France or Flanders.

A notable namesake, John Matheson, an advocate of religious reform, appears in France during the later period of tumultuous theological debate that was to erupt later into religious war. He demands further research as does the possible existence of Highland Matheson clerics during the 17th or 18th century. There may be profit from research on the Cnoc nan Clerigh, the Hill of the Clergy, maintained in earlier times by the Mathesons of Strathbran and located midway between Lochalsh and Sutherland.

Our last two clerics were men of eminence stemming from families removed from their land during the Highland Clearances. “Memorabilia Domestica” by the Reverend Donald Sage is relevant to our next subject. This book gives an account of the clearance of the subtenants of Strathnaver in 1819 conducted by the Sutherland Estate sub-factor, Patrick Sellar, including his heartless and peremptory removal of an elderly and bed ridden widow from her house in the township of Ceann-na-Coille which led to her premature death. The widow's son-in-law was Samuel Matheson, and it is his Christian name, highly unusual for a Matheson, that has made him the starting point of this account.

Samuel was quite remarkable. He was a catechist, and self-taught “mediciner” and surgeon. He was the son of catechist Donald Matheson of Kinbrace, the composer of poems much respected for their spirituality by Rob Donn, the legendary 18th century bard of Sutherland. Samuel's older brother, Hugh, lived in Caen, in Helmsdale, parish of Kildonan, which was also cleared. He was almost certainly father of three Matheson sons who emigrated to Canada and helped to set up a new township and parish of Kildonan in the Red River Settlement founded by the Earl of Selkirk on the edge of Hudson's Bay. There they found other Mathesons from Sutherland and encountered great hardships including raids from hostile Cree and Metis peoples, gang feuds and a virtual civil war between the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Fur Company.

A numerous progeny emerged including John Matheson, much respected as a policeman for his resourcefulness, and diplomatic and linguistic skills in this challenging land. Our clerical subject is John's son born in 1852, Samuel, the great grandnephew of his namesake. Many other Canadian ministers and missionaries have a good claim to acknowledgement in this somewhat idiosyncratic survey, but the selection of Samuel is not entirely arbitrary. A brilliant teacher and theologian, and powerful personality, he worked at St John's College of the University of Manitoba to prepare men for the arduous work of a missionary diocese in some of the most inhospitable territory anywhere. Samuel progressed steadily from priest to bishop of Rupert Land and Archbishop of the ecclesiastical province of Rupert Land before going on to becoming Primate of All Canada. There were eight further Anglican clergy and missionaries among his extended family.

The final subject of our account comes from a remarkable group of Mathesons who can probably be traced back to one Hugh Matheson of Torboll in Strath Carnaig, west of Dornoch, a man of standing in the early 1700s. Many of these inhabitants of Strath Carnaig were cleared from their holdings after 1809, settled in Glasgow, and became influential professional and business men. George Matheson, a merchant, was the father of perhaps the most notable of the Strath Carnaig descendants, the Reverend Dr George Matheson, the Blind Preacher, born in 1842. His hymn beginning “O Love that will not let me go” strikes a strong chord across the globe. Written, it is said, in five minutes on the day of a sister's marriage, the hymn testifies to his remarkable creativity and spirituality, also reflected in his outstanding eloquence as a preacher, with a nationwide reputation. George was academically brilliant and a prolific author, and a recent academic paper values him as a mystic, unusual for a presbyterian, whose blindness enabled him to reach a more profound union with the divine.

John Faid,
Clan Genealogist, February 2022

Hello from New Zealand

The New Zealand branch of the Clan Matheson Society has made some significant changes in the past year, as we look to put the branch on a stronger footing for the future.

We reported in the last annual newsletter that our branch committee had been thinking hard about the future of a membership-based organisation. Membership numbers were slowly falling, despite the modest subscription. Meetings and gatherings were becoming less popular. People have ways of interacting – such as through Facebook, video calling and email – that were unimaginable when the branch was formed more than 30 years ago.

As a committee we put effort into finding out what branch members and others with Matheson heritage are interested in regarding family history and Scottish culture more generally, and how they want to interact in pursuing those interests.

Based on the results of a survey and extensive discussion with members, at our annual gathering in August 2021 we adopted a new way of operating. The immediate changes are:

- Anyone who is interested in being involved in the New Zealand branch of the Clan Matheson Society is welcome. The branch will not be a membership-based organisation, and subscriptions will not be collected.
- The [newsletter](#) is available free of charge by email or from our website. We're rather proud of the newsletter, our flagship product, and it seemed a pity to hide the publication behind a paywall.
- We have set up a family history [forum](#) on our website as a complement to our Facebook [group](#).

