



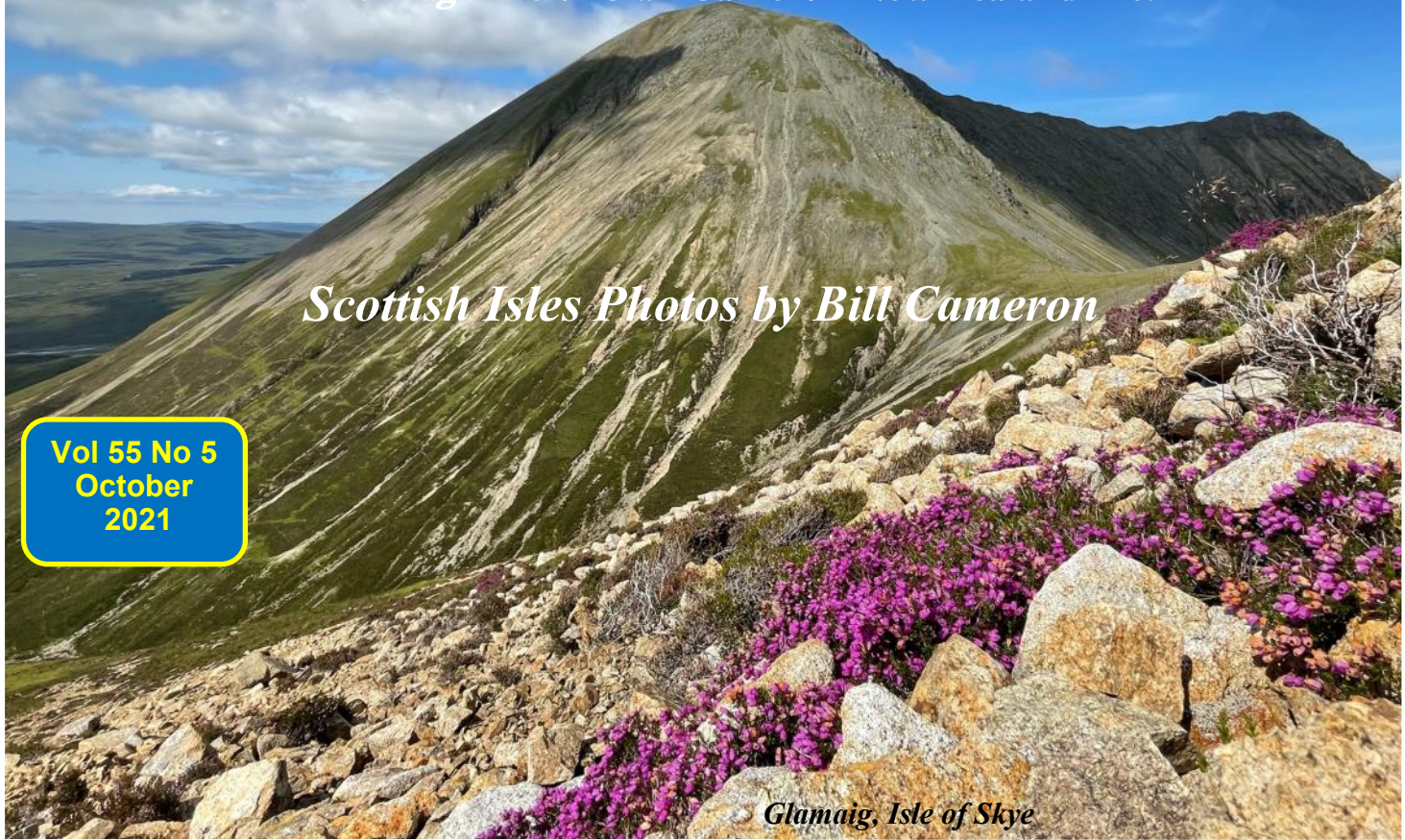
# Cameron



*The Magazine of Clan Cameron New Zealand Inc.*

*Scottish Isles Photos by Bill Cameron*

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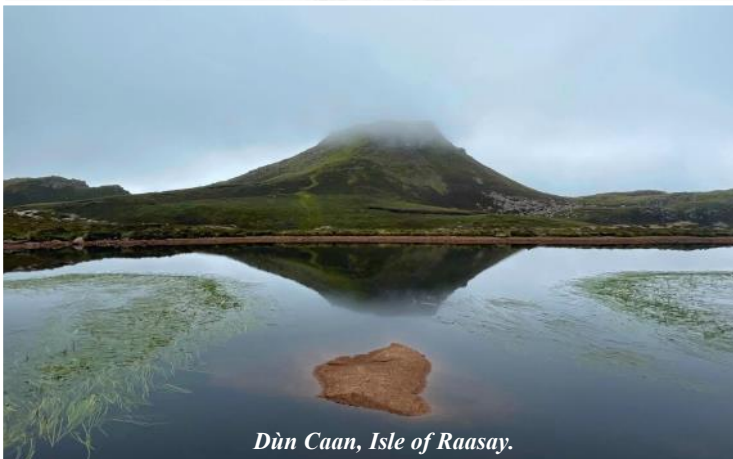
*Glamaig, Isle of Skye*



*Looking across to the Isle of Rum from the Isle of Muck.*



*The Isle of Eigg from the Isle of Muck.*



*Dùn Caan, Isle of Raasay.*



*Camus Mòr, Isle of Muck*



## “Cameron”

is the magazine of the  
Clan Cameron Association of New Zealand  
(Inc.)

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## A Message from our Commissioner...

Dear Clansfolk,

**M**y message is to STAY POSITIVE.

We were extremely lucky I think to have had the Auckland dinner on the 7th August in view of the subsequent COVID outbreak just 2 weeks later. The dinner was very well organized and a pleasure to attend. Especial thanks to Neil and Rob (and others) for all their work behind the scenes to make this event so great.

Your executive has a meeting planned in Turangi for the 16th October. Our Canterbury branch will again have a tent at the Hororata Highland Games on the 6th November – let us hope both can still be held.

