



Cameron



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Stags on the Achnacarry Estate.

Photo: Sarah McQueen



A fine array of Cameron banners prior to the Waipu Highland Games Street Parade

With Allan and Morea Cameron, Rob Cameron and Glen Rodgers.

Photo: Duncan McQueen.

“Cameron”

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Clan Cameron Association of New Zealand Inc.

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A Message from our Commissioner.

Kia ora tatou, failte, greetings.

Happy New Year to one and all. I hope you had a great Christmas and New Year. I am writing this from Dublin in Ireland as I am attending a conference here. It's fascinating to see the way Irish culture is celebrated and maintained in a modern European (and Celtic) democracy.

The first day of the year was spent at the 151st Waipu Highland Games. It was a great privilege and honour to be invited to be the host clan this year. It was wonderful to have a good turnout of Camerons and some banners from the regions. I met a number of people wanting to learn more about their heritage and connect to their history. One woman said she had come especially when she heard we would be the host clan this year. Thank you very much to the tent and display crew ably directed by Neil and Duncan McQueen.

I am looking forward to attending the upcoming Turakina and Paeroa Games in the coming weeks. These events are a lot of fun and a great celebration of our cultural heritage. I hope to see you and connect about what's been happening.

2024 is a big year for us with the international gathering at Achnacarry being held, and the first of our new chief. I am looking forward to attending this and travelling throughout Scotland. We will have a good showing of Camerons from New Zealand. The new Lochiel was telling me how much they were looking forward to the gathering and honouring his fathers legacy. I have been discussing what might be a suitable gift for the occasion, please let me know if you have any thoughts.

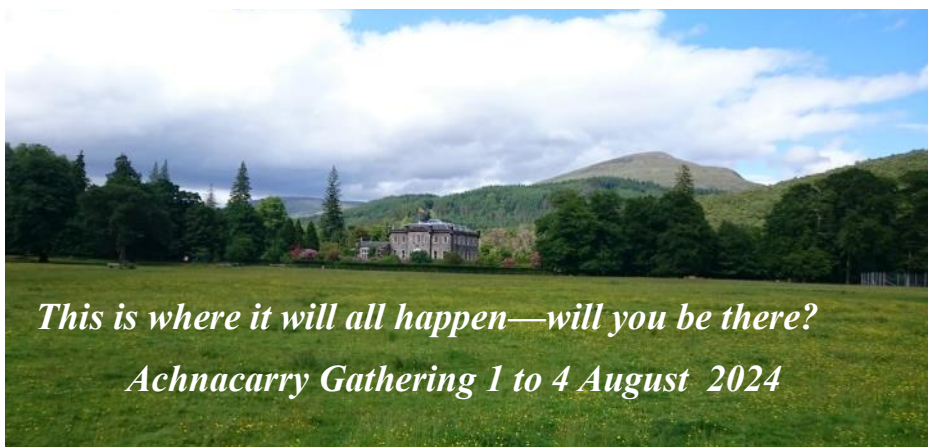
This year we will be meeting in Napier on the 4th May for our annual gathering. I hope you will be able to join us.

My visit to Ireland is the second one I have made here, the last 35 years ago as a young teacher. I have been marvelling at how much has changed and the energy in the country. Our conference is about what can be done to improve and enhance our schools.

Wishing you all the best for the summer, looking forward to seeing you.

Aonaibh ri Cheile

Dale Cameron Bailey



This is where it will all happen—will you be there?

Achnacarry Gathering 1 to 4 August 2024



Next Magazine Deadline is 15 Mar 2024

Printed By

Highland Games

By the Editor



Waipu Settlers

The monument in Waipu to commemorate the Highland settlers who, led by the Rev. Norman McLeod, settled in Waipu in the mid 19th century, via Nova Scotia and Australia.

Their story is told in the Waipu Scottish Migration Museum.

Photo: Bryan Haggitt.

The 151st Waipu Games are over and what a delight it was to have ten members of Clan Cameron Auckland there to help erect and dismantle the tent and display, and also man the tent during the day.

This has not often been the case, as the excerpt below from the 10 year old Auckland newsletter report of the 2014 Waipu Games shows.

“New Year’s eve was a warm, sunny day and we managed to tow a lightened Cameron trailer to Waipu behind our small car. Ruth and I set up the tent during the afternoon, helped by members of other clans. Although the weather forecast for New Year’s Day was initially good we were alarmed to find, at the end of the day, a last minute change in the forecast – for the worse.

The day of the games dawned reasonably fine and a large number of people arrived to enjoy the day. We started at 9.30 with the formal march into the grounds by the clans past the saluting base. It was rather lonely being the sole Cameron in this march!

Waipu is always interesting due to the diversity of people coming into our tent - holiday makers from all over New Zealand and from overseas. One or two showers of rain dampened the morning but cleared in time for the clan march and official opening at 12.30. Several Camerons who had been active elsewhere in the games, joined in this parade. The Games were officially opened by Pat Hellier. Pat won the NZ Highland Heavyweight competition for 18 consecutive years and announced his retirement last year at the age of 40.

