



Cameron



The Magazine of Clan Cameron New Zealand Inc.

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The 'Bay of the Kiln' is on the banks of Loch Eil. Just beyond this is where legend has it that someone with second sight warned the Gentle Lochiel, 19th Chief of Clan Cameron, not to join the 1745 Uprising

The straight at Camas na Ha - 'The Bay of the Kiln' Photo: Bill Cameron

Turakina Highland Games



The Manawatu Scottish Grade 1 Pipe Band, resplendent in Cameron Tartan -photo: Jo/Dean Cameron

“Cameron”

is the magazine of the
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(Inc)

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A Message from our Commissioner...

Dear Clansfolk,

With our house re-build now complete Julie and I moved back into our house two weeks ago. Unpacking was a little stressful but it has been a useful time to throw out items which are no longer used and an interesting time to look at old mementos of past living. We have set up a sound proof room at one end of the house for pipe practice and to house many of the “Cameron” items we seem to have collected over the years.

Our Dunedin pipe band contest on the 20th and 21st February was very successful and enjoyable and this Thursday we travel to Napier for the piping contest (the “Nationals”) on the 19th and 20th March 2021.

Last Sunday our band played for the winning teams of the Gaelic Football Event held in Hagley park. This also included shinty events. I do not think I have heard so many young Irish voices outside of Ireland itself. It was a little hard to work out what the rules are for this version of football!!

Julie and I look forward to the Hawera Clan Cameron AGM on the 10th April and Neville and Shona look to have organized great entertainment for us.

Good wishes and keep safe.

Cheers, *Nick*



Coming Events

Saturday/Sunday 3/4 April 2021

Hawkes Bay Easter Highland Games
Lindisfarne College, Hastings
The Cameron stall will be there.

Saturday 10 April 2021
National Gathering and AGM
Hawera

Saturday 12 June 2021

Manawatu Branch Winter Dinner
Wharera Conference Centre, Massey
University, Palmerston North

Saturday 7 August 2021

Auckland Branch Annual Dinner
At ‘The Parnell’ Gladstone Road
6pm for 6.30
Flyer to Auckland members and supporters
with the June newsletter. Everybody
welcome.

56th Annual Gathering and AGM

Hawera Club, 38 High Street, Hawera.

Saturday 10th April 2021.

Please come and support the Clan, especially the members of the Iar Branch, who have planned a wonderful day for you.

A flyer is on the website or can be obtained from the editor by email.

See Iar report on page 5

**Clan Cameron New Zealand
Website**

www.clanameronnz.co.nz

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<http://clanameron.ning.com/>

Welcome to the following Members who have recently joined us:

Manawatu Branch

Mary White
Margaret and Patrick Coogan

Palmerston North
Taihape

*Ceud Mile Fáilte
One Hundred
Thousand Welcomes*

Auckland Branch

Murray Cameron

Manurewa

Canterbury Branch

Kirsty Cameron

Christchurch

The Achnacarry dance went on till 6 am

By Ian Abernethy. From The Lochaber News

Lexy Campbell will never forget her first dance. To a girl who had been brought up in a remote Highland glen the awesome surroundings of Cameron of Lochiel's home at Achnacarry made a great impression.

And then there was the fact that Lexy, then only 15 years old, was asked to dance by the then Lochiel's younger brother Archie.

But the main reason why Lexy – now 89 – still remembers so vividly that night so long ago is that she had to walk 21 miles before she even danced a step.

But in the early 1900s there were no such things as taxis. And on the day of the annual dance which Lochiel put on for his estate workers the stormy weather spoiled Lexy's plans to catch a boat up Loch Arkaig. So Lexy walked the 21 miles from her parents croft house at Glen Pean to Achnacarry being joined by more and more friends along the way. Lexy who now lives in Invernevis House, Fort William, recalls: "We set off from Glen Pean at 12 O'clock – we were to get a boat at two. But it was so stormy that the yacht couldn't wait for us at the pier. "It was a wet day. We had walked four miles from Glen Pean to the pier. My uncle went down to the pierhouse and came back and said we would have to walk it – the boat had gone. We set off with the rest of the people who had gathered. We walked to Caonaich where we got tea. We set off again to Ardechive where we got some more tea."

And so the journey went on with more and more people gathering and more and more stops for tea.

Eventually the party – by then quite large – arrived at Achnacarry at about 8pm for the dance, which went on until six o'clock the following morning.

Grand March

"The Grand March started and Lochiel and Her Ladyship led it off and by gosh, after that we were dancing away like fury. Lochiel had a fair nice brother Archie and I got a dance from him and I was quite proud that I had."

When the dance eventually broke up the revellers had the unenviable task of walking home again. Lexy only managed 17 miles to her uncle's house at Strathan!

The daughter of one of Lochiel's 15 shepherds, Lexy's life

revolved around the lonely glens until she went 'into service'.

My mother used to be delighted when the shepherds were gathering at our house because it was company for her. The women were alone a fair lot of the time, their husbands would be away all day for the gathering and the marking of the lambs.

"The nearest house was four miles away. My two eldest brothers and two sisters walked four miles to Strathan School every day. I went to live with a neighbour because it was two miles nearer the school, I was 12 before I went home.