The next steps will be:

- Forming a charitable trust to be the legal vehicle for the Clan Matheson Society in New Zealand. This will provide a more formal structure for the organisation and its assets, and is necessary if the branch is to seek community or charitable funding for its activities.
- Revamping the website, before exploring options for commercial support to offset the end of membership subscriptions. This could include advertising by Matheson-related businesses and Scottish interest businesses, or other enterprises wanting to support our activities.
- Developing a new form of annual gathering, to replace the annual general meeting.

These changes will require a new way of thinking, as well as operating. There won't be membership, or a list of members. People won't have to "belong" in order to show their interest or share their stories. There will be more, and easier, ways to engage with Matheson heritage and history than joining a "club".

We have kept the Chief of Clan Matheson fully informed as we have considered options and implemented a new way for the branch to operate. We are grateful for his interest and support for the branch to develop an operating model that suits our particular circumstances.

This is an exciting time for our branch. We will monitor these changes over a three-year trial period. An analytics function on the website can track trends in usage. The newsletter is already going out to more people than when it was available only on subscription. For example, by sending it to more clan societies in New Zealand we have opened up dialogue with other groups with similar goals and facing the same challenges.

Change brings risk. We have to ensure that the branch develops contemporary ways of engaging with people interested in their Matheson heritage, while remaining financially viable. But the status quo carries risks too. A decreasing number of members, of increasing average age, is a trajectory with only one destination.

As for Clan Matheson branches in other countries, 2021 saw covid restrictions limit activities. During summer 2020/2021 committee member Rodger Matheson led representation of the clan at Highland games in Paeroa and Turakina, but uncertainty around restrictions for public gatherings has seen organisers cancel all such events over summer 2021/2022. Overseas travel was (and still is) heavily restricted by the need for incoming passengers to obtain a scarce spot in managed isolation, so there were no New Zealand-based representatives at the Clan Matheson international gathering in the US in July.

We continue with regular committee meetings by videoconference, and wider connections through the website, newsletter and Facebook group.

Andrew Matheson

Chief's Lieutenant for New Zealand

The New Zealand branch website: www.clanmatheson.org.nz

The New Zealand Clan Matheson Facebook group: www.facebook.com/groups/ClanMathesonNewZealand



Rodger Matheson leading Clan Matheson representation at events in New Zealand

The UK and European branch held its annual meeting on 7 August 2021, the first to be conducted in a “hybrid” format; there was an excellent turnout with members joining both in person and via Zoom from across the region. After a few teething issues at the outset, the format worked well and we were able to hear from all, appearing in both 2D and 3D! Those joining in person enjoyed a fantastic lunch generously provided by Bella and Will Craven, followed by some expert piping by Stuart Latto.



Having a chat after the 2021 AGM are (L-R) Renuka Speed, Tim Speed, Alexander Matheson The Clan Chief, Stuart Latto, Andrew Matheson The Chief's Lieutenant for the UK and Europe Branch (walking behind Stuart), Jennie Parke Matheson and Patricia Matheson.



Stuart Latto playing the pipes after the 2021 AGM

One interest common to many of our members is the study and exploration of our genealogies. In that respect, Stuart Latto and Shaun Matheson have shared some of their thoughts and experiences in the articles below which I hope will be of interest to others. If anyone would like to discuss their work, please let me know and we can put you in touch. Happy reading!

We will be holding our 2022 meeting on the morning of 14 May 2022. David and Susie Mathieson have kindly offered to host and we'll of course set up a video link for those who cannot join in person. For the afternoon, we are arranging a guided tour of and visit to the museum at the International Bomber Command Centre, which is just south of Lincoln (<https://internationalbcc.co.uk/>). Details of both AGM and IBCC trip will follow by email shortly but if you have any questions or would like to signal interest in the meantime, please email andrew.matheson@clanmatheson.org.

In the meantime, our best wishes to all friends in the UK, Europe and beyond!

Andrew Matheson
Chief's Lieutenant for UK and Europe

The Mathesons in Norway

Editor's note: Shaun Matheson gives an account of his work updating his branch of the Mathesons' Norwegian family tree.