With the lock down for the Auckland region at level 4 continuing – I hope those most affected are able to adapt to these changing times. In terms of slight up-sides I know my nephew Glen Rodgers has had to up his cooking skills and has even managed to bake bread using a recipe provided by my brother Andrew. Andrew has remained in Wellington since his last Afghanistan stint with the Red Cross to work as a Senior Lecturer at Massey University in Nursing Studies and has been carrying out COVID vaccinations whilst not lecturing.

In the South Island we have had only a relatively short time in level 4 and during this time our pipe band practices resumed using Zoom and Google Meet which seemed a good way to keep people together and communicating. As an essential service our Seed business was able to work but in a restricted manner. Fortunately, the timing for us was lucky as we had just finished most of our winter planting. I tell people around me at work to always look at the positives, not the negatives... as an example the recent 200 km/hour wind gusts at home have provided us with a bit more fire wood!

So stay positive ... good wishes and keep safe.

Cheers,

Nick



## Coming Events

*Due to Covid levels some events may be cancelled or postponed.*

### Sunday 10 October 2021

**Manawatu Branch Spring Luncheon**  
Focal Point Theatre  
Cuba Street, Palmerston North.  
Details will be forwarded to Branch members.

### Saturday 20 November 2021

**Auckland Highland Games  
(Awaiting Confirmation)**  
Lloyd Elsmore Park, Howick.

### Saturday 16 October 2021

**Executive Council Meeting**  
Parklands Motor Lodge, Turangi  
10am.

### Saturday 11 December 2021

**Jenny Mair Highland Square Day**  
The Square, Palmerston North.  
Look for the Clan tent.

### Saturday 6 November 2021

**Hororata Highland Games**  
Hororata Domain, Canterbury.  
Come and visit the Clan Cameron tent.  
<https://hororatahighlandgames.org.nz>

### Saturday 1 January 2022

**Waipu Highland Games**  
Come and support this very special event, celebrating the 150th Games.  
The Cameron tent will be there.  
More information on:  
<https://www.waipuhighlandgames.co.nz>

**Clan Cameron New Zealand  
Website**

[www.clanameronnz.co.nz](http://www.clanameronnz.co.nz)

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# Lord-Lieutenant hangs up his Uniform

by Iain Ferguson

After 19 years of donning the distinctive black and red uniform of the Lord-Lieutenant, Donald Cameron of Lochiel has handed over the title and the duties that go with it on reaching the age of 75.

Highly regarded throughout the area of Inverness for his grace and humour in carrying out his duties in the role and locally for his interest and activities within the community, he has officially welcomed the Royal Family to the area on several occasions and accompanied them as they visited various events.

He has also taken the salute many times on Remembrance Sunday as servicemen (and women), ex military and local groups paraded in Fort William High Street on their way to the War Memorial and, of course, at the Commando Memorial.

The latter has special links to his home at Achnacarry where a Commando training camp was set up during the Second World War, which to this day is visited by serving and former soldiers who take part in annual runs from Spean Bridge station to the castle as their forbears did almost 80 years ago.

As Lochiel is 27th hereditary Chief of Clan Cameron, Achnacarry is also home to the Clan Cameron museum tracing their history, including their Jacobite ties until the battle of Culloden in 1745 as supporters of Bonnie Prince Charlie right up to his family's present day links to the Royal family.

It was perhaps very appropriate that his last official function was to

present a Queen's Award for Volunteering to the West Highland Museum in Fort William's Cameron Square, bringing together many strands of his own family history.

He said: "I have thoroughly enjoyed my time as Lord Lieutenant and being able to meet a huge number of people. It's been a great pleasure doing things like presenting awards to local organisations and groups.

"But you do have to step down when you reach 75 so the presentation to the museum was my last official event which was just a week before my birthday.

"It has been very enjoyable serving as Lord-Lieutenant. It's been good fun."

Lochiel is succeeded in the post by Inverness lawyer James Wotherspoon who is currently senior Partner of Macandrew & Jenkins WS, a family legal firm based in Inverness. He has also been Clerk to the Inverness Lieutenancy, which encompasses the districts of Inverness, Badenoch and Strathspey and Lochaber, since 2002 and a deputy lieutenant since 2009.

*With thanks to Iain Ferguson and Lochaber Life.*



*Lochiel's last duty as Lord Lieutenant of Inverness was to present the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service to the volunteers at the West Highland Museum. Here, in front of past and present volunteers, the award is accepted by Sonja McLachlan, Volunteer Co-Ordinator.*

# Lady Cecil Cameron OBE

-*Novelist* By Sian Bayley in 'The Bookseller'

HarperNorth has scooped a "sweeping historical romance" from 73-year-old debut novelist Lady Cecil Cameron.

Publishing director Genevieve Pegg acquired world all language rights for *An Italian Scandal* from Diana Beaumont at Marjacq. It will publish in hardback, audio and e-book this November.

Lady Cameron grew up near Jedburgh in the Scottish Borders, daughter of the Marquis and Lady Lothian. Her grandmother came from Naples and is the inspiration behind her writing. Cecil read renaissance history at London University and subsequently worked for Save the Children in Vietnam and the UK. Married to the Chief of Clan Cameron, she was made an OBE in 2002 for services to children.

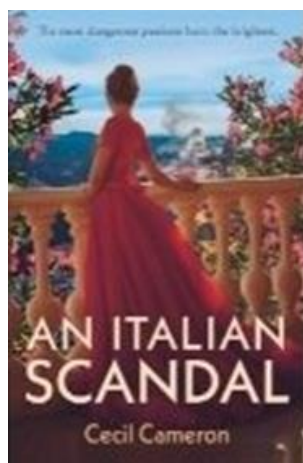
Only after retirement did she have chance to write the novel she'd been thinking about for 30 years. The publisher said *An Italian Scandal* "opens in London,

1859, where Carina Temple has put away the stifling black crepe demanded by the death of her father – but with it she has also cast aside society's expectations of what a single young lady should be and do. When a stain on her reputation sees her banished to her grandmother in Sicily, Carina finds a turbulent nation in the throes of revolution".

Lady Cameron said: "My grandmother came from Naples and the book is inspired by my family's bond with southern Italy and Sicily. Writing and history are my passions and I have wanted to set a love story against the turbulent backdrop of Garibaldi's Italy for as long as I can remember. *An Italian Scandal* being published by HarperNorth is a dream come true."

