



## CLAN CHISHOLM SOCIETY INC. AUSTRALIAN BRANCH

NEWSLETTER  
JUNE, 2019





## Céad Míle Fáilte

(One hundred thousand welcomes – Gaelic)

Hello fellow Clansfolk

This year's Annual General Meeting was held in April in Adelaide, South Australia. A report written by our new President Tony Morrison is included in this newsletter. I am certain that all members would like to thank our retiring President Donald M Chisholm and retiring Treasurer Penny Miguel for their sterling efforts over many years. A photo of AGM attendees is on our cover page. Copies of the Minutes of our AGM together with our International Journal are included with this newsletter.

Those present at the AGM decided to offer free membership to children up to the age of 18 years in the hope that this will foster interest in our Clan. If you have any young family members who might be interested, we would love to hear from them.

I advised members of an exhibition to be held in August 2020 in Cannich in the Scottish Highlands. The **Strathglass Heritage Association** would like to hear from anyone who has Chisholm ancestors who left Strathglass during the Clearances. More details on what they are looking for and how you can become involved are on page 17. By telling the story of your ancestors you might grow your tree! If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me. I visited their Heritage Trail Exhibition a couple of years ago and found it most informative.

The venue for the **next AGM is to be Ballarat** in Victoria from Friday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2020 until Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> March. I was alerted to the fact by a kind member of Clan Chisholm that on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> March is the Scots Day Out event in Bendigo. Given the excitement this generated amongst

our membership we have decided to travel to Bendigo from Ballarat for that Saturday. As this is an annual event, I feel sure that their website for 2020 will be up shortly. No doubt there will be a parade of pipe bands, dancers and clans down the street. We should all go prepared to march! I am certain there will be haggis, whisky, shortbread, dancing, Celtic folk music and much more. What a wonderful way to gather the Chisholms! The remainder of our time will be spent in Ballarat. If you have a request to see something, please let me know so that it can be factored into our itinerary. I am working with a local CCS member, so we are keen to hear from you. We have some great accommodation booked. Each room will have its own cooking facilities. Depending upon numbers, we may have to use the 2- and 3-bedroom apartments where some folk may have to share a bathroom. Bookings are at a premium in Ballarat during their Begonia Festival. Our accommodation is close to the CBD. In order to plan, could those interested in attending the next AGM please complete the appropriate form on page 31 and forward it to me by **30 July**?

I would really appreciate **contributions for our newsletters**. If you have a story to share, a photograph, some notable achievement, milestone, artefact or whatever it would be a very much appreciated contribution. You are almost most welcome to share any resources you have found to be valuable. If you would like help with an issue, please ask. I am willing to help anyone who seeks assistance in preparing an article.

Please read **Housekeeping Matters** on page 14.

Our Clan Chisholm Society has much to offer its members. I encourage you all to get involved, explore their web site (see contacts list) which includes the Forum and so many other features. The Clan needs our support and contribution for it to keep supporting us.

Warm wishes

*Kim Polley*

Secretary

**Thank you to those wonderful members who contributed to  
this newsletter: Donald Chisholm (SA), Tony Morrison**

## AGM held in Adelaide, South Australia 2019

### by President Tony Morrison

**Tuesday, 2nd April**

The clan arrived at The Adabco Boutique Hotel in dribs and drabs over the afternoon; a few such as the Polleys arrived the previous day, possibly because they think Tasmanians are always first or they just don't know what day it is. We met in the foyer and departed for The Red Ochre Grill, North Adelaide. How good was that! Nothing could have prepared us for the brilliant, just to die for, views down The Torrens, and the cuisine was simply fantastic. We had a ball. If this is an example of what Phillip and Suzette (I'm a sort of crepe) have in store for us, we are going to have one hell of a week.

*[Editor: maybe the Polleys wanted to make their presence felt as many Australian maps etc often omit their island state altogether! Mainlanders refuse to admit Tasmania really is the centre of the universe, Tony.]*

**Wednesday, 3rd April**



Waiting for our bus to arrive to take us to our day's excursion

Bright and early breakfast and we headed off for The David Roche Foundation. An amazing lifetime passion, a collection of art all jammed into the home where he lived. This is an amazing collection spanning the period from the late eighteenth century up until the mid-nineteenth century from all over the world, including ornate Versailles curtains, furnishings and paintings from Czarist Russia, porcelain, ceramics, art work featuring portraits ranging from

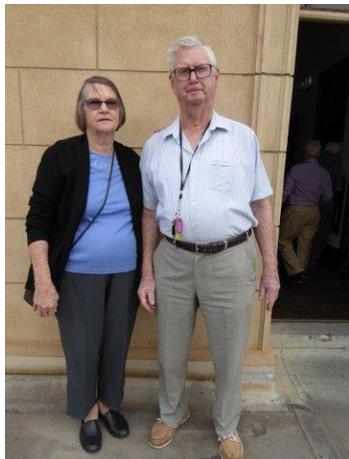
Scottish through to Russian and French as well as of horses and his other great passion – dogs. He bred dogs. At one stage he owned 50, which he kept in an enclosure behind the street wall in air-conditioned dog heaven luxury. He not only exhibited but judged all over the world as well and there are hundreds of ribbons and judges' rosettes testifying to the fact.

He owned his first dog at 10 and bought his first artwork at 14. He was passionate and imaginative about everything he bought and did, knowing exactly where to hang them, often nailing them to the walls through the silk wallpaper! There must be tens of thousands of art works from egg cups, clocks etc. through to huge malachite sculptures. The Roche collection and its preservation is an amazing bequest to the people of Adelaide.