My grandfather Eyvind Matheson left us with a family 'tree' he had been working on, starting with the first known Matheson to Norway, Jacob Matheson, back in the mid 1600s and working through to the mid 1950s. I felt it was my task to continue this book and started to collect information from family members, hiring two Norwegian genealogists to assist me in the work. I also had the help from distant relative Einar Chr. Matheson who had some interesting input.

The 'scrap book' includes families in Norway, USA, Australia and the UK, all to the best of our ability. It's not perfect but it gives us all an idea who was who, and who became who. There will most probably be holes which need to be filled in or updated. I have tried to bring at least the Norwegian branch into the year 2020. Some photos of our closest family will be included.

Shaun Matheson

The Statistics Underlying Genealogy

When my late father, Ian Ralph Matheson Latto, set about researching his family tree, he got no further back on his mother's branch than his grandfather, George Matheson. Although my father had had in his possession, a rather tatty copy of "History of the Mathesons, With genealogies of the various branches" published in 1882 by Alexander Mackenzie, neither he, nor I later, could identify any family connection. However, my "eureka" moment came when, by chance, I happened upon the Second Edition which was published in 1900 and lo and behold this edition included reference to the above mentioned George, and his daughter Georgina, who was my grandmother! (Hint- this edition is available to download free of charge from the National Library of Scotland if you haven't already done so).

Incidentally, my interest in genealogy was sparked after I had transcribed some fascinating letters written in the 1840s from a Robert Orr Stuart on Antigua to his sister Mary Orr Stuart in Govan. I then discovered Mary Stuart was in fact my maternal great grandmother and explains my first name. I have her portrait in my dining room. But I digress.

You may have seen references to the fact that if you tore a newspaper in half and kept on at it, after 50 or so times, you'd have a pile of paper from here to the moon and back! This is something I haven't tried as yet but this is an example used to illustrate the multiplying effect of geometric growth. The principal also applies to ancestry. We all have 2 parents, 4 grandparents, 8 great-grandparents, 16 great-great grandparents and so forth ad infinitum. Which left me pondering, with the "History" as my guide, how many generations could I go back, and how many ancestors would result.

So, armed with a stiff drink, the "History", Editions 1 & 2, a List of Clan Matheson Chiefs from Mathghamhain to the present day kindly provided by Mr Google, and a calculator, I set down to work. I've included in the schedule below the page(s) from the "History" where the Matheson ancestor in question is mentioned. Thus, commencing with my grandmother, what, I wonder do you think the total of my traceable ancestors comes to??– and by the way, any errors or omissions are not my fault – blame Alexander Mackenzie!

- My grandmother – Georgina C.G. Matheson 1872-1944 (2nd Ed p104) – Ancestry total = 4
- Gt grandfather – George Matheson 1826-1892 (2nd Ed p104) = 8
- Gt x2 grandfather – John Ban 1775-1851 (1st Ed p40, 2nd Ed p100,101 & 104) = 16
- Gt x3 grandfather – Donald (1st Ed p40, 2nd Ed p100,101) = 32
- Gt x4 grandfather – Farquhar (1st Ed p39&40, 2nd Ed p63, 64 & 100) = 64
- Gt x5 grandfather – Alexander (1st Ed p37, 2nd Ed p63) = 128
- Gt x6 grandfather – John or Ian Og (1st Ed p13,14 & 37, 2nd Ed p22, 62 & 78) = 256
- Gt x7 grandfather – Dugald an Oir (1st Ed p13 & 36, 2nd Ed p22, 61 & 78) = 512
Dugald was the 2nd son of Clan Chief Murdoch – those following are all Clan Chieftains
- Gt x8 grandfather – Murdoch Buidhe (1st Ed p12 & 13 2nd Ed 21, 22, 23 & 78) = 1,024
- Gt x9 grandfather – Dugald Roy (1st Ed p11 2nd Ed p19) = 2048

The “History” now becomes clouded between fact & myth - these follow the list of Clan Chieftains

- Gt x10 grandfather – Iain Dubh the younger = 4096
- Gt x11 grandfather – Alasdair MacRuaidhri = 8,192
- Gt x12 grandfather – Iain Dubh the elder = 16,384
- Gt x13 grandfather – Alasdair = 32,768
- Gt x14 grandfather – Murdoch = 65,536
- Gt x15 grandfather – Duncan = 131,072
- Gt x16 grandfather – Murdoch = 262,144
- Gt x17 grandfather – Duncan = 524,288
- Gt x18 grandfather – Murdoch = 1,048,576
- Gt x19 grandfather – Kenneth = 2,097,152
- Gt x20 grandfather – Mathghamhain = 4,194,304

