



Cameron



The Magazine of Clan Cameron New Zealand Inc.



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Rob Cameron and Finlay Cameron play rousing tunes in front of the Cameron tent at the Paeroa Highland Games



Cameron Banners on display at the Paeroa Highland Games

“Cameron”

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

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A Message from our Commissioner...

Bailey Naumai haere mai, Failte. Welcome

I have over the last week been riding through the beautiful Otago Rail trail, and been thinking about how amazing our earlier generations were in what they achieved in their engineering. I can highly recommend traveling through this region. What a beautiful country we live in.

It's been a busy period over the last few months to be able to connect with Camerons at the various Highland Games in Horoarata, Waipu, and Paeroa. It was so good to see each other and be together. Thank you to those members who hosted in our Clan Cameron tents and greeted visitors interested in learning more about our heritage. One comment I get all the time from visitors is how wonderful our Clan newsletter is. Thank you Neil, for the amazing work you do to make it so memorable. It is a wonderful benefit of membership.

Unfortunately I was not able to get to Turakina this year, but I did see that the weather was not cooperating on that day. The rain here in Auckland that weekend was simply unbelievable! Our hearts go out to the flooding victims across the North Island, particularly in Hawkes Bay and Gisborne areas. I hope all your family and friends were able to weather the storm conditions.

It's been wonderful for so many of our members to meet Finlay Cameron. Thank you to all members who have made his visit to New Zealand so memorable. I have enjoyed getting to know him and hear about his life in Lochaber. I was able to attend a Clan Cameron meeting in Palmerston North where Finlay played the pipes and showed photographs of his life and family. Finlay has been a great ambassador for Scotland and Lochaber. He will shortly be leaving us homeward bound. We wish him well and hope to see him again. There is a farewell luncheon for him in Auckland on the 2 April if you happen to be able to join us.

Have you seen the wonderful new clan crest badges that have been made by the Auckland branch? At just \$20 each they are a great way to share our heritage. One of our members in the Manawatu bought one each for their 10 grandchildren, perhaps something to consider. Contact your local branch to order some, or contact us in Auckland.

I do hope we might see you at the Clan Cameron annual gathering this May in Masterton. The team from the Wellington Wairarapa are sure to make you feel very welcome.

Aonaibh ri Chéile

Dale Cameron Bailey



Clan Cameron Gathering. Achnacarry, Scotland.

August 2nd/4th 2024

Accommodation is often difficult in Fort William at that time of the year so early booking is essential.

It would be nice to have a strong representation from New Zealand.



Next Magazine Deadline is 15 May 2023

Printed By

Clan Cameron New Zealand Website

www.clancameronnz.co.nz

Welcome to the following Members who have recently joined us:

Auckland Branch

Robyn Stevens
Gina Cameron

Whangarei
Grey Lynn

Bay of Plenty Branch

Jenny Balmer

Welcome Bay

Canterbury Branch

Dean Tobin

Dunedin

*Ceud Mìle Fàilte
One Hundred
Thousand Welcomes*

Scotland the Brave Tour

17th July/12th August 2024 *By Stewart Cameron*

By Editor: Stewart is arranging the following tour, which will include visiting Achnacarry for the August Gathering. He has arranged earlier tours to Achnacarry Gatherings which have been well supported by Camerons from NZ and Australia.

Visit the website below for full details. This is a no worries tour particularly for us oldies. I have paid my deposit.

Join Australian-based Kiwi, Stewart Cameron and his wife Jennifer on a 3 week Scotland tour - with a difference - in 2024.

Their company, Music Lovers Tours, has been creating tours to Europe, UK, the Pacific and New Zealand for over a decade. Prior to this, they were successful performers in the field of opera, as well as producers of opera seasons and concert series. Their performance company, **Operatif** has been in operation since 1994.

As their travel company name suggests, there is a focus on music, both classical and traditional, on the tours and **Scotland The Brave**. All tours are hosted by Jennifer and Stewart. There will also time to attend the Cameron Gathering planned for the start of August, with those details still being finalised at Achnacarry.

There is a great deal of information on their website : musicloverstours.com.au

The tour will be on sale in June 2023. In the meantime, it is suggested that interested Camerons join those who have 'Reserved a Place' - a unique system to guarantee your place while the tour is being finalised with a fully-refundable deposit of AUD \$ 200. Most Music Lovers Tours sell out from those who have 'Reserved'.

The tour will enjoy charming, centrally-located, generally 4 to 5 star hotels in the two major cities and 3 to 4 star in the smaller centres. There are many inclusions, convivial special dinners & lunches and of course, music -

National Secretary Clan Cameron

Tanya Cameron has indicated her desire to step down as National Secretary a role she has been doing ably for over a decade. Tanya has a proud association with Clan Cameron and has been incredibly efficient in her work. Thank you so much for all that you have done, and for your ideas about how we might continue to improve. I have been grateful for your assistance.

That leaves us with an important vacancy. Can you get your thinking caps on as who would like to pick up the role. Please drop me a line if you know someone who might like to help out.

Dale

both in theatres and with musicians brought in my Stewart & Jennifer.

