



# Clan Sutherland Society in Australia Inc.

## Newsletter

**December 2023**



### Upcoming Dates

- 30th November 2023 - St. Andrew's Day
- 24th December 2023 - Christmas Eve & Sowans Nicht
- 25th December 2023 - Christmas Day
- 26th December 2023 - Boxing Day
- 31st December 2023 - New Year's Eve & Hogmanay
- 1st January 2024 - New Year's Day & First footing
- 25th January 2024 - Burns Night

### Profile of Your Committee

This month, myself, Michelle Williams, Secretary, Queensland Representative and Communications.

Michelle Williams joined Clan Sutherland in 2018. Michelle was born in Melbourne; Australia and her Sutherland ancestors came to Victoria from Golspie in 1854. Raised in Brisbane, she also lived in Sydney for a time. For 10 years Michelle worked at a teacher's aide for Brisbane Catholic Education before deciding on a career change. After 8 years of study, Michelle Graduated Curtin University with a Bachelor of Arts, Librarianship and Corporate Information Management in 2022. Michelle has a keen interest in genetic genealogy and has helped many people find families they didn't know they had. Michelle enjoys travelling, having visited Italy, Malta, Ireland, Northern Ireland, England, and Scotland where she spent a whole day at Dunrobin Castle in 2019. Recently, Michelle published her first novel called "An Ancestor's Story". A fictitious historical romance based on her Sutherland ancestors. (Reviewed in this newsletter).



Currently working full time as a records officer for a local council, Michelle was previously our Genealogist and Historian for 3 years. She has rewritten our Clan Sutherland Handbook and keeps our social media and websites up to date. 2021 Michelle took over the role of society Secretary, and past the Genealogy and Historian roles to Marie Hodgkinson in 2022 and has since accepted the Genealogist role back when Marie retired.

## Barbara Axelsen turned 70!

It gives me great pleasure to share with you, My Mum's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday surprise. Barbara had no idea that when her daughters were whispering (there are 4 of us) that we were organising a surprise birthday party.



(Photo left: Barbara and her daughters)

(Photo below: Barbara with sister Dot, and Cousin Rosemary)

The biggest highlight of the day was having 4 of her 9 siblings at the party, 3 of which were from Victoria and came up specially for her.

(Photo left: Barbara with brother in-law Jim, sister Ruth, sister in-law Sue, sister Susan, & brother Glenn)



Another special mention goes to Barbara's eldest grandson who came all the way from Cairns for the weekend. With his partner and daughter. (Pictured below).



(Photo left: Barbara with almost all of her grandchildren, there partners and great grandchildren.)

**If you or one of your family members celebrated a special occasion, let us know!**





## Book Review – An Ancestor's Story by Michelle Williams

It's time for shameless plug.

On the 26<sup>th</sup> October, I published my first novel. As the author and publisher, I am proud to say this is my own original work. I enjoyed writing it and can happily tell you it will become a series of books. How many, I don't know just yet. But at least five!

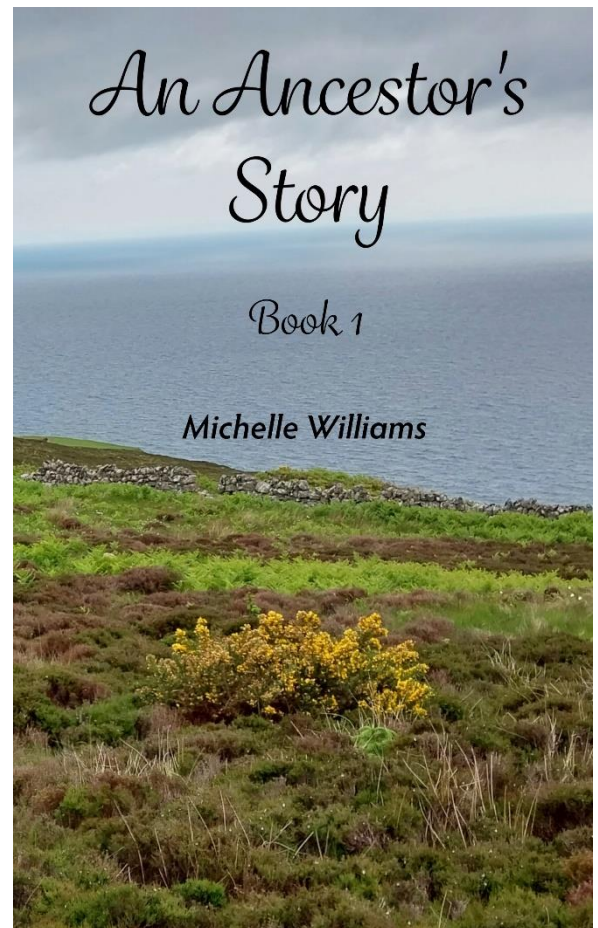
The blurb on the cover reads as follows:

