

Donald & Christina McLean Genealogical Council Inc

History of the Council

- 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.
- Informal meetings to promote the family history began in the 1980s and the first formal meeting was in 1986 and the Council ceased to function 11 years later, in 1997.
- At various times the committee included Laurence McLean (first president), Alf McLean, Eileen Lee, Norm Lee, Jennie Lee, Marie Keller, Gladys McNamara, Jack McLean, Jean McLean, Val Nas, Pauline Murray, Janine Jackson, Diane Facey, John Malycha and others. Alf was the key player.
- Incorporation: The Donald & Christina McLean Genealogical Council was incorporated in September 1988.
- Meetings : There were 22 meetings held over the decade.
- Membership: There were at least 700 members – possibly many more. There was an annual fee of \$2.
- Newsletters:
 - About 15 newsletters were distributed.
 - The first was in 1986 and the last in 1996.
 - The 8th edition, in February 1993, was posted out to 700 descendants and no doubt even more were sent out for subsequent editions.
- Family re-union in March 1988
 - A gathering was held in the Brighton Town Hall on a Friday evening – with well over 100 descendants present.
 - Photos of the gathering are included in the McLean book (BRB).
 - There was a tour of Strathalbyn on the Saturday, function on Saturday night near Brighton, and then a picnic (perhaps at Holdfast Bay) on Sunday.
- Obelisk:
 - A memorial was unveiled by Eva McLean on 20th March 1988.
 - It is located on Richmond Road in Marlestone, near the intersection with South Street, on the south-west corner, near the fence line. It was temporarily removed because of local road developments and then replaced in 1998.
 - It is 1 metre high and about 20 cm square.
 - The wording on the plaque is “Donald McLean grew the first crop of wheat in SA near this spot in 1838”.
- Family re-union in August 1995
 - At Strathalbyn
 - Souvenirs were sold – printed mugs, carafes and whisky glasses.
 - Almost 400 attended
 - The book was launched at this event
- McLean book
 - “History of Donald & Christina McLean and Their Descendants” – known as the Big Red Book (BRB)
 - Launched in August 1995
 - Published by the Council - so they held the copyright.
 - Vellum Binding printed it, made the covers and assembled them. It was bound with removable prongs (Chicago screws) so that more pages could be added for updating. It was 850 pages. 700 copies were produced. They were pre-sold for \$45 and then for \$49.50 plus postage.
 - Alf McLean was the driving force for the writing and producing the book. Many others contributed, notably Margaret Stevenson. Candy Scown did the word processing.

- It included some information about the early McLean clan and about Donald's life at Duiskey, near Fort William. There is a chapter on Donald & Christina and separate chapters on each of their children and descendants. Rachel's chapter is an updated version of a family history initially compiled in 1985 by Jill McDonald of Horsham and was included with Jill's permission.
- It includes about 7800 names. There are dates and places of birth and death, as well as places of marriage (but not date of marriage). There are details of parentage, siblings, spouses and offspring. There are about 650 photos. There are about 260 biographies of varying lengths – these include life events such as schooling, employment, civic positions, land ownership, achievements and family anecdotes.
- This is a truly impressive document and is a credit to everyone who played a part in putting it together. It required a huge effort, many skills and great persistence to search out all the details and assemble it into the present format. This body of research is all the more remarkable because it was compiled before the advantages of the internet and the improved availability of genealogical information.
- The costs were much more than expected and the shortfall was made up by some family members.
- The Strathalbyn branch of the National Trust of South Australia took over the copyright in May 2014. An email on 20th May 2014 stated "There is certainly no problem with the Strathalbyn Branch acting on behalf of the National Trust of South Australia in respect of copyright in the Red Book."
- All the contents of the original history were placed in a website, www.christinaanddonaldmclean.com which commenced in August 1915.
- Book launches :
 - In Strathalbyn Town Hall on 6th August 1995, Senator Gordon Davidson officially launched the book.
 - In Whiteman Park (WA): Organized by Pat Long. About 100 people attended. Pat gave out about 40 glasses on which she had painted the *Navarino*.
- Finances: The BRB was produced at a loss and committee members and others made up the short fall of several thousand dollars. There were no funds in the bank account when the council ceased to function.
- Alf McLean produced his memoirs "Having fun without working too hard" in 1996. This was as a fund raiser to help pay for the loss on the production of the original history.
- The Council has not functioned since 1997.
- Alf McLean died in 1998.
- In May 2014, the Strathalbyn Branch of the National Trust of South Australia agreed to take over the records of the Donald & Christina McLean Genealogical Council Inc because the constitution of the old Council specifies "*.... if no meeting has been held for a period of two years, all assets, records, and other materials must be placed in the custody of the National Trust Museum, at Strathalbyn, and there be held in trust until such time as the Council reforms or another association, with similar aims and purposes, be formed.*" The official records were handed to the Strathalbyn Branch of the NTSA on xxxxxdatexxxx.
- In August 2014 a website was commenced – www.christinaanddonaldmclean.com by a steering group of Trevor McLean, Lorna McLean, Don Gordon and Heather McGrath. This included everything which was in the original BRB and more information is being added.

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