



OTAGO SCOTTISH HERITAGE COUNCIL

Welcome to the June 2022 newsletter  
Edited by Dene Mackenzie  
Mid-Winter Hogmanay



Preparing for the Haggis ceremony at the Combined Clans & Societies Group Otago on Saturday night were (from left): Hugh Marshall (who did the address) Bill Ross, Bruce Nicholson, Todd Wall and Qwenton McKenzie.

Mid-Winter Hogmanay

Nearly 50 people enjoyed the Combined Clans & Societies Group Otago mid-winter Hogmanay held in St Peter's Church Hall on Saturday June 25.

Once again the food was excellent and the music and entertainment was top notch.

As is usual these days, illness prevented some from attending.



A Scottish entertainer . . . Colin Macnicol was on his piano accordion.

Combined Clans president Lyn Nicholson said the evening was very busy with the music, some games and lots of good “gossip neo-eisimeileach” (idle gossip).

The Combined Clans are holding a movie evening at the Metro in August. Inquiries to Daphne Macleod on [daphnemacleod@xtra.co.nz](mailto:daphnemacleod@xtra.co.nz)



Tripping the light fantastic . . . Heather Hay (left) and Julie Marshall enjoying the music and showing off their dancing skills.

Photos Below

- (1) Clan Macnicol members from left: Colin Macnicol, Jean Macnicol and Paul Macnicol.
- (2) And dancers who entertained during the evening.



## History

Historian John Stinson has delved into the archives from 1950.

**Dunedin Room:** Mr Caldwell reported that while in Scotland he had visited Edinburgh and inspected the Dunedin Room. He stated that the room was definitely in existence with the painting of Peter McIntyre hanging there. He thought Dunedin citizens should be made aware of it seeing they had subscribed the necessary capital to create this Room.

Mr Caldwell expressed surprise that the Mayor had not made mention of this following his return. Moved and Seconded that Messrs Brown and Caldwell interview the Mayor with reference to having a paragraph inserted in the local Press about the Dunedin Room.

**Burns Club:** Mr Caldwell stated that one of the organisations affiliated to this Council, the Burns Club, had staged one of the finest and most successful Concerts ever staged in the City. Mr Oliver returned Thanks.

## Gaelic sayings

1. **A' bhiast as mutha ag ithe na beiste as lugha** – The big fish eats the little fish.

This Scottish Gaelic proverb relates people to fish, meaning that stronger people overcome weaker people.

2. **Èist ri gaoth nam beann gus an traogh na h-uisgeachan** – Listen to the wind upon the hill till the waters abate.

This proverb teaches us to keep a low profile until trouble passesx

## Rob Roy McGregor

During a cold and wet afternoon, Sky Movies was playing the movie Rob Roy with Liam Neeson in the lead role. The story seemed a bit far-fetched so I investigated.



Rob MacGregor was born in February 1671 at Glengyle at the head of Loch Katrine in the Trossachs. He was the third son of clan chief Donald Glas MacGregor of Glengyle. His mother Mary was a Campbell, and it was from her that he inherited his red hair, leading to his nickname, Rob Ruadh (Gaelic for Red) which was later anglicised into Rob Roy.

The MacGregors supported the Jacobite cause in the first Jacobite uprising led by Viscount Dundee in July 1689. Both Rob Roy, aged 18, and his father took part in the Battle of Killiecrankie, which the Jacobites won despite the death of their leader. Rob Roy, who used his mother's name of Campbell (the MacGregor name had been proscribed since 1603 in reprisal for the clan's part in a bloody raid on Glenfruin), moved on to set up a business driving Highland cattle to market in Crieff. He was very successful and used his growing wealth to become the laird of Inversnaid, on the east side of Loch Lomond.

In January 1693 he married his cousin Mary Helen MacGregor of Comar and they subsequently had four sons: James Mor, Ranald, Coll, and Robin Oig who himself went on to achieve literary distinction in a cameo role in Robert Louis Stevenson's *Kidnapped*.

Late in 1711, Rob Roy borrowed £1000 from the Duke of Montrose, a landowner based at Mugdock Castle near Milngavie to north of Glasgow, to purchase cattle for the following year's market. But in early 1712, Rob Roy's head drover, having purchased the cattle, then sold them on and disappeared with the funds. Rob Roy returned from an unsuccessful search for the drover to find he had been bankrupted and outlawed by the Duke of Montrose, his lands had been seized and his family evicted.

Rob Roy sought revenge on the Duke of Montrose through a sustained campaign of cattle-rustling, theft and banditry. This included kidnapping Montrose's factor (financier), complete with over £3000 of rent money he was carrying at the time. Gradually the targets for Rob Roy's banditry grew to include other landowners who were not prepared to pay him to "protect" their stock and property. Meanwhile, his vendetta against the Duke of Montrose gained him a powerful ally in the Duke of Argyll, a long-standing enemy of Montrose.

During the 1715 Jacobite uprising, Rob Roy was used to raise the MacGregors in Aberdeenshire, and he also acted as guide to the Jacobite army as it marched from Perth towards Stirling in November 1715.

This culminated in the Battle of Sheriffmuir in which a much smaller Government army under the Duke of Argyll prevented the Jacobites from reaching the Lowlands. Rob Roy's loyalties were split between his Jacobite upbringing and his alliance with the Duke of Argyll and he seems to have been an onlooker at the battle itself, though claims he was secretly working for the Duke of Argyll have never been proved.

Nonetheless, for his part in the uprising Rob Roy emerged with a price on his head for treason in addition to the earlier charges of banditry.



For safety he set up home close to the Duke of Argyll's base in Inveraray and went on to play a minor role in the 1719 Jacobite uprising culminating in the defeat of the Jacobites and Spanish troops at the Battle of Glen Shiel.

Tales of Rob Roy's exploits grew with the telling: he was captured more than once only to escape. Then in 1723, Daniel Defoe published *Highland Rogue* and in 1726 Rob Roy received his Royal Pardon by public acclaim.

Rob Roy MacGregor died on 28 December 1734 in Balquhider Glen and was buried in Balquhider Kirkyard. The original grave markers of Rob Roy, his wife and two of his four sons has been embellished by a later rail which carries a plaque incorrectly ageing Rob Roy as 70 when he died (he was 63), and by gravestone erected in 1981 proclaiming *MacGregor Despite Them*.

### **Mid-winter break**

There is no Otago Scottish Heritage Council in July, mid-winter break. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, August 2 at 7pm. Details will be released at the end of July. Covid and the flu are still among us,

*Chì mi thu san Lùnastal*

(See you in August)

Dene