And that was just the morning! PM and lunch at the art gallery. Some of us stayed on to see The Ben Quilty Exhibition, which included works from his service as the official artist in war torn Afghanistan to beautiful and magnificent landscapes and portraits in his own confronting and realistic style. Others went on a visit to The Grand Lodge of The Freemasons where we were met by Don Chisholm (the elder) who took us on a guided tour of what is an

imposing, 5 storey piece of 1930's architecture, choc a block full of ballrooms, meeting rooms and libraries full of the history, customs, activities and philosophies of the Freemasons. An awesome display of Freemasonry money and power. Thank you, Donald for an interesting insight into Freemasonry.



Donald Chisholm (SA)  
and his sister Marjorie  
Mill



Adelaide Masonic Centre Museum

7:00pm Beef Stouw Restaurant. Just around the corner in Hutt St. Very nice. Wednesday Philip you are so and food and The innovative gastronome's ponder what medieval off the wall.



Packed for a evening. Very trendy. cool. Really good wine company of course. menu was a delight but could only message lay in the chastity belt hanging

[Editor: it was rather off-putting for those who had to sit under it!]

## **Thursday, 4<sup>th</sup> April**

After a light breakfast we hopped in cars driven by Don, Valerie and John. Thank you, drivers, and headed for ‘them thar’ Adelaide Hills. First stop. The Berenberg family farm. From a small strawberry farm, it has grown over three generations into a large diversified agricultural business which operates its own processing and packing business that sells locally grown produce nationwide, runs its own restaurant and sells an amazing selection of yummy jams and fruits.

Hahndorf, our next stop, the most notable of a series of villages established by Adelaide’s first settlers who arrived from Germany in the 1830’s; England’s idea being to settle southern Australia before the French. Why Germans? Who knows but it was lovely to stroll through Hahndorf, replete with its examples of 19th century influenced German architecture and history. Lunch at The Hahndorf Inn. German menu and beer. Very big, very alcoholic very nice. Don, Valerie, Michael , Sue and I went exploring to find the house in Inverbrackie Army Camp where Michael Morrison, the young Lieutenant with his beautiful wife Helen was posted in the ‘60’s. We were unable to gain entry to the camp but a nice stroll down memory lane.

**Dinner at Pauls Seafood, The Parade, Norwood.** Great seafood and very nice fun waitress too, according to my notes. We are slowly being introduced to Adelaide dining and enjoying ourselves immensely.



## **Friday, 5<sup>th</sup> April**

**Breakfast in the guest’s kitchen. Save \$15.95 each, and we set off for Port Adelaide and The Maritime Museum, and – no power!! Can you**

**believe it? Thousands of homes and businesses blacked out. I knew we should have brought our own batteries!! But a brigantine, the training ship ‘The One and All’ was tied up at the dock , so we had a look at her, had a cuppa at a Club in Semaphore on the beach and then lunch at the Cruising Yacht Club at Donald Chisholm’s (SA) invitation looking out over the water amongst the members’ hundreds of fabulous yachts and boats.**

**Haigh’s Chocolates.** A must see and eat. Our guide Pamela gave us a thorough look at the techniques, processes, ingredients, products and history, of the whole operation. It is a great family success story and as a chocaholic, I can testify to the fact that Haigh’s chocolates are ‘the best’.



Our briefing before venturing into the world of chocolate

**6:00pm. Empress Chinese. Another great night out. Best Chinese ever and great company as usual. We will all have to go on diets when we get back home. The food scene is so good it is irresistible.**

**Saturday, 6th April**

**The Barossa.** We wound our way up through the hills to The Lavender Farm. The season had finished but the shop had plenty of interesting, attractive credit card busting aromatic produce which was quickly snapped up before we moved on. What a fabulously beautiful piece of country the Barossa is. As we drove along the narrow winding roads the vineyards rolled out before our eyes in the rich undulating hills and valleys interspersed with small farms sheep, cattle broadacre farming (not everyone owns a vineyard) and houses. We came across The Grant Burge Winery. It is striking, maybe with Spanish influence, and the wines popular. Sue took a liking to it and a couple of cartons of the sparkling shiraz. [Editor: for Sue or Tony?]



We had a very nice lunch at The Vine Inn in Nuriootpa and then onto Seppeltsfield. Seppeltsfield is the embodiment of The Barossa. Steeped in rich Barossan heritage, it was established by Joseph and Joanne Seppelt 15 years after Europeans first set foot in South Australia. It is a National treasure and helped shape the history of the Australian wine industry. It has been sold and bought several times. It is huge and has grown into a very attractive and popular tourist destination having a wide variety of attractions, items for sale and history, barrels with vintages going as far back as the 1880's. We enjoyed an interesting drive back to Adelaide in time to get spruced up for a BBQ dinner with our hosts, Philip and Suzette Chisholm. Fabulous to meet their lovely families who looked after us extremely well in their beautiful home and garden in Hyde Park. Some 'BBQ'!. It was special. Very relaxing, wonderful meal, a beautiful Adelaide evening and great company.

## Sunday, 7th April

**The AGM at Glenelg Golf Club.** Being a golfer of sorts, I must say, it is an impressive golf course. Well laid out, immaculate and green, it looks like it would be a pleasure to play, allowing for the fact that golf isn't always pleasurable!

We held our AGM in the clubhouse. The AGM is covered elsewhere but suffice to say we missed Bruce and Kerry Chisholm and there was a changing of the guard. Donald Chisholm stepped down as President, after many wonderful years. We shall miss his solid and sunny leadership. He was replaced by Tony Morrison. Penny Miguel, our ever-vigilant treasurer stepped down to be replaced by an equally vigilant Valerie (Satnav) Chisholm.

