



Clan Sutherland Society in Australia Inc.

Newsletter

November 2023



Upcoming Events

Events for November

- There are no current events for November.

Profile of Your Committee

This month, Nathan Rantall, Historian & Victorian for Clan Sutherland Society in Australia

Nathan Rantall joined Clan Sutherland in November 2020 along with his mother Janette Rantall. Born in Warrnambool Victoria, Nathan is currently working as a Boilermaker welder/metal fabricator. He is currently learning how to play the bag pipes and speak Gaelic (not at the same time!) and is an avid history buff. I often receive weblinks and screenshots from Nathan saying, "did you know!?". To which the reply is often "oh no I didn't!". This made him the perfect candidate for our Historian role.

Nathan has taken the role of representing our clan in Victoria like a duck to water. He attends the Melbourne Highland Games every March as our representative, and other events throughout the year as a spectator. He loves to get involved not only with Scottish events, but other multicultural events as they come up. You would have also seen, he travelled with me to Scotland earlier in the year to represent us Aussies at the International Clan Sutherland Gathering in Golspie.



Thank you, Nathan for all you do for us.

New member welcome

It is always wonderful to be able to welcome new members. Anne comes to us from the Gold Coast and joined recent new member Kaye at the Celtic Fest Warwick. It was lovely to meet you, Anne. I look forward to chatting more as we get to know each other better.

Our Secretary wins Student Excellence Award

Some of you may recall in May 2022 we celebrated the success of Michelle on receiving the 2022 RIMPA QLD Branch Excellence Award - Harry Haxton Outstanding Student.

On Wednesday 4th October, Michelle attended a black-tie gala dinner on the Gold Coast hosted by RIMPA Global. The five-star evening consisted of a presentation of awards to people they felt have excelled in their profession. It was on this night, our very own Secretary, Michelle Williams, received the RIMPA Global Award - Tom Lovett Outstanding Student for 2022. The dinner was part of a week-long conference where Records and Information Professionals came together to learn about new technologies in their field and network with each other. Unlike the previous award that was state based, this one was a national award. You may recall Michelle graduated from Curtin University in February of 2022 with a Bachelor of Arts, Librarianship and Corporate Information Management with distinctions. She studied online for what seemed like a lifetime. Even the pandemic wasn't stopping Michelle from achieving her goal of completing her studies as she isolated at home. For Michelle's hard work, dedication, and perseverance to be recognised by this world leading organisation is recognition well deserved.



Congratulations Michelle!

The year is not a typo. Due to the covid pandemic, the awards had been postponed in order to ensure they received the recognition they deserved in the most appropriate setting.



RIMPA stands for Records and Information Management Practitioners Alliance. RIMPA is a worldwide organisation that has established itself as the leading premier body for professionals in the southern hemisphere and is connected globally through ARMA International.

Pictured left is this year's award.

Pictured right is last year's award.



Recent events we attended and reports from our representatives.

Warwick Celtic festival 1st October by Michelle Williams

Celtic fest was held on the Monach's. Birthday weekend in QLD. Being the 1st and 2nd of October. Mum (Barbara) came along to join in the fun. It was a typical Queensland day with the heat reaching in the 30s! (For those unsure where Warwick is, it is approximately 2 hours' drive southwest of Brisbane).

Saturday 1st of October the festivities began with a Ceilidh at 5pm to 8pm. This was a lot of fun and you will find on Facebook a few videos of me dancing the night away. Medieval displays and Highland Coos were available for the early birds. While live music could also be found into the night ending around 10pm for those wishing to make the most of the long weekend.

Sunday 2nd October, we joined the Celtic Market hosting the Clan tent and had a few enquiries relating to Sutherland and more relating to Scotland in general. We were joined by Marie & Bill Hodgkinson, Debbie & David Cowan, Kaye Amel and new member Anne Carstens & her daughter. Thank you all for coming. It was great to catch up with everyone that came and meet new friends. Most of all, making connections with other clans and societies with likeminded interests in keeping our heritage alive.

(Isn't the little drummer boy gorgeous!?) (Photo credit to Debbie Cowan and Michelle Williams).

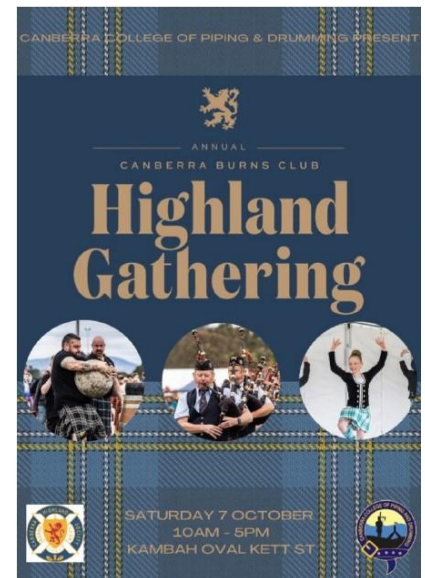


7th October 2023 The 10th Canberra Highland Gathering ACT by Sharon Kontista

Thank you to the *Highland Gathering* host The Canberra College of Piping & Drumming and the ACT Government for their financial assistance in making it possible to once again hold this year's very successful festival. After 3 years of no gathering due to the impacts of first COVID and then inclement weather.

