

Editorial February 2005 (*In the wake of disasters and tragedies*)

Dear friends,

We are recovering from the post festive coma, (like awakening from the northern winter hibernation) which seems to affect most folk except the disciplined souls who must bounce back to work and activities before the last strains of 'Auld Lang Syne' have ceased repeating in their minds.

Living in a family which teaches or studies, our school year is only just clicking into gear, and I confess I'm still "at the beach".

Regardless of how our immediate schedule calls, I reckon we still all live in a bit of a haze, and its nothing to do with summer or festivities.

I think a lot of people are bearing a post trauma paralysis. Maybe its not that obvious or severe, but we have been stupefied by the terrible events over summer which have hit our sensibilities hard, from the horror of shark attacks, the human devastation of tsunamis and bushfires, all set against the relentless toll of murderous bombings in Iraq.

Through all of this we must deal with our own levels of fear, grief, anger and frustration. We have a need to shake it off. One method is by constructive action. This could be through compassionate responses and activity, but it may also require a mental and spiritual readjustment of our own lives, values and priorities. We have had reminders of our tenuous role on this dynamic planet, and in society.

I marvel then, at the longevity and durability of our clan heritage. It is in the durability of the people who carry on. We will see it in the Eyre Peninsular Bushfire recovery, in the Asia-Africa tsunami region. Just as we had seen it in Rwanda, where the population is now 70% female, and social reconstruction is led by the reconciliation of 2 groups of women. – The widows of those murdered in the genocide and the abandoned wives of those gaoled for the atrocity.

There will be profound changes to communities, societies and nations. In our remoteness or disquieting closeness to tragedy, if our sensibilities are effected then we will change also in response the these events. ■

Editor's evocation May 2005 (*The MacLeods of Raasay heritage in SA*)

Some of you will have received the Clan Magazine and read the very interesting 'Nalang' story by Chief Roderick John MacLeod, XVIII of Raasay. It gives an historical account of the migration of his (and Chief Torquil Donald Macleod of Lewes) forebears to South Australia and their establishment of the property 'Nalang' at Bordertown.

You recall that we organised a visit there last year, and it has prompted John to broadcast this chapter of Macleod history, to the MacLeod society world wide.

Even though I was part of the party at Nalang and felt the strong sense of occasion as it impacted upon us all, especially John and Elizabeth, I have been considerably moved again by reading the story.

Chief John MacLeod XVIIIth Raasay, "broke the ice" at the Christchurch Gathering, and a 2004 Clan Magazine article on he and wife Liz visiting the Isle of Raasay and paying tribute to his family and ancestors. Earlier this year the Associated Clan MacLeod Societies (ACMS) formally recognised his title and arms as Chief of Raasay. This story now emerges from that background adding a new dimension to Clan Heritage.

Importantly, it paints Chief John of Raasay into our **recent** Clan history and heritage, and provides a reference point for all MacLeod readers to know and appreciate the MacLeods of Lewis and Raasay ties.

Through the images of the graves and the headstone,

*"In memory of John Macleod, Esq. of Raasay
and Chief of the Clan Torquile who died June 6
1860 aæd 55 years"*

it fairly and firmly sets Clan Macleod heritage in our consciousness, and not only in knowledge, but now evident in **Australia**, in the **world**, beyond Hebridean and Scotland's shores.

It further provides a prelude, or raft, for the interpretation of James Hunter's volume- *Migration of a Clan*, which will be published soon.

There is a richer meaning there now, because of the 'Nalang' story. It's more than a migration of clanfolk, but a migration impacting the Clan structure itself, symbolised in the relocation of "Clan Torquile",- its Chief and heritage, to the antipodes.

In a way, the saga of struggles, tragedies and early deaths of Raasay's ancestors was synonymous with other pioneering, dislocated clanfolk, the world over, and elicits a new respect for his people enduring the common challenge, and having to re-invent their lives. Like the Aussie folk song says "*In the Australian bush you're all one size.*" -Alex