At this stage the tour pricing will be in the region of AUD \$16,500 for Twin share, with a single supplement of around AUD \$4,000. This includes Economy flights on Emirates from the East coast of Australia. There is expected to be a small surcharge for departures from Auckland. As always, upgrades to Business class are possible as are delayed returns home (or early departure for Europe or UK). Travellers may also choose their own airline and take a 'Land Only' option.

Interested Camerons are invited to complete an enquiry form on the website, email Stewart at stewart@musicloverstours.com.au or "Reserve a Place", with a fully-refundable deposit.



Stewart on the last Gathering in 2009 at the New Club in Edinburgh.



One of the hotels on 'Scotland the Brave'

Coming Events

Sunday 14 May 2023

Auckland Branch AGM

St. Aidan's Church Social Rooms,
5 Ascot Ave, Remuera. 4pm.

Notifications will be sent to all
Auckland members

Saturday 20 May 2023

National Gathering and AGM

Masterton Club, Chapel Street,
Masterton. Morning ~ executive
meeting, morning tea, AGM, finger
food lunch.

Afternoon free but we will offer a
couple of visits to local places of
interest, wineries etc

Evening ~ entertainment with music,
dancing, meal, haggis etc.

See website and enclosed flyer

*If you intend coming and staying for
a night or two book your
accommodation asap.*

*Masterton has the following hotels/
motels within easy distance of the
Masterton Club venue:*

*Copthorne Hotel and Resort
Amble Inn Motel - walking distance
to the venue*

*Masterton Motor lodge
Gateway Motor Inn*

*Discovery Motor Lodge
BK's Chardonnay Motor Lodge
A few Airbnb's*

*See you in Masterton in May - Rob
Cameron*

Saturday 16 September 2023

Auckland Branch Annual Dinner

The Parnell, Gladstone Road,
Parnell. 6pm for 6.30

From the Branches....

Auckland by Rob Cameron

Bryan Haggitt and I attended the Turakina Highland Games on January 28th, which was our first time there. Despite the rain, we were able to see Finlay compete in the A grade Piobaireachd, and we caught up with some Manawatu and Bay of Plenty Clan members at the clan tent. We sold about a dozen of Dale's new Clan Cameron Crest badges which arrived just before the event. We have been steadily selling them ever since already covering the cost of the badges. I advise anyone interested in a badge to get in touch with their branch.



Neil and Duncan took the clan tent to Paeroa on February 11th, which had a good Auckland presence and was joined by our first lighter Finlay. We also had Auckland and Manawatu branches supporting Tanya and Bay of Plenty for the day.

Personally, I have been busy with the City of Sails Pipe Band, competing at various competitions including the Auckland Provincial Pipe Band Competition, the Central North Island Pipe Band Competition, and the Pipe Band Nationals in Christchurch. City of Sails came 3rd in the MSR and received top marks in drumming for Grade 4b.

It was great to see Finlay competing with Manawatu in Grade 1, and I hope he learned a lot from his experience in the competition. It was also great to see Manawatu Pipe band receiving top marks in piping for both MSR and medley, although they came second overall to Canterbury Caledonian Society. I wish them all the best as they prepare for this year's Worlds competition in August.

In terms of Clan business, we have started planning our annual dinner for this year, which will be held on September 16th at the Parnell with Originz as the entertainment. We have also set our branch AGM for May 14th at St. Aidan's Church social rooms, with a BBQ to follow the meeting. Notifications for this event will be sent to Auckland members.

We are also hosting a leaving lunch for Finlay on April 2nd at midday. All are invited, especially those who have interacted with Finlay during his stay. Special invites have been sent to out of Auckland members and non-clan members who have helped out while Finlay was here.

Lastly, we have been trying to organise the final weeks of Finlay's stay, but it has been difficult due to the recent bad weather in the North Island. Most of Finlay's remaining time will be spent navigating around closed roads as he travels through the Waikato, Bay of Plenty, Gisborne, and Hawkes Bay. Finlay leaves from Auckland on April 11th, and he will have a full day in Brisbane where he will catch up with an Australian pipe maker before travelling to Switzerland to help with tutoring The Pipes and Drums of Basel pipe band.

Manawatu by Anne Walker

Clan Cameron Manawatu have enjoyed hosting Finlay Cameron in our region over the last 6 weeks. He's been home hosted by various families who have ensured he's been able to see the best of the region, while still pursuing his piping commitments. Highlights of Finlay's travel have been posted on Facebook.



We were all sorry that the Turakina Games held over Auckland Anniversary Weekend were a washout. We were not in big numbers at Turakina, and grateful for our Auckland members who travelled down and back in awful weather to support us. We were pleased to see Finlay enjoy some piping success, and particularly pleased to see Patrick Coogan, one of our youngest members, win in the C Grade.

We were very mindful that the weather in Auckland was much, much worse over that weekend, and of course Cyclone Gabrielle then roared through the north and east of the county a couple of weeks later cutting a destructive path everywhere. Our thoughts are with all we have been affected. We look forward to gathering again in the summer of 2024 with the usual sunshine and fine weather.