Pegg added: "I was immediately captivated by the characters and the setting – who wouldn't want to be transported to life under azure Italian skies? – but most of all by Carina and Ben – two leads who jump off the page with their authenticity and passion. For everyone who loves a true romance or period drama, here's a story to lose yourself in.

We're delighted to publish Cecil on the HarperNorth list – and the ties that connect Cecil's Scottish upbringing to an amazing family history in Naples are fascinating."





# From the Branches....

**Auckland** by Rob Cameron

We held our Annual dinner on Saturday 7th of August. This was a great night, we had a total of 97 people attend, with a handful of people travelling from out of town. Notable guests included James McPhee, Commissioner for Clan Macfie and his wife Mary, also our Clan Commissioner Nick Cameron and his wife Julie travelled up from Christchurch. Others from out of town included Tanya Cameron travelling across from Bay of Plenty and my parents who travelled up from Blenheim.



As last year's dinner was postponed due to lockdowns it has only been a few months since our last dinner. As much of the programme was the same, we used this dinner as a fundraiser to help fund the motion made at our Branch AGM to bring someone out from Scotland for the First Light Exchange. I want to thank our branch members for getting behind this goal. It was evident from the ticket sales for the night's raffles, all of which will go towards this goal.

Bryan Haggitt, the First Light Convenor, has also contacted Finlay Cameron and has started a conversation about what we can offer and what our goals are. Hopefully he will be willing to take this opportunity and we can get the Exchange back up and running.

As I write this, Auckland is starting its fifth week in Level 4, we have just had another week added due to a spike in community cases over the weekend. It is uncertain what the near future holds for us, and I do feel for our members and hope that everyone is coping with the isolation. Hopefully it won't be long, and we will be back to some form of normality.

The Scottish Clans Association had planned an evening at the Ryders Cinema which included a roast lunch and a movie which was cancelled. They had planned to have their AGM and Annual dinner mid-September however both will not be going ahead.

A couple of us have tentatively planned for the Executive meeting scheduled in October, however we may not be able to attend, and that will depend on how Auckland handles the current outbreak.

The Auckland Highland games, which was waiting on a decision for funding, looks very much in doubt if it is going ahead in November. We have had notification that the venue has been moved from the Ellerslie racecourse to Lloyd Elsmore Park and if it goes ahead will be on the 20th of November.

**Manawatu** by Anne Walker

Clan Cameron Manawatu extend our thoughts and good wishes to all Clan members as we work through the current Covid 19 alert and consequent lockdowns. We know this very challenging for many, and hope you are all in good health and spirits. In the Manawatu we are very fortunate to be back to Level 2, and while everyone is masked up on their daily exercise, coffee and shopping trips, life is coming back to a new normal. We cannot unfortunately get together indoors in large groups just yet, and this is having an impact on events and planned gatherings.



Nevertheless, we are planning new events. A spring luncheon has been planned for Branch members and families on Sunday October 10th, at the new Focal Point Theatre in Cuba Street Palmerston North. A delicious light luncheon will be served, and anyone who would like to catch a movie in their spacious new theatre could do so before lunch or afterwards. All Level 2 Covid requirements are in place. More information will be sent directly to Branch members soon.

Clan Cameron Manawatu are planning their usual attendance at the Jenny Mair Highland Square Day in early December.

We are also talking time during lockdown to print some new Clan Cameron New Zealand brochures to place in our local Libraries and iSite locations. This initiative includes a postcard for

the Clan Cameron Manawatu Branch. Hopefully this will attract enquiries and new members. Thanks to Daniel Cameron for the wonderful Manawatu graphic which will be used on the postcard.

Please keep up to date with our news on the Clan Cameron Manawatu Facebook page, or email us on [clancameronmanawatu@gmail.com](mailto:clancameronmanawatu@gmail.com).

**Hawke's Bay** by Hamish Cameron

Branch members spent winter as it should be, snugly wrapped up indoors, away from the prevailing elements, which this year seemed to have stronger winds with it.



I sit here reflecting on another winter gone and surrounded by the bustling activities brought on by spring. The urgency that spring infuses on everyone is so evident that the feeling that the current task is already behind schedule, and a more concentrated effort is required, is almost unavoidable. The recriminations become more intense as the "----should have started this last month----" thoughts nag at an already busy brain. ----- But then comes the NEW reason for delayed action ----COVID ----yeah, we've been in Lockdown!! What a convenient excuse!!

However, on reflection, the uncertainty to life's established patterns inflicted by rolling lockdowns must be somewhat akin to what our Grandparents, and their generation, endured through Two World Wars and the Great Depression. The most mundane of tasks seems to continually have some uncontrollable delay imposed on its accomplishment. Our fixation with the daily broadcast from Parliament re COVID must somehow equate to that of the previous generations morbid desire for similar devastating news during New Zealand's involvement in the overseas war effort. - A similarly uncontrollable event completely out of our personal influence. ---- Hence the onset of the "I'll wait and see" syndrome - so evident today ---- But this newly acquired mind-set still won't fix what I should have "started last month"-----

So I had better start ---- and not worry about it any longer -- for fear I worry myself into an anxiety attack --- and qualify for the attention of that most modern of occupations -- the "Mental Health professionals" !!

Grandad and his like were made of sterner stuff, and didn't need an industry dedicated to convincing them that their personal fears and hang-up were the result of someone else's actions. They, also, faced a country financially and emotionally devastated -- so they just got on with it, using the most abundant mediums available to them -- common sense and self -- reliance --- (both of which appear to have been killed off by the advent of the electronic screen)

When I look back at what they had already endured, with an outlook more uncertain than what COVID is causing today's population, their response resulted in lifting ( at one stage) New Zealand's living standards to third in the O.E.C.D. countries ranking.

By contrast, today's self appointed business spokesmen look like a bunch of self-centred whimps continually crying out for more tax-payers hand-outs when the going gets tough.

-----Gee -- I hope I don't grow into a continually retro looking grumpy old man -----!  
See what happens when you watch the TV news.

