



OTAGO SCOTTISH HERITAGE COUNCIL

Welcome to the March 2023 newsletter. Edited by Dene Mackenzie

Murray Clan Society of New Zealand celebrate 60 years.



Murray Clan organising committee . . . (from left) Angela Cruden, Eunice Sommes, Glenys Murray, Lynne Jarvis (president), Bruce Murray (treasurer).

Murray Clan of Society of New Zealand recently celebrated its 60th year of operating in New Zealand with a lunch function held in Dunedin, the home of the clan.

Eunice Sommes (pictured above) was on the first committee when the society was formed in 1963 and remains on the committee to this day.

President Lynne Jarvis (nee Murray) said the clan only had one branch now and that was based in Dunedin.

The clan had celebrated its heritage on many occasions, starting with the 25th anniversary. However, the age of current members meant the 60th celebrations could be the last.

However, it was “absolutely worthwhile” to make the effort to arrange the lunch in Dunedin on March 12, she said.

The lunch started with a haggis ceremony led by young piper John Wansink. Ian Rae, a former president of the Otago Scottish Heritage Council recited the Address to the Haggis in a stirring manner, ensuring the criticism of French cooking was well understood.

Two young dancers from the Jacqui Seque School of Dancing performed for the more than 30 people attending. Speeches were short and everyone enjoyed the day.

Waipu Celebrates 150 years since first settlers arrived



As Waipu celebrated 150 years of settlement earlier this year, **OSHC historian John Stinson** came across a report from former council president W J Oliver who drove from Dunedin to Waipu to take part in the centennial celebrations.

The report follows below. It makes for interesting reading, particularly the crowd numbers.

Report by Otago Scottish Council president Mr W J Oliver on his visit to the Nova Scotia - Scottish Centenary functions at Waipu, Northland on January 1, 2 and 3, 1953.

I have much pleasure in reporting that after overcoming what at first appeared to be insurmountable transport difficulties, I was able to carry out my duties in representing the council at the Waipu centenary Celebrations. Also, by using my own motor car I was able to offer transport to the secretary, Mr McRae, who was holidaying in Auckland. And I was accompanied by him in all the functions.

Waipu is a small settlement about 90 miles north of Auckland and 20 miles south of Whangarei. It was pioneered by a group of Scots led by the Revered Norman McLeod in 1853.

For a variety of reasons, they had left their native Scotland to take up land and settle in Nova Scotia. They lived there for about 30 years but, on hearing glowing accounts of conditions in the Southern Hemisphere they built and furnished six ships and again fared forth, eventually settling in Waipu.

Gaelic speakers, and under the close influence of their spiritual leader, Mr McLeod, they formed a very close-knit community which has continued until today.

The Centennial Celebrations were commenced with Divine Service in the Waipu church. The sermon was preached in Gaelic by the Minister of Waipu, Mr Levack. The 100th Psalm (The Scottish Psalter) had been specially translated for the occasion and was sung in Gaelic by the choir. As only a small part of the congregation could be accommodated in the church, after the unveiling of two memorial windows by the only two surviving pioneers – Mrs Jessie McKenzie (99) and Mrs McRae (96) – the service was continued in the open air, a memorial plantation of trees being consecrated.

At the opening of the Memorial Museum in the afternoon, the council was honoured by your president being invited to speak immediately after the Prime Minister's representative Mr Webb and the Leader of the Opposition Walter Nash.

I conveyed your greetings on behalf of the Scottish organisations affiliated to the council and read a letter from the Mayor Mr L M Wright, extending the good wishes of the Dunedin City Council.

We later attended a function arranged in honour of the “aged over 80” descendants and the open-air concert held at night in the Caledonian Sports Ground.

The second day was devoted to the Caledonian Sports, and these were witnessed by approximately 7500 persons. The standard of competition was extremely high with some of the country’s foremost athletes taking part. The standard of piping and dancing was sufficiently high to renew our faith in the future of these Scottish activities, a feature of the dancing being the use of three roofed boards. By using two adjoining stages, one piper was able to supply the music while two different grades of dancing were contested. This appeared to be a good feature for the audience. Tossing the caber was also included in the programme.

On the final day, an estimated crowd of about 10,000 witnessed the re-enactment of the landing of the settlers on the Waipu River and their welcome by a party of Māori men and women. The costuming of the descendants was a feature of the celebrations.