Unfortunately, “Find my Past”, “Scotlands People” and the like are not much help earlier than around 1700s – although a few earlier records do exist. Of course, everyone has 20x great grandparents. Had records survived, no doubt I could trace my roots to Charlemagne - forty generations or so - when that ancestor total would get to about a trillion ancestors! That's about two thousand times more people than existed on Earth when Charlemagne was alive. But I'm more than chuffed that thanks to Mr Mackenzie and the writers of the Iomaire & Bennetsfield Manuscripts, I am able to put some names to those ancestors. The “History” also adds a short “snapshot” as an added bonus. It's just a shame that so few dates are included in the records.

Upon reflection, in the early years, the Highland Clans were beset with tribal clashes and feuds, after the unsuccessful uprising in 1745 and the massacres which followed, not forgetting the terrible Highland Clearances, I have to ponder on just how is it I'm here today – just how did those ancestors survive?

Stuart Latto

Greetings from Clan Matheson USA. We are excited to be coming out of the Covid-19 pandemic lockdowns and hope that we will now have more opportunities to visit with each other at the many 2022 highland games that will be held across the United States. We hope that all our Clan Matheson members and their families were able to make it through the pandemic safely. Our report this year will revolve mostly around the July 2021 Matheson Clan Gathering we held in concert with being the Honored Clan for the 65th Anniversary of the Grandfather Mountain Highland Games & Gathering of Scottish Clans (Linville, North Carolina).

As many of you know, we were to be the Honored Clan for the 2020 Grandfather Mountain Highland Games (GMHG) in July 2020. We had hoped to draw Clan Matheson members from all over the world and our Chief and his family were excited to all be coming to celebrate our heritage here in the USA with an international clan gathering – our first since 2014. When Covid-19 arrived and the world shut down in March 2020, the GMHG Board had to make the decision to cancel the July 2020 games. We were invited to extend our position as the Honored Clan to July 2021 with the hope that the pandemic would be over and the world would resume a sense of normalcy. As we communicated to you during the year and through our updated website, we remained hopeful throughout the end of 2020 and into 2021 that the July 2021 games would proceed. We made the decision with Chief Alexander that if the games were going to be held... we were going to proclaim our presence on the field... “Clan Matheson is Here”.

We made the commitment and fell back on our motto *fac et spera*, and we dusted off our 2019-20 plans; made some quick adjustments; and reached out to our USA members. Chief Alexander, Katharine and their family were prepared to make the flights as his role would be The Chieftain of the Games. We worked closely with the leadership at GMHG, re-committed to the hotel hosting our Clan Matheson Gathering, and pressed ahead! In April 2021, GMHG announced they had the approval from the state of North Carolina to proceed with the games based on their Covid plans and protocols. The event historically has over 30,000 attendees, so it was touch-and-go as nobody had an appetite for a super-spreader event. Our wild card was now the international travel regulations and whether we could get the Chief and his family here. Ultimately, it was the uncertainty of the UK and USA international travel restrictions that kept the Chief from attending, but we remained committed to holding our gathering and I am so pleased we did!

I would like to give my most heartfelt thanks to the 60+ Clan Matheson members and followers that joined us from all over the USA! The energy, enthusiasm, and spirit that we enjoyed together were absolutely remarkable. It was so clear that we were all starved for camaraderie and celebrating our heritage and I am so glad that we pressed on. I would like to give my thanks to the Chief and to our Clan Matheson leaders from the branches for their guidance and support during the entire 2019-2021 planning period. Below are several photos from the events we enjoyed together. Before describing the highlights, however, I really must recognize the unbelievable commitment and leadership of our North Carolina Convener for the Grandfather Mountain Highland Games, Ed Matheson and his wonderful wife Cindy and son Branson, and their extended family, who have attended GMHG for the past 10+ years and knew just what needed to happen. Branson Matheson has also been critical to revamping the new USA website during 2021 and he is both a coach and judge for the children's celtic wrestling and caber toss competitions at GMHG. Without Ed and Cindy and their family, we would not have succeeded and their welcoming hospitality and organization was the key driver behind a great weekend together.



