

# Cameron

Volume 41, Issue 1

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## Waipu Highland Games

Patrick Hellier prepares to toss the 56kg, 5.5m caber while successfully defending his title of New Zealand Highland Heavyweight Champion at Waipu on 1st and 2nd January

See story Page 6

## Our 2007 First Light Exchangee

This year's First Lighter is **Kimberley Walker** from Palmerston North.

Kimberley is the only daughter of Anne Long and Tony Walker, and step daughter of Nigel Long, and has been involved with Clan Cameron all her life.

She is 22 years old, and was educated at Parkland School, Palmerston Nth Girls High, and Wanganui Collegiate.

Kimberley is a graduate of Otago University with a degree in History, and is completing her Master's degree in Business Entrepreneurship, MBA.

She will leave New Zealand on June 5th and travel to Scotland, where she will spend some time at the Clan Cameron Museum, Achnacarry, before working in other areas.



Kimberley is interested in Scottish history and her heritage as a Cameron, and will be researching some of her own heritage while there.

Margaret Cameron, and Bill Cameron are organising her three months in Scotland, and further details of her projects will be known soon.

by Mary Barber



Photo by Neil Cameron

# Hogmanay on Skye

By Editor:

*I had asked First Lighter Bill to tell us how Hogmanay is celebrated in the modern day in the Highlands. The article below was received just before publication and I thought it deserved printing in full. Some general interest items were deleted to make space. Please keep your local articles coming - they are enjoyed.*

Neil

**For many people** living in the Highlands New Year's Eve, or 'Hogmanay' as we call it, is a special time in the festive season when we gather with close friends and family seeing out the Old Year and bringing in the New. This year I took in the Hogmanay celebrations with friends on the Isle of Skye, celebrations that lasted for three days and two long nights.

Seeing in 'the bells' at midnight, as one-year slips into the next, is usually celebrated with a number of individual and communal traditions, traditions that are still widely observed throughout the Highlands and other rural parts of Scotland.

It is, I believe, through our continued celebration of such traditions that New Year in the Highlands and Islands acts as such a draw for visitors from further afield and which I hope to share with you in this article.

Travelling by bus from Fort William to Invergarry, I met up with my friend Tom who had driven up from Edinburgh to join in with the celebrations on Skye.

Making our way along the winding road to the Isles we encountered all four seasons: gale force winds, horizontal rain, sleet, and snow - along with the occasional ray of sunshine.

A brief stop in Kyle for last minute supplies, we then headed across the Skye Bridge, until recently a controversial toll bridge spanning the narrow stretch of water separating mainland Scotland from the Isle of Skye. The relatively new Bridge allows islanders, and visitors alike, to come and go as they wish without having to pay toll fees or rely on ferries that are often affected by the unpredictable weather here on the west coast of Scotland.

I am not sure what knowledge or impressions fellow Camerons in New Zealand may have of the Isle of Skye. I know there are some Camerons whose ancestors lived on Skye, before emigrating to New Zealand, so you may already know quite a bit about the island.

For those who have little knowledge of Skye, it is one of the largest islands making up the fragmented chain of islands known as the Inner Hebrides. Twenty-five miles wide at its widest point and sixty miles long, its landscape is dramatic and ever changing due to its unpredictable climate.

It is inhabited most notably by the Clan MacLeod, whose ancestral seat Dunvegan Castle is a popular attraction for many far-flung Macleods. The island is also the stronghold of the MacDonald and MacKinnon clans.

Skye is renowned for its living Gaelic culture with the well-known Gaelic college *Sabhal Mor Ostaig* attracting many Gaelic scholars from around the world as well as educating

many young Gaelic speakers from across Scotland.

Some of you may also be familiar with the music of Skye based band 'Run Rig', a folk group who have toured throughout the world, attracting a large following from those interested

in contemporary Scottish music.

Skye has a rich history of myths and legends. Flora MacDonald, the noted Jacobite heroine who helped Bonnie Prince Charlie escape from Skye to the Uists after Culloden, is buried at Kilmuir at the north end of the island and is celebrated in the well-known Skye Boat Song.

Arriving on Skye not by boat but by car, we headed to the north end of the Island where we would see out the Old Year and take in the New Year.

