



## August 2023 Newsletter

### Upcoming Events

- 19-20 August 2023 Kryal Castle Highland Spectacular Ballarat VIC
- 16<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> August 2023 Scots in the Bush festival Boondooma Homestead, Qld

### Profile of Your Committee

This month we have our Treasurer James Sutherland

James was appointed as Treasurer when Wayne Clarke resigned from the position in 2022. He has worked in the finance sector for many years and has done a marvellous job getting to know the position and ensuring everything is done on time and correctly.



Like many other members of the Society, James is from the family of John Angus Sutherland and Mary MacKay who settled in Australia in 1852. James has visited his ancestral home in Brora visited "Old Square House" outside of Brora now a rental property and met up with relatives still living in the Highlands.

James often attends events where he can, in particular the Southeast Queensland Lunch in early September annually, organised by our Membership Secretary Mona Black.

### New member welcome

This month we welcome new members Kaye Amel with husband Tom Ford (pictured left with her cousin Annette Black second from the right). Kaye comes to us from the Gold Coast and attended the International Clan Sutherland Gathering in June. Kaye is eager to meet fellow Sutherland's and look forward to attending events were possible. Very big welcome to you all. (also pictured is their friend Marion who attended the gathering with us)



## Southeast Queensland Annual Lunch

It's that time of year again when we plan and gather in Queensland. Mona Black our Membership Secretary enjoys organising this event every year. This year it will be held **Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> September at 12 noon at the Grand Central Hotel** (270 Ann Street, Brisbane Queensland). This hotel is situated across from ANZAC Square and Central Station making it easy to get to by public transport. Parking is also possible but may be difficult to find. We hope to see as many of you there as possible. Last year's lunch was a huge success, and we would like to repeat this.

For those of you interstate wanting to join, of course you are welcome. Or stay tuned! I would like to organise something similar in Sydney and Melbourne in due course!

## Recent events we attended and reports from our representatives.

### Melbourne Tartan Festival

The **Kirkin '0 The Tartan Parade** at The Scots' Church was held on Sunday **2nd July** at 11.00am. Morning tea was served after to those who were able to stay. Nathan Rantall, our historian, was in attendance as our representative. Nathan said this was a great opportunity to speak to likeminded Scot's.

He informs me, the calm feeling he felt in the Sunday worship at the International Clan Gathering in Scotland, was the same calm feeling he found while attending this service. It is good to hear Nathan. Thank you for representing us at as many events as you have this year. We look forward to hearing more.

Later that evening, Nathan also attended the "**Heart of Scotland – A Pipe Band Spectacular**" as part of the Melbourne Tartan Festival program. This was held at the Melbourne Town Hall and celebrated 125 years of the '*City of Melbourne Highland Pipe Band*'. Their website says the following:

*"This is a celebration and showcase of one of Australia's oldest pipe bands. You will be entertained with many traditional favourites, alongside a number of original and contemporary works from the band's rich and innovative repertoire. With special guests the Glenbrae Celtic Dancers helping bring the music to life, this will be a colourful and vibrant showcase of Scotland's heritage down under!"* <https://melbournepipeband.com.au/>

Sounds to me like a great month for Nathan in Melbourne!

### Aberdeen Highland Games, Aberdeen, NSW

The Aberdeen Highland games were held Saturday 1 July 2023. Unfortunately, due to illness Helen Sutherland was unable to attend the games. Pleased to hear of her recovery. I am told the games were a huge success.

Where is Aberdeen I hear you ask? Aberdeen is a small town in the upper Hunter Region of New South Wales, Australia, in Upper Hunter Shire. It is 12 kilometres north of Muswellbrook on the New England Highway. For anyone considering attending next year, let us know and we can keep you informed with the event details and travel tips.



## News out of Scotland:

### Sutherland 900 – Dunrobin Distillery

While attending the International Clan Gathering, we were all excited to hear of the plans for the Dunrobin Distillery. The discussion centred around old buildings on the Dunrobin estate the Sutherland 900 Team hope to repurpose and preserve the buildings by making them useful as a distillery. The message contains an offer to Clan Sutherland Society in Scotland members is purchase membership to help fund the venture.