After lunch some of us went back to The Maritime Museum. The power was back on so we had an opportunity to catch up on some history after all and enjoy Port Adelaide.



## Sunday, 8<sup>th</sup> April

**Our last day in Adelaide took us to Goolwa and Strathalbyn, Coorong, Aquacafe for lunch at Goolwa, fantastic seafood, great**

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hosts and a stunning outlook over The Coorong, which is another subject. 140km's long it has fascinating natural and aboriginal history as well as being at the mouth of the Murray, which has been held back by kilometres of barrages before flowing into The Coorong and eventually, the sea. The Coorong, The Lakes and the seaside are very popular escapes for 'Adeladians' and Phillip and Suzette showed us their house which they are in the middle of renovating. It's not Palm Beach or Noosa; it's different, nice and a great getaway for the family who just love it.

We went to 'Vili's' 24-end for our farewell has the most amazing where you can eat out different again and a variety to choose from diner. And so we bade our thanks to Phillip what did turn out to be 'one hell of a week'. Thank you both so much!



hour café at mile dinner. Adelaide array of places and this was lot of fun. A great in a nice informal our farewells and and Suzette for

Above: Rory and Margaret Chisholm joined us at Vili's on our last night in Adelaide



l-r Valerie Chisholm, Philip and Suzette Chisholm, Donald M Chisholm

*Editor: Thank you Tony for your entertaining article.*

## Thank you to Donald Chisholm (South Australia)

It was great to meet Donald Chisholm in Adelaide. Donald is a Past President of Clan Chisholm Australia Branch and had some input into the planning of our visit to Adelaide for the AGM this year.



Donald James Chisholm was born in Brisbane, Queensland in 1931, and has family in Mitchell West, Queensland. Don is a second-generation descendant of James Sanderson Chisholm from Coldingham, Scotland. Following his education at Brisbane Grammar School, Southport School Qld, Don entered the family pottery business in South Australia, then joined International Pharmaceutical

Company in 1957, and remained in that industry until 1977. Don entered Medical Plastics Manufacturing until 1987, then started Southern Cross Science Pty Ltd Adelaide, SA, a scientific and research equipment supplier. In 2001, Don retired, and his son, Andrew Chisholm, now runs the company. Don's interests include pottery, yachting, freemasonry, and home.

Don shared the following information about his family history. James Sanderson Chisholm was a blacksmith, his parents were Robert Chisholm, a shepherd, and Eleanor Sanderson. James lived at St Abbs Head near Coldingham. Berwickshire, Scottish Borders. In 1880 at the age of 20 years he came to Australia in the sailing ship 'Stirling Castle', the journey taking 8 months. On his arrival in Australia he spent 18 months at Beenleigh, and then a similar period at Toowoomba. In 1883 he came to Mitchell and after working twelve months on the Maranoa River Railway Bridge, set up a business in Mitchell as a blacksmith and wheelwright.

In 1885 he married Miss Emily Bessie Woodward in Mitchell. They had 10 children. James was a member of the first Mitchell Hospital Committee and was one of the original members of the Mitchell School of Arts. Emily's sister, Mary Anne Hathaway, did not live far from the Chisholms in James Street, Toowoomba. Emily Bessie would walk around reading Dickens stories to Mary Anne while she

did her housework and then Mary Anne would do the same for Emily Bessie when she was doing her housework. Alison Chisholm, the eldest in the family of James and Emily Bessie, was not expected to do the housework. She was the family seamstress and spent all her working days sitting in the bay window sewing, making frocks for her mother and five sisters. How times have changed!

Thank you, Donald, for all you have done and continue to do for our Clan Chisholm Society Australia Branch. Hope we see you in Ballarat in 2020.



## AUSTRALIAN TV LEGEND SAM CHISHOLM



On 9 July 2018 Sam Chisholm passed away in Sydney aged 78 years. He had had a career in media spanning four decades and two hemispheres. Sam was born in New Zealand on 8 October 1939 and was educated at King's College. He initially worked as a farm hand but then emigrated to Australia in his twenties where he worked as a salesman, selling floor polish, and eventually moved into media management. He was appointed Chief Executive and Managing Director of the Nine Network in 1975, at 35 years of age. He then in 1989 joined Britain's Sky Television as Chief Executive, leading the

company through a merger with its competitor to form British Sky Broadcasting. BSkyB became the world's most successful satellite pay television operation. In 1997 he was appointed by the British Government as Chairman of the Executive Committee of the New Millennium Experience Company, responsible for the Millennium Dome project. A year later Sam was appointed a Director of Tottenham Hotspur Football Club.

Sam had been born with enzyme deficiency (Alpha-1 Anti-Trypsin). He suffered from emphysema, an inherited condition which caused the death of his father and brother. Luckily for Sam in 2003 he received a bi-lateral lung transplant. Since that time he was a Director of the Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute, inducted into Australia's television Hall of Fame and awarded a Gold Logie, was Chairman of the Australian Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplant Authority and awarded an Order of Australia (AO), for service to medical research and health organisations in Australia as a corporate leader and through fundraising.