Our North Carolina Conveners Ed and Cindy Matheson (Poquoson, VA) at Clan Gathering dinner

Terri Matheson Norburg, our Georgia Convener for the Savannah and Stone Mountain Games, and her husband Marty and two daughters came in from Savannah to add their much needed support and engaging hospitality. Also, a big shout out to Malcolm Matheson III (our prior Chief's Lieutenant USA for many years) from The Plains, Virginia, and his friend Nancy West, as well as my sister Heather Matheson Ryus (South Hamilton, Massachusetts) who all were tremendous help to me in anchoring our hospitality tents with cheerful and welcoming smiles and lively conversation. My children, Emma, Margot and Lochlan Matheson gave their father extra hands and eagerly greeted and entertained many of the teenage and younger children accompanying their parents. Others to be thanked below.

The printed program for the games is an impressive, glossy magazine in which Clan Matheson enjoyed two headline pages describing our clan history and pictures and biography of Chief Alexander. We started on Thursday afternoon July 8th arranging our three hospitality tents and greeting clan members prior to mustering at 8:15 PM for the Calling of the Clans at the Torchlight Ceremony – the official kick-off of the Games. The nighttime assembly of all the clans was a wonderful experience and it quickly became clear that there was a common denominator among many of us Mathesons... who discretely and generously shared several “wee drams” of Glenmorangie and Dalmore single malts to cut the chill of the North Carolina mountain air.



Our Georgia Conveners Marty and Terri Matheson Norburg at our hospitality tent



Emma, Lochlan, Heather Matheson Ryus, Malcolm Matheson III, former Chief's Lieutenant for the USA, Margot and Colvin Matheson, current Chief's Lieutenant for the USA at Clan Gathering dinner

On Friday morning July 9th, we all trickled back down to MacRae Meadows in time for the 11:00 AM Opening Ceremonies. Chief Alexander was kind enough to provide me as his “stand-in” with welcome remarks for each of the three days’ opening ceremonies. Many of the 60+ registered Clan Matheson members and their families enjoyed each other’s company Friday and many brought coolers with refreshments and snacks for our shared enjoyment. It was wonderful to meet our extended clan from all over the United States. Carolyn Matheson Loeffler journeyed from St. Michael, Minnesota with her grown children, Richard and Lauren. Les Matheson drove up from Mary Esther, Florida. Chuck and Charm Matheson came in from Atlanta, Georgia. We enjoyed the company of John and Lynne Matheson and their son John Jr. from Ashville, North Carolina. My cousin Holly Hight and Deb Self from Tavernier, Florida had fled to nearby Ashville, NC to wait out Covid lockdowns and they brought fabulous artesian cheeses and cooked meats to share at the tent. Many thanks! Mike and Alisha Matteson made the trip driving from Phoenix, Arizona with their children and grandchildren—especially noting the young Haggis-loving Blakely! Rich and Shawntelle Mathieson came in from nearby Cookeville, Tennessee with their daughters Ashlynn and Kaitlyn and I have to say it was hard to tell which of these two families (Mike's and Rich's) were more enthusiastic about their Matheson heritage and being at the games!



Mike and Alisha Matteson's Family, Gordon Matheson, GMHG President Steve Quillen, Colvin, Heather, Terri Norburg, Ed and Cindy and younger Mathesons at our tent



Rich and Shawntelle Mathieson with daughters Ashlynn and Kaitlyn (Cookville, TN)

With the games ending at 4:30, we did not have a set plan for the evening other than Ed and Cindy Matheson and their daughter Chloe and son Branson with his wife Vikki hosting a *ceilidh* at the adjacent campground where Ed, Cindy and their extended family have established “Matheson Corner” (which is actually embedded in Google Maps thanks to Branson's tech savvy skills). About 20+ Mathesons joined in a spaghetti dinner and festivities that usually include another 20-40 guests who seem to enjoy celebrating with Mathesons at the gypsy campground! At 6:30 PM there was a celtic rock concert at MacRae Meadows. Others were able to enjoy dinners in and around Blowing Rock, where our central hotel was located.