Dresses

"I think 14 was the biggest number in the school in those days. When I came out of school I was home working with my mother. There was such a lot to do – milking cows and one thing and another that she always needed one of us at home. One of us would go home when she was in service to give the others a chance. "It was when Lexy had her "chance" in service that she discovered the "huge place" of Fort William. She said; "We were happy to go in service to earn money to get dresses for ourselves.

"I went to Fort William in service at a hotel. I was working in the Ben Nevis hotel and the other hotel across the road. Mr and Mrs MacPherson were in the Ben Nevis and ran that.

"I got 25 shillings a month and my board as well. I would get up at six in the morning and we didn't finish until ten o'clock at night or after. That was quite normal. We had no day off but on Sundays you might get off for three hours to go to church and see friends.

"On Sundays people used to go for walks in Glen Nevis. We all had special clothes for Sundays. Duncan MacIntyre the butcher and all his family used to be dressed in kilts as they walked in Glen Nevis.

"When I first saw Fort William I thought it was a huge place, but really it was very small then. I used to come up to the town and you might hear the odd step on a Sunday, it was quiet. It was all gas lights in the High Street.

"The first time I came to Fort William in service I had a fine pair of shoes and I put studs in them to try to save them. The first thing they told me at the hotel was: "Lexy, you will ruin the carpets."

"Every hotel had a barrow with the name of the hotel on it. Boys would go to the railway station, with the name of the hotel on their hats so that the passengers would know who was who. The boys would meet the train to take the luggage to the hotels.

The first car I saw was when the present Cameron of Lochiel's father and mother came home after they got married.

But we enjoyed ourselves – we didn't know any different."

Coronavirus

By Jan Beaumont

I'm normally a social girl
I love to meet my mates
But lately with the virus here
We can't go out the gate

You see we are the "oldies" now
We need to stay inside
If they haven't seen us for a while
They'll think we've upped and died

They'll never know the thinks we did
Before we got this old
There wasn't any Facebook
So not everything was told

We may seem sweet old ladies
Who would never be uncouth,
But we grew up in the 60s –
If you only knew the truth

There was sex and drugs and rock 'n roll
The pill and miniskirts
We smoked, we drank, we partied
And were quite outrageous flirts

Then we settled down, got married
And turned into someone's mum
Somebody's wife, then nana,
Who on earth did we become?

We didn't mind the change of pace
Because our lives were full
But to bury us before we're dead
Is like red to a bull

So here you find me stuck inside
For 4 weeks, maybe more
I finally found myself again
Then I had to close the door!

It didn't really bother me
I'd while away the hour
I'd bake for all the family
But I've got no flaming flour!

Now Netflix is just wonderful
I like a gutsy thriller
I'm swooning over Idris
Or some random sexy killer

We'll all get through the crisis
And be back to join our mates
Just hoping I'm not too wide
To fit through the flaming gates!

With thanks to Jan Beaumont and Joan Cameron (Hawkes Bay)

From the Branches....

The views expressed in these reports are those of the writers. Some have been lightly edited.

Auckland by Rob Cameron

In January, the Auckland branch held its annual dinner. You no doubt would have seen the pictures which made it into the previous newsletter. The night was a great success. The Parnell, formerly the Quality Inn Hotel, had great food and service. It was great having Originz return as the main entertainment once again. We did something a bit different and in place of a guest speaker, we had Malcolm Campbell lead everyone singing a few tunes which went down well. We hope to see everyone back for this year's dinner, which will be at the regular time of year being held in August.



February saw the clan's presence at the Paeroa Highland Games. This was the first major outing our branch has had in quite some time. I would like to thank all the helpers on the day, Neil Cameron, Duncan McQueen, and Rex Garland from Auckland, David Cameron, Shirley and John Baillie, and Patricia Duncan from Bay of Plenty.

Paeroa was also the first band competition of the season in which I competed with the City of Sails Pipe Band. It was great to get back out into the competition circle again and see where the band stands on the road to the nationals. Currently I am planning to attend the New Zealand Pipe band championships in Hastings across 19th and 20th of March, competing with the City of Sails Pipe Band in Grade 4. It is fortunate that this event is still going forward (providing there are no Covid surprises before the event) as many events in the area have not been as lucky. As it will be with other competing Auckland bands, we will find it difficult to keep up with the rest of the bands in the competition. With the various lockdowns in Auckland, practice has been on and off making it hard to keep the momentum moving forward. This has greatly affected our build up. It also does not help there have been several competitions cancelled which provide the band with valuable experience. Although it will be challenging, it will still be an exciting weekend for the members of the band. We had planned to have our branch AGM in March however due the recent lockdowns in Auckland, we have had to postpone it. The meeting will be held sometime in May and we will send out a notification closer to the time when and where it will be held.

Over the next 12 months we will need to find a new home for our trailer, used to transport our branches tent to 3 annual highland games. We are also looking for people to man the tent during these events. If you have an interest in family history and would like to help, then please get in touch. I am also making plans to attend this year's Annual Gathering in Hawera in April. At this stage it will only be me representing the Auckland branch. Our branch will be pushing to get the First Light scholarship back up and running with the opportunity to bring one or both of two young Cameron piper's over from Scotland when international travel resumes with the hope they will revive the scholarship from the Scottish side.

Manawatu by Anne Walker

Since our last report, Clan Cameron Manawatu participated in the Turakina Highland Games on 30th January, where we erected our usual Clan tent providing a point for hospitality and information. It was a great day, with excellent weather and a good crowd



attending. We were thrilled to sign up a few new members on the day.