**Bay of Plenty** by Tanya Cameron

In August I attended the Auckland Dinner on behalf of the BoP Branch and had a wonderful time catching up with all those that I only see once a year at these events including Dorothy Cameron-Gavin and her wonderful family and grandchildren, Jenny and Bryan Haggitt and their busy families and grandchildren and my cousin Shona and her husband Jeff Thomson. On the Sunday I also got to meet another relation. My Paternal Grandfather Corry Cameron had 2 sisters and 6 brothers, and I have now met family from 3 of the brothers. Corry's brother Robert John Cameron's grandson Don Cameron lives in Auckland and has turned up living just down the road from Jenny and Bryan



Haggitt who I am thankful I get to stay with when I am in Auckland. It was lovely to meet Don, his wife and one of his daughters and her family who were visiting at the time. Funnily enough, Ian Trafford who is a distant relative and author of *Into the Unknown* had mentioned that a Don Cameron, who was related to me, had been on a guided hike with him in November last year near Nelson. I didn't know who this Don Cameron was as I hadn't investigated my grandfather's siblings families too much previously and it was great to put a face to the name.

Clan Cameron BoP Branch had their AGM on Sunday August 1st at the Classic Flyers Aviation Museum Café. It is a great venue and the one we had previously looked at for our National AGM. Unfortunately, this meeting was only attended by the Executive and friends, my sister and nephew. We try to have our gatherings in places of interest that are easy to get to, have good parking and access for all, but they are still not well attended. As is the case in these circumstances, we had trouble filling our officer positions from the wider Branch, and are still searching for a Treasurer. We had a wonderful Café meal and caught up for a couple of hours for an enjoyable time all round. We discussed the black velvet jacket, kilt and scarf that were donated by Helen Renner's family last year to our branch, and have been able to find a home for them that will be well used as there are several grandchildren in line for their use. Thank you again to the Renner family.

My nephew Callum Cameron, who is the youngest son of my younger brother, and I went for a wander around the museum and through the planes. What a wonderful place to stretch your imagination. For birthday gifts we often give experiences instead of money and Callum got lucky for his recent birthday experience, not only did he get to have lunch with two Aunties but when we went to visit a school friend who has a local business, The Aviator Experience. Callum was able to "help" commission his flight simulator for him, what a blast. He was able to fly fighter planes and he was able to perform tricks and also eject himself from one plane and hop into the next one.

Over all, the Clan Cameron BoP Branch is suffering from lack of interest, Covid-19 Lockdowns and a general feeling of apathy. If we are unable to draw ourselves out of this and enjoy the company of others in our Clan, we are going to run out of people to keep us going. Please, if you know of anyone that would like to join us, or if you would like to help us, please let me know. My details are at the front of the magazine.

We are working towards a local Branch luncheon in October to be confirmed as soon as available. It is hard to organise events with an unknown, low number of attendees, and I know this is happening at other branches also, so it may be that we become virtual branches or maybe even a magazine only Clan.

### **Canterbury** by Rae Magson

Nothing happening at all for Clan Cameron Canterbury, guess we are just coping in the best way we can. This morning I went to the supermarket for the first time in a month, although my granddaughter had been bringing me some items at times. What an exciting life I lead, but not many cars on the road. Sad all the events that are not happening, but that is how it is. I have not felt motivated so have been doing a lot of reading. At least I am catching up on that pile of reading matter in the cupboard. I'm just going to start *Wolf Hall*, by Hilary Mantel, all 650 pages of it. I do love reading about Tudor times but would not want to have lived then or to have been one of the six wives of Henry VIII.

Hopefully all will be well for the Hororata Highland Games in November, which is always a great day.

### **Wellington / Wairarapa** by Graeme Cameron

We were planning a lunch at the Gear Homestead, Porirua on Saturday 28th August. This was cancelled due to going into Covid Level 4 on 18th August.

However, we plan to proceed with the Gear Homestead lunch on an available date shortly after returning to Covid Level 1

We have updated our branch information on the Clan Cameron website with the assistance of Matthew McQueen.

### **Iar (Taranaki/Whanganui)** by Neville Wallace

#### **Keeping ahead of the undertaker!**

It was in the midnight hour of June 26th I was awakened by Shona saying ring the ambulance and there the story starts:

Sleeping peacefully when one is suddenly awakened puts the fear of hell into one's mind. Pulling on warm clothes I head for the St. Johns alarm and push the button. What a racket that thing makes and from the bowels of nowhere comes a voice wanting to know who you are, where you are, and what's the problem it takes several attempts to get the voice to accept everything you say. It's most important that you can remain rational and explain the situation. Then I was told we have a paramedic on the way. In the meantime, I am explicitly told not move from the St. Johns speaker/phone box that's on your bench. Then out of the blue comes a strange question, "what's the weather like where you are"? I described the weather, then the voice say's "we've despatched the rescue helicopter".

By this time the paramedic has arrived and diagnosed the patient is in anaphylaxis shock and has administered a stabilizing injection. Within 15 minutes of being told the helicopter has been dispatched it's overhead and in communication with the paramedic, who confirms the location is the correct area and where to land the helicopter. Which is outside our front door. Shona is wrapped up in a thermal blanket on a stretcher and we wheeled her out to the helicopter and loaded into the back (boot) of the helicopter with 2 flight paramedics. My daughter Kelly flew with her mother to Taranaki Base Hospital. 17 minutes "later she was unloaded from the helicopter and given an ambulance ride several hundred yards to ICU unit. Just to give you some idea of distance from Hawera to base hospital is about 70 kilometres by car and an hour's travel. Ambulance would be slightly quicker! Return trip in helicopter

There Shona remained in hospital for 2 weeks. Of course, this all happens just before our Clan Cameron Iar AGM which was going to be held on the 26th of June so that was a frantic task of notifying everyone that our AGM was cancelled. It took about six weeks for Shona to fully recover before we were able to contemplate our next CC Iar AGM. Following Shona's recovery, we contacted all our members again and arranged another AGM, thinking can anything go wrong again? Our next meeting was scheduled, and guess what? Someone let the bloody Covid cat out of the bag in Auckland and we're locked out of another AGM which brings on another community problem living with Covid.

As I have explained a case of anaphylaxis Shona has had this several times before, after a flu vaccination several years back and latterly, a reaction to an antibiotic injection. So here, at this point in time no Covid vaccination under hospital supervision!