#### **HOUSEKEEPING MATTERS**

It believe that some members have a preference for what material they receive from the Clan annually. Can you please complete this survey and forward it to me (see page 30 for my contact details)? Please circle which you would prefer

- 1. I only want to receive the Journal**
- 2. I only wish to receive the Journal and 2 newsletters**
- 3. I wish to receive the Journal, 2 newsletters and other updates via email**

Name –

Postal Address -

Email address –

**If I do not hear from you, I will continue to send annually the Journal, 2 newsletters and emails when appropriate.**

## CAN YOU HELP?

### I RECEIVED A QUERY REGARDING RESEARCH USING NEWSPAPERS.

- I am sure that everyone is aware of the digitized newspapers on the Australian site Trove <https://trove.nla.gov.au>
- When researching British newspapers try [www.ambaile.org.uk](http://www.ambaile.org.uk) especially if looking for information on the Highlands
- I recently updated my Findmypast subscription to include British and Irish newspapers, periodical source index and US and world newspapers
- British Newspaper Archives  
<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk>

Does anyone else have any suggestions please? What has worked for you? How can we find out what newspapers are going to come online shortly?

### Two noteworthy discoveries on a walk around Adelaide.



And  
then  
I found  
ELVIS!

Left: A beautiful monument of Robert Burns outside the State Library of South Australia in Adelaide. It was the first public sculpture to be unveiled in 1894.

I knew Adelaide was known at the City of Churches but I was intrigued to find these wonderful wire mesh sculptures filled with leaves.

*This is how they do it!*





# Strathglass Heritage Association

I wish to draw your attention to an exciting exhibition which will be held 8<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> August 2020 in Cannich in Strathglass, Scotland. The focus will be on the Chisholms who left the Strathglass area during the Clearances. Strathglass is perhaps one of the least documented clearances and they are keen to gather as much material as possible. I have been in contact with the Association and offered to spread the word on their behalf to our Australian membership.

They define the time period for the Clearances broadly from Culloden to the late 1800s. They state “The term Clearances is more strictly applied to the years after Waterloo when landowners actively encouraged or forced their people to emigrate. Prior to this is a more 'voluntary' period where people left to seek a better life. Strathglass saw evictions that led to mass emigrations between 1800-1810 and then late 1820s though many of those evicted took refuge on the neighbouring Lovat Estate.” They would be keen to hear from Australian members whose families relocated from Strathglass. It would be most helpful if you could attach a potted family history, notes, photos etc. The information will be displayed on appropriate display boards with notation. If you can identify where your family lived before they emigrated would be most appreciated. They would then try to pinpoint that on maps and look to see if any visible signs of habitation are still there. They would like to include any information in their archive.

If you wish to follow this up further please don't hesitate to contact me or [info@strathglass-heritage.co.uk](mailto:info@strathglass-heritage.co.uk).



## DNA DISCUSSION

### MALES ONLY TEST

At our recent AGM in Adelaide there was much interest shown by members in DNA testing to assist them grow their family tree and meet new cousins. We discussed the Y-DNA test (for males only) which enables the male to learn about their male line for thousands of years. The male Y chromosome does not alter much as it is passed from father to son over time. Therefore, it is very possible that you might find your Chisholm family connection from simply doing the Y-DNA test.

I explained that occasionally when these test results are processed the person tested may receive a surprise. There may be surnames of other males who are matching his DNA that he did not expect to see. There are several reasons for this, apart from the obvious one, an extra-marital event. For example, the common ancestor you share with a match may have existed many generations ago prior to the establishment of hereditary surnames. In Scandinavia for example hereditary surnames only came into existence about a century or two ago. Another explanation may be that after a battle when many of the males belonging to a clan are killed, the clan will recruit other males from other clans to join them to boost their numbers. Those new members will adopt the name attached to their newly acquired clan. Another explanation may be that the parents of a child die, and he is assimilated into a new family with a different surname. That child could have adopted the new family's surname. If a person lived on lands belonging to a different clan over time, he may become known as, for example, Thomas Fraser instead of Thomas Chisholm of Fraser. Another explanation, a child would adopt the name of their stepfather. Or, often at times of immigration, families might change their surname, especially if they wanted to make a 'fresh' start in a new land.

Our Clan Chisholm Society has a DNA project which compiles the test results. It is optional to join but may assist you in finding your

DNA cousins. The Clan recommends the use of Family Tree DNA (FTDNA) testing company. It is a very professional company and held in high regard by the most reputable genetic genealogists. If you choose to take a Y-DNA test, please choose 37- or 67-marker levels as they will be the best value for what you are looking for.

### TEST FOR BOTH MALES AND FEMALES

The AGM membership was also very keen to learn the value of taking an autosomal DNA test. This test at FTDNA is called Family Finder. Both males and females who test are able to search for their ancestors back five to six generations on both their mother's and father's side. It can be great fun. Once the test results, called a kit, are processed, people often like to upload their kit to Gedmatch (<https://www.gedmatch.com/>) so that they can search for connections with kits from numerous other testing companies. This is a free process! Others may choose to upload their FTDNA Family Finder kit to My Heritage which is also great but will involve a small fee.

If you have any questions or want assistance, I am willing to help. My contact details are on page 30. I have found it to be an incredible journey. I hope you do too.



**Do you have an email address and you are  
not receiving my emails? Please send me a  
message and I can add you to my email list.  
kim.polley13@gmail.com**

Please consider contributing something to our next newsletter. We need all hands on deck!  
**Share a story a photograph a memory a family tree  
a eulogy an achievement a special birthday  
your holiday a certificate an idea a birth, death or  
marriage a newspaper clipping**



## **DARING EXPLOITS OF AUSSIE WAR HERO.**

The exploits of Australian war hero, **Keith Chisholm**, who died last weekend aged 72, read like stories from a *Boy's Own* annual.

In five action-packed years from 1939 when he was a 21-year-old RAAF Flight-

Sergeant and Spitfire pilot, Chisholm:

Made 92 successful sorties in seven months against the Germans.