Arriving at our friend's house in remote Duntullum Bay just before darkness, we unloaded bags of food and drink that would easily have lasted us well into 2007.

It is traditional to have a hearty meal on Hogmanay. I am not sure if this is because of its significance as the last meal of the year, or a sensible precautionary measure to put a good lining in the tummy in preparation for the liquid refreshments that go hand in hand with Hogmanay celebrations. In our case we enjoyed Scotch broth soup, followed by venison and all the trimmings and finished off with some lovely homemade trifle.

Retiring to the front room, the peat stacked fire roared up the lum and we relaxed and reflected on the highs and lows of the year gone by as the wind and rain battered on the windows outside.

As the old wooden clock on the wall slowly ticked its way towards the end of the year, I made my way out of the house as



*The view from the house on the Island of Skye*

the chosen first-footer.

The role of the first-footer is traditionally undertaken by a tall handsome gentleman who is the first to cross the threshold of the house, bringing good luck to everyone in the house for the year ahead. They chose me - well two out of three isn't bad!

Standing at the front of the house as the wind hurled around about me, I heard the sound of gunshot from across the bay signifying the beginning of the New Year. At that I knocked on the door and was met by my friend Caroline, the lady of the house who welcomed me in with a handshake and a kiss - 2007 had arrived.

Armed with a bottle of whisky to toast the health of the household, a lump of coal to bring heat to the house and a girdle scone to share sustenance, I made my way round the rest of the party wishing them all a Happy New Year.

Placing the coal on the fire and the scone on the table, I poured everyone a drink from my bottle and raised a toast to the year past and the year ahead.

After a while the phone started to ring, some friends in America wishing us a Happy New Year, followed by Caroline's Auntie Joyce who now lives in Auckland. These calls were closely followed by friends who had opted for the city centre celebrations in Glasgow and Edinburgh; unfortunately they were both cancelled due to adverse weather conditions.

Although celebrating Hogmanay in a remote part of Skye, far from organised entertainment and the wonders of plasma screened countdowns, it seems to me that it's not where you take in the New Year but in what company you choose to take it in with.

Having celebrated New Year in a number of different countries, I think the feelings of being connected to a particular time and place are strongest for me at home in the Highlands and Islands surrounded by good friends and family.

After a while we gathered ourselves together and headed off to the nearest neighbours, Kenny and Mary, who live further along the bay.

Again as the designated first-footer I knocked on the door and was given a hearty welcome by Mary as the rest of our party slowly followed in behind.

Although it was about 2 am when we went first-footing, Hogmanay seems to be the one evening in the year where time takes on a different meaning.

The front room was already filled with other neighbours from around the bay who likewise thought of Kenny and Mary's as a good Ceilidh house to go and first-foot.

With first-foot drinks poured from our bottles we sat catching up on the various goings on, then various people sang songs backed up by bongo drums, bagpipes and guitars.

As the night progressed I think everyone provided some sort of entertainment, whether it was dancing, telling stories or playing a musical instrument.

As the hours flew past from evening to morning we headed home just before dawn, having welcomed in 2007 in good style.

Rising late on the first morning of 2007, the day passed all too quickly, with many neighbours stopping in to visit, all of whom were served with the customary tea, sandwiches, cakes and of course something stronger to see off the cold sea breeze.

On the evening of the 1<sup>st</sup> there was a Ceilidh dance held in the Village Hall in near-by Kilmuir. Another opportunity for folk from outlying areas of the township to catch up with friends and family.

With everyone taking some sort of food or drink for the evening celebrations the kitchen was full of home made baking, soup and sandwiches amongst the many pots, pans and platters.

Arriving just after nine, thinking that we would get a good seat in the hall, we were instead met with a mass of people gathered around the doorway as the musicians on stage had already started and the dance-floor was a sea of people revolving round the hall.

The evening saw many talented local musicians ply their trades as the gathered crowds were entertained, fed and watered into the wee small hours of the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of 2007.

Leaving the Village Hall in the early hours, a large party of us headed down a rough track onto yet another Ceilidh house. Looking out towards the still moonlit waters of the Little Minch, the distant lights of Harris flickered orange on the hori-

zon as millions of stars blinked above our heads; one of those special moments in which you feel connected to the bigger picture, alive and thankful for being in what feels like the right place at the right time.