*Dear Sutherland Clan Member,*

*As you may know, 2030 will signify the 900th anniversary of the Sutherland Clan in Scotland.*

*This is a rare and significant milestone, and it is our ambition to mark it with the creation of the Dunrobin Highland Distillery, a high-provenance, single estate single malt whisky distillery here in the grounds of Dunrobin Castle.*

*To launch our distilling operation, we will install a small batch copper gin still at the Powerhouse site, adjacent to the Castle, and here we will distil Dunrobin Estate ICEHOUSE GIN, using a variety of botanicals grown and foraged wild on the Dunrobin estate. Distilling of the ICEHOUSE GIN will be ready for the 2025 summer season at the Castle.*

*This is a significant undertaking, and the journey is going to be fascinating. This represents the first Sutherland distilling venture since the creation of the Clynelish Distillery in 1819 by the then Marquis of Stafford (later to become the 1st Duke of Sutherland).*

*We would like to offer to the Sutherland Clan Members, the opportunity for you to join us on this journey to create a distillery at Dunrobin Castle. Accordingly, we have created the SUTHERLAND 900 society. Membership is limited to 900 members and this opening offer is to **Clan members only**, until **31 August 2023**.*

*Membership brings a range of benefits, including the very first limited-edition bottlings of both our gins and our single malt whisky, exclusive invitations to future distillery events and priority status and discounts for future offers and bottlings.*

*Beyond the creation of the first Sutherland single malt whisky in over 200 years it is our ambition to bring together a community, both here in Golspie and among the worldwide Sutherland Clan. To this aim we will keep a password protected website running for our members to document each stage of this unique journey; from the planning and build of the ICEHOUSE gin distillery, through the design, development and build of our single malt whisky distillery to when the first whisky runs from our bespoke stills – our target being the landmark year of 2030. The site will be interactive, and we will welcome community participation.*

*We welcome you on our journey.*

**SANS PEUR**

**SUTHERLAND 900 team**

If you are not a Clan Sutherland Society in Scotland member, and want to know more, please contact me (Michelle Williams) and I will forward you details of how to obtain more information.

### Important note

The Clan Sutherland Society in Australia cannot give financial advice or advice on the purchase of any financial products. All Clan Society members must take responsibility for their own investment decisions and while we welcome this offer of membership of the SUTHERLAND 900, those that choose to take out membership must do so having considered their own financial position.

## News from ScotlandsPeople

### **New records:** Search lightkeeper registers released online

Four volumes, spanning 84 years (1837-1921), from the Lightkeeper registers of the Commissioners of Northern Lighthouses have now been added to ScotlandsPeople. 2,047 images capturing the entries of 1,363 lightkeepers can be searched online.

The main source for lighthouse history at National Records of Scotland (NRS) are the records of the Commissioners of Northern Lighthouses. The Commissioners are a corporate body, operating as the Northern Lighthouse Board, with responsibility for Scotland and the Isle of Man. Included within this broad collection are lightkeeper registers (NRS, NLC4/1).

Lighthouses were manned by lightkeepers, whose primary duties were to keep the light and fog signal in perfect working order. Lightkeeper registers give career histories for each keeper, noting their full name, lighthouses worked at, promotions, demotions and date of retiral. Later volumes also record the lightkeeper's date of birth. The registers are kept alphabetically according to surname and also separately by lighthouse.

Lightkeepers can be searched by name, age and the year they entered service. Alternatively, searches can be undertaken by searching for the name of a specific lighthouse, the county or locality.



### **Overview of Scottish lighthouses and lightkeepers**

The earliest lighthouse to be built in Scotland was constructed on the Isle of May by James Maxwell of Innerwick and John Cunninghame of Barnes, under a patent from King Charles I of 1635. This light, however, was rather primitive compared to modern standards, consisting of a stone structure, with a coal fire serving as the illuminate.

*Holburn Head Lighthouse near Scrabster Harbour, Thurso, Scotland.*

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:HolburnHead.jpg>

The origins of the Northern Lighthouse Board date to 1782, when a number of severe storms highlighted the lack of lighthouses around the Scottish coasts. Following an act of parliament in 1786 the Commissioners of Northern Lighthouses were created and given powers to borrow money, purchase land and levy dues from ships to finance their work. They were allowed to build four lighthouses, one of which, Kinnaird Head, Fraserburgh, is now part of the Museum of Scottish Lighthouses. Further acts of parliament in 1788 and 1789 gave the Commissioners the power to construct new lighthouses as they deemed necessary. Jurisdiction was extended to the Isle of Man in 1845.

Lightkeepers were divided into two grades – Principal Lightkeeper and Assistant Lightkeeper. At night, keepers took turns to keep watch in the lightroom to make sure the light was working properly. The hours for this varied depending on the type of station. During the daytime all keepers were engaged in cleaning, painting and generally keeping the premises clean and tidy. At rock stations such as the Bell Rock or Skerryvore, there were six lightkeepers (three on the rock and three having a spell ashore) and four at mainland fog signal stations.