The AGM of Clan Cameron Manawatu was held in the Summerhouse at Mt Lees Reserve, near Feilding, on Sunday 21st February. It was a small gathering this year, as a number were unable to attend, but nevertheless it was a beautiful summers day and members enjoyed a brief and informative AGM, followed by a shared potluck luncheon.

President, Russell Cameron, provided a good overview of our busy year of activity. The Branch elected a full committee, with Russell Cameron re-elected as President, and John Cameron, as Vice-President.

This year, Clan Cameron Manawatu are planning four key events. This busy calendar includes a small gathering at the home of our patron Maisie Earle in March, our formal mid-winter dinner on June 12th, a luncheon sometime in Spring, and of course, our usual presence at the Jenny Mair Highland Day in early December. Clan Cameron Manawatu will also be represented at the April AGM in Hawera, and at the Turakina Highland Games in January 2022.

All Clan members are invited to 'keep the date' for Clan Cameron Manawatu annual dinner, which will be held once again at Wharerata Function Centre, Massey University, Palmerston North, on Saturday 12th June. More information on all these planned events will be available later.

Hawke's Bay by Hamish Cameron

As an organised group, Clan Cameron Hawke's Bay hasn't been able to co-ordinate an opportune time for a gathering suitable for all concerned. There are those of us facing some trying times right now and none of it can be blamed on COVID-19!



Although, as we count down to our Easter Highland Games, COVID has snared another victim with the recent cancellation of New Zealand largest equestrian show - "The Horse of the Year," held in Hastings.

This comes shortly after Napier's Art Deco week was also "Officially" cancelled. Both of these events are traditionally large crowd and financially productive events for Hawkes Bay.

The rules around COVID being as they are, and the fact Auckland - a large visitor source - was in Level 3 left no alternative but to cancel.

Aucklanders may be sick of the oscillating nature of their alert levels but their plight also has an unjust effect on the rest of the country -----But, in the parlance of the day --- "I suppose it is what it is ---"

However, on a more positive note, everything at the moment looks all go for our Easter Highland Games.

Probably the only thing we can guarantee is good weather-----.

Now that is tempting fate-----

Bay of Plenty by Tanya Cameron

Our branch has planned a couple of unsuccessful gatherings recently.

No luncheon was held for the end of the year, but we were hopeful in February 2021 of a catch up. Alas, nothing doing there.



The Annual Paeroa Games were on in February 2021 and Neil Cameron, Duncan McQueen and a selection of our wonderful Branch were there. Unfortunately, at the last minute, I was unable to go as we had a medical event to deal with. I am so grateful to those that were able to help at the Clan Cameron tent.

Our meal in February was cancelled at the last minute due to the uncertainty of the closing of borders due to community outbreaks of COVID-19.

We have high hopes of being able to attend the Clan Cameron NZ AGM in Hawera in April.

Canterbury by Rae Magson

At the end of March we are planning a meeting and then out to lunch in Ashburton. It is time we all got together again, as over the last year we have been rather remiss. Covid was partly the reason but mainly the need for some younger energetic members has been the cause.

Where do we find these? Any hints on this search would be appreciated.



Iar (Taranaki/Whanganui) by Neville Wallace

The Clan Cameron 56th Annual Gathering will be held on April 10th at the Hawera Club 38 High street. Our gathering will be commencing at 12.30 pm with an executive luncheon, Executive meeting, afternoon tea for everyone followed by our AGM and Dinner. A happy hour between 5pm and 6pm.

6pm will be dinner and we have two highly informative speakers to entertain and inform you. Namely, New Zealand's Leading farming academic, Adjunct Professor Dr. Jacqueline Rowarth CNZM and Alan Beck (ONZM and QSM.) CEO Beck Helicopters, Specialist's for Heavy Lift, Agricultural, and Fire Fighting.

These two remarkably interesting speakers will undoubtedly draw a large audience so the dinner will be opened to paying listeners from the public.

Hawera has a choice of Motels so get your accommodation settled because this is going to be a continuous show with no breaks so come dressed in your Highland regalia

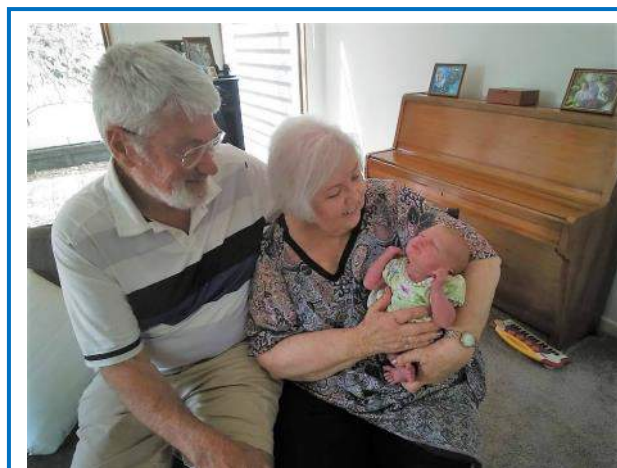


Let's make this a great evening for Clan Cameron and those that come along!

A Query from our Clan Genealogist

Duncan Alexander Cameron 1808 to 1888

I have received a query about the above named Cameron who lived in New Zealand from 1861-1865 while in the Army and was a General during the Land Wars. He is said to have been a Chief of the Cuilcheanna branch of Clan Cameron. The enquirer, Iain Wakefield, tells me he lives in Duncan Cameron's house in Drury, near Auckland. Iain is interested in any information on Duncan as he is writing an article on him. (He is aware there is an article on Wikipedia). If anybody has information they can contact Iain via email, iain@jollydoc.co.nz.