Another late night of merriment ensued with an unusual line up of banjos, mouth organs and chanter playing taking us into the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of the New Year.

Rising late on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, my last day on Skye had come round all too quickly. I had intended to travel back to Fort William by bus; however, the weather had turned bad again so no buses were allowed to cross the bridge. A gentle reminder that although the new bridge connects Skye to the mainland, it still remains an island, distinctive in character and susceptible to the vagaries of the weather.

Luckily someone was heading back to the mainland by car and I was able to connect with a bus further inland.

Travelling back along the road to the Isles, I reflected on three wonderful days, the sights, sounds and unique celebrations of a New Year on Skye.

A Happy New Year to all Camerons in New Zealand.

*William Cameron*

### 'Lochaber Lines' - on the kilt

"**THE KILT** is today worn with great pride and will be much in evidence at functions over the festive holidays.

We may squeeze into our own for Hogmanay but it has been let out more often than your average criminal.

However, our national dress was not always so popular and it is interesting to note what Lochiel said on the subject when addressing the founding meeting of *An Comunn Gaidhealach an Locabair* in 1906.

Apologising to a packed hall for being the only person present who was unable to speak Gaelic, the Cameron Clan Chief said: 'As regards our Highland dress, I think it is a great pity that the kilt has so absolutely disappeared except in the army.

'Why does everyone nowadays prefer to wear the English trousers instead of their own national garb? In the old days, everyone wore a kilt until after the '45 when, as you know, it was proscribed. Since then, except in the army, it has never generally been revived, and the only people seen in a kilt now are a few Highland Lairds, most of whom only wear it on special occasions such as going to church or attending meetings like this, not to mention a number of Cockney tourists in the summer, who think it is the right thing to do when they come to the Highlands.

'I should like everyone to wear the kilt: It was good enough for our fathers and it ought to be good enough for us. I should like to see it as odd to see a man in trousers in the Highlands as it would be to see an Arab in a frockcoat and top hat in Morocco.'

□ We wonder what Lochiel would have made of this week's news that the good soldiers in the Royal Regiment of Scotland are having to share 320 kilts.

*Oban Times 21 December 2006*

## *A message from our President*



Dear Clan Cameron Members,

### **Our Celtic Connections**

The Celts were one of the greatest peoples of Europe in the 500 years before Christ. From a homeland north of the Alps, they spread East and West, from Anatolia [in modern Turkey] to Spain and Britain.

Raiding bands fought their way into Italy and Greece, looking for plunder and new lands in which to settle.

The Celts were a people full of contradictions. They spent much of their time fighting, often among themselves – their religion involved sacrifices to the gods, with animals and even human victims, but they were not an uncivilised people. They included many fine craftsmen who produced objects of great beauty and artistic skill. The Celts never united [more the pity] and did not establish a great empire. They were divided into many tribes who were continually squabbling; this inter-tribal rivalry was the cause of the Celts eventual defeat by the Romans. One by one the Celtic tribes were brought within the Roman Empire, except for those in the far north of Scotland and in Ireland. There the old ways of life went on into the Christian times.

But, although the Celts were over-run and absorbed in the Roman Empire it is still possible today, some 2,000 years later, to find traces of their existence. In most countries of Celtic settlement there are the remains of hill forts and Celtic shrines, overgrown but still recognisable. Archaeologists have uncovered a great many Celtic artefacts – jewellery, weapons, tools; and many more still remain to be discovered.

Traces of the Celtic language survive in numerous place names, as well as more directly in the Celtic language spoken today – Scottish and Irish Gaelic, Manx, Welsh and Breton. Although they left no written records, the Celts have not been forgotten and their blood continues to flow through every Highlander's veins. [My thanks to Raymond Cameron – Clan Cameron - North of England Branch - 1984]

The Gaelic language has its roots in antiquity; it was the ancient language of Scotland and even in this changing world, it is still preserved and treasured in some parts of the Highlands. Indeed, there is a revival of interest in the old tongue all over Scotland, and not only in Scotland but in many parts of the world the bond of language is holding many communities together. The late Hon. Peter Fraser, when he was Prime Minister of New Zealand, said he could find a resemblance in the Gaelic culture with that of the Maori.