We are an aging group of people amid one of the most contagious and fastest spreading diseases known, and it's going to take time for everyone to adjust to the ramifications of living with Covid.

In the event of yours or my departure from this world is your WILL up to date as to how you want to depart from this world? Remember that funeral homes are under very strict limitations as to how funerals are conducted. These may be issues that we will now have to learn to adjust to. It may be worth learning more about online (zoom) funerals. A recent local funeral had an online funeral which had the advantage of extended family overseas could join in without having to travel back to NZ, until a memorial service can be had later.

During this "Delta Covid" outbreak funeral homes were only able to have ten people at a funeral which in most cases were done from the funeral homes chapel. That's ok, but family then has the problem of who do you include in the party of ten, if it's a large family who get's left out? Churches around here are very old structures and deemed earthquake risks. Which brings about

*Continued on page 10*





# Tauranga Calligrapher

## Ray Crafts - *forthcoming exhibition*



Ray Crafts is well known to members of Clan Cameron as a master calligrapher and the Patron, Bard and Piper of the Bay of Plenty Branch.

Ray is preparing for an exhibition of 13th to 15th century illuminated manuscripts along with his sister Heather Van Wyk, who is an artist and potter.

This exhibition will be held in the Gisborne Museum and Art Gallery from 26 November 2021 to 12 January 2022.

Gisborne is Ray's home town. The exhibition will show 16 pieces of Italian, French and Dutch Illuminators as well as some of his other pieces.

Ray developed his lifelong passion at the age of eight, when his Scottish grandfather began teaching him copperplate writing. "I first learnt during the war. My father had gone to fight and my mother was away working so I stayed with my grandfather" says Ray.

"The funny thing is my grandfather was asked to create an address for the Queen in 1953 and then years later I was asked to create one for the Queen Mother's birthday."

Ray already had a keen interest in art, books and history and he quickly became fascinated with early Celtic designs, manuscripts and how calligraphy worked.

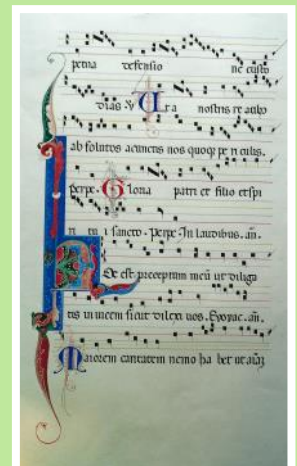
Ray has created many examples of his craft for the clan, including life certificates and an illuminated greeting for presentation to the 26th Lochiel on the occasion of 50 years of chieftainship in August 2001.



*Exhibition pieces done by Ray*



*Left: Manuscript work. Oxford, England. 14th Century*



*Right: Antiphonal. Northern Italy. C 1350.*

### Happy 80th Birthday to Ewen Grant



*Above: Ewen cuts his birthday cake, grandson Aidan Grant plays the Blenheim Pipes and Ewen is with Dick Earle and Bruce Cameron. Bruce played part of the tune he and Astie are composing in memory of Maisie Earle.*



**Bay of Plenty AGM**  
*Left : Janet and Ray Crafts, David Cameron, Callum Cameron, Tanya Cameron, Patricia Cameron and Alison Thompson. Right: Callum Cameron at the Classic Flyers Aviation Museum.*  
 Photos: Sandra Larsen and Tanya Cameron





*Almost 100 Camerons and friends lining the dining room to sing Auld Lang Syne was a wonderful sight, partly captured on camera by Jean McQueen.*



*Top left: Brian and Pam Cameron family table. Top right and below: Some of the great folk who entertained us on the night. These included Rob, Nick, Allan and Morea Cameron, Michel Tent, Malcolm Campbell, Graham Fuller and Bryan Haggitt, seen with son Bryan and Andrew McQueen.*





# ST KILDA, THE EVACUATION

By Mark Bridgeman

*reprinted with the kind permission of the author and the West Highland Museum, Cameron Square, Fort William.*

Over 90 years ago, at 8am on 29<sup>th</sup> August 1930 the evacuation of the far flung island archipelago of St Kilda began. The HMS Harebell pulled away from the harbour on the main island of Hirta; and with it, at least 2,000 years of human occupation, courage, fortitude, suffering and a unique lifestyle came to an abrupt end.

The story of the evacuation, and of St Kilda, is a fascinating one and every ten years the full decade anniversary often reignites interest in the island's story. In 2010, to mark the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary, new books on the subject were published, and the story received coverage in several national newspapers, all of them scrabbling to interview the last two remaining survivors from that fateful day. Norman John Gillies was aged only five at the time of the evacuation in 1930, but still held vivid memories of the day. Rachel Johnson was born on Hirta in July 1922 and was eight at the time of the evacuation. Sadly, today's 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary passes without the unique insight of the 'living, eyewitness history' that is provided by surviving observers to historical events.

Norman John Gillies died in 2013 in a Cambridge hospital at the age of 88. He had moved to the university city



from which we have become one further step removed.

Yet the evacuation was not a sudden decision nor one which was forced onto the islanders by outsiders. The remaining 36 St Kildans finally made the heart-wrenching decision to seek outside help in May 1930 and wrote to the Scottish Government.

Numerous factors led to the evacuation of St Kilda. The islands' inhabitants had existed for centuries in relative isolation until Victorian tourism and the presence of the army during the Great War led the islanders to seek alternatives to the privations they habitually suffered. The arrival on the island of regular visitors in the nineteenth century disconnected the islanders from their isolated and traditional way of life, which had allowed their forebears to survive in this unique environment.

The inhabitants were gradually tempted by the potential of the wider world, learning to rely on outside communication and contact with the mainland. In 1852 36 St Kildans emigrated to Australia and the inexorable population decline began.

John Ross, the schoolmaster, noted in 1889 that islanders spent most of their time producing goods to sell to tourists, including sheepskins, tweeds, knitted gloves, stockings, scarves, eggs and ornithological items of interest. A small jetty was constructed in 1902, to try and assist the St Kildans with the offloading of supplies, but still they remained at the weather's mercy. Gradually the islanders began to become more dependant on imported supplies of fuel, food and materials, then suffered even more greatly when bad weather prevented the arrival of those provisions – which in a bad winter could be for months on end.