During February Clan Cameron Manawatu held a Branch gathering at our home in Palmerston North, as part of our commitment to welcome Finlay. About 25 Branch members gathered to hear Finlay tell us a little about himself and his family, his piping and pipe-making, and then we enjoyed afternoon tea in the sunshine. We were blessed with great weather all day and Finlay and Bruce Cameron piped for us in the garden before a relaxed barbeque meal in the evening. It was a great catch-up for us all and feedback was very positive.

The Branch encourages members to attend the AGM and gathering in Masterton on the 19th and 20th May, and we look forward to hosting all here at our annual dinner at Wharerata, Massey University, on the evening of Saturday June 19th.

Hawke's Bay by Hamish Cameron

This should be a brief report ----- for two reasons
The first, and most telling is instigated by Joan --- "the ultimate authority"--- who noted that the recent absolute devastation wreaked on Hawkes Bay was all my fault -----



If I hadn't continually extolled how far sighted and clever our forebears were, in diverting rivers etc to their own ends, then maybe MOTHER NATURE would have carried on as she had done in previous centuries, and left us alone -----

Instead --- "because of me"----- she sent walls of water (no exaggeration) down from the hills in the middle of the night that just obliterated generations of infrastructure and livelihoods. Weeks later there are still people isolated by roading, bridges washed out (over 60 bridges) and without power or landline---- which also means internet.

The second reason for a brief report is the fact there is nothing to report ---- other than the Hastings Highland Games are just around the corner come Easter.

Until then we will remain in clean-up mode.

Bay of Plenty by Tanya Cameron

Clan Cameron Bay of Plenty have done nothing for a long time.

If we are lucky we have 6 at the AGM and nobody responds to emails or pays their subscriptions.



Paeroa Highland Games however was a great turnout. David and Elaine Cameron from Whakatane, John and Shirley Baillie from Te Aroha, Mary-Anne Cameron and Rhys Fenton from Rotorua were all in attendance from the Bay of Plenty Branch. The amazing organiser Neil Cameron and his sidekick Duncan McQueen, Rob Cameron (Auckland President) from Auckland were there with the tent. Our National Treasurer Hillary Hakaraia and her husband were there from Auckland as was John Cameron from Manawatu and Finlay Cameron (who was staying in Manawatu).

The tattoo at the end of the night was great as was the entertainment with the Resonators and Susan Prentice on the stage. We managed to survive the day with reasonable weather before Cyclone Gabrielle bore down on Sunday in the area.

I have a new job and move to Opotiki on April Fool's day leaving my son behind to become his own person, and house sitting for a week before I go, so I am currently being pulled in many directions and am on a tight time budget. Be safe and look after each other.

Canterbury by Nick Cameron

Since the Hororata gathering the main activities for me have been the usual plant breeding work including gathering data, spraying, harvesting and cataloging seed for planting.



Our Canterbury Caledonian 4A band competed in February in Dunedin and Blenheim and last week we have just played in the National pipe band contest in Christchurch this last weekend (10th & 11th March).

Finlay played for the Manawatu Grade 1 band who won the piping scores in the set and medley events over the winning Canterbury Caledonian band... so he was very happy.

I managed to catch up with Rob Cameron our Auckland branch president and with his parents Alan and Morea in both the Blenheim and Christchurch events. I have purchased 20 badges from Rob which we can sell to our Canterbury branch members. I also met up with Dale our commissioner at the Dunedin and Christchurch events. Dale seems to be everywhere!!

I will be competing in the Hastings solos during Easter ... so hope to catch up with Hamish and Joan Cameron then.

At present we have the pleasure once again of hosting Finlay Cameron for the next 2 nights with a quick visit to see Donald Gannaway and Greg Wilson. Greg is a well known solo piper and judge, but also makes bagpipe reeds and Finlay has asked him to make a set of reeds for the ancient Cameron Blenheim pipes. Finlay has been generously gifted a set of bagpipes by Rob Cameron of Masterton... and Finlay is thinking it might be a good idea to provide this set to a New Zealand up and coming Cameron piper. I have suggested he put up a circular to enable this to happen.

Wellington/Wairarapa by Rob Cameron

The Wellington/Wairarapa branch of Clan Cameron was excited to host Finlay Cameron recently. During his time with us he visited some of the local sights, met Clan members, went to a practice with the Fern and Thistle pipe band in Masterton, and participated in the Pipes in the Park Pipe Band day at Waitangi Park in Wellington.



Masterton members Liz and Lawrence Cheetham hosted Finlay for a day's sightseeing which culminated in him going to the local Pipe Band practice. Cath and Rob Cameron provided accommodation and a trip to Castlepoint during his stay. Hazel and Graeme Cameron provided accommodation in Wellington as well as transport and sightseeing.

Finlay played with the Manawatu Scottish Pipe Band at the Pipes in the Park day; the only Grade 1 band there on the day. They turned out immaculately and played beautifully. This was classed as practice for the upcoming Nationals in Christchurch the following week.

During his time with Cath and Rob, Finlay resurrected an old set of bagpipes I had in storage that had not been played for 40+ years, maybe more!! Quite an emotional moment when Finlay began playing tunes on them.