At least John Stuart Blackie, Professor of Greek at Edinburgh, strove to link the language with wider concerns; "The moment the Gaelic language dies, the Highland people die with it and with the Highland people dies all the glory of Celtic chivalry and all the wealth of Celtic story". He aimed to put Gaelic on the linguistic map so as to redefine Scotland's place in the world.

Today, I would like to send my personal greetings and best wishes to the committee members of our branches, who do so much work for their fellow members. An enormous amount of work is involved in maintaining the branches and the Clan Association would like to say thanks for their very hard work. They are the quiet achievers; for without these members, the Clan Cameron would not function at all.

I would also like to encourage our members to begin planning for the 2009 International Gathering to be held at Achnacarry Castle. The Auckland Branch excelled when they decided to promote the gathering in 2005 that was held at the Saint Kentigerns College. It was a success story, when approximately 400 plus Clansmen and Clanswomen from many parts of the world wanted to be with us on that occasion. It was a very enjoyable weekend and one that I will never forget.

**"The future of the Clan depends on the youth of today, and is essential to get them interested in Clan affairs and to learn about their heritage."**

*Colonel Charles Cameron*

Joy and I would like to thank the Manawatu Branch for their warm welcome when we attended the Square Day celebrations early in December. The Manawatu Branch excelled themselves with a full on approach to succeed with plenty of Haggis sandwiches, coffee and sausages to fuel their funds for the branch and First Light. One person I met had been having Haggis sandwiches for close on 12 years from the Clan Cameron caravan and looked forward to them each year and would never miss. Our sincere thanks to our hosts: Harry and Mary and Joy and Colin for a wonderful weekend.

I would like to quote Lt Colonel Charles Cameron, by using his opening speech at the International Gathering held in Auckland in 2005:

"The future of the Clan depends on the youth of today, and is essential to get them interested in Clan affairs and to learn about their heritage. Long may this continue, for I believe today, the Clan has an important role to play to bring together people from many different countries in understanding and friendship. We must continue to seek ways of putting the strength and unity of the Clan to good use in this century".

With kind regards and thank you for all your support in 2006. The Officers and Council members look forward to seeing you once again during the coming months.

"Leis gach deagh dhurachd and Slainte mhath"  
[With every good wish and good health]

***Denis Cameron***



## *Aonaibh ri Cheile*

### 'Cameron'

is the newsletter of the Clan Cameron Association of New Zealand (Inc) and is published on or near the 1st day of every even month of the year

Deadlines for articles are on the 15th of the month before publication. Items of urgency or importance may be accepted up to 10 days later.

Articles about Camerons, Branch activities with photographs, and advice of Coming Events are especially welcome.

**Deadline for next issue:  
15 March 2007**

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## Coming events

### **Saturday 10 February 2007**

14th Paeroa Highland Games and Tattoo. 9am at the Paeroa Domain. Evening Tattoo starts 6.30 pm. A record number of Pipe Bands will compete. The parade to the Town Square will commence at 11am and it would be great if you were able to take part. Join us in the Cameron tent.

### **Sunday 25 February 2007**

The Manawatu branch plan to hold their annual picnic on Sunday, February 25th, at the Ashhurst Domain. For further details, please contact Joy Cameron ph 06 3549365, email [kenprace@clear.net.nz](mailto:kenprace@clear.net.nz), or Mary Barber, ph 06 323 5906, email [mbarber@clear.net.nz](mailto:mbarber@clear.net.nz)

### **Sunday 25 February 2007**

Auckland Branch AGM at 4pm, followed by a barbecue at 5pm, at the home of Brian and Pam Cameron, 4 Pencarrow Avenue, Epsom. Meat provided. Please bring a salad or a sweet (as arranged with Pam on 630 4383) and drinks of your choice. Enquiries to Don Cameron

### **Weekend 13 - 15 April 2007**

Clan Cameron AGM and Gathering at the Hornby Working Men's Club, Christchurch. See enclosed flyer and registration form.. Enquiries to Alex Cameron.