Saturday morning, July 10th, once again attired in our plaid, we descended on MacRae Meadows for the “official” opening of the games with Colvin feeling quite humble marching in with the officers and honorees for the Games and then having the opportunity to again open the games with Chief Alexander's words. More Mathesons from the vicinity stopped by to introduce themselves and we were able to register some new clan society members. Old friend and colleague Gordon Matheson, with his wife Karen, made the trip from Richmond, Virginia. Peter and Brenda Hayes from Round Rock, Texas made it a family weekend with his brother Bill and Diane Hayes who came down from Cutchogue, New York. We are hoping to enlist Peter and Brenda to convene a Matheson tent in Texas soon! Elanor and Greg Riley joined from Portage, Michigan. Tina Matthewson Springs and Gary came all the way from Grass Valley, California. Joining from Temecula, California was Lynne Harter accompanied by Grayson and Courtney. One of the highlights of the weekend was the presentation of an embossed copper Grandfather Mountain logo made by artisan Patrick Kehoe, husband of Cathy Mathis, that was presented at our tent to the President of Grandfather Mountain Highland Games, Steve Quillen (Clan MacLaren). This was a special moment (with special scotches!) and we were able to pay our thanks to Steve for helping us navigate the tumultuous year that culminated with a successful games for GMHG and successful gathering for Clan Matheson.



Artisan Patrick Kehoe presenting beautiful embossed copper Grandfather Mountain plaque to GMHG President Steve Quillen who joined us for a few wee drams

We had a wonderfully social day at our tents watching the parades and field events while getting to know each other better. Saturday was also the evening that we hosted our Clan Matheson Gathering and USA meeting at the Green Park Inn in Blowing Rock, about 15 miles north of the games. From 5-6 PM we held an organizational meeting in which Colvin reviewed the past couple years and plans for the future and others were able to provide ideas as we look to build awareness and interest in our society—especially seeking conveners for Matheson tents at highland games around the country. We gathered for cocktails at the outdoor patio next to our dining room and took photographs and mingled amongst each other, reinforcing our bonds. It was wonderful to see 60+ Mathesons wearing their evening plaid and enjoying the time together. We had arranged for The Mountain Laurels, a local musical trio of North Carolina folk and celtic music, to play before and during dinner. Ed Matheson had arranged for five pounds of Haggis, which was dutifully piped in followed by Ed delivering Robert Burns' *Address to a Haggis* in a mix of North Carolina twang and Scottish brogue! The Reverend Robert Friend, accompanied by his wife Deborah and sister Susan Fisher, presented a heartfelt blessing. As is our own family custom, Malcolm Matheson and our family members rose to sing an impromptu rendition of Harry Lauder's *A Wee Deoch an' Doris*.



Clan Matheson USA Gathering dinner in Blowing Rock, North Carolina



Malcolm Matheson III, former Chief's Lieutenant for the USA and Rich Mathieson at our dinner

Sunday morning July 11th saw us once again descending on our hospitality tents. At 10am we enjoyed a very moving worship service and *Kirkin'* of the Tartan followed by the *Parade of Tartans* and closing statements. As Clan Matheson mustered to lead all the other clans in the Parade, we certainly gathered more Mathesons from the local area, who we hope will join our society. Observing from the podium and viewing stands it was wonderful to watch Ed Matheson carry our banner amongst the other clans.



Twins Emma and Margot Matheson leading our way during the closing Parade of Tartans with 80+ strong Mathesons assembled.

As a close to the brief report on our Clan Gathering, I have to comment on the pride I felt being part of such a wonderful group. The spirit that all of our Clan Matheson members brought with them was simply contagious. The enthusiasm was clear. The bonds strengthened and I feel confident that the younger family members left with a stronger sense of their heritage. We certainly missed that our Chief and his family could not make it, but I firmly believe we set the seed for a great showing at our next International Clan Gathering!

With regard to other activities, 2021 was a year of highland festivities being canceled due to Covid-19. However, in early September 2021 we convened at the Virginia Scottish Games in The Plains, Virginia. John Aakesson (Deputy Chief's Lieutenant for USA-East) with his brother Alec Aakesson once again led our effort and we were joined by Ed and Cindy Matheson and Malcolm Matheson III and Nancy West. Lastly, in October 2021, Terri Matheson Norburg (Georgia Convener) reports a wonderful weekend at the Stone Mountain Scottish Festival & Highland Games near Atlanta, Georgia. She looks forward to the Charleston, Savannah, and Stone Mountain games in 2022. The highland games that we usually attend in Utah, Colorado, California, and Arizona were all canceled, so we will report on our Western USA activities in 2022. As always, if your state hosts Scottish games, please contact me and let's talk about convening a tent.

Colvin Matheson
Chief's Lieutenant for USA