Congratulations to Bryan and Rebecca Haggitt on the birth of Amelia Ann, here seen with proud grandparents Bryan and Jenny.

Scots in New Zealand

By Neville Wallace

Whenever you have watched a pipe band parade, have you ever considered the origins of the pipers as they filed past playing their bagpipes, the music or maybe highland dancers and how they came to our shores and did their part settling NZ. As has happened with immigrants from other countries. The cause of this massive migration was due to the population growth in Scotland, which in turn caused competition for land, jobs, and housing. The failure of fishing, linen, and kelp industries led to high unemployment in the Highlands. The potato blight of 1847 spread to Scotland and left thousands of Highlanders close to starvation.

Scots have settled into communities across NZ, Dunedin probably best known with Waipu a close second. It is interesting looking at Scottish settlement in NZ as many settled in the South Island which was very much like their homelands in Scotland. They were a progressive race, as in 1848 a small group founded the colonial settlement of Otago and began building the City of Dunedin and within 21 years the University of Otago had been created by ordinance of the Provincial Council and opened 5th of July 1871 and if you care to take the time many Scots settled other parts of New Zealand as well.

In 1935 The idea of a Clan Cameron association in New Zealand was originally suggested by Colonel Sir Donald Walter Cameron, 25th Chief of Clan Cameron. "It was hoped ... at least one thousand Australian and New Zealand Cameron's attend a Rally at Achnacarry the following

June. The Rally was to spread enthusiasm for the Clan spirit and therefore be a great force for peace.' By 1936 branches had been established in Auckland, Hamilton, Palmerston North, Masterton, Wellington, Dunedin, Tauranga, and Wanganui by then 1,700 Cameron's and their kin that had joined the association. The beginning of WW2 saw an interruption to clan membership which was not revived till 1956. The 1980's saw a flourishing clan membership and they celebrated 50 years at their AGM in Tauranga in September 1985. So here we are in 2021 celebrating 86 years of Clan Cameron.

There are several Scottish events held in many different New Zealand localities, our nearest in Taranaki is the Turakina games where there's competitive Highland Dancing events, Tossing the caber (a pole approx. 16-20 feet long 90-150 lbs) and Sheaf (bunch of cereal-crop stems bound together) also competitive piping and drumming.

Incidentally, highland dancing nowadays is performed mainly by girls. In days of earlier civilization, it was performed by males as dexterity training for combat.

The Kilt an interesting garment. After the battle of Culloden, the British Government attempted to crush the rebellious clan system with an act of parliament banning the use of weapons, and the wearing of the Kilt a penal offence in 1746. By the time the law was repealed in 1785 Scots had lost their desire to wear the Kilt and their weapons for performing the sword dances. However, when Queen Victoria re-discovered the beauty of Scotland many of the ancient arts were revived. As a pertinent point of interest, the modern kilt uses about 8 yards of woollen material, if this garb could be more popular think how much this would be of benefit to New Zealand sheep farmers.

Woodturning – Walking Sticks

by Dave Cameron (Whakatane)

By Editor: Dave Cameron came all the way from Whakatane to help in the Clan tent at the Paeroa Games. He asked to look at my walking stick, saying “I make them as a hobby”. I asked him to write me a few words about his hobby and here they are.



I have been woodturning for over 10 years and at 84 years old are still going.

In 2015 I joined the Whakatane Art Society’s Woodturning group to polish up my methods and techniques under the watchful eye of their mentor and tutor Merv Bennett. I turned my hand to many turning projects, even obtaining a 2nd place in the Kawerau National Woodskills competition for first time entrants. I have made woodturning my principle hobby.

After exhausting my interest in bowls, rolling pins, paua shell inlays, Celtic knots, lace bobbins and various other projects, I recently turned some ‘walking sticks’. These I made from 50mmx50m square NZ

Rewarewa wood, as long as my lathe would take (1 metre) between centre. This I turned round and tapered to the bottom to take a rubber shoe. The top handle I made on the cross of the same wood with a long spigot turned to match the top end of the stick with a dowel and plenty of glue. The handle was carved to shape, suitably comfortable for ones hand and finished with a leather wrist strap. The whole was sanded, polished and sealed with Danish oil and bees wax. The finished product was attractive and practical. I have given them away to several of my elderly friends. At 84 years old I had better make another for myself.



Some examples of David’s talented work. Photos: Tanya Cameron



Manawatu AGM at Mt. Lees.

Front: Anne Walker, Roz Grant, Jessie Annabell. Middle: Barbara Barber (pt obscured), Russell Cameron, Bryan Barber. Back: Ewen Grant, John Cameron

Photo: John Annabell



Remembering the Past

by the Editor\

On the way home from the Paeroa Highland Games I visited the Paeroa Historic Maritime Museum to renew acquaintance with the mast of the corvette HMNZS Kiama, which I commanded in 1972/73.



From Left: David Cameron, Patricia Duncan, Shirley and John Baillie and Rob Cameron



The band leading the clan march



Above and Below: The City of Sails Pipe Band, of which Auckland president Rob is a member, marching on and being judged below.



