



Cameron



The Magazine of Clan Cameron New Zealand Inc.

Vol 58 No 4
August
2024



Malcolm Campbell and Rob Cameron pipe inside the Kirk.

**The Kirkin' o'
The Tartan**
at St. Andrew's
First Presbyterian
Church, Auckland

“Cameron”

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

Directory

Hereditary Chief and Captain of Clan Cameron
Lord Cameron of Lochiel,
Achnacarry, Spean Bridge,
Inverness-shire, Scotland. PH34 4ES

New Zealand President and Commissioner
Dale Cameron Bailey
6 Harapaki Street, Meadowbank, Auckland 1072
Ph. 09 521 5329 dale.bailey@xtra.co.nz

Secretary
Scott Turner
17 Pheasant Lane, Aokautere, 4471
021 163 8201 shedquarters1066@gmail.com

Treasurer
Hillary Hakaraia
2 Crestlands Place, Papakura, Auckland 2110
09 299 8672 HillaryHak@xtra.co.nz

Genealogist and Historian
David Weston
14 Tanguru Street, Wanganui 4500
Ph. (06) 343 2539 westmor@yahoo.com

First Light Exchange Convenor
Bryan Haggitt
96A Lucerne Road, Remuera, Auckland 1050
Ph. (09) 524 5254 bchecho@xtra.co.nz

Branch Presidents

Auckland
Rob Cameron
15B Gavin Street, Ellerslie, Auckland 1060
Ph. 022 525 3151 robcameronnz@gmail.com

Bay of Plenty
Tanya Cameron
7 Sundell Place, Opoitiki 3122
Ph. 027 293 5603
Tanya.cameron30@gmail.com

Gisborne
David Cameron,
885 Wharekopae Rd, RD2 Gisborne. 4072
Ph. (06) 862 7803 camerondvd@xtra.co.nz

Hawke's Bay
Hamish Cameron
76 Jarvis Road, RD 5, Hastings 4175
Ph. (06) 876 7509. h.jcameron@nowmail.co.nz

Iar (Taranaki / Whanganui)
Neville Wallace
242B Turu Turu Road, RD 14, Hawera 4674
Ph. 027 416 3563 neville.wallace@talk2me.co.nz

Manawatu
Russell Cameron,
6 Woodland Grove, Feilding 4702
Ph. 027 601 4410 russelldcam@gmail.com

Wellington / Wairarapa
Graeme Cameron
4 Karamu Street, Ngaio, Wellington 6035
Ph. (04) 977 6250 glcameron@outlook.com

Canterbury
Nick Cameron
322 Auchenflower Road, RD 1 Darfield 7571
Ph. 027 232 6664
nick.cameron@cropmark.co.nz

Magazine Editor
Neil Cameron,
SA 551, William Sanders Retirement Village
7 Ngataringa Road, Devonport,
Auckland 0624
Ph: 027 948 5808 kncam@xtra.co.nz

Web / Facebook Co-ordinator
Dale Bailey
dale.bailey@xtra.co.nz

Facebook
<https://m.facebook.com/ClanCameronNZ>

A Message from our Commissioner..

Kia ora tatou, failte, greetings

By the time you read this Lena and I will be in Scotland for the international gatherings of Clan Cameron and Clan Matheson. Lena's clan gets to go first with their gathering being held on the Isle of Skye. The Camerons gathering will be in August and Lena and I will be staying two weeks in Fort William. We are very much looking forward to meeting clan members from far and wide and in connecting with the places that our forebears came from.

What I am very much looking forward to at the gathering is our special First Light in Lochaber breakfast event where the Kiwis (and friends) are getting together at the wonderful West Highlands Museum in Cameron Square Lochaber. We will be celebrating those who have journeyed so far to attend and to commend the excellent work of the First Light Exchange over 24 years. We have had a great response so far and Lochiel has agreed to join us.

Recently, we were very pleased to attend the Manawatu Branch's annual dinner at the historic Wharerata homestead at Massey University. It's a building I am very familiar with having studied Geography just across the road from it back in the day. While I was there our very own cousin Bruce Cameron became President of the University Students Association (MUSA). It was great to have our next first lighter Lochiel Nielsen attend and speak about her family heritage. We were to have a few generations of our own family in the attendees which was special to us. Thanks to Russell and the team for organising a great night.

Next year Clan Cameron New Zealand will be celebrating its 90th birthday and I am keen to have some suggestions about how we might best commemorate this milestone. Let me know what you think about that.

Aonaibh ri Cheile

Dale Cameron Bailey

Commissioner & President



Next Magazine Deadline is 15 Sept. 2024

Printed By

Gift to Lord Cameron of Lochiel, 28th Chief of Clan Cameron

At the First Light in Lochaber breakfast at the West Highland Museum in Cameron Square Fort William a special gift will be presented to Lochiel on behalf of Clan Cameron New Zealand. This beautiful pounamu Hei Tiki will be presented by New Zealand Commissioner Dale to Lochiel.