### **Saturday 10 March 2007**

'Tattoo Day' at Lloyd Elsmore Park, Pakuranga Road, Auckland. Commencing at 10am. Clan Societies will have tents there. Enquiries to the editor.

### **Saturday 28 April 2007 1pm**

'Scotland the Brave' at the Aotea Centre, Auckland, by Andrew McKinnon with the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra. The smash hit celebration of the best of Scottish Music, Song and Dance. If you are interested in attending the 1pm matinee showing we may be able to obtain a concession price for a group booking together with other Clans. For further details and a copy of the flyer please contact the editor. We will need to know the numbers by Friday 9th February.

### Useful Websites

**Clan Cameron New Zealand website**  
<http://camclan.orcon.net.nz/>

**Clan Cameron Online**  
<http://www.clan-cameron.org/>

**Clan Cameron Scotland (New Site)**  
<Http://www.ceolnancraobh.org.uk>

**Clan Cameron Australia**  
<http://www.clan-cameron.org.au>

**Lochaber Life**  
<http://www.lochaberinternet.co.uk/life/>

**Fort William Online**  
<http://www.visit-fortwilliam.co.uk/>

## The Waipu Highland Games



If there was any further proof necessary, the Waipu Highland Games held in the Northland town each January 1 proves that when enthusiastic country folk get together the big-city promoters can be left way behind.

The Waipu Games were established back in 1871, long before people formed the New Zealand Rugby Union and perhaps ranking only second in seniority to the Anniversary Regatta in Auckland.

The latest big day at Waipu actually stretched to two, with the traditional parades, piping and dancing events on the first day, and more competition on January 2, with the Australasian heavyweight team championship as the highlight.

The daily newspaper, the Northern Advocate, estimated that 4000 people (about the same number that watched all the first New Zealand-Sri Lanka cricket test at Christchurch) made a great spectacle on the Waipu Caledonian Park on January 1. That might have been a conservative estimate, for Games officials were talking about a total of perhaps 9000 for the two days, but there was nothing low-scale about the Advocate's coverage of the Waipu Games.

The Games led the Advocate's sports page on January 2, with back-up cover, feature stories and colour photos on the inside pages, and running on to the editions for the next two days.

Neil and Ruth Cameron again led the Cameron contingent, and if there is ever a prize for the best-decorated and most informative clan tent then Neil would be close to winning first prize.

In passing, the clan tents are becoming more and more elaborate and attract quite a few passers-by interested in confirming their clan links, or checking to see if they have any Scottish heritage.

Heather Cameron, the latest First Lighter from New Zealand, was among the Cameron party, and she could show the colour photos she took when she was in the Highlands and Western Isles.

Heather was the star attraction for two young lasses who wanted to know all about Scotland and the clans, and Camerons. They and Heather got on famously, especially considering they were from Taiwan and might be struggling to find any links to Lochaber. Another visitor to the tent was Chris Lyons, who rejoined the Auckland branch and looked big enough to lock the All Black scrum.

Before leaving the tent, it might be time for the Auckland Camerons to purchase a larger home for events such as those



Photos by Neil Cameron

at Waipu, Paeroa, Howick and the Auckland Highland Games. The present tent is owned by Neil and might well be retained as back-up accommodation when needed.

Clan Donald, for example, had a tent twice the size of the Cameron tent which gave them more room to entertain their guests and interested visitors. In fact, Clan Donald might have taken the lead in the genealogy stakes, for they had three lap-tops on display if anyone wanted to check their clan background.

And, with modesty, it should be noted that Clan Cameron was given the place of honour, leading the clan parade into the ground at the start of the festivities on January 1.

And at the end the New Zealanders won the trans-Tasman match against the Australians in the heavyweight competitions such as tossing the caber and other field events.

Patrick Hellier, a policeman who lives in Auckland but was born in the north, has won the New Zealand heavyweight title for 11 years, he led the New Zealanders in the 'test' win, and the Waipu organizers wanted to do something special to show their high regard for Hellier.