Cass and Hillary Hakaraia, Rob Cameron and Duncan McQueen



The Clan March



When living communities filled the Loch Arkaig glens

By Ian Mitchell.

From the *West Highland Free Press*

Transcribed by Bill Cameron

It is well-known that large areas of the West Highlands were cleared for sheep in the aftermath of the failed rebellion of 1745. One such area was at the west end of Loch Arkaig, in Glens Dessary and Pean, where the observer wrote: "Families who have not been disturbed for four or five hundred years are



Photo: Bill Cameron

Glen Pean, former home of the Campbell family. Now a mountain bothy.

turned out of house and home and their possessions given to the highest bidder."

This was in 1804, when the lands belonged to Cameron of Lochiel. Contrary to the romantic Jacobite mythology, Lochiel had had difficulty in raising large numbers of his tenantry for the cause, and some took advantage of the forfeiture of the estate to help the Hanovarian troops burn down Achnacarry House in 1746, and destroy the estate records pertaining to their rents and debts.

There was for some years a Hanovarian barracks at the head of Glen Dessary, and General Wade had made a rough road through the glen to Knoydart. But the Redcoats eventually left, and in their place came first Lochiel, and then the sheep.

Unlike most West Highland areas, the region did not later convert from sheep run to deer forest, but remained, for a century and a half, one of the biggest sheep farms in the Highlands. In order to run the farm shepherds had to be brought in, and they occupied half-a-dozen houses at the loch head, and in the glens running westwards. The OS map of 1875 shows them all, and also shows, not a barracks, but a school at Strathan, product of the 1872 Education Act.

It was my remarking on a rusted shed, while walking past Strathan, and wondering as to its possible purpose, that aroused my interest in the area. "That's no shed, it was a school," said my friend, "and I know someone who went to it, who was born in

Glen Pean." While he tried to locate this contact for me, I did a bit of digging in the old mountaineers' journals.

The first man to complete his Munros, Rev AE Robertson, traversed this area at Easter 1895, and was given accommodation with two friends at Glen Dessary. He said: "The people in the glen are kind, courteous and hospitable to walkers".

The size of the operation is shown by the fact of the hills carrying 13,000 sheep at this time, and one walker arrived at Strathan in 1908, commenting; "I came upon a crowd of men clipping sheep and was met by a headlong rush of about 20 dogs." His name was William Barclay.

After World War One Glen Dessary was occupied by a family of Stewarts who continued to offer climbers hospitality. One who had been there pre-war noted the changes coming into the area.

"Glen Dessary farm was reached at 5:55. Mrs Stewart told us a hot bath would be ready in half an hour's time. (The bath) had come up by a motor launch from the east end of Loch Arkaig. (She) told us that a road was being made along the north side of the loch and that in a year or two Glen Dessary would be in motor communication with the world."

This was in 1926, and the writer, FS Goggs, regretted the breaching of isolation this would entail. Prior to this, apart from when accompanying the sheep-drove to Spean Bridge, the means of exit and entry was by boat. Up to World War Two supplies were ferried in to the shepherds twice yearly on board the yacht 'Rifle' from Achnacarry – although the recent road brought the post-van twice a week, and the possibility of its utilisation as passenger transport.

Another regular visitor to the area was the Rev Burn, second man to complete his "Munros". He usually lodged with the Stewarts at Strathan. He spoke most warmly of the hospitality of his hosts, and the help given him in his studies of Gaelic place-names and in song-collection by the family, up to the early 1920s.

Another house serving a shepherd's family was in Glen Pean. Built in 1894, it replaced a house on the opposite bank of the river, which was twice almost swept away in landslides! It was occupied by a family of Campbells (who had seven children) until 1915 when they vacated it.

Mr Campbell had moved to Glen Pean in 1807 and his daughter Lexie recalled that he was often away for days gathering the sheep. He was a writer of Gaelic songs and poems, and all the children had only Gaelic when they went to school – to which they had to walk daily three miles down the glen to Strathan. Lexie recalled her days there: "We had many happy days at Glen Pean . . . I see Mother coming down the glen to meet us, carrying our dinners and getting us to help her to lift the peats. Some of us would be helped by one of the girls to milk the cows."

A family of Hendersons were the last occupants of Glen Pean.

Scenes of Childhood

I had put all this aside, when my friend phoned. He gave me a number which I called, and I found myself talking to someone born not at Glen Pean but at A' Chuil, another shepherd's cottage opposite Glen Dessary. Lorna McGibbon had been born in 1939, in the house her parents – the Sutherlands from Stratherrick- had previously moved into. She told me there was bothy accommodation for the single shepherds at Strathan, and when married they moved into one of the houses.

Though only four when she left, she remembered cows being swum across the river, calves downstream, and the hay-making at A' Chuil. And she supplied me with some moving old photographs of her birthplace- as well as the telephone number of Peter Cameron, whose family had occupied the house at Strathan.

I had a long chat with Peter, now in his 70's and retired in Dunfermline. His family were Lochaber people, who had occupied the house in Glen Kingie, to the north of Strathan (then also part of the Lochiel sheep-farm) until 1941. Then his family had moved to Strathan, and he had left the area.

I asked about the school – another blank, since they had had a resident school teacher at Glen Kingie for the Cameron children,



Photo: Bill Cameron

The old School at Strathan, Loch Arkaig

the track over to Strathan being too long and rough for the children to use daily. But he did tell me that the building also doubled up as a church, with occasional visits by an outside minister.