The Hei Tiki is a perfect gift, made of New Zealand greenstone, a type of jade found in New Zealand. It has powerful symbolism.

The Hei Tiki represents the human form and ones ancestors. It links the past, present and future. Traditionally, Hei Tiki are passed from parent to child or used for protection and good luck. It is considered to be a taonga, or sacred treasure, and is often passed down through generations.

The Hei Tiki is a symbol of fertility, good luck, and strength of character, and is said to bring protection to its wearer.

The gift was selected by Dale and Rob Cameron, President of the Auckland branch and will journey with them to Scotland as they join the 2024 International Gathering of Clan Cameron.



Gift of the Blenheim Pipes to Clan Cameron by Dale Cameron Bailey

At our annual gathering this year the Association accepted the ownership and custodianship of the Blenheim pipes. These pipes are a very special part of our Cameron legacy here, coming to New Zealand in 1840 on the *Blenheim* which brought Scots migrants to Wellington just after Christmas Day. Originally played by Donald the Piper these pipes have been handed down through the generations since arriving in New Zealand. They represent the most tangible link with our Cameron heritage and culture.

Ewen became the most recent custodian of these pipes having been given them by Denis Cameron, President Clan Cameron NZ (2006-2011). The pipes will now come under the care of Clan Cameron New Zealand, who will determine who is the best to hold and care for them on behalf of Clan Cameron. Ewen signed over the pipes at the recent Manawatu branch dinner. A special vote of thanks was passed at the dinner for the care Ewen has shown during his custody of the pipes.

Ewen was keen to note that they must be used and played not put away in a cupboard. President Dale said "this is the most special privilege for our association to be the custodians of the pipes".



Ewen Grant signs the deed of gift prepared by Anne Walker Long Secretary Manawatu Branch, which was witnessed by Dick Earle.

Coming Events

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.

**Saturday 28 September 2024
Scottish Clans Association AGM
And Annual Dinner.**

*AGM will be at 5pm and the dinner will start from 6pm. Dinner price is \$75 per ticket and proceeds will go towards their Endowment fund.
Further details will be advised.*

**Saturday 19 October 2024
Executive Council Meeting.**

*Hawkes Bay Club, 53 Marine Parade
Napier
9.00am to 1pm followed by lunch for those who wish to.*

From the Branches....

Auckland by Rob Cameron

Firstly, I would like to welcome the Bay of Plenty members who decided to join the Auckland Branch. Thank you for keeping your Clan membership. We are currently organising a lunch in October or November in Tauranga or Mt Maunganui for our new members which some Aucklanders will consider coming across for.



Recently, I performed with the City of Sails Pipe Band and the Auckland Symphony Orchestra at the Last Night of the Proms. The band had performed at the same event last year and was able to put on another stellar, polished performance. The band has also grown quite a bit for the coming competition season, putting out 23 pipers at a recent band practice.

On July 30th, the St Andrews Church held the Kirking of the Tartan service. As part of the Scottish Clans Association, I participated in the piping leading the clans in and out of the church.

By the time you are reading this we would have held our branch's Annual Dinner. We have had a couple of changes to our entertainment however it is gearing up to be another significant night. We will have Emily Roughton from Rough Town returning to play the fiddle. We have a few artifacts relating to "The Blenheim" and Donald and Christina's family on display including the Blenheim Pipes.

The dinner will be the last event we have before people start leaving for Scotland and the Achnacarry Clan Cameron Gathering at the start of August. We have quite a few Auckland-based clan members who will be making the trip this year. Current First Lighter Sarah McQueen is also getting behind the Gathering spending time with the organising committee to make sure events run smoothly. I also want to wish everyone going safe travels as I am sure everyone will be waiting for the stories in the next newsletter.

The upcoming piping season has the following events in Auckland; 24th August, Solo piping competition, this has historically been in Howick however last year it was in Karaka. 12th October Mini bands competition in Drury. 24th November is the date scheduled for this year's Farmers Santa Parade.

Some other events include the Scottish Clans Association AGM and Annual Dinner on September 28th. AGM will be at 5pm and the dinner will start from 6pm. Dinner price is \$75 per ticket and proceeds will go towards their Endowment fund. The Scottish Clans Association is also organising a St Andrews Day event on 30th November at Kinder House. Details for both events are yet to be distributed.