Shot down numerous German aircraft, including two Messerschmitts in less than one minute.

Cheated death when his Spitfire was shot down over enemy territory.

Escaped twice from Prisoner of War camps.

Tried to make another daring escape by stealing a German plane.

Was tortured for 10 days by the dreaded Gestapo.

Worked undercover for the Polish and French Resistance.

Escaped across Europe to freedom disguised as a German Army soldier.

Keith Bruce Chisholm was born in Petersham, Sydney on December 2, 1918, the son of a dentist. He was educated at Newington College, Stanmore.

In 1939, when war broke out, he quit a dentistry course at Sydney University to join the RAAF.

He trained in Canada as a pilot and in March 1941 went to England to join the RAF's newly formed 452 Fighter Squadron, which consisted mainly of Australians.

The crack 452 Squadron became one of the most successful in the RAF, destroying 22 enemy planes in its first four months.

Flight-Sergeant Chisholm made his name as one of the top Spitfire pilots—but his luck ran out in October 1941.

His Spitfire's tail unit was blasted off in a dogfight with a German plane over the coast of occupied France. Chisholm bailed out and landed in the English Channel, only to be captured by a German patrol boat.

He was taken to Stalag VIIIB prisoner-of-war camp in Sudetenland – a former Czech possession – but within days hatched a plan to escape.

Chisholm swapped uniforms with a British soldier, who was less closely guarded, and got out of the camp with a working party bound for nearby railway lines.

Fifteen of the party were locked up overnight in a disused flour mill and escaped in the dead of night by ripping floorboards and climbing through an air vent. German search parties recaptured all the escapees except Chisholm, a Canadian and a Briton, who trekked to a Czech village near Brno and contacted the Czech Resistance.

In a mix-up caused by language difficulties, the escapees were sent to see the Mayor of Brno – who turned out to be a Nazi collaborator who informed the Gestapo.

The Gestapo soon realised Chisholm was not a soldier. They suspected him of a recent assassination of a local Nazi and for 10 days, Chisholm was interrogated, bashed, tortured and abused – night and day- but refused to talk. He finally collapsed and was sent to hospital, where he befriended another captured pilot, Wing Commander Douglas Bader, the legendary English ace with tin legs.

Within days, Chisholm and Bader hatched an audacious plan to escape by stealing a Messerschmitt fighter and flying it to England.

They decided to swap identities and join a working party heading for Gliewitz, on the old German-Polish border, where there was an air strip with German ME110 planes.

But the Gestapo caught wind of the escape attempt and a carload of agents screamed into the work camp the day before the escape attempt.

Security at the camp was tightened but that only fuelled Chisholm's obsession to escape.

A few nights later, Chisholm and five other prisoners cut a hole in the roof of their sleeping quarters, climbed through the roof, scaled a barbed-wire perimeter fence and ran for cover to a wheat field.

Two of the escapees were recaptured two days later but Chisholm and three partners hid in a farmhouse for a week then moved to Cracow and Warsaw with help from the Polish Resistance.

In Warsaw, Chisholm became fed up with running and hiding and decided to join the Polish Resistance in the spring of 1942.

For the next five months he risked his life again and again by smuggling more than 20 Allied soldiers over the Polish border.

Chisholm, who had assumed the identity of a Polish company director, then went into counter espionage.

In March 1944, Chisholm and a Dutchman decided to escape to England via Brussels. They disguised themselves as Belgian members of the German Army and caught a train from Warsaw to Brussels.

In Brussels, Chisholm swapped identities again and got himself smuggled to Paris, where he teamed up with a French spy and began transmitting top secret information about German troops to Whitehall in London.

Chisholm joined the French Resistance, becoming bodyguard to underground leader Colonel Rol.

When the Allied forces liberated Paris, Chisholm was flown back to England. He eventually returned to Sydney a war hero, having been awarded the Military Cross (MC), the Distinguished Flying Medal (DFC) and Poland's Gold Cross. Chisholm died of liver disease last weekend in New York, where he lived for 15 years.

He leaves a widow, Marie-France (his second wife) and four children aged 30 to 37: Caroline, Tony, Kim and Peter.

Taken from *Sun Herald*, 1<sup>st</sup> September 1991



**As the Clearances is being discussed in this newsletter, I decided to include a story about one of the last cases of eviction and burning on the Chisholm estates, Clan Chisholm Journal, Number 35, 1992 pp. 8-13**

## **EVICTION AND BURNING AT WESTER RUNIVRAID, INVERCANNICH ON MONDAY 13 SEPTEMBER 1886 OF PETER SHAW AND CATHERINE CHISHOLM**

On Monday, 13 September 1886 at midday, there took place at Wester Runivraid, Invercannich, probably the last case of eviction and burning on the Chisholm estates.

Peter Shaw and his wife Catherine Chisholm were tenants to the Chisholm on the farm of Wester Runivraid. The farm had been in Catherine's family possession for over fifty years, her father William Chisholm built the house stone by stone and had paid for the wood required for its construction. His annual rent was set at £27 10s but this was increased a few years later to £30 and it was only by hard labour that he was able to pay this sum. James Sutherland Chisholm, who inherited the estate in 1858, granted a new nineteen-year lease to William in 1876 with the right of his daughter Catherine to succeed him. The opportunity was not lost, however, to increase the rent to £40, a massive rise of 30%. On the very week that this increase came into effect William suffered a severe stroke whilst visiting the nearby village of Beauly and was thereafter unable to actively assist around the farm. Sometime after it was reduced to £35 but was quickly increased again back to £40. Her father was

unable to pay and consequently borrowed heavily from the Bank to avoid the ever-present threat of eviction.