Early afternoon came the downpour. The ground under the tent became a lake. The waterproof (?) tent began to leak and the tent filled with dripping people trying to shelter, much to the detriment of the books on display, although they were hastily put

away. Some of the display boards were damaged by water and will require renewal.

Finally the sun shone again but, for the clans, this was the end of the day and we started packing up.

The McQueen family, here for the Highland Dancing, kindly towed the trailer home, and we spent the next day drying everything out. The weather reminded me of our visits to Lochaber!

The disappointing thing for me both here and at the Auckland Games was the poor support from our Cameron members. There is a lot of work involved preparing and setting up for these events and Ruth and I are not getting any younger. There is a need for at least one person in the tent to attend to the many visitors who have often difficult questions and need explanations of the displays. There are many very interested people out there. This is what we are here for - to tell people something of our Scottish, and in particular, Cameron heritage and history. It would be really appreciated if other Camerons could come, even for a short period, to help man the tent so at least we could appreciate some of the other Clan displays and the Games themselves.”

The plea in the last paragraph above is still very relevant. We need the support of the wider clan to achieve our objectives, and your help would be very much appreciated.

The Turakina Games are almost with us as we go to press and shortly after, the Paeroa Games. These will be followed by the Royal New Zealand Pipe Band Association National Competition on 15/16 March on Onewa Domain, Auckland’s North Shore. Please come along and support us and, if possible, spent a little time helping in the tent. You will enjoy it.

See you there.



Coming Events

Saturday 27 January 2024

159th Turakina Highland Games

Cameron Road, Turakina.

Great country games.

<https://turakinahighlandgames.co.nz/>

Saturday 10 February 2024

31st Paeroa Highland Games

Join us in our tent. Enjoy the piping and Tattoo.

This years Special Guests: Marian Burns & McSweeney Brothers,

Two Many Chiefs, Sarah Spicer & The Blue Riders, Charlotte Yates.

<https://paeroahighlandgames.co.nz>

Sunday 3 March 2024

Auckland Branch AGM and BBQ

Parnell Cricket Club. AGM 4.30pm, BBQ

5.30pm. Meat provided but please bring either a salad or a sweet, letting Jenny Haggitt know you are coming and which food you would like to bring. Cash bar. Jenny: 09 524 5254 bchecho@xtra.co.nz

Sat / Sun 15/16 March 2024

National Pipe Band Championships

Onewa Domain, Auckland North Shore.

The Cameron Tent will be there.

Saturday 4 May 2024

Clan Cameron NZ Gathering and AGM

Hawkes Bay Club, Napier.

Registration Form will be enclosed with the April newsletter.

Saturday 6 July 2024

Auckland Branch Annual Dinner

The Parnell, 10-20 Gladstone Road,

Parnell. 6pm for 6.30pm.

Great company and great entertainment.

A farewell for those going to the gathering at Achnacarry

1 to 4 August 2024

Clan Cameron Gathering at Achnacarry, Lochaber, Scotland.

A very full programme is being arranged which will include all the traditional gathering events - plus a lot more.

From the Branches....

Auckland by Rob Cameron

The Auckland branch's main focus over the Christmas break was the Waipu Highland Games. We were invited to be the host clan, leading the opening parade and getting a primary spot for the tent in the Avenue of Clans. Dale, as host clan commissioner, was very popular during the day, he accompanied the Waipu Games Chief Ted Hart on the podium, greeting the clans as they marched past in the morning parade.



The day was sunny however there had been a lot of rain prior to the event. This made the grounds very boggy. Sand was brought in to try and absorb some of the water but there were still a few puddles around the grounds. As a result, there were a few missing clan tents, and it appeared that ticket sales were down due to the previous days rain. We had several people visiting the tent, interested in the resources on display, however we did not get any new memberships.

I want to thank Dale, Duncan (McQueen), Neil, Allan, Morea, Glen (Rogers), Bryan (Haggitt), Hillary and Cass (Hakaraia) for their help during the day. I would also like to thank Nick from Canterbury and Hamish from Hawkes Bay branches for a loan of their banners.

We are deep into planning our events for this year. The first event is our branch AGM which will be on the 3rd of March at the Parnell Cricket Club. The meeting is at 4 pm followed by a BBQ. This is a good chance to meet other Cameron's and I encourage everyone to attend if they can. Also, if you are interested in becoming a committee member then please let me know, it is a great opportunity to help our branch with future events over the coming year.

Auckland will be hosting the RNZPBA Nationals competition on March 15th and 16th at Onewa Domain on the North Shore. This will be a big event for me as I will be competing with the City of Sails Pipe Band across both days, plus we have also registered the clan to participate in the Clan Alley across the event. We will be looking for volunteers to help with the tent setup and take down as we cannot park on the grounds. The street march will be in Takapuna and we will also want someone to participate with the clan banner at the massed bands.