Manawatu by Anne Walker

The Clan Cameron Manawatu Branch dinner of Saturday 8th of June at the Wharerata Conference Centre, Massey University, was as usual a thoroughly enjoyable evening. Most attending this year came from our local region, but interestingly this year ranged in ages from 4 years old to over 90. It was great to see some of the younger members there. The evening was presided over by Dale Cameron Bailey, CCNZ President, and Russell Cameron, our capable Branch President was MC. This year, as a novelty, we opened the evening with a rolling display of photographs taken by long time Clan Cameron supporter, Ainsley Watson, during a long road trip he undertook in Scotland last year. Ainsley travelled about 2000kms in a campervan, on mainly secondary roads, and as talented landscape photographer took hundreds of photos. These proved an interesting talking point as people gathered with drinks on arrival, as many reminisced about the places they had visited while travelling in Scotland.



Guest speaker, and Clan Cameron Manawatu member, Ian McKelvie shared some insights of his journey into national politics, and observations made during his 12 years as MP for Rangitikei. He's now enjoying a quieter life in retirement. Lochiel Nielsen and her parents were also at the dinner. Lochiel participated in her first ever haggis ceremony, presented the Selkirk Grace before dinner, and shared a little of her background and hopes for her First Light Exchange in 2025. It was also good that Kim Carrington (nee Walker) First Lighter from 2006 was at the dinner, and about to speak with Lochiel and share some insights.

We enjoyed the piping of our young member, Patrick Coogan. Patrick pipes in the Manawatu Scottish Number 2 Band and was recently named in the NZ Youth Pipe Band for their overseas tour. Although he is unable to take up the position due to university study commitments, it is testament to his ability and talent. This year Patrick invited 13 year old piper Ashton Murphy to pipe with him. Ashton is under tuition of Stewart Easton, of Manawatu Scottish, and is a member of the recently formed Number 4 Pipe Band. Along with Patrick, Ashton welcomed guests with piping on arrival, and entertained us with a set. After dinner he also given the Blenheim pipes to look at by Bruce Cameron and capably piped *Auld Lang Syne* on these precious old pipes. Everyone was very impressed.

It was a full programme for the dinner, with presentations from Dale Bailey, a video message from First Lighter, Sarah MacQueen, our Guest Speaker Ian McKelvie, piping entertainment from Patrick and Ashton, and a couple of special piped items by Bruce Cameron. One being, *Maisie's Tune*, which he played and then presented the sheet music to Dick Earle, Maisie's husband, and another new tune called *John 'Stockcar' Cameron* which he'd written for Branch Life Member, John Cameron and to whom he also presented a framed copy of the music.

Clan Cameron Manawatu are planning a Spring event for mid-September, and more details will be available in due course.

Finally, Clan Cameron Manawatu are preparing a 2025 calendar incorporating a series of landscape photos taken by Ainsley Watson. Funds raised will support First Light Scholarship and other Clan activities. The calendar will be available by 1st September. \$25 each, and pre-orders are welcomed. Do consider these for Christmas gifts.

For pre-order and enquiries. Please email clancameronmanawatu@gmail.com.

Hawke's Bay by Hamish Cameron

The fact that the International gathering of Clan Cameron – which involves N.Z – is being held in Scotland, at the beginning of August, creates a collision with New Zealand's usual winter calendar schedule. I am aware of other branches dilemma at trying to shoehorn expected occasions into a new compressed time frame, while all I have to achieve is some notes in earlier than normal. It doesn't seem that long ago that we were consumed with the national AGM and only natural to now think its time to relax a bit ----



"not so" in my particular part of the territory. We here in Twyford were particularly hard hit by Cyclone Gabrielle with some horrific devastation to homes and livelihoods. Locals are now busy putting together an emergency warning system (one that works) and refurbishing the local community hall into a disaster relief centre.

A decade or so ago this hall was moved to its present site on the local school grounds, and is now in regular use. Luckily it was decided at the time to re-pile the whole building to a higher floor level than was fashionable at the time. A decision that proved propitious as the neighbouring class rooms were all flooded to desk top height while not getting anywhere near the halls new floor level.

The “resilience of these areas (as the remote bureaucrats are want to refer to the desperate efforts of victims) is now manifesting itself in the form of working-bees, donations and the enlisting of skills from sympathetic experts.

The brief is to have stored on site- generators, gas, freezers, fridges and cupboards with enough supplies to support at least 150 people for 3 days. A large rear section of the hall is having its internal lining replaced after the installation of insulation to adapt into a dormitory area.

Luckily the area has lots of helicopters that are now well versed in roof-top rescues. Experience that was gained while the “authorities” were still working out which forms to fill out- and how to prioritise them.

The irony of what we are trying to establish is akin to what Maori operate constantly – our own marae. A centre able to operate at capacity in an instant.

To achieve this entails a lot of people over quite sometime, usually in the “volunteered” state, a position thankfully filled by an involved community interested in solutions not requires. YES – there is always somethings you wished you had completed yesterday!!

Bay of Plenty by Tanya Cameron

The Clan Cameron Bay of Plenty Branch had its final AGM on Sunday 23rd of June 2024. Our branch has now gone in to remission, with all bills paid and subscriptions for all going to new branches fully paid for their financial year. Ray Crafts is our only Life Member, so we have paid for 3 years for his subscription at his new branch.