Ceilidhs, I asked? Oh yes, there were plenty of them, but they took place in a sheep-shed at Strathan itself. The school, he thought, closed around 1950, just after his family left Strathan.

He did not remember many climbers and walkers in the area in the 1930s, but said there were still many travelling people who turned up at the isolated shepherds' houses such as Glen Kingie.

Today, Glen Kingie is a mountain bothy, restored from the ruinous state it fell into after 1941. The same has happened to A' Chuil and Glen Pean. The less isolated Strathan continued as a sheep-farm longer than the other habitations, but eventually – like Murlaggan and Upper Glendessary, two other shepherd's houses – became a holiday home. Kinlocharkaig, at the south side of the loch, was spared that fate, and simply became a ruin. Like the school . . .

The Skye connection

That school was proving a problem. It had been in the old Inverness Division, so I wrote to Highland Regional Council, who informed me they could “find no trace of such an establishment”!

But eventually a letter came from Skye (in reply to an enquiry of mine in the West Highland Free Press) with help from Miss Connie MacInnes. Her father, from Ord, had been one of the 14 shepherds on the farm in the 1930s, at Upper Glendessary.

The school, which she had attended, was a “side-school” and reputedly the smallest (in size) in Britain! There were eight scholars in the 1930s – and nearly two dozen in the 1920s. One of its products was Norman Maclean, singer and Mod gold medallist. Connie's teachers had been Skye women, and had lodged with the parents' families.

She remembered the glen warmly. As well as ceilidhs, there was an annual dance in the sheep-shed, and the children had a party at Christmas. . . Connie also provided me with an old photo of the ‘Rifle’ at a flitting.

Now the fiery cross was going round Skye! I got a letter from Mrs Maisie Nicolson, daughter of the Glendessary Stewarts. Her father had been head shepherd under Lochiel.

She enclosed a copy from an old ‘Life and Work’ of an article by Mr Whalley, a student missionary in Arkaig from 1933-41. He had preached to a congregation of 35 in the corrugated iron school house. “Some came on foot, one young shepherd on a motor cycle, others on push cycles, in the keeper's car, the folk from the most isolated glen on horseback, some from across the loch by rowing boat . . .

Whalley visited Glen Kingie, six miles over a high pass, to give the five Cameron children Sunday school – they saw so few strangers they ran away from the minister on his first visit! Even the GPO refused to deliver to Glen Kingie, and paid one of the boys to come out and collect the family letters.

I hoped that Lochiel had improved Glen Kingie cottage since it was visited by Rev Burn, when occupied by the MacLeans in the 1920's. He described it thus: “I got a warm welcome from Mrs MacLean, her usual kind self. She told me that this house was ruinous when she came in, with no doors that would shut, no window frames or glass. Water comes in up the hearthstone (and) the plaster is breaking away from the walls.”

On the bottom of Whalley's article, a scribbled note said that Professor William Barclay had also been a missionary at the Strathan school. The same man who was there in 1908, I wondered. . .

Maisie confirmed that Gaelic was universal in West Arkaig in the 1930s - except at School where it was never spoken, despite the teachers having Gaelic. There was no evacuation of the area, but the effects of the war led to families gradually moving out.

The article was ready for the post, but that morning another letter arrived, from the daughter of another Skye shepherd, William Douglas. Now a young lad of 89, he had been

a shepherd at A'Chuill for 15 years pre-war. His daughter told me her uncle had had his wedding reception at Strathan. “The barn was all cleared out and decorated for the occasion, and friends came from all around and had a great day. The glen was a very busy place at that time.”

I realised if I didn't get the article in the post quick, it would be a book I would be writing!



Photo: Bill Cameron

The River Pean winding through the Glen Pean below the house on the right, and the old dwellings on the flat ground on the left.

Lochiel's No More

Today there is an air of sadness about Loch Arkaig, with only holiday homes and ruins where formerly there were communities. This is compounded by the monotony of the conifers which choke both Glen Pean and Glen Dessary, for these lands were sold for private forestry some time ago.

It is no longer true that, as the old saying went, “everything you can see is Lochiel's and everything you can't see is Lochiel's also”. Sheep farming did not prove an economically viable use of mountain land, and neither, one feels, would monocultural forestry for the tax-breaks and subsidies involved.

There is good land at the west end of Loch Arkaig, and in no other country than Scotland would one find it devoid of people – the trouble was, that by time such legislation as the Crofters Acts were passed there were no crofters here. For them it had been exile, and “Lochaber No More”, as it was to be later for the shepherds of Lochiel.

Through my investigations I feel I have known them, people I have never met. I have tramped their hills and slept on the floors of their abandoned dwellings; hopefully this repays the debt a little.

Pictured below is the ‘Rifle’ doing a flitting at Loch Arkaig pier between the wars. The Rev Burn, a regular visitor to the area, collected a verse about a flitting in Strathan: De satharnaith mu thuath de-luan mu deas ged nach bi agamsa ch an t-uan ‘s ann de luan an dh’ fhalbh an leis. The literal translation of the Gaelic phrase is “Saturday to the North, Monday to the South even if all I had were lamb its Monday I would go with.”



Flora MacDonald – The Myths Behind The Legend?

By Julie Ruddock

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A chance encounter between a young lady and a young prince, entwined Flora MacDonald and Charles Edward Stuart forever, in history and in legend.