In August 1880 poor, honest William passed away. All he had to show after a lifetime of hard work was a £150 debt to the bank, he left this world financially poorer than when he entered it. There can be little doubt that he would have been sadly aware that his devoted daughter was about to inherit an impossible legacy.

Catherine, the eldest daughter out of a family of girls, succeeded to the farm and shortly afterwards had repaid (sic) the Bank £100 of her father's debt, but in doing so fell seriously into arrears herself. Her neighbours stated that she worked hard to overcome her financial problems and had done much to carry on the farm work successfully. However, a succession of bad seasons, together with crop losses due to flooding, cattle deaths and other misfortunes added to and compounded her financial difficulties. In 1884 she married Peter Shaw, a ploughman on the farm, but by 15 June 1885 their rent arrears came to £127 16s 11d being made up as follows:

Rent (Half Year)	£ 20 0 0
Arrears	£107 16 11
Total	£127 16 11

The Shaws were unable to pay this amount in full and she made an offer to pay half the arrears by selling the sheep stock, undertaking also not to fall into arrears in the future provided her annual rent was reduced to £30. Mr JB Grant, the factor (or estate manager), would not agree to this or any other arrangement and directed that they must leave by Martinmas (11 November) taking only the stock with them.

They were reluctant to leave their home and hoped that somehow their problems would be resolved. However, they were threatened with legal action and Mrs Shaw made a further offer whereby she offered to quit provided they could take with them the stock and farm effects and be given other accommodation. She had also carried out improvements by erecting fencing on the farm four years earlier and was willing to leave it. The factor, presumably having spoken to or, at the very least, was fully confident that he had the Chisholm's support, replied that he did not think that the Chisholm would not be prepared to renew the offer that he had made earlier.

The first legal proceedings on the road to their eviction began on March 1886 when a petition was presented by the Roderick Chisholm, with the consent of the trustees of his late father James who died in 1885, before the Sheriff Court in Inverness for the sequestration of the farm stock in security of 1885/6 rent. The pursuer stating that he was afraid that his right of hypothec would be lost unless he took action.

A hypothec, to explain, is peculiar to Scotland whereby the landlord can claim the crop as security for rent. In 1853 Mr R Alister in a letter printed in ‘Gloomy Memories’ had this to say about them. “The laws of hypothec I also found operated most injuriously against society, by unduly enlarging the size of farms, by giving illegitimate security to lairds for rents, and for increasing the price of rent to a fictitious amount.”

Returning to the text a copy of the petition was given to the Shaws but they could not attend court and the sequestration was granted. In June the trustees of the late Chisholm presented a petition for cession against the Shaws. On 24 June Hugh Rose, solicitor, Inverness, was appointed trustee for the general creditors and on 31 July had sold the greater part of the stock, implements and household furniture. Finally the pursuers obtained a petition of ejection against the Shaws on 2 September.

At 9am on Monday 13 September, 1886 Mr Alexander Macdonald, messenger-at-arms (or bailiff), left Inverness railway station for Beauly taking with him a locksmith, and as a precaution, five burly henchmen, in case, one supposes the unfortunate victims or their friends should resist. It was dull and drizzly when this fearless bank left Beauly for Invercannich. They drove quietly through Strathglass followed, in separate carriage, by a reporter whose diligently recorded report I have freely borrowed. Only a dozen people were passed during the entire sixteen-mile journey and three of them were ministers, none of whom would have offered molestation. The dismal party would have passed on their way the magnificent home of the wealthy but absentee Chisholm and the comfortable house of the compassionless factor. Arriving at the humble abode of the Shaws, which was some fifty yards from the road, they dismounted from their carriage and walked briskly, their heavy boots desecrating the muddy gravel path, the remainder of the way. There was nobody to be seen around the premises.

Mr Shaw, who appeared to understand the meaning of the visit, met Macdonald at the door and was asked by him why they had not removed themselves, particularly as they had been offered a house rent free for two months at Millburn, Inverness until Martinmas. Mr Shaw replied that they could not leave as the house offered was uninhabitable and Mrs Shaw added later that they did not have the means to pay for the removal.

Macdonald proffered the decree of eviction to Mr Shaw who declined to accept it. The decree was then read out and witnessed by Macdonald’s assistants who then entered the house. Mrs Shaw, who was sitting inside anxiously talking to a neighbour, was informed of what was to happen and she replied that “it is very hard, but we will not hinder you.”

The house consisted of a parlour, kitchen and small bedroom all of which were dimly lit. The parlour and bedroom were adorned by Mrs Shaw with prints cut

out of the Illustrated London News and the Ladies Pictorial. Cuttings of the royal family from latter journal were the prominent theme on the bedroom walls. The house was also well supplied with furniture as Mrs Shaw's uncle had bought some for her sister who was staying with her. To our eyes their home would appear rustic but it should be borne in mind that, up [to] the time of the passing of the Crofters Act in 1886, there was no incentive to improve existing houses as the crofters had no security of tenure. As soon as they obtained this the housing standards rapidly improved throughout the Highlands.

The evictors then began their task in, what was described [sic] as 'a quiet and decisive manner.' Mr Shaw became excited through frustration and despair, he remonstrated with them and endeavoured to interfere and obstruct their progress when he saw their furniture being roughly handled. Mrs Shaw remained calm throughout realising that protest was futile. Only once did she interfere and that as when the men came to remove her old-fashioned wooden bed. It was impossible to take out without breaking it up. This touched her heart. Nothing could be done however and it was destroyed and carried out piece by piece.