The next event will be the Annual Dinner which will be earlier this year on July 6th to accommodate some of our members who will be attending the Clan Gathering in Scotland in August. This will be at The Parnell as usual, and we will have Originz returning as the main entertainment. We also have folk singers Paul Brown and Noel Armstrong returning after their brilliant performance at last year's dinner. Other plans for the evening are underway and it is gearing up to be another great night.

A small group of us will be making our way to Turakina for the Highland Games held on January 27th. I am hoping that we will get better weather than last year.

Manawatu by Anne Walker

Members of Clan Cameron Manawatu extend our best wishes to all for a happy and successful 2024, and like many others are enjoying the summer weather.



We look forward to seeing Clan Cameron members and supporters at the Turakina Highland Games on Saturday 27th January 2024, where we will host a Clan tent where everyone is welcome to come along and enjoy Clan hospitality.

Branch Members are advised that the annual meeting of Clan Cameron Manawatu Branch will be on Sunday 18th

February. All members, family and friends are welcome to attend the short annual meeting, which will be followed by a shared afternoon tea. The venue and arrangements will be finalized shortly and emailed to our local branch members, and posted on our Clan Cameron Manawatu Facebook page.

Hawke's Bay by Hamish Cameron

The downside of living life in a desirably hot and "settled" climate at the countries established "holiday period", is the fact that, that very "settled" weather is what actually provides the provinces wealth. If it wasn't for that very predictable weather pattern then there wouldn't be such a huge horticultural industry exploiting such good fortune.



To the many Tourists and holiday makers wandering around our province over this "annual break", it must seem like some staged sideshow, where you can watch your produce being harvested – packed – marketed or put into a Watties can. ----- The locals look so focused on ever colliding deadlines that they seem – either oblivious – or not interested in the leisured observations of passers – by. ----- It does become an all consuming operation – harvest time – but a very necessary endeavour. More so this year as a lot of uncertainty looms as to how and what survives "GABRIELLE." (our only glitch of recent years to our "settled weather title.!!)

Being anchored in the Bay at this time also impacts on what would normally be a Clan outing, as this was the year Waipu Highland Games had designated that Clan Cameron NZ, and its various branches, be the host Clan at the games. This entails leading the piped parade ahead of all other Clans – a time to show the banners – and Clan Cameron have more active branches than most – ours amongst them.

AND IT DIDN'T RAIN !!

Bay of Plenty by Tanya Cameron

Bay of Plenty branch are currently not active. We hope to get together in February after a good turn out at Paeroa Highland Games helping to man the tent.



Please make an effort to pay your \$25 overdue membership from last year and outstanding \$25 membership for this year. Although we are not currently an active branch, this amount covers you receiving your newsletter, just, and many of you haven't paid last year's subscription.

Please bring your subscription up to date as when the Bay of Plenty Branch goes into remission at the next National AGM in May 2024, those that aren't financial members will no longer be receiving their Newsletter.

Please email me if you have any questions.

Canterbury by Rae Magson

A meeting is planned for the next few weeks to gather members together, either at Nick Cameron's home or in Christchurch. Otherwise we are enjoying the hot weather and holiday times. Best wishes for 2024 for Clan Cameron.



First Light News

by Bryan Haggitt—First Light Convenor



It is truly wonderful that we, Clan Cameron NZ, again has a First Lighter in Lochaber – fulfilment of the late Maisie Earle’s wishes!

And, by all accounts, Sarah McQueen is enjoying herself immensely – just look at the photos she is posting on Facebook and Instagram. She has certainly taken to the hills and glens of

Lochaber accompanied by an enthusiastic terrier. Much of this due to the kindnesses shown by Finlay, who we hosted last summer, and his parents Ken and Rhona Cameron.

The 151th Waipu Highland Games are just behind us – quite strange not to have Finlay competing in the piping contests. On reflection, his presence through that appallingly time weather-wise made the 2022/23 summer not only tolerable but actually enjoyable. Thank heaven for First Light and may exchanges continue now for many, many years!

Sarah has contributed her own Report for this Newsletter issue and I leave it to her to express the joys of being a First Lighter!



Invermallie Bothy

Photo: Bill Cameron



Invermallie Bothy

Photo: Bill Cameron



A Snowy Cameron Square, Fort William

Photo: West Highland Museum



A lovely snowy end to the school day.

Photo: Bill Cameron



From a snowy Lochaber to a summer Scottish tradition on the other side of the world.

The Waipu Highland Games, New Zealand.

Photo: Bryan Haggitt.

Waipu Highland Games 1 January 2024



Our marked out site after heavy rain the night before



A better site, under the symbolic oak. Dale, Neil, Bryan, Hillary, Cass, Allan, Morea, Rob and Glen.



Dale Cameron Bailey meets Ted Hart, Waipu Games Chief.



The Street Parade



Duncan McQueen, Dale Bailey and Neil Cameron.



Kobain Birchall, winner of the Cameron Cup, with Bryan.



