



OTAGO SCOTTISH HERITAGE COUNCIL

Welcome to the April 2023 newsletter. Edited by Dene Mackenzie

Congratulations Qwenton McKenzie.



Presentation . . . From left Clan MacKenzie Society NZ Lieutenant to Cabarfeidh Ian MacKenzie, Qwenton McKenzie, Combined Clans & Societies Group Otago president Lyn Nicholson.

Young Dunedin piper Qwenton McKenzie was a special guest at the Combined Clans & Societies Group Otago potluck lunch at Ocean View on April 16. Qwenton, a pupil at John McGlashan College, was lured to the lunch with his parents Fia and Gordon McKenzie on the pretext of playing for the group members.

Qwenton had been selected for the National Youth Pipe Band of New Zealand and had been due to travel to Canada with the band later this year. Circumstances meant the trip had been postponed.

At the end of the lunch, Clan MacKenzie head Ian MacKenzie announced to Qwenton that something was afoot. Clan MacKenzie had decided to not award a scholarship in 2023. Instead, the \$500 set aside for the scholarship would go to Qwenton for his trip to Canada.

The Combined Clans group matched the \$500, and Qwenton was presented with a combined \$1000 to help with his trip next year.

“I really didn’t expect this,” Qwenton said. “The money will certainly help. It is better to have a postponement than a cancellation.”

Ian MacKenzie said the Clan was immensely proud of Qwenton’s achievements. He was the clan’s first scholarship recipient, aged 12. He had since gone on to represent the clan in many functions around Dunedin. Qwenton also recently competed with the ILT Invercargill Pipe Band at the recent nationals in Christchurch.

Combined Clans president Lyn Nicholson said the Combined Clans group was always impressed with Qwenton’s professionalism at events at which he was asked to play. Those included the group’s mid-winter and Christmas functions and events such as St Andrews Day and the Kirkin’ O’ the Tartan.



Obituary

The Otago Scottish Heritage Council paid a tribute to former Dunedin City Librarian Mary Ronnie. The following obituary comes courtesy of Libraries Aotearoa.

Mary Ronnie was an astute and capable leader in the library world.

Active in the profession, she started work at Dunedin Public Library when she was fifteen years old and became the Dunedin City Librarian in the 1960s, later Auckland City Librarian, the first woman to be a National Librarian (1976-1981), she later taught at Monash University in the Graduate Department of Librarianship, Archives and Records from 1989 to 1992, and in her retirement she was an active LIANZA Murihiku committee member and writer.

Mary was a New Zealand Library Association (now LIANZA) president from 1973 to 1974.

Mary was a crusader for libraries, believing they needed to be made more attractive to all sectors of the community and she had no time for the librarian who hid behind a desk and piles of books.

She wrote the Dunedin Public Library centenary publication in 2008 'Freedom to Read' in her 80s for which she received the John Harris Award. Mary became a LIANZA Fellow in 1975 and was made an Honorary Life Member in 1986 in recognition of her distinguished service to the association.

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Allison Dobbie read a eulogy at Mary's funeral service on March 24 . In it she commented that Mary, "implemented clear succession plans for the future. She had a clear vision and a powerful ability to communicate and persuade. Town clerks and councillors were in awe of her and thought her formidable. She was mischievous and canny, and irreverent when necessary. At her farewell before leaving to take up the role of National Librarian, she said of the public service 'there is only one rule, and that is don't read the rule book.' A practice I have tried to follow but largely failed.

"I wanted to paint the picture of these strong characteristics of her

leadership that I experienced at Dunedin Public Library because they are evident throughout her career. Along with dedication – total dedication and love for the role and the people she worked with.”



Mary used these words on the centenary of LIANZA in 2010 from her presidential address in 1974: “It seemed clear then, and still does, that unless the librarian is accepted as an authoritative professional figure, freedom to act will be restricted to the most trivial matters rather than extended to areas where knowledge and experience have outlet”.

“And a word of warning from a Luddite – don’t get too firmly behind a computer screen or your muscles might atrophy. People are better understood when visible and audible. Energy is still essential.”