Finlay is a wonderful ambassador for piping and Scotland. His easy manner and friendly persona makes him a popular visitor wherever he goes and his obvious huge talent in piping has been a great asset to all groups he has visited.

We are indebted to the Auckland Branch for initiating and financing Findlay's visit.

Recently Cath and Rob Cameron from Masterton had a visit from Ken and Rhona Cameron; Finlay Cameron our current piping visitor's parents.

During their visit Ken said he thought I had shorn sheep on their property many years ago. While working on Lochiel Estates during our OE in the early 70's I did do some shearing out in the field. Two of us shored using a flexi tube dropper off the back of a Landrover while 2 others shored using clippers. Well goodness, me not long after their visit I received an email from Ken which included photos of me shearing at their farm. By the look of my long bushy hair I could have done with a good shear myself!! It's a small world.



Thank you to those who have already registered for the annual Gathering to be held in Masterton 20th May this year. We hope more register and make this a great fun event and something special.

Registration forms are on the Clan Cameron website - Catherine Cameron

Iar by Neville Wallace

We picked up an exhausted Finlay Cameron from Palmerston Airport. We had conversations on the way home, then went and did the "Believe it or Not Quiz", that Shona and I do every Tuesday evening. His first public appearance was at the quiz when he played a couple of times for patrons at the quiz and one quiz contestant shouted Finlay a beer. But after several long sleep ins, we believe Finlay eventually got attuned to local conditions.



We organized a successful Haggis party to which approximately sixty people came along. This was at a local Eatery by the name of Upside Down and Finlay played there many times, as well as piping in the Haggis. Now as being the maker of haggis and having them at Clan Functions, a heck of a lot was brought home for yours truly, but last night people ate the lot many coming back for second and third helpings. That was Finlay's and my breakfast that was eaten.

A very interesting aspect of the evening was when Finlay was approached by Jim Duthie, who asked Finlay, if he knew of a cousin of Jim Duthie, and it turned out that Jim's cousin, back in Scotland had tutored Finlay when he was about the age of six or seven. Another Patron was local helicopter pilot, Alan Beck who had a long conversation with Finlay about bagpipe playing technique, plus taking much video for further learning. Isn't it great that we now have cell phones that have such capabilities?

Today Friday our daughter, Kelly Judkins took Finlay on a local sightseeing tour, and a visit to the local Tawhiti museum where he saw what our forebears faced when they came to New Zealand and established our farming foundations. Now here in NZ we're getting so much made about changing the European to Māori names, Finlay went to some lengths to explain this is happening in Scotland as well from English to Gaelic.

Finlay has been a joy to host and we wish him all the best in his future endeavours.



Some of the Clan Cameron Members at Paeroa. From Left: *Duncan McQueen, Dale Bailey, Shirley and John Baillie, Rob Cameron, Bryan Haggitt, Finlay Cameron, John Cameron, Tanya Cameron and Neil Cameron.*



Shirley and John Baillie



David Cameron



Hillary and Cass Hakaraia



Finlay Cameron with Mary-Anne and Tanya Cameron



Sarah Jenkins, a niece of Astie Cameron, Lochiel's Estate Manager. She is with current First Lighter, Finlay Cameron. Astie was the first First lighter from Lochaber



Glenis Cameron and John Cameron



Above: Rob Cameron (Auckland President) 's parents Morea and Allan, in the Blenheim and Districts Pipe Band, and Nick in the Canterbury Caledonian grade 4a Band, at the Canterbury Centre Competition held in Blenheim over February 25th / 26th.

Right: Cath and Rob Cameron of Masterton hosted Finlay for a very pleasant visit (see Wellington/Wairarapa report) On right Finlay is shown with Rob.



Clan members from far and wide gathered at Anne Walker-Long's house for the Manawatu AGM combined with afternoon tea and a BBQ dinner. Finlay Cameron & Bruce Cameron piped for us and among the tunes played was the one that Bruce and Astie Cameron wrote for the late Maisie Earle. Left: Dick Earle with Jessie and John Annabell. Right: Finlay and Bruce.



**Clan Cameron
Lapel Badges for
sale.**

\$20 each

**They can be
obtained through
your branch
presidents**

**-or by post from
Dale Bailey or
Rob Cameron by
adding \$5**

(Addresses on page 2)

**Also for sale at the
AGM in Masterton and
the Auckland AGM**



Sarah McQueen, prospective First lighter, seen with her two grandfathers, Peter McQueen and Neil Cameron, on the occasion of her brother Andrew's wedding.

Sarah entertained us with her Highland Dancing at the Auckland Clan Dinners from a very young age, played the pipes in the St. Kentigern College Pipes and Drums and in the City of Dunedin Highland Pipe Band.

Sarah is currently completing her PhD at Otago University.

Continuing “My Time as a First Lighter” *by Finlay Cameron*

As my time in New Zealand draws to a close, I would like to reflect on some of my experiences as a ‘First Lighter’, a piper and a ‘Scot abroad’. I must first apologise for my lack of input in the previous edition – I have been keeping very busy, and instead of submitting my report I was hiking in the Abel Tasman National Park with my bagpipes! Since my last report, I have travelled more of the country than I could have possibly anticipated – during this time I have been hosted across several different branches of the Clan Cameron, and I have met some wonderful folks along the way. On the lead up to Christmas, I spent considerable time with the Auckland branch, and I enjoyed a lovely Christmas celebration with Bryan and Jenny Haggitt and their family. New Year was spent in Waipu at the Highland Games, where I competed in the ‘Helen MacGregor Memorial Competition’, as well as the field events on New Year’s Day.