At the Opening Ceremony



Glenis Cameron, Bryan Haggitt, Allan Cameron, Duncan McQueen, Dale Bailey, Hillary Hakaraia and Morea Cameron.



All packed up. The team who did a great job erecting and dismantling the tent and displays. Bryan, Rob, Neil, Allan, Dale, Hillary, Cass, Morea, Glen and Duncan. Photos: Duncan McQueen.

Sarah in Scotland



Left: Sandy Cameron , Eireann and I on top of Stob Ban with Ben Nevis in the cloud behind. Right: Climbing up Stob Ban



Loch Treig near Inverlair on boxing day



Sarah outside the Dundee V&A in snow with Captain Scott's RSS Discovery in background



Roddy Cameron, Johanna, Charles and Sarah at Innerpeffray Chapel.

Charles Cameron represented Lochiel, his brother, at the 2005 International Gathering of Clan Cameron in Auckland, New Zealand. He is now 103. Roddy also attended that gathering, representing Clan Cameron Scotland. Sarah was in charge of the ice cream trailer at that gathering and later danced for us at the evening ceilidh.



With Alex MacDonald on the Achnacarry stag feed run.



The Camerons

The following is from *A History of Rannoch* by A.D.Cunningham.

In days gone by the boundary between Cameron and Rannoch lands was roughly where the West Highland Railway now makes its way from Rannoch Station to Corroun. If you travel on the train you will get a fleeting glimpse of a peat-stained lochan with a sandy shore a mile or two from Rannoch. This is called Loch a' Chlaidheimh (in English: the Loch of the Sword). The story of how it got its name is an important one in Rannoch history, and although the account of the incident which occurred there has no doubt been 'improved' with the telling, it is based on an old and persistent tradition from the 17th century.

This tradition states that there were frequent clashes between the Cameron and Rannoch Clansmen because each claimed the valuable grazing lands of Beinn a' Bhric and the pastures around the Blackwater. (This was, of course, hundreds of years before the area was flooded to make Blackwater Reservoir). Ewen Cameron of Lochiel arranged to meet the Earl of Atholl on the disputed 'march' and come to a decision, once and for all, about the boundary between their lands. Each agreed to be accompanied by one man. Hardly had Lochiel set off when he met the well-known witch Gormsuil (The Blue-eyed One). 'Turn back,' she said, 'where are your men? If you go to meet a wolf you will need more hounds'. He decided it would be prudent to do as she said. 'Choose three score and five of your best men' she added.

Near the loch – then nameless – he told his men to hide in the heather unless he gave a signal. At 'High Noon' the two warriors strode towards one another warily, hands on sword hilts. Soon a heated argument arose about the boundary and swords flashed in the air. At a shrill whistle fifty hidden Atholl warriors appeared behind their chief, who said triumphantly, 'These are my Atholl wedders come to graze on the Lochaber grass'. Instantly Lochiel gave his own signal and sixty-five Cameron warriors sprang up eager for the fray. 'These are my Lochaber dogs and they are gey hungry for the flesh of the Atholl wedders'.

Seeing that he was outnumbered Atholl gave way to Lochiel and renounced for ever his claim to the disputed grazings and to ratify the agreement a sword was thrown into the loch. Thus the lochan got its name. And the sword remained there for years until in 1812 it was found by a herd-boy when the loch was low during a dry summer. The rusty and peat stained claymore was taken to Fort William, to a Dr Thomas Ross. When the leading inhabitants heard what had happened they decided it must be returned to the loch from which it had been removed. It was carried with fitting solemnity by twelve men back to the Loch of the Sword where it was thrown far out and (in the words of Seton Gordon) 'for an instant as it sped, its trusty blade turned to glowing bronze in the sunlight, then, like Excalibur, it sank for ever from sight'. This story illustrates the great importance of grazing lands to the Highland communities such as those of the Camerons and those of Rannoch. Agriculture was very primitive so that the peoples' very existence depended on cattle and adequate grazing.

It was probably shortage of grazing and its subsequent consequences that brought the first Camerons to Rannoch, but this would be some time before the Loch of the Sword incident. The early Camerons were not a rich clan. The country they lived in was difficult: Most of it was over a thousand feet with steep and narrow glens and not able to support a great number of people. In addition they had frequent feuds with a rival

clan, the Macintoshes, which continually drained their resources. When times were particularly hard some had to find a living elsewhere and many came to Rannoch. They lived on both sides of the loch, some of them settling down peaceably, others finding themselves very much at home with the many caterans already occupying Rannoch; after all they were just as experienced at 'lifting' cattle as many others who had been brought up in a Highland glen.