After the Great War, the majority of the young men left the island, seeking work and opportunities on the mainland, and the population fell from 73 in 1920 to 37 in 1928. Food shortages and influenza outbreaks also occurred several times between 1910 and 1930. Four of remaining men on the island died during an influenza outbreak in 1926, and this was followed with a succession of crop failures in the late 1920s. The island's soil had become contaminated over a lengthy period of time with pollutants, caused by the use of seabird carcasses and peat ash in the manure used on the fields.

A child, the son of Rachel MacDonald, died due to a lack of medical care on the island, helping to highlight the remoteness of the community. After further harsh winters in 1928 and 1929 the final straw came in January 1930 when one of the island's few remaining young women, Mary Gillies, fell ill while pregnant and was taken to the mainland for treatment, where she tragically died in hospital. She was the mother of the longest male survivor, Norman Gillies. For many years it was assumed that her death had been caused by appendicitis. However, Norman discovered in 1991 that she had actually died of pneumonia after giving birth to a daughter, who also sadly died. By May 1930 the population had reduced to just thirteen men, ten women, eight girls and five boys. Among the adults there were six widows and three or four widowers. Between them they formed just 10 households, leaving the remaining cottages unoccupied.

The driving force behind the evacuation was nurse Williamina Barclay, who had been stationed on St Kilda in 1928. Nurse Barclay reported her observations on the conditions on the island to the Scottish Department of Health. In May 1930 she managed to convince many of the islanders to evacuate and helped draw up an official petition to request assistance with the evacuation and for the islanders' resettlement on the mainland.



after meeting a woman there while serving in the RAF. She was to be his wife for more than 63 years. Norman John was named after his mother's two brothers. They were among five men trying to land on one of the other islands in the St Kilda archipelago during a strong sea swell when their boat capsized. No St Kildan could swim. Norman John's grandfather was saved along with another man. Only one body was retrieved but neither of his uncles Norman or John's bodies were ever found. From that moment on Norman John was always called by both his names.

Rachel Johnson passed away in April 2016, at the age of 93, after spending the last few years of her life in a care home in Clydebank, Dunbartonshire. The mere mention of St Kilda was said to cause a gentle smile to light up her face. With their deaths during the last decade the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary becomes yet another historical event from the 20<sup>th</sup> century



**St. Kilda, Scotland. 10th May 1930**

**Petition to the Secretary of State for Scotland, The Right Hon. W Adamson MP. Westminster.**

*Sir,  
We, the undersigned, the natives of St Kilda, hereby respectfully pray and petition H.M. Government to assist us all to leave the island this year and to find homes and occupation for us on the mainland. For some years the manpower has been decreasing. Now the total population of the island is reduced to 36. Several men out of this number have definitely made up our minds to go away this year to such employment on the mainland. This will really cause a crisis as the present number are hardly sufficient to carry on the necessary work of the place. These men are the mainstay of the island at present, as they tend the sheep, do the weaving and look after the general welfare of the widows. Should they leave the conditions of the rest of the community would be such that it would be impossible for us to remain on the island another winter."*

The islanders said they did not ask to be settled together as a separate community; but were seeking help to be moved somewhere where 'there would be a better opportunity of securing our livelihood'.

The letter took fourteen days to arrive at the Scottish Office. However, the islanders' precarious existence was already well known to the Secretary of State, who appointed Nurse Barclay as the government's official representative on St Kilda; with responsibility for the planning of the evacuation and the resettlement of the St Kildans on the mainland. All the cattle and sheep were taken off the island, by the tourist boat *Dunara Castle*, two days before the evacuation, for sale on the mainland. However, all the island's working dogs were drowned in the bay as it was decided they could not be taken. Friday 29<sup>th</sup> August, the day of the evacuation, promised to be a perfect day. The sun rose out of a calm and sparkling sea and warmed the faces of those waiting to leave the island. A clear blue sky and the sight of a green and pleasant Hirta made parting all the more difficult. Observing tradition, the islanders left an open Bible and a small pile of oats in each house, left the houses unlocked, and at 7am boarded the *Harebell*.

Although exhausted by the strain and hard work of the last few days, they were reported to have remained cheerful throughout the operation. Finally, at 8am the ship pulled away from the St Kildans' homeland, the only one they had known. As they steamed eastwards and the familiar outline of the island grew faint, the severing of an ancient tie became a reality and the St Kildans gave way to tears. The women stood at the stern of the *Harebell*, their shawls around their heads, waving goodbye to the island until it was out of sight.

The ship landed at Morvern on the Scottish mainland, to a waiting and curious crowd. Officials found forestry work for the men – who had never seen a tree before. The men were renowned for being strong climbers, a reputation earned from years of scaling dangerous cliffs to collect bird eggs. Most of the St Kildans were settled at Lochaline near Oban, while other families went to live at Strome Ferry in Ross-shire, Culcabock near Inverness, and at Culross, Fife. The Scottish Office did its best to respect the islanders' personal preferences as to the family members or neighbours with whom they wished to be settled. Many of the St Kildans found the transition hard, particularly the older islanders, of whom many had wanted to stay. Some of the elder inhabitants knew only a little English and had never used money before. St Kilda had no use for notes or coins.

During the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2010, Norman John Gillies looked back fondly on his early childhood on the rocky archipelago of four small islands.

*'We lived at No 10. There were 16 cottages in a little*

*semicircle on Village Bay,' he remembers, 'Next door was Christine McQueen, my widowed aunt; a few doors away my uncle, Donald Gillies, with his wife and daughters; and at No 15, my granny, known as "The Uncrowned Queen of St Kilda" for her youthful good looks.'* Today, her nickname is carved on a plaque by her abandoned home – part of the information available to the few summer tourists who visit the UK's only dual world heritage site – recognised for its natural attributes and its vanished culture.