The picture below is from the Helen MacGregor Memorial competition – the other prize winners are Callum Carn, Campbell Wilson, and Stuart Easton. The contest was judged by Willie Rowe, who was the winner of the previous competition. I spent the following week camping in Whangarei Heads whilst participating in the New Zealand Gaidheal teachd – a weeklong camp dedicated to the music & culture of the Celtic nations. This was a great opportunity for me to meet Traditional Musicians from New Zealand, and a nice way to swat up on my flute playing as well as my piping. From one week of music to another, I travelled to Christchurch to teach at the New Zealand Pipe Band Summer School – it was a real privilege to get the chance to teach some of the country’s most talented and enthusiastic pipers. The standard of playing is world class, testament to the quality of teaching in New Zealand, it also shows that people have a strong drive to preserve and develop this important part of our Scottish culture, heritage, and identity.



The next leg of my January South Island trip took me to Nelson, where I spent the first three nights camping in the Abel Tasman National Park. I took my pipes with me in my pack, and enjoyed three nights of camping in beautiful weather, starting from Marahau. The pictures below are of the beach at Bark Bay/Wairima. The AT track is very gentle and in the shade for most of the walk – it is quite refreshing not having to work too hard for such incredible views!

I spent the remainder of my time in Nelson staying with fellow piper Hamish Reid in Ruby Bay – I spent some time getting my pipes set up for the upcoming band contests, as well as cycling down to Mapua wharf and enjoying the sun & trails on Rabbit Island/Moturoa.



Flying to Palmerston North from Nelson, I was greeted by Roz & Ewen Grant, where I had a lovely stay on the lead up to the Turakina Highland Games. Upon arrival I had the pleasure of meeting Dick Earle, husband of the late Maisie Earle and great supporter of Clan Cameron and the First Light exchange. We had a good catch up, and our first meeting gave me a personal insight into Maisie’s life, and how the



exchange programme came to be. I also got to meet and examine the infamous ‘Blenheim Pipes’, which came to Scotland on the barque “Blenheim” in 1840. This historic instrument was made by Alexander Glen in the early part of his career and is a ¾ sized instrument made of Cocus Wood and mounted in Ivory and Bone. The pipes are in excellent condition for their age, though I made a few suggestions towards improving the playability of the instrument and preserving it for the future. The blowpipe is a little worse for wear and is leaking from a few cracks, so I will make a replica on my return to Scotland. We also decided to send the chanter to piper and reed maker Greg Wilson, who will try to make a few new reeds for the chanter which are in keeping with the design of the old reeds which are now past their best. I do believe that these little improvements will make them much more user friendly and allow them to keep making music for many years to come.

Although a washout (the rain follows me relentlessly!), the Turakina Highland Games were very enjoyable from a piping perspective, and it was nice to see the Clan tent in full swing come rain or shine. The piping events were moved to the Turakina School, and the dancing to a separate indoor location, too. Roz took me to visit the school children on their first day back after Summer, where I spoke about the opportunities that piping has brought me, and played them a few tunes on my pipes, flute, and whistles.

From this point on, my focus became firmly on my preparations for the Pipe Band season, where I began working towards playing with the Manawatu Scottish Pipe Band at the New Zealand & South Pacific Pipe Band Championship. Manawatu Scottish wear the Clan Cameron tartan, so it felt very fitting that I work towards playing with them at the

competitions. I stayed initially with Anne & Nigel in Palmerston North, which allowed me to attend the 'pod' practice in town, under leadership of P/Sgt Willie Rowe. I then moved out to Rata, and stayed with Sam & Bruce Cameron on their dairy farm. I very much enjoyed discussing the ins and outs of Highland Piping Styles across the globe, and the role of the instrument over the years. Bruce also brought out a very interesting early 19th century set of bagpipes which, although in great shape for their age, require a little bit of work to bring them closer to their original condition. I agreed to repair these pipes on my return to Lochaber. I hope that Bruce enjoys playing them as much as I will enjoy restoring them.



The photos above are of a rafting trip on the Rangitikei, organised by Bruce and Sam. We rafted from Awastone for about three hours, stopping for lunch at the Whitecliffs Boulders (second pic). The weather was favourable, and the views were excellent. Following the flooding of the previous week, it was touch and go whether the trip could go ahead as planned, so I was delighted to get out on the river and see such a unique perspective of the riverbank and surrounding area.

I travelled through to Masterton to stay with Rob Cameron, where I spent the days leading up to my trip to Christchurch for the Pipe Band Nationals. I attended the 'Golden Shears' event in Masterton – there were even a few Scots there for me to cheer on! After discussing my interest in antique bagpipes, Rob pulled out a lovely old set of pipes from his attic – they are currently in my possession, and after restoring them I hope to put them in the hands of a suitable piper in New Zealand. More to come on this idea in time.