*Love for eternity comes to few.*

*Something about her infatuated John as he watched her dance at the Lughnasad festival. He thought he knew everyone until he saw her. John didn't know who she was, but knew he had to speak to her.*

*Mary's parent's refused to allow her to see him, but she knew she would marry him the moment she set eyes on him. Sneaking away to meet in secret, Mary saw her future in his eyes as she gazed lovingly at the man, she would spend the rest of her life with.*

*Mary thought John would be hers for all eternity until the dairymaid returned with an unexpected surprise. Will John and Mary find forever in each other? Will Kate steal John away, leaving Mary alone? What will Mary do now she knows the truth? John has a decision to make before it is too late.*



An Ancestor's Story has been released on Kindle (digital) and Paperback on Amazon.com.au and it is the first of a series of novels I have written based on my family history, with a lot of imagination of what life would have been like for them. Set in the late 1600's to early 1700s, the completely fictitious story is a historical romance about two young people who meet and fall in love. I hope it grabs you from the very beginning.

Stay tuned as she turns this one book, into a series of novels following the family as they experience life in the 1700s.

If you have Facebook, please like and follow my Author page: Michelle Williams Author <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61552068824467>

Amazon link for purchases:

[https://www.amazon.com.au/gp/product/B0CLY5G9HQ/ref=dbs\\_a\\_def\\_rwt\\_hsch\\_vapi\\_taft\\_p1\\_i0](https://www.amazon.com.au/gp/product/B0CLY5G9HQ/ref=dbs_a_def_rwt_hsch_vapi_taft_p1_i0)

If you would like a copy and you are unsure about using Amazon to order, please get in touch and I'll assist you in any way I can.

## Podcast Recommendations

Podcasts are free to listen on apps or websites using your mobile phone or computer. I use Spotify and find it very easy and free. If you are interested in listening to a podcast or two, the ones I have found and enjoyed are as follows. (to find these on Spotify or your favourite podcast provider, just type in the name of the podcast and hit search).

**Lore** – Lore is a bi-weekly podcast that has also been turned into a TV show and book series about dark historical tales. Each episode explores the mysterious creatures, tragic events, and unusual places that fill the pages of our history. Some of these tales can be a little terrifying, but I found them to be interesting as he explains the origins of some of our folk lore such as Vampires, Monsters and alike. Not for the faint hearted but you will learn a lot.

**The Scottish history podcast** – The Scottish history podcast is a podcast dedicated to all things Scottish History by an experienced Scottish tour guide. This one is great if you only want short explanations of history. Hosted by Owen Innes, he researches his topics thoroughly providing a glance at the important events that moulded Scotland as we know it today.

**Thistle Do Nicely** – This podcast is brought to you by a group of three longtime friends and displaced Scotsmen, who get together to talk about their homeland, the weird stuff that happens there and to remind us why the Scottish are the way they are. The men have a great banter as they discuss history, food, folk lore, traditions, and customs of the Scottish people. I personally recommend this one if you enjoy a good laugh as you listen to the 45 minutes of banter between three very good friends. this podcast was created through the covid lockdown and only 100 episodes available.

**Stories of Scotland** – Stories of Scotland is an award-winning Scottish history podcast. The hosts aim to unravel the rich tapestry of Scotland's culture, nature, and heritage. Prepared to climb into caves, cairns, and chaos as they travel around Scotland and investigate how stories of the past can help us make sense of the modern world.

**Do you have a favourite book, podcast, movie or TV show you would like to recommend? Let me know!**

## 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.



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 to the right, 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.

## 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](mailto:clansutherlandaustralia@hotmail.com)

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

## 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 number: 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.