So, who was Flora?

Flora was born in windswept Milton on the Isle of South Uist in 1722. She was the youngest of three children born of Marion and Ranald MacDonald. Her father was a tacksman who unfortunately passed away within a year of her birth. She was raised by her father's cousin, Sir Alexander MacDonald of Sleat, in a staunchly Presbyterian family. Unlike



Flora MacDonalds birthplace, Milton, South Uist.

many of the Skye MacDonalds, Sir Alexander did not support the Jacobite cause. He stated that the rising was not an opportune time and he could see no outcome other than failure.

Flora had values that ensured she would be prepared to help those who needed it, regardless of their affiliations. She had not taken part in the rebellion of '45 but would not stand back while another human being was in distress. Although her standing in history has been romanticised over time, the facts also indicate that she was a true heroine. She clearly had the moral compass to guide her actions when required.

Despite many documented facts there are still elements of her story that are little more than veiled legend. One example is the presumption of her attending Edinburgh for her education, there is no documented evidence of this.

Another question hangs over the "romance". Legend says there was a flourishing, if very short, romantic tie between Flora and the Prince. Documented history would suggest otherwise. Legend claims Flora "fell" for the Prince. However, it was Flora's stepfather who had approached her to assist in the escape and the more likely explanation is that Flora had simply agreed to help with his plight. There is little factual information to support the idea that the Prince "fell" for Flora. On his eventual return to the continent, he indulged in a rakish, playboy lifestyle. Social commentators of the time referred to the Prince in period terms that

would translate to describing him as a "love 'em and leave 'em" type character.

Another myth abound is that Flora and the Prince had an illegitimate child. There are currently individuals in the Carolinas (where Flora and her husband would move) who claim to be direct descendants of this child. This may be the most outlandish tale of all. Ten days after Flora assisted with Charles' escape she was arrested and imprisoned for a year, first at Dunstaffnage Castle, then briefly at the Tower of London. The birth of an illegitimate child would have been well documented. It is further alleged that Flora and Allan MacDonald (who she married 5 years after her encounter with the Prince) brought this child to the Americas with them. Again, there is no documentation to support the passage of this child aboard the ship.

Another common misconception is the tale told of Flora saving the bedsheets that the prince had slept in. The Prince in fact stayed at Flora's mother-in-law's home (Lady Margaret of Kingsburgh). It was documented by Flora herself that the sheets had been saved by Lady Margaret who had preserved them with lavender. It was in fact Lady Margaret who requested they be used as *her* burial shroud, such was her devotion to the Jacobite cause.

In 1948, David Niven starred in the film "Bonnie Prince Charlie". The level of embellishment, swashbuckling and romance had the production laughed out of most cinemas in Scotland.

What we can safely say is Flora's fleeting encounter with the Bonnie Prince was wholly instrumental in his eventual escape. The Prince disguised as Betty Burke, an Irish spinning maid, landed in Kilmuir, known today as Prince's Point, Rudha Phrionnsa. He is said to have then presented Flora with a locket containing his portrait. They never met again.

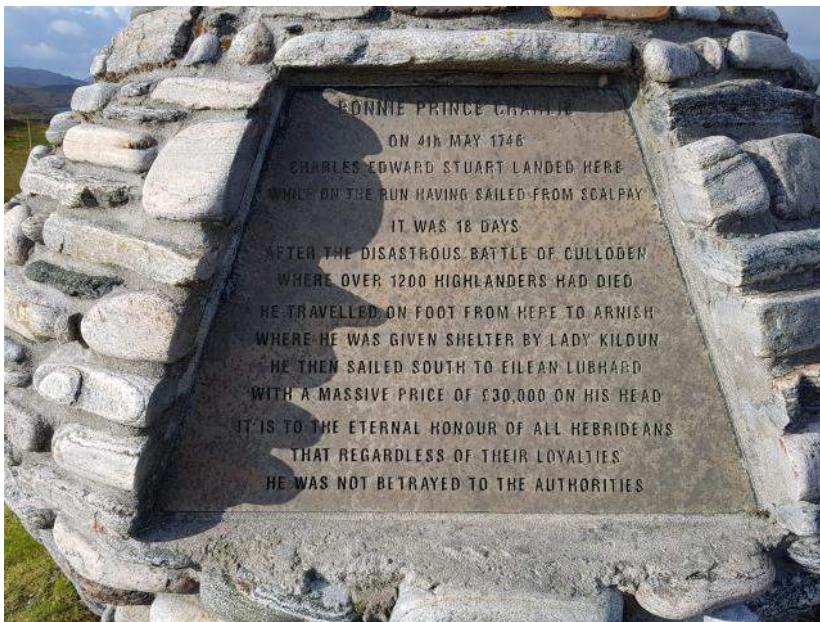
We can surmise that young Flora was a lady who would not stand by and see someone in trouble (despite the Prince having a £30,000 bounty on his head). When arrested and questioned why she had assisted the Prince, she responded, "It was no more than I would have done for Your Majesty, had you been in like situation".

This is what makes Flora a heroine, the compunction to assist without judgement. Indeed, the epitaph on her headstone is not a crown or Jacobite quote, but one from Dr. Samuel Johnson (of Bothwell and Johnson, and dictionary fame). It simply reads, "Her name will be mentioned in history and if courage and fidelity be virtues, mentioned with honour".