On 31 March 1998, over 211 years of light keeping tradition came to an end in Scotland, when Fair Isle South became Scotland's last manned lighthouse. ScotlandsPeople feature an article called *Shining a Light on the Lives of Lightkeepers*. It provides more historical background to the role of lightkeepers.

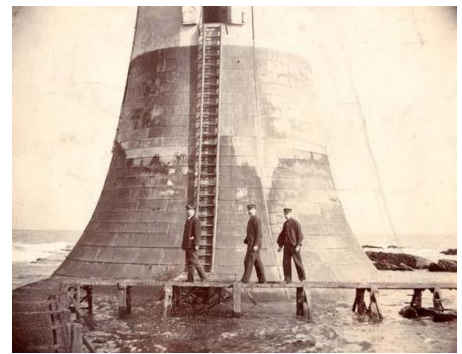
## Introduction to Lighthouses and Lightkeepers

Lightkeepers once served up and down the coastline of Scotland, manning lighthouses to shine a guiding light to vessels traversing the seas and looking to return to harbour. While the lighthouses remain, the majority of lightkeepers have long since retired as the process of automation was completed in March 1998. Despite this, the story of lightkeepers, their role and how they lived still fascinate, as many imagine their day-to-day activities, on isolated and weather-battered towers. Families continue to research and pass down the stories of their lightkeeper ancestors, and the pivotal role they played in protecting the lives of sailors.

### On the Bell Rock

The Bell Rock Lighthouse is the oldest sea-washed lighthouse in the world. Situated on the Inchcape Rock, or Bell Rock as it is known, the lighthouse was built to guide ships around this treacherous reef. Until the lighthouse's construction, the rock remained a significant danger to navigators because it was overflowed and often obscured from view during each tide.

Three keepers would be on duty at the Bell Rock, originally for six weeks, followed by two onshore. Over time this changed to two months on, one month off, and by the 1970s, one month on and one month off. At night, shifts of three or four hours would be taken to ensure that the clockwork mechanism, that turned the lamp and rang the bells, was wound up every 30 minutes.



*Pictured: Three Lightkeepers outside of The Bell Rock Lighthouse. One is believed to be John Henderson (1864-1939), c1900-1919*

Between their night shifts, each keeper slept in one of the three bunks available, one on top of the other, in a 13-foot circular room, with a curtain provided for privacy. The keeper on the night watch previous would make breakfast for all of the men. The day would then be spent cleaning, repairing and maintaining the tower itself. This included the daily measurement of important stores, such as oil, paraffin and water. As contact with the shore, and access by boat could be restricted by weather, it was important to effectively ration these supplies. This meant that there was no shower or bath for the duration of the lightkeepers' stay on the rock. Similarly, the lighthouse did not have a toilet until 1964 when a saltwater unit was installed. It is easy to imagine the relief of those on shift when returning to shore and having access to a fully equipped bathroom!

The above information & photo was taken from <https://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/article/our-records-shining-light-lives-lightkeepers> & <https://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/guides/record-guides/>

**Did you have a lightkeeper in your family?**

## Did you know?

If you have never ventured to Maclean in New South Wales, you wouldn't know about the interesting artwork seen on the streets!

These photos come to us from Helen Sutherland's cousin David Goodwin. When I saw his post on Helen's Facebook I had to ask to share!

What a great way to flash up the streets power poles and share our Scottish Heritage at the same time. Well done to the town of Maclean!



Visit New South Wales says *"The iconic Maclean Tartan Power Poles were instigated by the Maclean Scottish Town Association in the year 2000 to coincide with the arrival of the Olympic Torch which was to be conveyed through the township of Maclean. The designs attracted so much favourable comment that there was ongoing considerable public demand for "Family Tartans" to be painted. Hence the Tartan Power Pole painting was carried on through the main street and extended from there so that today they have an avenue of tartan poles in and around the streets of the main town, extending from the Harwood Bridge to the southern approach to Maclean at Ferry Park. All tartan designs have been painted by resident Maclean artist Linda El Mir."*

But where is Maclean I hear you ask?

Maclean is a seven-hour drive north from Sydney or three hours' south from Brisbane. Maclean's Scottish history dates back to the 1840s, when Caledonians started coming here, attracted by Australia's gold rush and the prospect of avoiding famine back in their homeland. Today, the town in the Clarence Valley on the North Coast of NSW is self-proclaimed as 'The Scottish Town of Australia'.

Maclean has hosted a Highland Gathering for the more than 115 years, the Easter festival consuming the town with parades and fanfare. The bagpipe-playing competitions draw musicians from across the country, while crowds gather to watch caber tossing and Highland dancing, before enjoying traditional Scottish food.

118th Maclean Highland Gathering was held this year on the 7-8 April 2023.