We have also sent a donation of \$500.00 through to the Te Puke and District Highland Pipe Band from the Branch and also Harold and Betty Cameron. Harold and Betty Cameron donated this money to us for music at our events, but it wasn't used, so we have passed it on. We received this reply from them.

After a much-depleted post-covid squad the Band's Tutor programme has launched an intense re-build campaign. The ongoing rotations of forced lockdowns prevented tutoring learners as ongoing replacements in addition to the usual exodus of young people moving away to jobs after completing degrees at Toi Ohomai and others shifting towns. The Band now has an enthusiastic young Pipe Major Hector Couper from the far northwest of Scotland, his Mum was born and raised in Te Puke and also his grandparents and great grandparents. With Hector's help the tutor programme is thriving with 10 learner pipers and 9 drummers. Tutoring at the Intermediate school too. Regards Sue Muir –Pipe Sergeant

Moving forward, Dale Bailey our Commissioner for Clan Cameron NZ has agreed to be custodian of our branch documents, accounts, photos and artifacts until such time as they find a more permanent home.

I will be holding onto the banner for our branch for now and Ray Crafts will be holding onto the Bard's rod.

I hope to see you around the Cameron events in the future.

Canterbury by Nick Cameron

We have still to organise a suitable time for our local AGM and unfortunately nothing has been organised to date.

For some time my wife Julie has been having increasing pain in her hip region and had found it increasingly difficult to walk without severe pain. After an X-ray 3 weeks ago she was promptly admitted to hospital for a hip replacement with the surgeon later telling me after the operation it was one of the worst hips he had seen for some time. She is now on the mend and we



hope she will be fully mobile before our trip to Scotland for the gathering.

After the gathering we have booked to fly to Germany to visit my brother Andrew who returned 2 months ago from Dnepro (near the Russian border) in the Ukraine working with a British medical group. Andrew's daughter Emily Cameron and her partner Ludwig own and operate a cropping farm in the Regensberg area. They have built a mobile seed cleaning plant and also produce chook food as a sideline besides growing a range of intensive seed crops over 100ha. Since my occupation is as a Seedman/Plant Breeder... this visit should prove to be very interesting.

On the piping front I have been following the piping successes of Finlay's brother Sandy in several major events and we are looking forward to hear both of them play while at the gathering. The band I play with in Canterbury has recently handed out 6 new tunes ... hopefully we can get them up to a suitable standard before the Hororata Games contest in November. I am also trying to get a new piobaireach up and running called “You're Welcome Ewen Lochiel”.

On the work front I have been working on developing a new Seed Application for Australia for cell phone use, harvesting chicory seed selections and at present trying to plant grass polycrosses between what seems continuous wet weather. Life doesn't seem to slow down!!

First Light News

by Bryan Haggitt—First Light Convenor



Our current First Lighter, Sarah McQueen, continues to have the time of her life. Just back from a sojourn in Munich and down the Danube with a diversion on the canals and cycling between villages. Only hic-cup was the high water levels in the rivers in the canals when the boats were prevented from going under the bridges. Sarah is now back in Lochaber and being hosted again by Ken and Rhona Cameron at Inverlair.

Meantime, Finlay Cameron – First Lighter here 2022/23, graduates on 4 July with a “First” from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. Congratulations, Finlay – you were a master musician out here in NZ and, I understand, both you and your brother, Sandy, are back piping with the Field Marshall Montgomery Pipe Band.



Here's hoping Sandy is able to join us in New Zealand this coming summer. An even more noted Piper, Sandy won Gold at the 2023 Braemar Games – Piobaireachd, eight tunes asked for, 17 played 1 Sandy Cameron, £400, Gold Medal and Donald Bain Trophy, *Battle of the Pass of Crieff*

Lochiel Nielsen of Masterton is hoping to follow Sarah to Lochaber next May and to stay on to experience a “White Christmas”. Her aim this year is to complete her Early Childhood Studies at Ecol in Palmerston North a qualification which should secure her employment in Fort William.