Time flies. I travelled through to Christchurch for the National's over a week ago (at the time of writing) and began the final days of preparation for the contest. There was a real buzz about the band, and the build-up to the competition will go down as one of my most enjoyable Pipe Band experiences. On the day, although we didn't win the championship overall, the band put on two strong performances and came away with first places across the board from the piping judges. We enjoyed a big celebration in Christchurch following the competition all the same. I am delighted to have had the chance to play with the band, and I am very thankful for all the support I received on the lead up from the Clan Cameron, from friends and members of the band.

I spent a few more nights in Darfield staying with Nick & Julie Cameron, where I had a chance to begin to recover from the busy weeks prior. Upon my return to the North Island I travelled to Hawera to stay with Neville and Shona Wallace – I enjoyed a busy night at the "Upside Down" restaurant where Clan Cameron hosted a very successful night of Haggis, tunes and craic. I have likely missed out several details from the last few months, though I hope that this gives an insight into all the

fantastic opportunities I have had during my time as a First Lighter.



Visit to Masterton

By Alistair Cameron, National Clan Cameron of Australia President

During the break I was able to travel across the Tasman and met with various relations and friends. Representatives of three living generations of Camerons, who are descended from Donald Cameron, "Donald the Weaver" and his son Donald Cameron, "Donald the Piper", participated in a small graveside ceremony at the Masterton Cemetery (on New Zealand's North Island). I observed that we have three generations buried in the Cameron family plot starting with my great grandfather who died in 1931 and who has a Gaelic inscription provided by the local Caledonian Society at the time. We therefore had six generations, all born in New Zealand, together in the one place. Interestingly, I was also able to point out the graves of four of the six sons of Donald the Piper who are buried within a few metres of each other.

There are also two previous generations who were born in Scotland. So, in total we now have eight generations of Camerons in New Zealand and Australia including the first two who arrived on the ship Blenheim in 1840. I was subsequently able to visit the Bolton St Cemetery in Wellington where the first two pioneer Cameron generations (including the two Donalds above) are buried. These graves were all exhumed to make way for a motorway in the 1970s, and their headstones relocated to an adjacent memorial park.

Best Wishes, Alistair Cameron

By Editor: There will be a chance to visit the Masterton Cemetery after the AGM on 20th May.

From Aotearoa to Alba,

"which may be closed when we get there"

By Roger Cameron (Marrickville NSW, Australia)

(By editor: This article was first published in the *Clan Cameron Australia News*, under the title of **"From Oz to Alba, which may be closed when we get there"**, and was written by Roger Cameron, who is a member of both the National Clan Cameron of Australia and the IAR Branch, NZ.

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This article assumes that in early August 2024 you will not just fly to Scotland, attend the Clan Cameron Gathering at Achnacarry... and then leave Scotland! It assumes you intend to make the most of your expensive trip and see other sites, both before and after the Gathering. For those of us planning/hoping to finally attend in August 2024, there may be a new 'spanner in the works' ... in fact one could postulate there are now two spanners in the works.

First, Spanner No. 1: Historic Environment Scotland (HES) now has many historic sites closed, citing the prospect of falling masonry. The souvenir shops and coffee shops may be open for a limited time on a few days but the sites, the real attractions, are currently closed.

Second, Spanner No 2: the Scottish Fiscal Commission (SFC), Scotland's official economic forecaster, has noted that throughout much of 2023 and 2024 Scotland is projected to be in a recession (*The Times*, 16 Dec 2022). The question remains as to how this will affect tourism and the staffing of historic sites. Clearly, this equally applies to the whole of the U.K.

Our Last-Chance-To-See Tour (well, at least for the early-edition Baby Boomers): I became aware of the HES's problems when I started planning where I would like to go and what I would like to see and do; both before and after our Gathering in August 2024. And, of course, much of this planning was done initially for the Covid-19-cancelled 2020 Gathering. There were places on my bucket list to visit during my last-chance-to-see tour of Scotland that are now closed. For example, I certainly wanted to see Arbroath Abbey, the site of the Declaration of Arbroath on the 6th April 1320, not only for its being the site of this famous declaration but also as a Sir John de Cameron (a baron) is towards the bottom of the list of Earls and Barons that were signatories of this document to the Pope. This document demanded recognition for Scottish independence. He is listed as the VII Chief in the earlier list of unauthenticated Clan Cameron chiefs (Stewart, J. 2015). His name appears as Johannes Cambrun in faded brown ink within the document (National Records of Scotland).

Currently, I cannot go in to photograph the Arbroath Abbey ruins (see Photograph 1), make my own notes and just soak up the ambience. Many of these freestanding masonry walls have been standing in their current state for at least 300 years and officialdom has recently decided they are unsafe!