*'Everything was shared,' explained Norman John. 'Each day, except Sunday, God's day, all the men met between house No 5 and No 6 for the morning meeting (known as the St Kilda parliament) to decide what needed doing and who would do it.'* *'When the men had been to kill the seabirds they were put in a big heap and shared out.'* Not according to who had risked life and limb climbing the cliffs to collect them, but according to need. *'I must have eaten a fair few fulmars, guillemots, gannets and puffins.'*

Norman John never forgot his roots and in 1976 he returned to St Kilda, as part of a National Trust working party to renovate some of the houses in which his family once lived. *'It was quite emotional for me to see where I was born, the house where I lived, and visualise the people on the street,'* he admitted, *'and to see the church. I remember as a boy sitting in the church. I couldn't sit still sometimes, and my mother had to get me from the aisle.'*

In 2006, at the age of 81, Norman John finally discovered where his mother had been buried. In a churchyard near to the hospital where she had died in Glasgow. He erected a stone in her memory. When asked what his most vivid memory of his mother was; he recollected her standing on a high dry-stone wall beckoning and shouting to both ends of the island, *'Tormod Iain'* – Norman John in Gaelic – *'Time for your dinner!'*

Despite a request from the St Kildans for the evacuation not to be photographed or filmed, their wishes were ignored (they agreed only for their arrival on the mainland to be recorded). John Ritchie, an amateur cine enthusiast and ornithologist, recorded this unique footage of the preparations for evacuation, the existence of which was kept secret until 1979. At the time of the evacuation, Scottish Office regulations also prohibited any photos or newsreel recordings of the event. The film includes shots of Rachel MacDonald, whose child had died for lack of medical attention, and thus helped contribute to the final decision to evacuate St. Kilda. The islanders did not wish to be photographed and can be seen either turning their faces or hurry into building to avoid being filmed. Even viewed 90 years on, the experience for the watcher feels uncomfortable, poignant, and slightly voyeuristic.

If you wish to relive that final day, and put yourself in the shoes of a St Kildan on that poignant and emotional day, please select:

<https://movingimage.nls.uk/film/0793>

Thanks to this recently rediscovered, and rare, footage from a 1972 television documentary, it is still possible to hear and see some of the long-forgotten voices from St Kilda. Please click here to view:

The story of St Kilda has fascinated people for many years. The events are probably without parallel in Britain and captivate each new person that learns about the island for the first time. I hope this series of blogs have intrigued you too. If you wish to find out more, why not visit the West Highland Museum in Fort William and learn more about life on this unique island archipelago?

**Mark Bridgeman**

*Mark Bridgeman is an author. His latest book "Blood Beneath Ben Nevis" is available at the Highland Book Shop (Fort William), Waterstones, WH Smiths, Amazon. and in the West Highland Museum shop.*

[Home | Mark Bridgeman Author \(wixsite.com\)](https://www.wixsite.com/markbridgeman)



where do you want your funeral to be held. Think about; Wool sheds, Marque's sports halls How you would like it conducted Some funerals have been held over until there's a change in the public risk factor. That may suit some smaller operators but could become a problem for bigger centres.

To wrap this up we in Clan Cameron are not getting younger and we do have to consider the future. Funerals are a very stressful occasions for those of the family that must attend to such matters. This can be avoided to a large degree if you make it known in your "WILL" as to how you want your funeral carried out..... more so under these Covid conditions.

These are suggestions only. Please consult your legal adviser for further advice we are going to be living with Covid for a long time to come and do get vaccinated it's in your interests

I have written this article while listening to my daughter describing the trials and tribulations of arranging local funerals.

Kelly, our daughter, is the local undertaker!

## The True Story of the Blenheim Bagpipes by Denis Cameron

There seems to be some confusion about the story of the Blenheim Bagpipes. This is a copy of the letter written by Don Cameron, ex President of the Wellington Branch to Denis Cameron, when he asked Denis to be the "custodian" of the famous Glen Half Size Set of Bagpipes.

Dear Denis

*This is just a note to let you know that I am going to gift you the bagpipes that you enquired about recently and it's my real pleasure to do so.*

*When I was 13 years of age and I started to learn the bagpipes – my mother bought me a practice chanter but couldn't afford bagpipes as my father had passed away and we were hard up at that time.*

*My great Uncle John Cameron, was thrilled when he learnt that I was learning the bagpipes, that he invited my mother and I around to his place on Oriental Bay and surprised us by giving me this half size set of bagpipes.*

*He related the history of them saying that they were bought out from Scotland by his grandfather Donald Cameron, who landed in Wellington with his wife and family on 27 December 1840 on board the Blenheim. My great Uncle John had no family himself, so he was interested that I was keen on learning the pipes.*

*His grandfather Donald died in 1870 and these pipes were handed down to his father Alexander and on his death on 1899, they were handed down to his son John, who was my great Uncle.*

*Both Alexander and John never learnt the pipes – so between some time prior to 1870 and 1940, these pipes were never played. I had a new bag put on them and played them for two years. When I joined the band of the 1st Battalion Wellington Regiment [Pipes and Drums] I had to get a full size of pipes and hence the small set has never been played for the last 64 years.*

*When we shifted from Silverstream to Upper Hutt 3 years ago I sold my pipes, but retained the small pipes.*

*As the bag on these pipes went hard as a crust I destroyed it with the idea of getting a new bag, but just haven't got around to doing it.*

*I haven't got any relations who are interested. So I was thinking of selling them or seeing if a museum may be interested in them.*

*So it's my pleasure to hand them on to a family with the name of Cameron and particularly to you Denis, who has done so much for Clan Cameron. I will try to arrange for some one, who is going to the Clan Cameron International Gathering at Auckland to take them up for you.*

*Wishing you and your family, all the best for the festive season and 2005.*

*Kindest Regards, Don Cameron*

## The Glen Bagpipes

Just to let you know that the half size Glen Bagpipes are back again with a new bag and new reeds and the drones have been checked out and "oiled" and are now in good working order. One of the ferrels had been replaced in about 1930 and John Park of Raglan, agreed that the chanter was from Alexander Glen of Edinburgh.

The Glen half size bagpipes, had been bought to New Zealand in 1840 on the Barque name the "Blenheim" by the Gaelic Speaking Scots from Lochaber, Morven and Skye - many of them Camerons, who helped to build the Hutt Road [completed in October 1841]

Apparently, this set of Glen bagpipes, were being played daily by Donald the Piper, for dancing on the deck of the "Blenheim".

An intention to maintain a Gaelic speaking community was implicit in preparation for the "Blenheim" departure. Fifteen Gaelic Books, were sent to New Zealand with the Rev. John Macfarland, as the basis for a Gaelic Library.