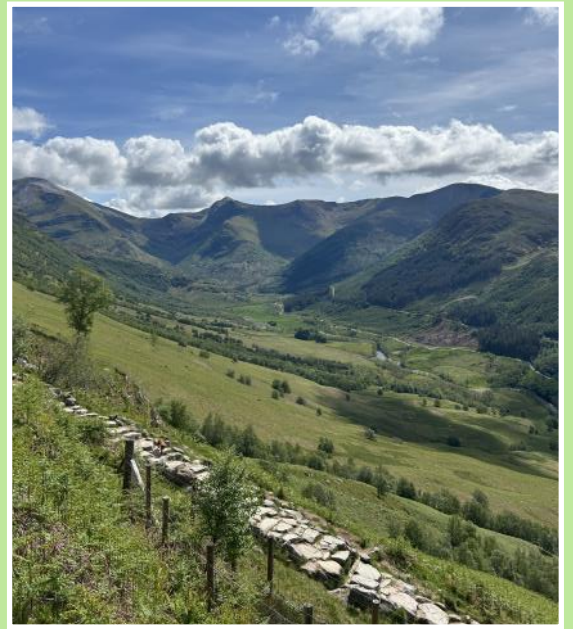
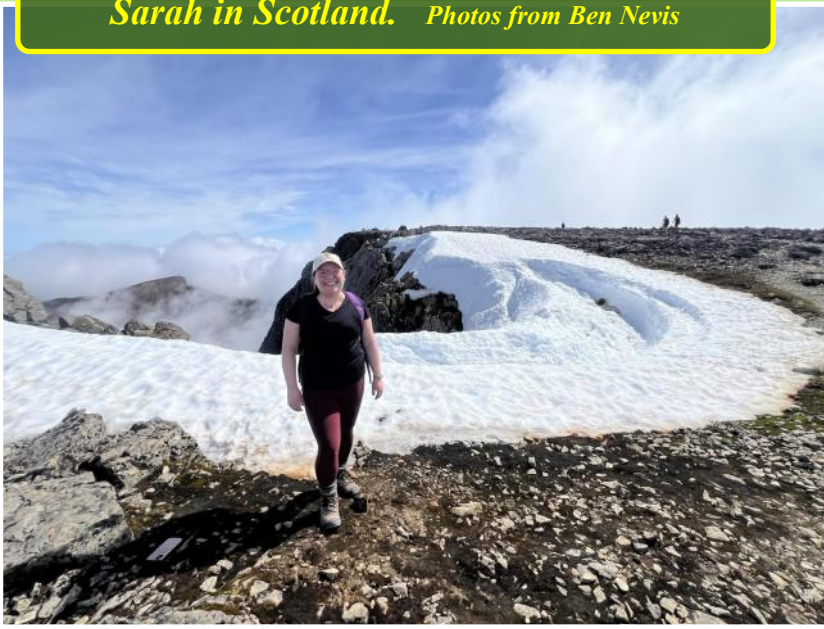


Photo: The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

Photos from previous Achnacarry Gatherings



Sarah in Scotland. Photos from Ben Nevis



The Manawatu Annual Dinner Photos: Joanne Cameron



John and Jessie Annabell



The Haggis Ceremony



Lochiel Nielsen



Dale Bailey and Bruce Cameron



Pipers Patrick Coogan and Ashton Murphy



Planning the Auckland Dinner



At the Saint Kentigern's Ceilidh

Bryan and Jenny Haggitt, Heather Laird and Jean and Duncan McQueen

The Lost Portraits of Bonnie Prince Charlie

By Julie Ruddock

The Lost Portraits of Bonnie Prince Charlie unveiled their mysterious allure during a recent talk held on March 17th, 2024, in Fort William by Dr. Bender Grosvenor. Grosvenor is an art historian and dealer and a BBC broadcaster. He has discovered a number of previously lost Jacobite portraits.

He first discussed the historical importance of imagery, shedding light on the strategic use of portraits to maintain power and influence, even during times of exile and defeat. Citing Henry VII as an example of one who put his image out as PR. He had coins minted with his likeness after the Battle of Bosworth in 1485. James II of Scotland produced much imagery when in exile in France after 1648. It maintained the illusion that all was well (e.g. power, wealth, grandeur), not only to followers and supporters, but to other monarchs and people of influence.

Some imagery was designed to be secretive and to only be appreciated by chosen people. I refer to the deliberately distorted painting of Prince Charles Edward Stuart displayed here at the museum. The wooden board appears to carry a smear of paint, but when viewed through the metal cylinder, the prints can clearly be seen. If a non Jacobite visited, by moving one of the two objects, they would have had no idea that the Prince's imagery was present.

Grosvenor went on to explain how often paintings could be lost. He said that the paintings essentially lost their importance after the Jacobite defeat on the Culloden battlefield. Paintings could then become improperly named, and artists would paint over sashes and shields, in effect producing another painting. Often Jacobite imagery was tweaked and renamed as influential French dignitaries. This appeared to be a basic commercial act (giving the painting more value), rather than a concerted attempt to remove Jacobite imagery. In fact, the prince's portrait was often morphed by painters into Louis XV of France, purely for commercial reasons.

Grosvenor then talked us through the discovery he made pertaining to one of the well known Jacobite portraits in the National Gallery of Scotland, and the investigative process that led to the correction of historical records. The portrait was alleged to be Prince Charles in armour, a recognisable image in the 2000's due to its copy adorning shortbread tins and even being used as the prince's true likeness in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. Grosvenor, however, on coming across 'Portrait of a Cardinal', an image of Prince Henry Benedict by De La Tour at auction, came to the realisation that this was a near match to the iconic portrait of Charles in the National Gallery. The portrait hanging in the Gallery was indeed Prince Henry Benedict, Charles's younger brother. Henry had supported his brother's claim to the throne through naval expedition, hence why he was in armour in the sitting. Henry in later years would become Cardinal York. So, in 2009, the National Gallery had to admit the mistake, rename the portrait, and begin the search for a genuine image of the prince.