Photos: Author's own Sources:



Dunstaffnage Castle, near Oban, Argyll.



Bonnie Prince Charlie monument, Isle of Lewis, Outer Hebrides.



Flora MacDonald Statue, Inverness Castle,

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Find out more about Exploring History Scotland by visiting Julie's YouTube channel:

[Exploring Scotland's History - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQt8Wrd8stVm6L1Xw4dw-0w)

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQt8Wrd8stVm6L1Xw4dw-0w>

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

By Vanessa Martin, Curator



1. THE SECRET PORTRAIT

An anamorphic hidden painting of Prince Charles Edward Stuart (1720 - 1788). At first glance the object appears to be a smear of oil paints on a black wooden board, but when paired with a mirrored cylinder, the true nature of this unique object is revealed. Prince Charlie is reflected right back at you! Discovered by chance in a London junk shop in 1924 and purchased for £8 by the museum's founder, Victor Hodgson, it has been a star object in our collection ever since.

In the 18th century it was treasurable to support the exiled Stuart dynasty, so their supporters known as Jacobites, devised ways to secretly display their loyalty. They developed an elaborate series of codes and symbols to hide their allegiances from the ruling Hanoverian regime. This is one of the most unusual examples of Jacobite material culture. The portrait would have been used to drink toasts to the exiled Prince. If a non-Jacobite came into the room, the cylinder could be whisked away and allegiances hidden.

2. HOLYROODHOUSE BALL FAN

A paper and ivory fan depicting Prince Charles Edward Stuart (1720 - 1788) with the Mars, Roman god of war, and Bellona, Roman goddess of war. They are surrounded by other classical gods. The figures to the right are reputed to be the family of the Hanoverian King George II fleeing.

This design is by tradition attributed to Robert Strange, the Jacobite engraver. These fans were said to have been distributed to ladies at a ball at the Palace of Holyroodhouse in Edinburgh in 1745. Prince Charles held the ball to celebrate the Jacobite victory at the Battle of Prestonpans.

(More objects next issue)





Aonaibh ri Cheile

The Back Page



Turakina Highland Games - photos by Jo/Dean Cameron



From Left: David Weston, Dean Cameron, James Cameron, Colin Cameron, Bruce Cameron, John Cameron, Shirley-Anne Thomson



The Clan march, Cameron banner carrier James Cameron



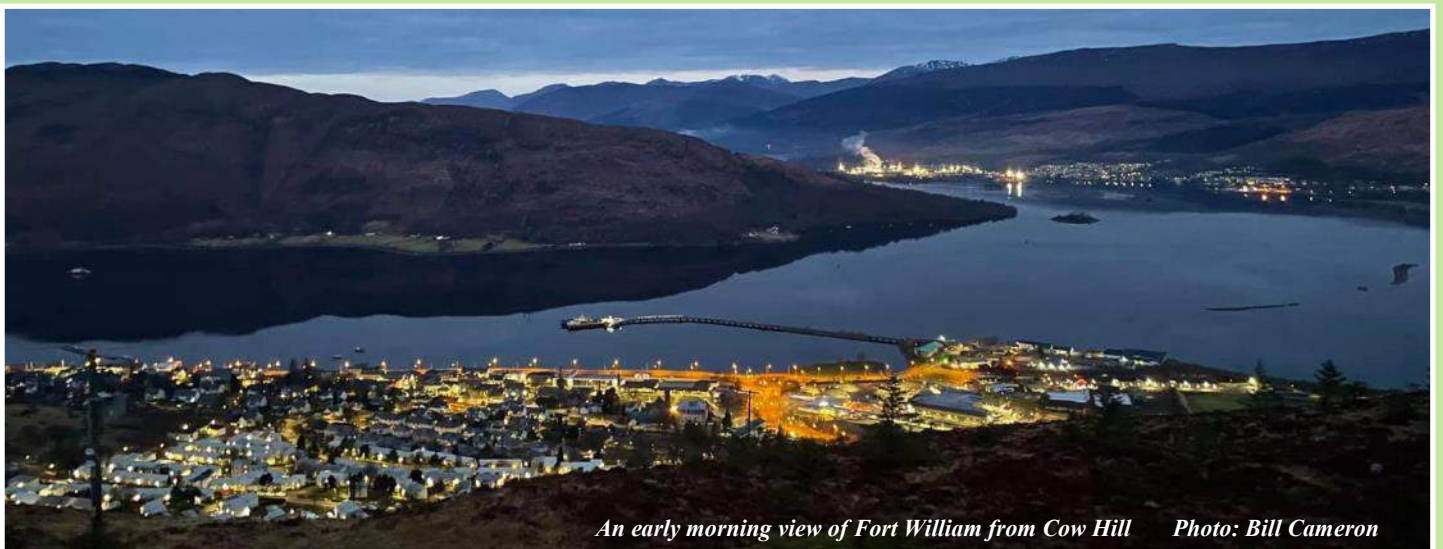
From Left: Mary White, Patrick Coogan and Margaret Coogan – descendants of Donald (The Weaver) Cameron and Christina McLean who came to NZ in 1840 on board the Blenheim. They are taking their first look at the pipes that were brought out by their family on the Blenheim.



Left: From left: Roz Grant, Ewen Grant, Tracey Grant, Isaac Grant
Right: Gail & Peter Cawkwell



The massed band



An early morning view of Fort William from Cow Hill Photo: Bill Cameron