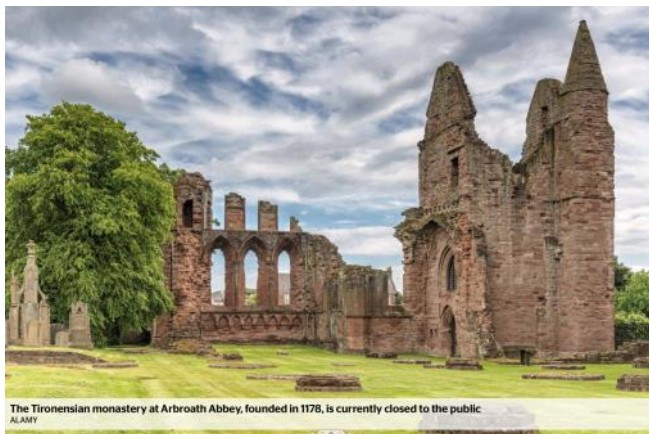
Some of the approximately 67 historic sites currently closed include: Arbroath Abbey, Linlithgow Palace, Dunbarton Castle, Caerlaverock Castle, St Andrew's Cathedral (ruins in Fife), Aberdour Castle, Bothwell Castle, Tantallon Castle and a number of Border abbeys. The HES website lists what is closed and their smartphone app also notes whether a site is closed or not.

The relevance of all these closures lies in our needing to be aware of what is closed and open when we plan our next

tour of Scotland. For many of us older members of National Clan Cameron Australia Inc. (NCCA) and Clan Cameron New Zealand it may well prove to be our last-chance-to-see tour of Scotland - so to have many historic sites closed to us (having travelled from the other side of the planet) would be especially galling. Many of the major sites within the larger cities will of course be open (the National Gallery, the Portrait Gallery, the National Museum etc) But you still need to do your research regarding opening hours etc. as there may be staffing issues. Photograph 1. The Tironensian Monastery at Arbroath Abbey, founded in 1178, is currently closed to the public. This is the site where the Declaration of Arbroath was signed on 6 April 1320 by around 40 Earls and Barons; Sir John de Cameron was one of the signatories. Some of these freestanding masonry walls have been stable for around 300 years (Image downloaded from *The Times*).

Alba's Fiscal Kerfuffle: Let's revisit Spanner No 2:

Whilst what the SFC predicts is still just a projection, by any measure Scotland, along with the rest of the UK, is in trouble. The SFC is taken seriously by Holyrood, the Scottish Parliament, and it influences many of the budgeting decisions that Parliament takes. Clearly, maintenance and staffing budgets will affect us in 2024. I now have the feeling it won't quite be the same Scotland that my wife experienced in our last visit in 2016; where everything was open and the weather was



The Tironensian monastery at Arbroath Abbey, founded in 1178, is currently closed to the public. ALAMY

glorious ... mostly.

So, where does that leave us Antipodean tourists? Mostly being able to get only as far as the tourist shop if it is open. Sites with freestanding masonry walls that have been deemed relatively safe for over 300 years are now closed - a profound disappointment! It lies somewhere between galling and depressing that Scotland's Government is preventing not only Scots themselves but also those of us of Scottish heritage from reconnecting with historic sites within our ancestral homeland.

A take-home message: It is a bit of a 'Hotel California' situation in reverse; you can check in anytime you want but you can never see! So my final take-home message is - stay tuned to the notes regarding site closures on the HES website. To this end I have signed up for HES's news alerts on their web site and will watch their app on my smartphone. I still plan to visit but have a plan B for sites currently closed, just in case.

An afterthought: If there is a closed site that you were really wanting to visit, hop into Google Earth and have a look around the site - also use Google Earth's Street View function. In the case of Arbroath Abbey there are many locations surrounding the abbey from which one could take telephoto shots of the ruins. For example, just north-west of the abbey is a cemetery from which you could take such photos. Combine this with a visit to the abbey's museum/centre when open and you would not come away entirely empty handed.

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The Lochaber Axe by Betty Bruce

The origin of the name Lochaber axe is shrouded in mystery. No-one is really certain about the actual appearance of the original and there are disputes about the length of the shaft.

Local historian Donald B MacCulloch maintains that it was probably short shafted. He bases his argument on handed down descriptions of weapons wielded by two Lochaber warriors. He feels that in each case it was more likely to have been an axe which was used rather than a halberd. In almost all other cases it is described as a halberd. It is estimated that a six foot shaft would be sufficient to bear the type of axe head most often depicted in drawings of the weapon. Certainly the ten foot shafts used by the men of Atholl to welcome Queen Victoria would be unlikely to be transported through heather and bracken by fighting men. As well as the controversy over the length of the shaft, the application of the name 'Lochaber' to the weapon is also something of a mystery. The most likely explanation is the supply from the district of a supply of good strong straight hazel rods. There is some evidence of a factory in the area supplying blacksmiths throughout the district. Whatever its origin the Lochaber Axe now appears on the Fort William coat of arms.

The Fort William Coat of Arms is shown on the right.



The crossed Lochaber axes recall that Fort William is the capital of that district and also the Battle of Inverlochy fought near by in 1645. The oak branches are the plant badge of Clan Cameron in whose lands the Burgh is situated and the Crown recalls the two royal names it has borne.

The Gaelic motto means "Gainsay it who dare" and is the same as that of Macdonald of Clanranald.

First Light News

by Bryan Haggitt—First Light Convenor

First Lighter Finlay arrived back in Auckland a couple of days ago after almost 3 months being hosted in various parts of the country and competing at Highland Games in Waipu, Turakina, Paeroa and piping with Manawatu Scottish PB, at the NZ National Pipe Band Championships in Christchurch.