A procession of descendants grouped according to the various ships was held in the afternoon as well as demonstrations of spinning and weaving and demonstrations of Scottish Country Dancing.

A Ceilidh at night concluded three memorable days in which we witnessed perhaps the greatest family get together ever held in New Zealand.

The chairman, Mr D R McKay, and the members of his executive were greatly appreciative of the honour the Otago Scottish Council had paid them in sending representatives so far to be present at the functions and we were accorded the greatest hospitality and requested to convey their thanks to the council.

King's Birthday Celebrations. A debate is settled.



At the March meeting of the Otago Scottish Heritage Council, the secretary remarked about a national bagpipe competition being held in Dunedin at King's Birthday weekend.

One of the members took the secretary to task, alleging that the holiday formerly known as Queen's Birthday was so named as

to honour Queen Victoria and should remain known as Queen's Birthday.

However, members were quick to email the secretary and point out the King's Official Birthday (alternatively the Queen's Official Birthday when the monarch is female) is the selected day in most Commonwealth countries on which the birthday of the monarch is officially celebrated in those countries. It does not necessarily correspond to the date of the monarch's actual birth.

The sovereign's birthday was first officially marked in the Kingdom of Great Britain in 1748, for King George II. Since then, the date of the king or queen's birthday has been determined throughout the British Empire and, later, the Commonwealth of Nations, either by royal proclamations issued by the sovereign or viceroy, or by statute laws passed by the local parliament.

The date of the celebration today varies as adopted by each country and is generally set around the end of May or start of June, to coincide with a higher probability of fine weather in the Northern Hemisphere for outdoor ceremonies. In most cases, it is an official public holiday, sometimes aligning with the celebration of other events. Some Commonwealth countries, including New Zealand, release a Birthday Honours

The missing "A" in McKenzie, MacLeod and McNicol.

We have often chatted about the missing A in some of our names and it is often put down to lazy English bureaucrats who couldn't spell. However, a member of the Macleod clan came up with an answer at a recent Clan MacKenzie function that sounds about right. His great-grandfather arrived in New Zealand to establish the Burke's Pass pub, leaving his fiancé at home. Because of the distance, for two years Mr Macleod was left to send his beloved cables, paying for every letter used. To save himself some money, Mr Macleod dropped the A from his name and his family have continued to spell Macleod as McLeod ever since.

National Pipe Band Championships, Christchurch. March 11,12 2023



John McGlashan College from Dunedin during the street march during the New Zealand Pipe Band Championships held in Christchurch. The band was seventh in Grade 4B.



The ILT City of Invercargill Highland Pipe Band which placed sixth in Grade 4B.

Photos: Julie Marshall

Gaelic lesson

Each newsletter will contain some Gaelic terms which may help understand things you read online. I am trying to learn a few phrases. Each month, a Gaelic speaking member of the Otago Scottish Heritage Council, Dr Alison Thornton, gives us a lesson on words I have dug out of a Learning Gaelic website I follow. As it was Autumn, I asked her to help with the pronunciation.

Autumn, Foghar pronounced Foh.ur; Leaf, Duilleag – dulyag; brown donn – Do.un. The brown refers to a natural brown like a table, brown hair. The Ruadh (ru.ag) is more akin to red. Harvest, Buain – bu.in. The full stops in the phonetic spelling indicate the two syllables in each word.

Some others you may use are Madainn mhath dhuibh, good morning to you; ciamar a tha thu, how are you? Tha I ga math tapodh leibh, I am well thanks.

Postscript to the February Newsletter

Congratulations to Joanne Galer and Ann Barsby for a significant win in their battle to save Dunedin's historic buildings. Joanne spoke of their campaign to save the Arthur Street School's historic infants' building.

The school announced this week the multimillion-dollar refurbishment of the school would now include the preservation of the infant's building.

Saving the old kauri former schoolhouse had been a years-long campaign for Dunedin's Southern Heritage Trust. The Ministry of Education said discussions with the trust, Heritage New Zealand, and the community were important in its decision-making.

Next Meeting

The Otago Scottish Heritage Council will hold its next meeting on Tuesday, April 4 at 7pm in the Athenaeum Library. The guest speaker is Nicky Page, the director of the City of Literature.

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