Grosvenor then brought us on to the image of the prince that hangs in the National Gallery today.

A portrait by Alan Ramsay?

The portrait came from Gosford House, and they have Ramsay and Stuart cited in their catalogue but more proof was needed.

Grosvenor explained that Ramsay was known to keep company with Stuart, even attending the same functions. Grosvenor had also unearthed a letter from the Cumberland Papers held in the Royal Library in Windsor inviting Ramsay to Holyrood house to paint Stuart, dated the 26th of October, 1745. This posed an issue as an 18th century journal writer, George Vertue, noted that Ramsay had headed to London in October, written as 'Xber'. After much research, Grosvenor



The Highlander Portrait currently on loan to West Highland Museum

was able to show that the X was an abbreviation of the Latin decem, so Ramsey was clearly still in Edinburgh after Stuart had left to march south. Assessment of the painting style further proved it was Ramsay. The brush strokes for the hair, light under the chin and facial tones all pointed to the esteemed portrait artist. Facial features also matched Stuart's, seeming to confirm that this was a life painting from a sitting and commission.

Grosvenor explained to us that it was a small painting designed to travel. The Prince was heading south, and this image could be reproduced like others for 'PR'. His portrait doesn't have tartan or other Scottish imagery on it so it was clearly aimed at his English audience. This is a stark contrast to the imagery of the Prince as a Highlander with strong Jacobite themes.

Grosvenor then talked the audience through his acquisition, the 'Highlander Portrait' painting, loaned to us, and hanging currently in our Jacobite collection. The artist is unknown, but this Highlander Portrait was definitely aimed at the Scottish audience

and probably painted after his return from Derby. Possibly in the 19th century, someone had attempted to beautify the Prince and painted his image with blue eyes. Grosvenor had the painting x-rayed and the true essence of the artwork was revealed, unveiling historical secrets that added depth and richness to the narratives of Prince's era, it revealed the true Prince with brown eyes below! The discoveries just kept coming! The x-ray revealed a Jacobite battle banner in a further layer of paint below that of the Prince. It shows a coat of arms, a red saltire and white background, and two savages holding the banner. Grosvenor said it could belong to Archibald Menzies of Shian, who fought for the Prince. The Prince stayed in Castle Menzies on his march to Culloden in 1746. Robert Strange produced an engraving of the painting in 1746, though Grosvenor doubts he was the original artist.

It's worth visiting us to view the Jacobite collection. The Highlander Portrait is stunning and can be viewed alongside the many Jacobite artifacts the museum has accumulated, including Robert Strange's copper printing plate. An immersive experience is promised for those eager to uncover the mysteries of the past.

We look forward to seeing you there!

Julie Ruddock is a West Highland Museum Volunteer and creator of the successful Exploring Scotland's History digital channels.

<https://www.youtube.com/c/ExploringScotlandsHistory>
Facebook: Exploring Scotland's History | Facebook

We thank The West Highland Museum and Julie Ruddock for permission to reprint this article. This painting and many other wonderful items are on display in the Jacobite collection and well worth a visit if you are in Fort William



Dr Bendor Grosvenor (right) with Ian Peter MacDonald (Chair of Board, West Highland Museum) and Vanessa Martin (Curator Manager, West Highland Museum)



X-rays expose images beneath the Highlander Portrait

Renewing our Constitution

by Dale Cameron Bailey

As part of the requirements to comply with the Incorporated Societies Act (2022) we are currently redrafting our constitution. Our current constitution will no longer be compliant after April 2026 so we do have to develop a new one.

Our executive council discussed the matter at our meeting in May in Napier. We have formed a small subcommittee to prepare a draft a new version to be shared with members. We have decided to take the opportunity to not only comply with the Act but also make changes that will

future proof our society.

The subcommittee is Dale Bailey, Rob Cameron (Auckland), Russell Cameron (Manawatu) and Scott Turner (National Secretary). This group will make a draft available to branches later this year and will be discussed at our Executive Council meeting in October.

Following feedback a revised and recommended draft will be put to the Annual General Meeting 2025. This draft will be made available several months ahead of the AGM so everyone has plenty of time to review and consider. Alongside the draft there will be a short summary paper outlining the reasons and thinking behind the changes, some of which will be mandatory.

The subcommittee would welcome any comments and input you have.



Glen Coe taken by Sarah McQueen



Finlay graduated from Royal Conservatoire of Scotland with BMus (Hons) First Class in Traditional Music (Piping). Well done Finlay.