The day turned into a warm and sunny environment with many Clans and festival goers making the most of the day's events.

At the 10am was the Opening ceremony and Massed Pipes & Drums. All 15 Clans gathered excitedly to join in together on the oval to march with the pipe Bands. The Parade Order was first the Pipe Bands then the Clans were to line up at the back row. Then we had to wait for the band's configuration to parade down the oval, turning around and converging to the front again. In which we were then to follow behind them. But The Canberra Scottish Terrier Group hadn't heeded waiting and followed the Pipe bands, which created a challenge for the returning configuring band members. Credit goes to the mastering of those pipers and drummers and the catastrophe was saved from happening with ease! The Chieftain for the day was Tara Cheyne MLA Minister for the Arts in the ACT Government. Who accepted the invitation to officiate the Opening of the Gathering.



Pic below: It was an honour to have visited our Clan Tent, the Town Crier for heralding in the start of the Gathering and Chieftain, Tara Cheyne MLA.

Pic: Afterwards, our *Clan Mascot Dogs* had a visit from the *Canberra Scottish Terrier Group*. We were pleased that none of our fur friends were ran over in this morning's parade.



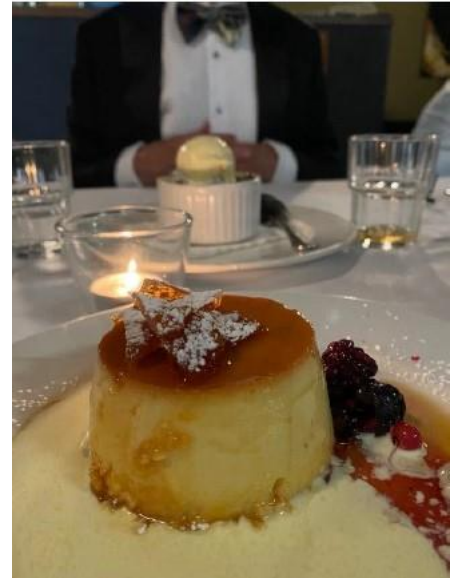
Clans present were Clan's Buchanan, Davidson, Campbell, Donald, Douglas, Edmonstone, Farquharson, Gregor, Hope, MacAulay, Macarthur, Macrae, MacEwen, MacPherson, Scottish Aust Heritage (SAHC) & Scottish Aust Heritage, Clan Sutherland.

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Pic: Angus and Eira enjoy some R'n'R after a busy day of greeting festival goers at our Clan tent. With some Pipe Band music to sooth their Scottish DNA.

Clan Sutherland was invited by the Scottish Australian heritage (SAHC) to attend the Evening Clan Dinner at D'Browes Restaurant at Narrabundah. Malcolm Buchanan officiated the night. Sharon and John Kontista were proud to represent our Clan. The tartan worn in this photo is our formal Sutherland tartan which is to be worn on official evening occasions.



The wild heather of Scotland

We have all heard of Scotland's national flower. But how many of you know much about it? If you google "Heather of Scotland", there are many results showing a multitude of photos. Some of which I will share with you now.

We have all heard of Scotland's national flower. But how many of you know much about it? If you google "Heather of Scotland", there are many results showing a multitude of photos. Some of which I will share with you now.



There are three species of heather you will find, all of which contribute to the purple scenes. All three are short-leaved evergreen plants with purple or pink flowers, but when they are seen together the common heather is easy to pick out on account of its flowers' shape. As you can see in the photo below, cross-leaved heath and bell heather have bell-like flowers concentrated in a clump at the top of the stems. The flowers are actually made up of four petals, but these are fused together to form a tube, and this is what gives it the distinctive bell appearance. Common heather's flowers are arranged in a wider distribution along the stem, and they have distinct petals that give them a more familiar 'open flower' appearance. The flower colour is a tell-tale sign too. The heath species tend to be more noticeable as individuals or small patches, where their large and lurid flower heads draw the eye in otherwise uniformly coloured landscapes.



Historically, heather has been used for many purposes including as fuel, fodder, building materials, thatch, packing and ropes. It was also once used to make brooms which is how it got its Latin name: *Calluna* is derived from the Greek word meaning 'to brush'. Heather ale was made in Scotland for thousands of years – archaeologists have found traces of an alcoholic drink made from heather on shards of pottery more than 3,000 years old!