For more about Maclean, go to [Maclean NSW - Plan a Holiday - Accommodation, Caravan Parks & Maps \(visitnsw.com\)](https://www.visitnsw.com) and the Highland games [Maclean Highland Gathering | Australia's home for highland hearts](https://www.visitnsw.com)



## Flags of Scotland

This month I bring you the flag of Caithness. Designed by Andrea Merchant and Niall Smith the flag was adopted 26<sup>th</sup> January 2016, the flag of Caithness was unveiled by Lord Lyon and Dr Joseph Morrow at a ceremony in Caithness House in Wick.



The flag institute state *“the community flag proclaims the unique identity of this historic Scottish county.”*

They continue to say: *“The Nordic cross design symbolises the ancient ties of the county to the Vikings. The black recalls the county's geology with the famous Caithness flagstone, while the gold and blue allude to the beaches and sea reinforcing the maritime nature of the county and its heritage. The traditional emblem of Caithness, a galley, is placed in the first quarter, with a raven upon its sail as it appears in the county's civic arms.”* [Caithness Flag | Free official image and info | UK Flag Registry \(flaginstitute.org\)](#)

Like the Flag of Sutherland, the Flag of Caithness was chosen in a competition. The Scotsman noted *“More than 40 per cent of voters chose the Nordic cross design, after a competition was launched last year by Highland Council to select a county flag, with designs submitted from as far afield as Brazil, Australia and the United States.*

*The final four designs included references to the county's maritime history and Viking heritage. One entry featured a Pictish cat design, in a nod to the county's past, when Picts inhabited Caithness at the start of recorded history. The Pictish tribe living in the area was known as the Cat or Catt people, hence the 'Caith' in Caithness.”* [New Caithness flag unveiled by Highland Council | The Scotsman](#)

Pictured below are some of the other designs that were submitted for consideration.



The Pictish style wild cat head recalls the ancient Kingdom of Cat of the area. The triangle issuing from the hoist to represent the geography of the county as a peninsula jutting into the sea, the word ness meaning a promontory. Together the cat and triangle play upon the name of the county as 'Cat-ness'. The black colour recalls the county's geology with the famous Caithness flagstone, whilst the white chevron and blue field depict the sea to reinforce the maritime nature of the county and its heritage.



The galley is the traditional emblem of Caithness, including a raven upon its sail as it appears in the county's civic arms. The ship is depicted here in the canton to signify its importance with the remainder of the field depicting the sea to reinforce the maritime nature of the county and its heritage. The black canton refers to the famous

Caithness flagstone.



The galley is the traditional emblem of Caithness, including a raven upon its sail as it appears in the county's civic arms. The ship is depicted here on the sea to reinforce the maritime nature of the county and its heritage, whilst the black background denotes the Caithness flagstone.

As seen: [Public vote opens to select a Flag for Caithness | The Highland Council](#)

Next month another flag of Scotland.

## Some housekeeping

For regular updates of the events, we attend as they unfold be sure to follow our Facebook page. Feel free to email me at any time, I am happy to forward emails to other committee members or members at your request as well.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/clansutherlandocietyinaustralia>

Michelle Williams Secretary [genealogist\\_clan\\_sutherland\\_australia@hotmail.com](mailto:genealogist_clan_sutherland_australia@hotmail.com)

New members contact [clansutherlandocietyaustralia@gmail.com](mailto:clansutherlandocietyaustralia@gmail.com)

## Change of postage address

Please note that I will be giving up my post box that I have been using for all clan mail. In future, please use my home address **44-58 Old Pub Lane, Greenbank, QLD, 4124.**

## Request for newsletter items

Do you have something interesting your fellow Clan Members might like to read about? Or perhaps there's a topic you would like us to research and include. Send your ideas and additions for the newsletter to Michelle Williams (Secretary).

## Membership Fees

Membership fees are due 1<sup>st</sup> April each year. However, we are happy to receive them any time. Please contact me (Michelle) If you have any difficulties.

I have had some people email asking how much the fees are and how to pay.

Individual: **\$15.00** Family (spouse/partner or household members): **\$20.00**

Our bank details:

For those doing it in person at a bank, it is a Westpac Bank account.

Account name: Clan Sutherland Society in Australia,

BSB 032-008,

Account 222050

Please include your Clan ID number as a reference if you recall it, otherwise your name is sufficient.

## Clan Sutherland Australia Lapel Pins available!

These superb lapel pins are still in stock. This is the same pin that was presented to Lady Rachel on behalf of her father The Earl of Sutherland.

If you would like to purchase a pin for you or a loved one for \$10 (including postage), These can be added to your membership fee payments. Please contact Michelle Williams (Secretary) for how to order.