It was cold and raining heavily by then but this did not deter the men from continuing to remove the household articles and unceremoniously discarding them on the public highway unprotected from the elements, the whole operation lasted two hours.

There were several houses in the neighbourhood but non [sic] of the occupants gathered to watch the proceedings.

Their disagreeable work was not yet complete for Macdonald announced that, unwilling as he was, he must carry out the warrant, and raze the building to the ground.

The prints which Mrs Shaw had hung to brighten and decorate the interior of her little home were insensitively torn down, roughly folded and used as torches to set the farm house on fire. The damp thatch was at first reluctant to burn and, for a while, it was thought that the fire would extinguish itself. Macdonald watched carefully and when he saw that fire would catch hold he dryly remarked, "It's going to do yet." Dense black poignant smoke broke through rising to broadcast its [sic] sad and evil message. This was followed quickly by the unmistakable sound of crackling burning timbers from within. Angry and untrammelled flames suddenly burst venomously through the roof which soon succumbed and collapsed inward showering the confines with a pyrotechnic display, sealing for ever the fate of the poor couple's humble abode.

The wooden roofed barn and the cow-shed were then set on fire and were quickly devoured by the hungry flames. The dairy was of a wooden structure and it was pulled down.

Macdonald's final remarks were, "the law must be upheld," and with that he and his men then left, their mission complete.

By this time a small silent group had gathered. They stood some distance back and viewed the scene with sorrow and regret no doubt recalling earlier similar atrocities in the glen and wondering if they too one day would become victims. Also to offer opposition would only attract attention to themselves for the fear of factors was very real.

Mr and Mrs Shaw stood dignified and alone, Mrs Shaw saying "I have not a farthing in the world, and I have no place of shelter to which I can go." Being a person of considerable intelligence she fought off the temptation to despair and was soon busy covering her discarded and water-logged furniture.

Their hens, which had fled from the burning stable, had then to be collected and secured. This done their pig had to be transferred also. He was reluctant to go and squealed piteously. It was only after great deal of pushing and coaxing that he was finally induced to leave his quarters.

The fire burned itself out leaving only the blackened shell of the house standing. It was becoming dark and the broken and crushed Shaws departed. Bedraggled and cold they made their wet and weary way to the Cannich inn where they had been kindly offered shelter. What happened to them after that I have been unable to find out.

In a house, close by, an old man stood and watched the proceedings with deep regret. For 53 years he had paid rent to the Chisholm estate but had fallen in £120 arrears. He too was unable to liquidate his debt and, in early 1886, his land was taken from him but was allowed to remain in his house.

Stewart, Rule and Burns, solicitors, Inverness, who were agents to the Chisholm, fearing public outrage and revulsion for such barbaric proceedings rushed to publish, on the 16 September, a letter which lamely attempted to exonerate themselves, their paymaster and the sycophantic factor and dishonourably place all the odium upon their puppet Macdonald's shoulders. Great concern was expressed for the loss of the buildings and they emphasised that it was the Chisholm alone who suffered from the burning unless he recovered compensation from the officer. The Shaws, they miserably wrote, 'were not entitled to commiseration beyond what other people may be, who by shiftlessness fell into poverty.' They also pointed out that the tenants "were removed from the house before the officer set fire to it," generosity indeed. The legal agents could not think of them simply as fellow suffering human beings. The following is an extract of their letter: "*We regret that an officer, instructed by us, as agents for the Chisholm, to put in force a warrant of ejection, took it upon him, after executing his duty, to set the buildings on fire. The officer has not only been severely reprimanded, but intimation has been made to him that he will be responsible for the value of the buildings. Lest the incident should be made the occasion of comment upon the action of the Chisholm, we think it right at once to publish the fact that neither the Chisholm nor his factor, nor*

*ourselves, had the slightest intention to destroy the buildings, and that we knew nothing of the occurrence till we saw it reported in the newspapers on Tuesday morning. We at once saw the officer, who admits that he exceeded his warrant and instructions, but partly excuses himself on the ground that the persons ejected told him that they would reoccupy the house immediately on his leaving. Of course the officer should have reported this statement to us, instead of taking the law into his own hands.”*

The Scottish Highlander newspaper dismissed this letter outright by saying that any attempt by the proprietor or his agents to remove the blame of burning out to the tenants to another cannot be listened to. The Chisholm, and no one else, was accountable and also responsible for the conduct of those that he employed to do his dirty work. The paper observed that landlords had only recently started to explain, justify or even apologise for any unusual proceedings that occurred on their estates. There was a time, it wrote, when the whole matter would have been disposed of by an appeal to the convenient maxim, that a man can do what he likes with his own.

Roderick Chisholm then instructed his legal agents to take proceedings against Macdonald for destroying the buildings and also reported his conduct to the Sheriff (i.e. judge).

Sheriff Ivory in response to the Chisholm's complaint wrote the following letter, on behalf of the Lord Advocate, to Alexander Macdonald. In it he severely censured Mr Macdonald for the rash way in which he had turned the young couple out –

25 November 1886

Sir, - I have received a report from Sheriff Blair, with various documents, in regard to the proceedings taken by you in burning the house formerly occupied by Peter Shaw and his wife at Strathglass on 13 September last. Sheriff Blair reported to me, states that he is of the opinion that the act of Macdonald in burning the house was reckless and unauthorised, and one that should be strongly reprobated. After careful perusal of Sheriff Blair's report, and the accompanying documents, I regret to be obliged to state that I have no alternative but reprimand you for your indiscreet and reckless conduct. I have to inform you, further that the Lord Advocate, who has made full inquiries into your conduct, has desired me to convey a severe reprimand to you at his lordship's instance for your conduct on the occasion.