The largest body of Camerons who came to Rannoch were the McSorlies of Glen Nevis. They were a tribe descended from the race of Somerled, hence the name McSorlie. They settled in large numbers on Slios Garbh, the south side of the loch, mainly at Camghouran. According to the present Chief they were not faithful adherents of the Cameron chiefs although they were of course part of the Clan and followed the Chief, Cameron of Lochiel, on various occasions. There was an occasion when Lochiel had instructed some of his men to go to Rannoch to raise the Camerons there for service in the regiment in support of Prince Charlie in 1745. An account of this recruiting was given by John MacDonald of Dalchosnie. He said: 'Upon Thursday, the 15th August, Cameron of Kinlochleven, Cameron of Blairchierr, Cameron of Blairmackalt, Cameron of Glennevis, Cameron (alias Macaloniue) of Strone, heads of the several tribes of the name Cameron, came from Lochiel's country and entered Rannoch with a party of their servants and followers to the number of 24, and went from house on both sides of Loch Rannoch, the north side belonging to Sir Robert Menzies, and the south side to Struan Robertson, and intimidated all the Camerons, which are pretty numerous on both sides of the said loch, that if they do not forthwith go along with them, they would that instant proceed to burn all their houses and haugh their cattle. Whereupon they carried off the Rannoch men about one hundred mostly of the name Cameron. From the same report came the admission from Dalchosnie that MacDonald of Keppoch warned him that a like fate would befall him and his cattle if he did not join *his* chief.

Fugitives from Cumberland

The MacGregors who lived on the Isle and in Slios Min had brought Rannoch into bad repute and the Camerons did the same for the Slios Garbh with their turbulent and unruly ways. They became as notorious as the MacGregors at the 'creach', particularly after the '45. It is worth remembering at this time that after Culloden, cattle thieving all over the Highlands had increased for a very good reason....the reason being that all their own had been stolen by the greatest thief of the lot, the notorious Duke of Cumberland, by whose orders at least 40,000 head of cattle were collected and sold to southern drovers.

Of course cattle were not the Duke of Cumberland's main concern. He was determined to break the spirit of the Highlanders so that they would never rise again in rebellion. So cruelly did he do this that in Scotland he was called 'Butcher Cumberland'. The English later gave his name to the flower, Sweet William, while the Scots called their noxious weed, the Ragwort, after him, Stinking Willie. Troops were ordered to hunt down Prince Charlie's men wherever they were to be found. They were dragged out of cottages where they had taken refuge and were shot in cold blood. Although the pursuit was ruthless it was not easy in Rannoch. One Cameron on the run, called Black Duncan, led the soldiers a fine dance. He was remarkable for his agility and fleetness of foot. When Bonnie Prince Charlie was besieging Stirling, Black Duncan was sent upon some urgent business to Fort William. He did this journey on foot, a distance of 88 miles, in a day. His strength and skill in the mountains enabled him to avoid pursuit with ease. He used to rest up in Meal Chomraidh on a rocky ledge now called Leaba Dhonnacha Dhuibh a Mhonaidh,

meaning The Bed of Black Duncan of the Mountains. This position at the head of Loch Rannoch is in a vast amphitheatre surrounded by mountains, providing views of 20 to 40 miles distance. He could see the Redcoats searching for his hiding place but he was concealed from view.

An incident in which he and another fugitive were concerned is said to have given rise to a well-known story called 'The Lone Highlander'. It concerned a large troop of Redcoats who were on patrol from the Barracks at the west end of Loch Rannoch to the Soldier's Trenches (still to be seen on the West Highland Line between Gorton and Rannoch Station) when they saw a lone Highlander on the top of Meall Chomraidh making rude gestures and taunting the soldiers. A private and a corporal were sent to deal with him. They disappeared over the top following him and there were sounds of battle. Then it was quiet. Not long after this the lone Highlander appeared again but there was no sign of the private or the corporal. He made further rude gestures at the soldiers so an officer was detailed to lead up a troop to teach him a lesson. They disappeared over the top from where there were sounds of shouting and yelling, then it was quiet. Lo and behold the lone Highlander again appeared and again he started mocking the troops. The Colonel in charge now ordered the bugler to signal an all-out attack and the remainder of the unit charged up the hill. As they neared the top a figure limped out signalling frantically. It was the private, who was wounded. He yelled out, 'Get back! Get back! It's a trap. There are two of them!'

I do not apologise for this light-hearted diversion, for serious things are to follow. Such fugitives were driven to lead the life of outlaws for subsistence, swelling the large numbers of caterans already in Rannoch. The most famous of these was a Cameron whose daring and character made him a folk hero. His name was John Dubh Cameron, commonly called (Big) Sergeant Mhor. He had fought at Culloden and soon gathered round him a band of desperadoes, all armed and accustomed to fighting. He led them on raid after raid, escaping to safety in



Taken from the train while en route Glasgow to Lochaber by Dale Bailey.

Rannoch. He got the reputation of being a sort of Robin Hood. He plundered the Whigs and the Sassenachs and he gave to the poor. He also controlled his men from committing senseless violence. Followers and others worshipped him. It is said that although he extorted the usual Black Mail over the Lowlands the protection money they paid him guaranteed that if their cattle were stolen by others he would replace them. Unfortunately on a raid in Braemar one of his men killed a man. As soon as it happened the Sergeant stopped the raid, but the deed had been done. A larger price was put on his head and the search for him intensified. A Lieutenant Munro was put in charge of the party to search him out (he later became the famous General Sir Hector Munro).