So he was presented with the Assynt Quaich (a quaich is a two-handed drinking bowl), a special and historic pewter trophy to mark his long contribution to the Waipu Games over the years.

by Donald Cameron

### The Highlanders' Museum Appeal

(see last Newsletter)

Donations to the appeal by the following are acknowledged with pleasure:

- \$30. Brigadier M R Kennedy
- \$20. Denis and Joy Cameron  
Richard & Toni (Cameron) Taylor  
Bruce & Diane Cameron  
David & Rowena Cameron  
Neil and Ruth Cameron

Any donations, big or small, will be greatly appreciated.  
Please send to the Clan Cameron NZ Treasurer.

## Settlers fondly remember the past



*Reliving favourite memories, the most senior lady of the day, Ethel Cameron, pictured with her son Harold.*

It was a day to remember for the more than 130 guests who attended a celebration last week marking the 125th anniversary of the arrival of emigrant settlers from Britain aboard the *Lady Jocelyn*.

The Te Puke Lions organised the event to acknowledge those who had contributed to 'making the district a great place to live', and to give early settlers the chance to reminisce about the early days. Anyone who had lived in the district since before 1940 was invited, and Lions members were the perfect hosts - providing entertainment, a wonderful afternoon tea, and the chance for our elder townfolk to relive some fond memories.

Ethel Cameron (nee Cuff) was found to be the oldest resident in attendance, born in February 19, 1909. She came to the district with her family in 1917 to farm 20 acres to farm 20 acres up Beatty Ave., with two cows to supply the family with milk and cream. In 1930 she married Matt Cameron.

"We went back to Scotland for our honeymoon, six weeks on the boat each way," said Ethel. "We returned to Te Puke and farmed 70 cows at Otamarakau for many years. I remember the season before we started butterfat was at 10/6, and in our first year on the farm it dropped to 9d!"

Mrs Cameron says that despite the depression, and some of the hardships people experienced, "it was a wonderful time. It brought people together - we'd never take the Dodge to town without asking all the neighbours what they needed."

The Camerons kept a horse and cart, decked out with motorcar wheels, for closer trips.

"We called it the chariot."

*The above is an excerpt from the Te Puke Times of Dec. 6th. Article and Photograph by Susie Steens, Chief Reporter.*

## Manawatu Branch News

The Manawatu branch held their usual stall at Square Day Palmerston North on December 9th 2006, selling haggis sandwiches and a sausage sizzle. Due the rather miserable day, hot coffee and chocolate was a popular addition to the stall, and it was well patronised by the pipers and public alike. Our thanks go to Bruce Cameron, Feilding, for the loan of his coffee making machine, and his time spent making the drinks. Thanks also go to our willing band of helpers who man the stall for the day.

The Manawatu branch are delighted that one of their members, Kimberley Walker, has been chosen as the First Lighter for 2007. She will travel to Scotland in June and plans to return at the end of November. We wish her well for her exchange.

by Mary Barber



*The Cameron Stall at Square Day in Palmerston North*

*Photo by Denis Cameron*

*From Left: Alistair Cameron, Shane East (obsc), Sonia Cameron, Elizabeth Shearer (in doorway), Mary Barber, Colin Heggie, Harry Lampen-Smith, Bruce Cameron (Feilding), Jessie Annabell, Ewen Grant (obsc) John Cameron, a young Cameron, Mary Lampen-Smith.*



# Aonaibh ri Cheile

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February 2007  
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## In This Issue...

'Hogmanay on Skye' and 'Te Puke Settlers fondly remember the past'

## Cameron connections



Clockwise from top left:

1. Graeme Cameron prepares to lead the Clan in the parade at the Turakina Highland Games on 27 January.
2. A group of Camerons in front of the Cameron Clan tent at Turakina. From left: Graeme Cameron, Mary Barber, Jessie Annabell, Ruth Cameron, Peter Cameron, Liam Cameron, Joy Cameron, Zac Cameron, Sonia Cameron, John Annabell and Hazel Cameron.
3. One of the guided tours sets off up the hill during the Auckland Branch visit to Motuihe Island on 20 January.
4. Peg Emery, Dave Bower and Carolyn Vaudrey show great interest in the old trees on Motuihe.
5. Donald, Diana, Valmar and Liz Cameron cut and serve the birthday cake carried to Motuihe to surprise one of the Auckland members.

Photos by Neil Cameron