A very busy time for Finlay and huge thanks to all those Clan members who have hosted him and extended hospitality to him. I get the impression that he is overwhelmed with the kindness extended to him over the months he has been here.

Thank you all – Finlay's visit has been an outstanding success and it is so good that, at long last, we have reconnected with our ancestral Lochaber roots.

Finlay still has work to do – this coming week he will be visiting the Bay of Plenty and being hosted by Clan Secretary Tanya. Then to Gisborne where Colin Cameron has 5 sets of bagpipes damaged in the floods. Finlay has been asked to inspect these and give advice on restoration.

I am accompanying Finlay and providing the car. I have never been to Gisborne before via the Waioeka Gorge so this is a great opportunity for me to see the Gorge, support Finlay and to meet more Clans folk as well as to get a real appreciation of the extent of damage caused by the recent tragic floods.

I will return to Auckland the following weekend and Finlay will carry on to explore Rotorua and the geothermal area. Finlay then has an invitation to compete at a Piping Gathering at Hamilton on 1 April before returning to Auckland where, on Sunday 2 April, Auckland Branch will farewell him at a lunch to be held at the Parnell Cricket Club, 32 Shore Road, Remuera.

Over Easter Finlay will compete at the Hawkes Bay Highland Games, 7-9 April at Lindsfarne College. Hastings before returning to Auckland and flying out to Zurich on 11 April.

From Zurich he will take a train to Basel to take up an invitation to tutor at their Summer Piping School just as he did in 2022. A great honour for Finlay being invited to return –

testimony to the talents and demeanour of this 21 year old!

All Clan members are invited to this lunch on 2 April to farewell Finlay. Plus any others who have met him and been impressed by his remarkable musical talent. For ease of catering, if you wish to attend, please text me on 021 0264 5021 or email me at bchecho@xtra.co.nz.

The W.D. Milestone

by Betty Bruce

In 1654 the first fortified structure was built in Fort William by General Monk at the behest of Oliver Cromwell. After the restoration of Charles 11 in 1660 a military presence was not deemed necessary and the fort fell into disrepair. In 1688 with the overthrow of James 11 and the accession of William and Mary a strong garrison was felt needed to keep the Highlands in subjection. The fort was accordingly strengthened.



The fort continued to be garrisoned until 1864 when it was dismantled and the buildings sold. During the period of military occupation a war department milestone stood outside the fort at the four points of the compass. These stones stood where a shot fired from the fort's largest cannon landed. All within this perimeter came within the protection of the military. Hence the W.D.- WAR DEPARTMENT on the stone.



Aonaibh ri Chéile

The Back Page



Photos from a wet Turakina Highland Games

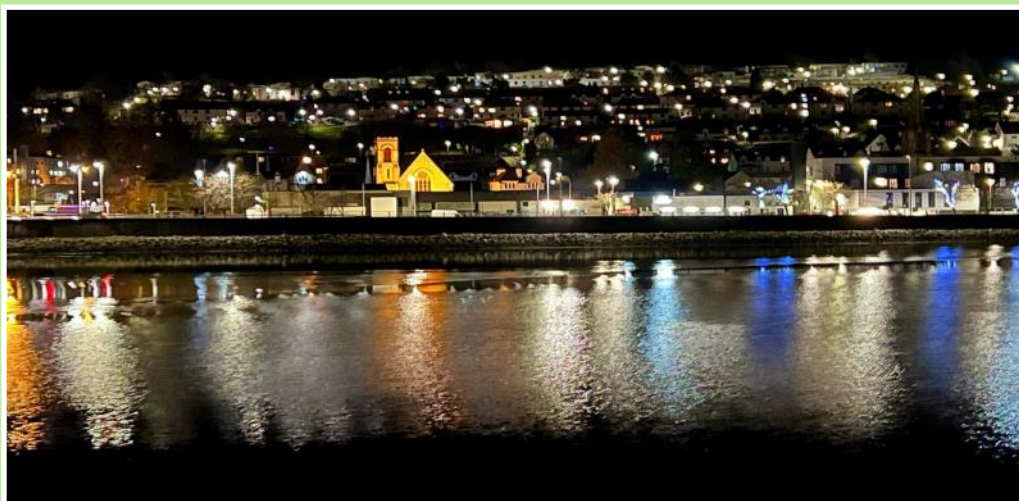
*Above left: John Cameron, Lindsay Campbell, Rob Cameron, Dean Cameron, Ewen Grant, Bruce Cameron & Patrick Coogan.
Above right: Bruce Cameron, Patrick Coogan, Finlay and Rob Cameron
Right: Finlay pipes in the Haggis Party.*



Bruce, Finlay and Rob Cameron with Patrick Coogan, winner of the D Grade Solo Piping

Finlay piping the lament in the tent on Friday evening as it was wet at the cemetery

Turakina Highland Games - Photos Bryan Haggitt and Dean Cameron



Bill Cameron's Great Pictures - Reflections of Fort William on the Linnhe and Spring Colours in the Glen.