The Lieutenant marched with a strong force of soldiers through Rannoch. Here, one of his own clansmen gave Big John away, whether from spite or for the reward is not known. He informed the Redcoats where he was hiding. It was in a house in Dunan and under cover of darkness they surrounded the place. After a great struggle Big John was overpowered. He was taken to Perth where he was tried. The reports of the trial show that he was defiant to the end. He was executed and hanged in chains on 23rd November, 1753.

It seems that another leader took over after Sergeant Mhor's capture called Donald Cameron (known as Donald Bane Leane) but he was soon arrested for cattle stealing and he was executed at Rannoch as an example to others. He expressed surprise and indignation at his fate, as he had not committed murder or robbery, only taken cattle off those with whom he had quarrelled. He had merely taken part in the Highland activity of cattle 'lifting'.

He was said to be the last man to be hanged on the Gibbet Tree. A pardon had arrived for him but the commanding officer of the troops concealed the fact and allowed the execution to take place, considering that it would be an example to the other wrongdoers in the district. He was right!



Robbie Burns - born 25 Jan 1759

In 1707 the Act of Union (*Achd an Aonaidh*) between the Kingdoms of Scotland and England formed the Kingdom of Great Britain.

Robbie Burns decried those members of Parliament who signed the Act and wrote this poem in 1791. Burns contrasted their treachery to the country with the tradition of martial valour and resistance commonly associated with such historic figures as Robert the Bruce and William Wallace. It is now associated with Scottish nationalism.

*Fareweel to a' our Scottish fame,
Fareweel our ancient glory!
Fareweel ev'n to the Scottish name,
Sae fam'd in martial story!
Now Sark rins o'er the Solway sands,
An' Tweed rins to the ocean,
To mark where England's province stands;
Such a parcel of rogues in a nation!*

*What guile or force could not subdue,
Through many warlike ages,
Is wrought now by a coward few,
For hireling traitors' wages.
The English steel we could disdain,
Secure in valour's station,
But English gold has been our bane;
Such a parcel of rogues in a nation!*

*O would, ere I had seen the day
That Treason thus could sell us,
My auld grey head had lien in clay,
Wi' Bruce and loyal Wallace!
But pith and power, till my last hour,
I'll mak this declaration;
We're bought and sold for English gold;
Such a parcel of rogues in a nation!*

Robert Burns 1791



Turakina Highland Games

With thanks to Bruce Cameron, Roz and Ewen Grant and the late Trish Topham.

They may not be the earliest - the first were reported to be in Wellington in 1848 - but the Turakina Highland Games are the oldest still running in New Zealand. First held 150 years ago in 1864 they are believed to have been held annually since then, although they were affected by the 'flu epidemic of 1919, the great depression, and the two World Wars.

The Wanganui Chronicle of Dec 24 1863 reported that the settlers of the district have arranged for a day of Rural Sports to be held at the Ben Nevis Hotel, Turakina on New Year's Day. It was to conclude with a shinty match with a supper and ball to take place in the evening. In the event (because of the Rangitikei races) the supper and ball took place on New Year's night and the Games the next day, Jan 2 1864.

The village and surrounding countryside were settled by highlanders from 1849, after the Rangitikei Purchase by Sir Donald McLean from the Ngati Apa tribe in 1848. Further west halfway to Wanganui John Cameron had already settled at Marangai in 1841, along with his cousin Jessie Cameron Campbell and her husband Captain Moses Campbell. The first settlers at Turakina were predominantly of the "Blenheim" people who landed at Kaiwharawhara, Wellington in 1840. They were the "Big" John Cameron and Donald "Bane (Bain?) the Cooper" Cameron and their families.

These families established farms near the village. Over time further Cameron families arrived including the Angus Cameron family (Angus was a nephew of Big John) in the late 1850's, this family also took up farming. Also resident for a while in the village was Thomas Ross Cameron who was employed constructing the roads in the district. To the east on the Rangitikei river at Parewanui, Annie Cameron McDonell (daughter of Donald "The Weaver" Cameron, wife of James McDonell) and Alexander Cameron (nephew of Thomas Ross Cameron) and families also settled and were farming.

In later years descendants of these many Cameron families spread throughout the Rangitikei, Wanganui, Manawatu and King Country areas.

The committee of the first games included three Camerons; John Cameron of Marangai and Messrs D Cameron and Thomas Cameron. At the committee meeting for the 1865 games, now called the Celtic Games, the three judges appointed included two Camerons; J. Cameron of Marangai and J Cameron of Invermailie.

Over the years the games have reflected the changing times and for a time focussed on athletics and have included shinty playing, wrestling, tent erecting and equestrian sports among the events. Also, in the 50's and 60's, beauty competitions, fashion shows, archery and weightlifting were some of the events competed for or demonstrated.