I am your obedient servant,

W Ivory

Sheriff William Ivory has been described as a judicial monster for, to him, mere suspicion was sufficient for conviction. He was no friend the oppressed or the struggling crofters. Instead of relaxing their ligatures he did his best to tighten them. It was he who sent and led an army of alien policemen from Glasgow to Skye which culminated in what became known as ‘The Battle of the Braes’ where women and Children [sic] were brutally clubbed. His behaviour was well documented at the time and, paradoxically, it was ultimately a blessing in disguise to the crofters. The Scottish Highlander newspaper commenting on the Sheriff’s letter simply said “What a splendid instance of the pot calling the kettle back.”

In January 1887 Roderick Chisholm lodged an action in court against Mr Macdonald for the injury and damage of his property to the value of £70. Mr Macdonald maintained that this sum was excessive and suggested that £5 was the real value. I have not found any information as to the outcome of this case. It is worth noting that Peter and Catherine were not alone in falling into arrears for, in December 1887, a large number of Chisholm tenantry petitioned Mrs Chisholm for a reduction in rent.

The Scottish Highlander pointed out that Roderick was but one of a distant collateral bunch of the original owners, into whose hands the estate fell by the application of a deed of entail. The paper explained that the entail excluded the female line of succession and thus deprived Mary Chisholm (Gooden) form her rightful inheritance. It was she, by her heroic and patriotic interposition, that saved the estate from sharing in the disgrace which the wholesale clearance of the native people in the past to make room for sheep had brought on so many parts of the Highlands. Roderick died in 1887 aged 24. After the death of Roderick’s sister Anne in 1932 the chieftainship passed from the hands of interlopers to the descendants of the good Mary who, as stated, so vigorously [sic] opposed the evictors and so gallantly protected her people. The full circle had turned, poetic justice had taken its course.

*D Mackay, Inverness 1991*

If your family was cleared from the Strathglass area, please share it with us. It is always possible that you might find more cousins just through the act of sharing. Readers in other Branches around the globe will also be able to enjoy your story.

# COMAR LODGE, STRATHGLASS

**SOLD**



The Georgain, C-listed dwelling Comar Lodge has been sold again. Comar Lodge is significant for several reasons:

- It is the ancient seat of the Clan Chisholm near Cannich
- It was built in the 1740s by Roderick Chisholm
- There is a stone in the wall near the front entrance where the Chisholm men sharpened their swords before they left to fight at Culloden
- It is believed that after his defeat at Culloden in 1746, Bonnie Prince Charlie was hidden here at Comar Lodge by the Chisholms
- In the 1790s four Englishmen met with The Chisholm at Comar Lodge to entice him to turn his clan members off the land and replace them with sheep, a much more lucrative proposition. The Chief's daughter Mary overheard the discussion, and instead of going to bed as instructed, went to the kitchen and alerted the servants of what was being discussed. During the night the tenants in Strathglass were informed and when The Chisholm rose next morning, he was greeted by hundreds of men, women and children outside Comar Lodge demanding a meeting with him. They were able to convince him to reject the offer from the Sassenachs.

## **Contacts for Clan Chisholm Society Australia**

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### **Clan Chisholm Society Genealogy Database**

[www.chisholmgenealogy.com/DB/](http://www.chisholmgenealogy.com/DB/) (Secretary can provide password)

**Australian CCS Database:** [clanchisholm.org.au](http://clanchisholm.org.au) (Secretary can provide password)

**CCSForum:** <http://www.chisholmgenealogy.com/cgi-bin/yabb2/YaBB.php>

# Interest in joining CCS AGM, 6 -11 March 2020 in Ballarat, Victoria

Please return this slip to Kim Polley, PO Box 84, Longford, Tasmania 7301 or email to [kim.polley13@gmail.com](mailto:kim.polley13@gmail.com) by 30 July 2019

**Yes, I am planning to join the Clan for the Ballarat AGM week from 6-11 March 2020**

**Name(s) attending .....**

**Will you require transport to Bendigo from Ballarat or around Ballarat?.....**

**Email.....**

**Address .....**

**Phone number.....**

**I will need accommodation in a suitable motel that the CCS chooses**

.....  
**Are you willing to share a bathroom in a 2- or 3-bedroom apartment if necessary? Rates for apartments are cheaper per room. If yes, who have you organised to share with?**

.....  
**A proposed itinerary and accommodation details will be sent to you as soon as it is finalised. We will be in walking distance of the CBD. Initial plan is arrive Friday; Saturday - travel to Bendigo for Scots Day Out; Sunday (am) - AGM, (pm) Ballarat Historic Streetscapes walking tour, visit art gallery etc, official dinner at night; Monday – Sovereign Hill (all day experience); Tuesday – some may wish to return to Sovereign Hill (2<sup>nd</sup> day no cost) or visit Botanical Gardens including conservatory,**

statues, begonia festivities and on to Tramway Museum, fish hatchery. The Begonia Festival will be ongoing during the long weekend; Wednesday – depart. Do you have any suggestions?

Please add your comments and suggestions below:

### ***STOP PRESS***

**Are you aware that Strathglass was once heavily populated by the Macraes? Do you have Macraes in your family tree and wonder where they came from? I have had discussions with Clan MacRae and we will be sharing information between our two Clans. If you have MacRae connections and want to learn more, please compose a question or list for our ‘How Can We Help’ column and I will circulate it to Clan MacRae. They plan to do similar.**

**Go to <https://clanmacraecanada.ca/the-macraes-of-strathglass/> where you can read or download an interesting article called *The Macraes of Strathglass*.**