Heather is also known as 'Ling' and is an abundant plant on heathland, moors, bogs and even in woodland with acidic or peat soils. Its delicate pink flowers appear from July to October and are a

contrast to the tough, wiry, sprawling stems they grow upon. Plants grow tightly packed together and can live for up to 40 years. It can grow up to 90cm tall and can be seen all year round, flowering in the Autumn months with the best time to see it in August.

Did you know? While Heather is common in Scotland and England, when found in Australia it is considered a weed because it is a highly adaptable plant, capable of growing across a broad range of altitudes, soil types and environmental conditions. Each plant can produce thousands of seeds annually, and it is possible that individual seeds may remain viable for up to one hundred years. These seeds are tiny and easily spread, and once heather becomes established in an ecosystem, it is capable of rapid growth which can quickly out-compete all native plants within the area. Heather infestations are promoted by fire, which encourages seeds in the soil to sprout profusely, allowing this plant pest to gain even more ground.

Folklore tales from Shetland Islands

Recently, I have started listening to podcasts while I am at work. I have come across some great old folk tales from Scotland and thought I'd share a few with you all. I wonder if you know this one.

The Mermaid Wife *By Liana Paraschaki*

Beneath the rolling hills and evergreen meadows of the Shetland Islands lies one of the best-kept secrets in all of Scotland. In the depths of the Atlantic Ocean, far beneath the fish and the corals visible to the human eye, live the mermaids, in palaces and houses made of corals and pearls and swaying seaweed.

They may look like humans, but their beauty and power far surpass that of our own; they are supernatural beings, capable of many great and terrible things. To survive in the depths of the ocean, they must wear the skin of a sea animal, which makes them capable of breathing underwater. Most of the time, mermen and mermaids choose to place upon their shoulder the hide of a seal, as the amphibious animal allows them to exist both underwater and on the shore. On the shore, their hides come off, and the merfolk resume their own form and examine all around them, curiously noticing the human world. But they must be careful, for they each only possess one skin: if lost, they can never return to the sea.



Photo credit: www.pickpik.com/mermaid-fantasy-mystical-nature-sea-beautiful-7197

Once upon a time, a group of merfolk found themselves on the shores of Unst, dancing and playing in the moonlight. Their shed skins were lying all around them, quickly forgotten in the magic of the night. As luck would have it, a Shetlander came across the creek, and the merfolk quickly grabbed their hides and rushed to the sea, scared by the sudden appearance of a human. The islander saw a skin lying by his feet and swiftly hid it in his sack. He had another look at the creek. Suddenly, he noticed the most beautiful woman he had ever laid eyes on sitting on a rock all alone, lamenting the loss of her skin and, subsequently, her life as she had come to know it. Without her skin she was an exile; without her skin, she must become an inhabitant of the world above.

She begged and begged and begged the Shetlander to give her back her skin. But the man, stunned by her beauty and eager to possess her, cruelly refused, offering instead his protection and hand in marriage. The mermaid, finding herself between the devil and the deep blue sea, could do nothing but accept his offer. And so, they lived, as husband and wife, for many, many years. He was always stunned by her beauty, and she coldly returned his affection. She would often return to the creek, where a large seal waited for her, day after day, and year after year, holding, in a tongue unknown to humans, an anxious conversation.

The mermaid and her human husband had several children as the years went by, until one day, one of their children found a seal skin, hidden underneath a stack of corn. Both curious and proud, the boy ran to his mother to show her his prize. His mother's eyes gleamed with joy, and she let

out a cry of happiness, unlike anything she had ever uttered before. She hastily held her children close to her chest, bidding them a silent goodbye. She hugged them, and once she had kissed their soft cheeks, she ran towards the shore, eager to leave the human world behind her.

The Shetlander returned to his house, only to find his wife missing and his children murmuring something about a seal's skin and a stack of corn. At once, he realised what had happened, and turned on his heel, running after his wife. He was, however, too late. He came to the creek just as his wife, now fully turned into a seal, was returning to her home, followed by the seal that had met with her every year of her human existence.

The mermaid took one final look at the creek, saying her farewells to the human world, when her eyes landed upon the Shetlander, standing miserably on the shore. Her heartbeat loudly in her chest, and, for a passing moment, she felt his sorrow as if it were her own. "I always loved my first husband best," she told him, and, with those parting words, she disappeared into the depths of the ocean forever.

Found at: <https://folklorescotland.com/the-mermaid-wife/>

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 clansutherlandaustralia@hotmail.com

New members contact clansutherlandocietyaustralia@gmail.com

Our website <https://goldenvale.wixsite.com/clansutherlandaus>

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).

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.