Since the Second World War the Games have returned to more traditional Scottish competitions, with the emphasis on highland dancing, pipe bands and solo piping and drumming.

Although the first games are recorded as being held in grounds adjoining the Ben Nevis Tavern, for many years they were held in the paddocks of local farmers. It was not until the 1960's that the games were established on the Public Domain and have been held there ever since.

The 2014 Highland Games.

On the evening before the games a moving ceremony of "The Pipes of Remembrance" took place in the Turakina cemetery, overlooking the village. With a congregation of over 50 people, most of whom had ancestors buried there, piper Tom

Whittle played a lament and the Rev. Trevor Jurgens said a memorial prayer.

This was followed by the launching of the commemorative whisky at the Ben Nevis Tavern. This was a specially labelled 10 year old single malt, brewed at the Ben Nevis Distillery in Fort William, Scotland. This, of course, is Cameron country. The Ben Nevis Tavern has always had a close association with the Turakina Highland Games.

This year's games included the New Zealand Solo Piping Championships and a record number of pipe bands were competing.

A new dancing board, funded by the Middle Districts Lions, was opened by Mrs Sue McKelvie, wife of local MP Ian McKelvie. (Ian McKelvie became a member of Clan Cameron Manawatu during the day)

A highlight was the talk on the Scottish diaspora history in New Zealand, with emphasis on the Turakina Games, given by Dr. Tanja Bueltmann, Senior Lecturer in History, Northumbria University. To learn more go to: <http://thescottishdiaspora.co.uk>

The weather was perfect and a large number of competitors and spectators were present. The field was a hive of activity with field events, piping, drumming and dancing providing a wonderful spectacle. A marquee, provided for the first time, gave a shaded venue for talks and performances and a respite from the sun.

Turakina Games are always something special, with a more country atmosphere compared to other Games in New Zealand. We thoroughly enjoyed our visit and will remember it fondly.

I will conclude by adding the letter below from Trish Topham, who says the things I mean to say so much better than I can.

"On Saturday we attended the Turakina Highland Games and enjoyed the beautiful sunny weather which was the icing on the cake.

Although not many of our Manawatu Branch Members were in attendance, those who hosted us should be very highly commended for all the hard work and dedication they put in to promoting Clan Cameron N.Z. The Cameron and Grant display and hospitality tents gave a very warm welcome to all, including people from other Clans who popped in to say hello during the course of the day. Bruce Cameron as Chief of the Turakina Caledonian Society was kept very busy with his duties but made time to greet all visiting Cameron members.

In true Scottish fashion the hospitality extended to a very nice shared lunch, and a Barbecue meal at the close of the day was greatly appreciated by all. Roz and Ewen, Jessie and the two John's gave 200% and worked tirelessly throughout the day. Roz's fruit cake and a dram served in a classy crystal glass for those who had participated in The Clan March really set the tone and was an unexpected bonus. Thankyou Roz ! In the early 1850's the founding settlers of Turakina, were the families of Donald "Bain" Cameron, John "Mor" Cameron and Alexander "Sandy" Grant. To honour those Pioneers the Grant and Cameron Clans were given the honour of leading the Clan March.

There was a very large attendance at Turakina and seeing very young children proudly wearing their Clan Colours was heart warming. The smallest and youngest child I saw wearing a kilt would have been no older than six months.

But the best part for me always, is the meeting up with our Cameron friends and family and it was good to note that on this occasion there were representatives from all seven North Island Branches of Clan Cameron New Zealand. Congratulations to Turakina on 150 years."

By Editor: I thought it would be appropriate to reprint this article which appeared in this newsletter in February 2014. The 2024 Turakina Highland Games are taking place as we go to press.

With Sarah in Scotland

Greetings from cold and sometimes snowy Scotland. Firstly, Mere Kirihimete and Happy New Year! I can't believe it has already been two months since I wrote my first First Light report. I have been privileged to undertake several adventures since then, and I am reporting some of the highlights here.

Following my time in Glasgow at the National Piping Centre and visiting art galleries- the Burrell collection being my favourite- I travelled by train through picturesque scenery back up to Ken and Rhona at Inverlair. While back up in the Highlands, I was fortunate to join Sandy Cameron (Finlay's older brother) and his partner Eireann on a ~7-hour hike leaving from Glen Nevis up Stob Ban and Mullach nan Coirean. So, I can officially say I have ticked off a couple of the 283 Munros (peaks over 3000 feet in Scotland). We were treated to amazing views, and it gave me a greater appreciation of the Highland landscape (although my body was extremely sore for a few days following!).

I have had a couple of marvellous days exploring Edinburgh. Travelling between Glasgow and Edinburgh is so easy with the express trains, which I utilised. While in Edinburgh, I explored the famous Christmas markets, visited the castle, watched a few shows and spent a lot of time walking around the old city plus up Calton Hill. As a scientist, I enjoyed the National Museum of Scotland, where Dolly the sheep is displayed.