The group established New Zealand's first Gaelic Speaking Community at Kaiwharawhara, Wellington and it was from here that many settlers - later left to established farms around Wanganui, Turakina and the Wairarapa.

The Cameron's from the Blenheim, were truly brave pioneers venturing into land unknown, after having left the Highlands they loved so well.

These small set of Glen bagpipes, had been completely made from Cocus Wood and had been insured for about \$4000 dollars.

John Park, of Raglan, played these pipes for us when he arrived back with them to Tauranga. They appear to need a lot of playing to get them in tune once again.

The Glen half size set of bagpipes, had not been played for some time - until John Park played them for us at his home in Raglan. John, also put a new bag on for us, so they are in good working condition.

Joy and I have met Don and Clarice Cameron of Upper Hutt – when we were staying with them, the night that we went to a Presentation of the 2000 Edinburgh Tattoo in Wellington and we became firm friends and it was that week end, that Don approached me and asked me if I would become the "custodian" for these price less and historical bagpipes.

When the bagpipes arrived at the Auckland International Clan Cameron Gathering from Don Cameron - they were still in the original suitcase that the bagpipes arrived in Wellington on board the "Blenheim" and as Don Cameron said - they were with out a bag, so we took them over to John Park of Raglan, who put on a new bag and checked the drones and chanter and made these historical bagpipes playable once again.

These wonderful bagpipes were played on many occasions in Tauranga and been played by several pipe majors of the local Tauranga Pipe Bands. The "First Lighter" Robert Nairn, also played them on his visit to Tauranga, entertaining the Bay of Plenty Branch members as well as all our neighbours in Kokomo Key.



Don Cameron (centre) with Bruce and Warren Cameron

So these wonderful small set of pipes are now approximately 181 years of age [1840 – 2021] and have been handed over to a Blenheim Descendant - Ewen Grant of Turakina.

Joy and I met Ewen and Roz Grant, at a Clan Cameron meeting and we thought we would ask them - would they like to come to Tauranga and pick up these bagpipes and take them back

to the home of the Blenheim settlers.

Joy and I were most happy and most honoured, to have been the "custodians" for the Glen Bagpipes for many years and are pleased that they are now being played back home in "Blenheim Country".



# The First Bloodshed of the '45

by *Kenny MacKintosh*

The first bloodshed of the 1745 Jacobite Rising took place during a skirmish on the 16th August 1745 at High Bridge or Dròchaid Bhàn as it was known to the Highlanders. This bridge, 8 miles from the town of Fort William, carried the Military Road between the Government forts of Fort William and Fort Augustus. The honour of striking the first blow of the Rising fell to a small group of MacDonnell of Keppoch's clansmen under the command of Major Donald MacDonnell of Tirmadris. Two companies totalling 85 men of the Royal Scots regiment of the British army commanded by Captain John Scott and Captain James Thomson were on route from Fort Augustus to re-inforce the garrison at Fort William. When word of their movement reached the local Jacobites, a small force consisting of eleven men and a piper rushed to the bridge and by occupying the inn at High Bridge and the nearby woods were able to intercept them. They managed to create the illusion of a much larger force by running about the woods discharging their weapons, shouting, and making a huge clamour.

The Royal Scots, with two men dead, retreated and soon MacDonnell of Keppoch himself arrived with reinforcements to join the pursuit. The British troops were finally surrounded at Laggan at the head of Loch Lochy as men of Lochiel's Camerons and Glengarry's MacDonnells joined the action. Captain Scott, himself wounded, and having lost six men with another dozen or more wounded decided he had no option but to surrender. The prisoners were treated with great chivalry, receiving medical attention, and were marched to Glenfinnan,

presented to Prince Charles, and watched the raising of the standard on the 19th August after which they were released to make their own way home. Captain Scott's particularly fine horse had been confiscated and gifted to the Prince by the clansmen.

Major MacDonnell of Tirmadris was executed in 1746 at Carlisle for his part in the Rising and his head displayed on the town's gates. MacDonnell of Keppoch was to die on Culloden Moor at the head of his men and his clansfolk were to suffer dreadfully in the brutal Government reprisals following the collapse of the rising.

The ruins of the bridge can be seen to this day and a cairn at the spot commemorates the skirmish.



*With thanks to the West Highland Museum, Fort William.*

## *The West Highland Museum's Top 10 objects relating to Bonnie Prince Charlie*

*By Vanessa Martin, Curator*

### 7. THE PRINCE'S WAISTCOAT

A pale green striped silk waistcoat that has been embroidered with rosebuds and silver thread. It is a textile with a fascinating history. The waistcoat once belonged to Prince Charles Edward Stuart. It was quite common for Charles to gift his personal belongings to supporters as souvenirs. However, the gifting of his personal clothing is fairly unusual and would have only been bestowed upon his most trusted friends and confidants. In this case the provenance of the waistcoat can be traced. Charles gifted this waistcoat to his doctor, Doctor Irwin, before he left Rome in 1744.



### 8. HIDDEN PORTRAIT SNUFF BOX

A circular box with an enamel tartan decoration. The hinged cover opens to expose a plain interior. However, the hidden double lid opens to reveal a finely enamelled portrait of Prince Charles Edward Stuart dressed in a tartan jacket with the orders of the Garter and Thistle decorations, white cockade and blue bonnet.

Hidden portrait snuff boxes such as this are amongst the most iconic Jacobite works of art. This example is in particularly good condition and finely enamelled. The portrait is a variant of the famous Robert Strange example which likely date this piece to circa 1750. Purchased in 2019 with the assistance of the Art Fund and National Fund for Acquisitions.







*Auckland President Rob Cameron pipes guests to the tables.*



*Ella Tent and Marie Boyle. Piper Michel Tent*



*Commissioner Nick gives the toast to Lochiel*



*Dale Bailey and Dorothy Cameron-Gavin*



*Allan and Morea Cameron*



*Barrie Paterson and Tom McDonald*



*Murdock McDonald and James McPhee, Commissioner Clan Macfie*



*Ruth and Neil Cameron*



*Pam Cameron with Duncan McQueen, MC for the evening*



*Tanya Cameron—National Secretary*