

# Donald Hugh McRAE & Margaret Gollan McRAE (nee LAIDLAW)

Biography as published in 1995

**DONALD HUGH McRAE** b. 9/8/1858 at "Kintail", Milang » Lake Alexandrina.

Parents : Mary McRae (nee McLean) & Duncan McRae

Grandparents Christina McLean (nee McPhee) & Donald McLean:

**MARRIED: Margaret Gollan Laidlaw** (b. 30/3/1863), 2nd daughter of her mother's 2nd marriage to Thomas Laidlaw of Angas Plains. Her mother was formerly Mrs Margaret Fraser (nee Gollan) and there is a very complicated inter-relationship between Gollans, Frasers, Mathesons and the Laidlaw families. They were mainly from Invernesshire. Margaret Gollan Laidlaw was born at Belvidere, S.A. where her father Thomas was a blacksmith. The general belief in the families was that Thomas was drowned in Lake Alexandrina, however, the newspaper notice in the Adelaide "Observer" reports that he died of pneumonia at Sliding Rock on 23/11/1875. Margaret was then aged 12 years. (Thomas was 69). Her mother, also Margaret, was buried at Strathalbyn on 30/8/1891. (The 1883 marriage took place at Mt Barker.)

Donald Hugh McRae farmed in the Strathalbyn area but retired to North Adelaide where he died on 22/5/1927 aged 68 years. He was taken by train back to Strathalbyn for burial there on the 25th.

OBITUARY "Southern Argus" of 26/5/1927.

"The death occurred last weekend of Mr Donald H. McRae, an old identity of the Strathalbyn District, born at Milang, but resident most of his life at Strathalbyn, removing to Adelaide a few years ago. He leaves a widow and a grown up family. His remains were brought to Strathalbyn on Monday and laid to rest in the Strathalbyn Cemetery." Div. 2/415.

DEATH: Margaret Gollan McRae, his wife, was buried with him on 3/8/1941, aged 78 years.

Her very brief obituary in the "Southern Argus" merely recorded her death at Adelaide and that she had been buried at Strathalbyn on the previous Saturday. (paper of 6/8/1941)

THEIR CHILDREN (11) :-

1. Allen Alexander McRae born 13/12/1884 at Strathalbyn. Married with one child, no details known. Death: on 4/5/1916 at Adelaide. Interred at Strathalbyn on the 6th Div. 2/460 in the same grave as a baby sister. From the "Southern Argus" dated 11/5/1916 (Thursday); Personal: "the death occurred at the Adelaide Hospital on Thursday night last of Mr Allan McRae, eldest son of Mr and Mrs Donald H. McRae of Strathalbyn, at the age of 31 years. He had been engaged at the Victor Harbor Water Works and contracted an attack of typhoid fever of a very severe type. He was sent on by Dr Douglas to the hospital, where despite all skill he succumbed to the illness. His body was brought to Strathalbyn on Saturday and his mortal remains were laid to rest in the Strathalbyn Cemetery. The Rev. G. C. Love B. D. conducting the service at the grave. The late Mr McRae was a bright and clever young man, and a hard worker for any cause he associated himself with. He leaves a widow and one child for whom, as for his bereaved parents, much sympathy is felt."
2. Thomas (Walter) McRae born c. 1886 at Strathalbyn. There is a photograph of him dated 1904 as a member of the St. Andrew's Choir in "They Built Strathalbyn" by H. J. Stowe. Nothing further traced.
3. Olive May McRae born c. 1888 – Nothing traced.

4. Donald Howard McRae born 22/9/1890 at Strathalbyn. Death: by drowning in the Angas River on 9/12/1898. "Sad Fatal Accident". - "Southern Argus", Thursday 15/11/1898: "On Friday morning last a sad fatal accident took place at Strathalbyn, a little boy about 8 years of age, son of Mr D. McRae, falling into deep water (waterhole known as King's) and drowning before he could be rescued. The lad was crayfishing at the spot in company with a companion some 3 years younger. and while endeavouring to net some fish which had attacked his bait, he overbalanced and fell into the deepest part of the water. The other child rushed off to give the alarm and Mr J. J. Edmonds was the first to arrive on the scene of the disaster. reaching there just in time to see the little fellow disappearing under the water for probably the last time. He plunged in and grasped the boy whose struggles dragged him under the water which is about 9 or 10 feet deep. Being unable to swim Mr Edmonds in his own struggles to reach the surface lost his grasp of the child. Meanwhile Mr G. W. Montgomery reached the spot, and learning where the child had sunk. got to the bottom of the hole and succeeded once in feeling the body which however got lodged under some rocks. Mr Geo. Phillips next arrived and diving into the water managed to secure the boy. By this time Dr Shone who had previously been sent for, was on the spot and for an hour and a half used every effort to restore animation but without success. An inquest was deemed unnecessary, the burial certificate being given by Mr G. W. Montgomery JP. The accident cast quite a gloom over the town and messages of sympathy were sent from all parts to the bereaved parents. The funeral took place on Sunday, when a long procession of school children followed the remains of their late companion to the Strathalbyn Cemetery.
5. Elspeth Margaret McRae b. 1892 - registration date not found. No details but the Genealogical Index gives her death as 1961.
6. John Archibald McRae born 10/7/1895, Strathalbyn. Possibly the A. J. McRae on the St. Andrew's memorial plaque as serving in W.W.I. Nothing further Traced
7. Janet Mary McRae born 19/5/1897 at Strathalbyn. Married: Walter Lamont Fathers (b. 26/6/1894 - d. 24/7/1980) son of George & Ada Fathers at the Presbyterian Church, Flinders St. Adelaide. His occupation: Bookkeeper/Clerk Residence: 16 Norseman Ave. Westbourne Park. S.A. Death: of Janet on 8/10/1990 at the Flinders Medical Centre. Bedford Park, aged 93 years. CHILDREN - Allan (b. 22/10/1925), Kimberley (b. 17/3/1928), Jean (b. 30/11/1929).
8. Keith Gollan McRae b. 16/11/1899 at Strathalbyn. He served overseas with the First A.I.F. but also appears in a 1916 group photo on page 146 of Nancy Gemmell's book standing on the stepping stones of the River Angas opposite the Post Office. He is on the St. Andrew's Honour Roll for W.W.I. In 1912 he was a scholar at the newly opened Strathalbyn High School so must have enlisted at an early age. No further information.
9. Eric Vernon McRae born 26/8/1901 at Strathalbyn – The Genealogical Index gives his death as 1960 aged 59 years. Directory 1922 - farmer at Hindmarsh Is.
10. Ivan Robert Laidlaw McRae born 6/11/1903 at Strathalbyn. Nothing traced.
11. Barbara McRae born 6/8/1908 - died aged 1 day. Buried 9/5/1908, Div. 2/460 at the Strathalbyn Cemetery.

- SOURCE : This biography is an extract from "The History of Donald & Christina McLean and Their Descendants" which was published in 1995 – page 390 to 392.
- COLONIALISTS : Christina and Donald McLean and their ten children migrated from Argyllshire to South Australia in 1837. This was in the earliest years of the colony. The McLeans initially settled near Adelaide where they grew the first wheat crop in SA. Then in about 1840 they pioneered the Strathalbyn area. There are now well over 20,000 descendants spread across Australia and elsewhere.
- CHANGES : Please contact us with additions, corrections or suggestions about any part of this family tree.
- CONTACT : Visit our website [www.christinaanddonaldmclean.com](http://www.christinaanddonaldmclean.com) or Strathalbyn Museum phone 08 8536 2656 to discover more about your family – and about privacy and copyright.