Erracht -the Place of Assembly

by Bill Cameron (Lochaber)

In October this year it was announced in the press that Erracht House is up for sale - thus ending a unique chapter in Cameron history.

There are few houses in Lochaber that can claim to be continuously owned by one family, far less having a tartan named after it, a military regiment founded by one of its former inhabitants; and most surprisingly, for its distinctive architectural features to have survived the ravages of time.

Erracht House has withstood many a wet night on its rounded knoll at the entrance to Glen Loy. For over 300 years, possibly even more, a house (in various forms) has looked out upon Nevis Range, commanding some of the finest views of Ben Nevis in the whole of Lochaber. Looking up from the adjacent Caledonian Canal, Erracht stands out in the Lochaber landscape as one of few remaining examples of indigenous architecture, sympathetically designed to withstand the wet climate, yet carrying a quiet strength about its white washed façade.

The history of Erracht plays an important role in the collective history of Clan Cameron. During the height of the old clan system, the Camerons of Erracht were one of the leading cadet families, at one stage challenging the Lochiel family to the chieftainship of the clan. Much has already been written about this unfortunate episode in Cameron history and I think its best to leave the five arrows where they are and present a united front – it is our motto after all!

Erracht is derived from the Gaelic An Eirachd, meaning "place of assembly". It is recorded in 1772 as being a creel and turfed building - continuing in this form until 1816, when Col. Alexander Cameron raised it from a one, to two-storey building. Interestingly, the best rooms in the house are to be found on the upper floor, such was the interior design of the day.

Walking through the front hall-way at Erracht, you are presented with one of the most unique features of the house – a sturdy length of timber which slides out from one side of the thick walls - past the front door and into the opposite wall. One could draw comparisons with the tale of Kate Barlass at this point. This original feature harks back to a bygone era when unwelcomed visitors would literally be barred from entry. Opposite the front door a sweeping staircase takes you up to four large rooms on the upper floor. With coved ceilings and fires at either end of the house, these large rooms would have no doubt entertained many interesting and distinguished guests over the years.

Wandering up the rough track to Erracht House, you will find a commemorative cairn, remembering Erracht's most distinguished former inhabitant – Lt General, Sir Alan Cameron of Erracht, founder of the 79th Cameron Highlanders. Known affectionately to the men of his regiment as "Old Cia Mar Th'a" – due to his regular use of the Gaelic greeting "How are you". An extensive biography of Sir Alan was written by one of his descendants in the 1980's, covering his long and distinguished military career. 'The Indomitable Colonel', by Loraine MacLean. It is also worth mentioning that one of the most popular Cameron tartans worn by Camerons around the world has its origins in Erracht. Sir Alan's mother, Marsali Cameron, specifically designed the Cameron of Erracht Tartan for the 79th Cameron Highlanders - blending the colours of the

MacDonald and Cameron tartans into a single weave.

A jovial story of the tartan rivalry is recorded in Sir Alan's biography in which we are told of two men arguing in the garrison over their respective tartans. One Cameron man refers to another man's Black Watch tartan as a 'mongrel tartan - owned by no clan in particular'. Meanwhile the man of the Black Watch asserts that Cameron of Erracht resembles 'the reddish hue of bully beef'.

"Mon, he said with scorn turning to the Black Watch man, dae ye no ken that the Cameron tartan originated in the Garden of Eden? "An hoo dae ye mak' that oot?" scoffingly remarked his hearers. 'Why' he said, 'didna Adam an' Eve wear a garment o' leaves?' 'Yes,' they acquiesced. 'Weel, said Andrew, if ye can understand, the leaves faded in coorse o' time an' took on reddish tints, wi here an' there a yellow hue. An' there', he added, triumphantly smacking his thigh, 'ye can see for yersel's whaur the idea o' the Cameron tartan sprang fae'.

Looking back at records of Erracht House, it appears to have been in the Cameron family for a long period of time. During the Second World War it lay empty and was subsequently occupied by a member of the Lochiel family - Ewen Cameron of Lochiel, (1878-1958). A barrister of the Inner Temple and Major in the Lovat Scouts. Major Ewen employed a number of staff in the house during this period.

Leasing Erracht from 1959 until recently. Mrs. Jennifer Ogilvy and her family occupied the property for over forty years. After she moved down to Oxford to be closer to her family - I spoke with Jennifer on the phone and she recalled some of her happy memories of Erracht. During her first visit to the house in 1959 she remembered herself and her husband having to carry out a lot of restoration work, as the house had lain empty for a number of years after Major Ewen's occupancy. She described how she used the upper rooms as bedrooms, and suggested that one of the outbuildings could have been a blacksmiths shop at one time. Above the entrance to another of the outbuildings is a date stone with the

initials D.C.L – L.V.H 1842 – Donald Cameron of Lochiel and his wife Lady Vere Hobart. There are also the initials D.M.L which are believed to be of the stonemason.