I travelled by train to Perth to spend a few days with Roddy Cameron- Scotland's Clan Cameron Commissioner- who is based in Perthshire. While staying with Roddy, I experienced a small-town pantomime, had a day marvelling at some castles (Scone Palace and Glamis), visited St Andrews

(including the Old golf course and castle) and had a snowy hike in Glen Clova.

After braving -8oC overnight temperatures, we were treated to a day of snow in Dundee. I could write a whole article on the tartan exhibition that is currently on at the Victoria and Albert, Dundee, which includes the oldest known piece of tartan. We were met at the V&A by Johanna and Colin Wilson, with whom my Perthshire experience continued in Auchterarder. It was wonderful to reminisce with Johanna's father, Charlie Cameron, who, at 103 years old, fondly remembered New Zealand and attending the Auckland International gathering in the early 2000s. Attending a Carol concert in the Innerpeffray Chapel was pretty special, particularly considering the Chapel was built in the early 1500s.

I spent my first-ever winter Christmas at Inverlair. It seemed like I had slipped into a parallel universe wearing my first Christmas jumper with the fire on and it being dark at 3.30 pm rather than being in NZ's hot summer. Just before Christmas Day, I was lucky to join Alex MacDonald at Achnacarry on the Stag Feed Run, during which I saw about 100 stags on the estate. It was a

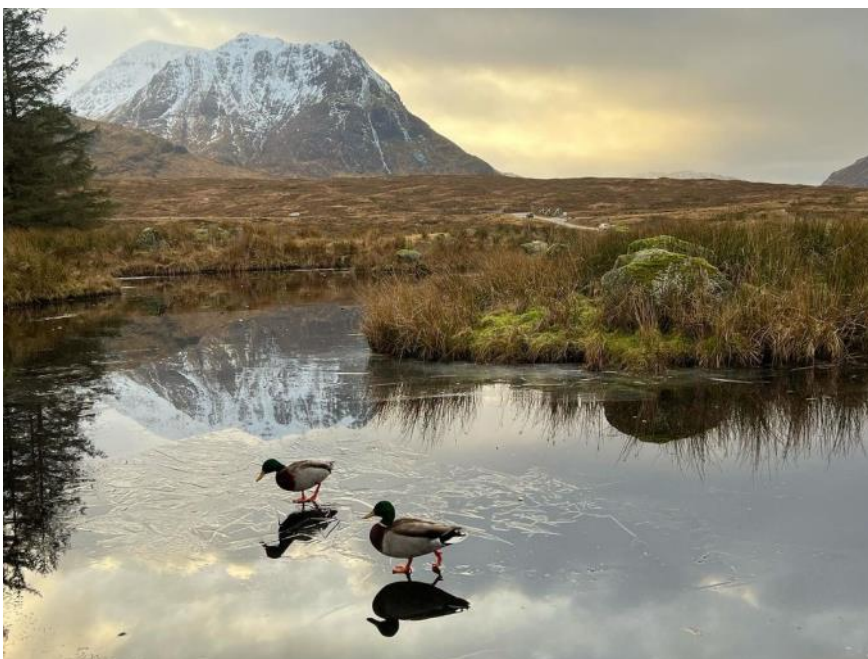
fabulously magical experience to witness these wild animals come running down for feed and see them on the hills beside Lock Arkaig. I was blessed with having an officially white Christmas as it snowed in Inverlair on Christmas evening. Hogmanay involved whisky, Ken shooting out the old and in the new year, and myself piping in the new year.

I have spent much of January in England, staying in London and Eastbourne, a little respite from the Scottish cold, having time to stay with family friends, and visiting where I was born and lived in Kent (please don't hold that against me!). I will soon be heading back up the Island, with my next stop in Scotland being in the Dumfries and Galloway area in Scotland's South West. That is all for now. Thank you for reading, and I look forward to updating you further in the next magazine.

Sarah



In Corrie Fee Glen Clova



Some of Bill Cameron's great pictures. *Left: ducks walking on ice in Glen Coe. Right: The Peat Track near Fort William*



Left: Tossing the Caber at the Waipu Highland Games on 1 January 2024. See bottom left. Photo: Duncan McQueen

Above: A Photo from the Past. Auckland member Brian Cameron tosses the caber (kiwifruit pole) at a Auckland Branch BBQ on Neil and Ruth Cameron's Lochiel Orchard in 1989. Photo: Editor



Full scotish breakfast for brunch!!

Haggis for breakfast is a first but so good! 🍌

Sarah enjoys her breakfast!



Tossing the weight at Waipu. The weight seems almost balanced on the bar.

Photo: Cass Hakaraia.



Taking the salute as the street parade marches in to open the Waipu Games.

Highland Games Chief Ted Hart and Clan Cameron NZ President Dale Bailey.

Photo: Duncan McQueen



Away it flies! Photo: Duncan McQueen



Clan Matheson at Waipu. Roger Matheson, Chris Binns and Lena Orum. Photo: Duncan McQueen.