Literature playing an important role for Dunedin



Dunedin City of Literature director Nicky Page (left) was proud to show colleague Stesha Brandon (right) from Seattle City of Literature the breathtaking views from the Caselberg House, after a tour of the house and studio by Trustee Lesley Hirst. Photo: Supplied

A new residency to be shared between New Zealand and overseas writers is an exciting develop for the Dunedin City of Literature, director Nicky Page says.

Speaking to the April meeting of the Otago Scottish Heritage Council, Ms Page said this year, the Caselberg House Margaret Egan Cities of Literature Writers Residency would be available to overseas writers from a city of literature.

Next year, the residence was available to New Zealand writers.

The residency came after a generous bequest from the Caselberg Foundation and would pay for a writer to live in Broad Bay for six weeks, rent free, travel paid and a stipend.

“The interest from overseas will boost the profile of Dunedin. Applicants, even those who are unsuccessful, will be searching about Dunedin – raising interest in the residency and the city.”

The residency would be in October, spring when the city was looking great and at the same time as the Dunedin Writers and Readers Festival, she said.

Ms Page gave an inspiring address to council members, proving that again Dunedin was being recognised worldwide for its literature and art.

Dunedin shone among the 42 cities of literature because of how the city did things.

“The thing about Dunedin is we are all so collaborative. Everybody is interested in what people are doing. It is natural to collaborate in partnerships, working together and making us shine as a city of literature.”

The Dunedin City of Literature team is asked by larger cities how to get people to collaborate on projects and on how to get community backing on large projects, she said.

The team had a package to “shine a genuine light” on projects happening in the city. The city of literature could be sponsors, work with festivals, arrange events to run smoothly and attract more people.

“What we can do is help others grow; show the world what we are doing, share our story. We can promote our writers, playwrights, poets, and others out into the world. If we hear about an opportunity, we quickly push it out to our people.”

Other cities offered opportunities which the Dunedin team quickly assessed to find someone local who could apply.

Ms Page was in touch regularly with other cities of literature through emails or zoom. She chairs a working group on communication and promotion of the network.

Key allies for Dunedin included Edinburgh and Dublin. Others she worked closely with included Iowa, Krakow, Heidelberg, Norwich and Nottingham.

Asked how other cities with hundreds of years of literary history regarded New Zealand, Ms Page said other cities genuinely found Dunedin interesting.

“Everyone brings something unique to the group. That’s what makes it magical.”

History. Historian John Stinson finds some of the council’s earlier officials had a high opinion of themselves.

Flashback from 1953:

At the Otago Scottish Council Meeting held on September 3, 1953, the President Mr Oliver spoke of a recent visit to the Mayor of Dunedin in connection with the Queen’s upcoming visit and stated that the Mayor promised to seek the Council’s assistance.

Several Members spoke and it was suggested that the Council should inform Major Ross to ensure that the Scottish Regiment would be on parade for the visit. Mr McMillan stated that the Council should have direct representation on a committee. Further to this it was Moved and Seconded that the President and Vice-President wait on the mayor to gain representation on some Committee to plan for the Queen’s visit.

It was also noted “that this Council views with grave concern the fact that the Powers that Be failing to utilise the services of the Dunedin Scottish Community through the Otago Scottish Council”.

At a subsequent Meeting held on October 1, 1953, the President stated that he had interviewed the Mayor who had very little to say other than advising that this Council would receive invitations to some of the functions.

At the same Meeting Mr Pratley stated he had been informed that the Council had prevented a Ladies Pipe Band from holding Dances. Mr Pratley said he had refuted this idea and made it clear it was simply not true.

Te Anau Tartan Festival shrugs off bad weather



More than 500 people attended the Te Anau Tartan Festival at Easter, The Southland App reported. The photo shows the Real Journeys Fiordland Community Events Centre on Easter Saturday where people arrived to see a large variety of Highland-themed events.

Event secretary Kirsty Pickett said moving the event to an indoor venue turned out to be a good one given the bad weather on the day.

“Previously the dancing has been in a marquee outside so it was a lucky call because we wouldn’t have been able to do it.”

More than 30 dancers took part in a variety of highland dancing competitions throughout the day, with participants travelling from as far as Christchurch for the event. (Photo and report The Southland App)

My apologies for no Gaelic lesson this month. Gaelic will resume next month.

The next OSHC meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 2. An agenda will be sent out a week before the meeting.

Dene Mackenzie