Jennifer said she never tired of the views looking out towards Nevis Range in all seasons. And who would not. I could sense that she still thinks fondly of her years at Erracht with its rich history and views across to Britain's highest mountain.

As Erracht embarks on a new path, we can reflect on all the good things that have come from this most Cameron of houses at the entrance to Glen Loy.



With Sarah in Scotland

Greetings from Scotland! This is likely my last time giving an update as the First Lighter. I want to thank everyone who has supported this exchange in Scotland and New Zealand and all the fantastic people who have hosted in Scotland, particularly Ken and Rhona Cameron.

Since writing my last report, one major highlight was my trip up Ben Nevis, a few pics of which did find their way into the June Mag. Having driven past the 'Ben' many times, I finally can say that I have ticked off the highest Munro. I was fortunate to have a wonderful guide in Bill Cameron, and as it turns out, it is a bit of a rite of passage for NZ First Lighters to head up Ben Nevis with Bill! We set off early on a fine May day up the 'Tourist route', which originally was the 1883 pony track to the summit. We were very fortunate with the weather and had lovely views up Glen Nevis until we got to the Saddle by Lochan Meall a t-Suidhe (known colloquially as the halfway lochan). At this point, we zig-zagged into the cloud and stayed in it for about an hour before we got above it. I only asked, 'Are we there yet?' a few times before we reached the sizeable stoney plateau of the Summit. As we were above the cloud, the view was for miles, but we couldn't see any landmarks, just a fluffy white sheet as far as the eye could see. The summit features the observatory ruins, an emergency shelter and a solid cairn. Atop the cairn sits a trig point to mark the highest point; therefore, I was briefly the highest person in Great Britain! As we descended, the cloud lifted, and we were treated to stunning views of Fort William and the surrounding lochs. After about 7 hours of hiking, we returned to Achintee and ate a well-deserved meal at the Ben Nevis Inn. It was a rewarding climb and so worth the very sore legs and slight sunburn!

The last few months have also included some trips away from Scotland, including a trip down to London/Cambridge and making the most of being so close to Europe as I jetted off to Germany, Austria, Slovakia, and Hungary! I may have seen some great castles on this trip, but there is something special about the Scottish ones I have visited over the last few months.

I have been involved with the Clan Cameron International Gathering organising committee and can't wait

for this fabulous event. We have put together a great programme, and it will be lovely to see some fellow Kiwis there. I will have to compare my accent to see if I have picked up a bit of Scottish accent over my time here!! I have also been contacting previous First Light exchange participants, so look out for updates from them, especially as we are about to reach 25 years of this fabulous program.

I hope you have enjoyed my updates and photos of my journey. Thank you for reading them. I am sure I will contribute to this magazine more in the future, but I am officially signing off as the latest NZ first lighter, the 11th overall! -Sarah



Updates from Previous First Lighters.

Compiled by Sarah McQueen

Shona Cameron

I was the first New Zealander to take part in the First Light Exchange Programme in 2001. Three aims were set for the exchange – professional, personal and clan development. Based in Fort William, I worked for Lochaber College writing and delivering a new marketing strategy for the college; I visited Clan branches throughout Scotland to give talks; and was part of the organising committee for the 2001 Clan Gathering – including the task of exploring the local area and pulling together a commemorative information booklet for international visitors.

Other highlights of my exchange included attending a Knights of the Thistle Service at Edinburgh's iconic St Giles Cathedral as the guest of Lochiel (26th Chief); exploring the Highlands and Islands; climbing a number of Munros including Ben Nevis (twice!) and making some life-long friends. After the exchange I returned to work in Scotland. Despite only planning to stay for a few years, I spent the next 20 years

working in Edinburgh in senior communication and engagement roles with Edinburgh City Council, NHS Scotland, the Scottish Parliament, the Scottish Government and the University of Edinburgh. In my spare time, I travelled with my family throughout Europe, as well as the Middle East and Africa and trained and worked as a fitness instructor and life coach.

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, I returned to NZ in January 2022. My family is now settled in Canterbury, and I am working as Engagement Director for the University of Canterbury.



Further updates will be published in future issues.



**Founding members of Clan Cameron Auckland:
Neil Cameron, Brian Cameron, Garry and Dale Taylor and Pam Cameron.**



Photos this page by Dale Bailey, Bryan Haggitt, Jean or Duncan McQueen and Ed.

Our MC for the evening—Duncan McQueen



Claire Robertson and Emily Roughton



Sue Wright, Helen Saunders, Rob and Cath Cameron, and Fiona North



The Rev. Bryan Haggitt addresses the Haggis



A young Haggis party - Eva, Lilly and Isabella Cameron and Bryan Haggitt Jr.



Auckland President Rob Cameron with his parents, Morea and Allan



Auld Lang Syne

