



Newsletter March 2018 – “Easter Edition” –



OSHC Today:

The OSHC is an umbrella organisation involved with Scottish culture and heritage in the Otago region.

The following clans and groups are currently members of the OSHC:

Scottish Society Dunedin

Taieri Scottish Society

Clan MacNicol

Clan Mackenzie

Clan McLeod

Clan Donald

Clan Murray

Otago Gaelic Club

Caledonian Society

Burns Club

Clan Gunn

Burns Scottish Country Dancing Club

Ceilidh Scottish Dance Club

City of Dunedin Pipe band

Clan Elliott

Clan Johnstone

Clan Mclean Otago

Dunedin-Edinburgh Sister City Society

Pipes and Drums of Dunedin

Piping and Dancing of Dunedin

Royal Scottish Country Dance Society

Scottish Scarves

Sister Cities Tartan Ties

Southern Heritage Trust

Combined Clan Society Group Otago

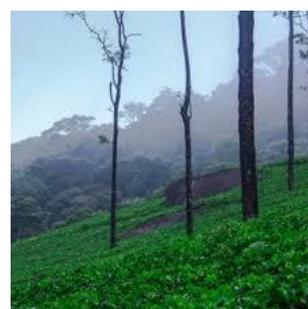
All members of the OSHC are encouraged to invite any groups interested in Scottish culture or heritage to the monthly meetings held on the first Tuesday of the month except for Jan & July at the Athenaeum Library at 7.00pm in the Octagon. All are welcome.

March: Guest Speaker: Professor Angela McCarthy



Dr Somerville introduced guest speaker Professor Angela McCarthy and welcomed her back to the council after her sabbatical in Scotland and the United Kingdom. Prof McCarthy gave a fascinating address on her main area of research “The life and times of James Taylor” who was known as the King of Tea (Ceylon). Taylor’s activities were crucial to the success of tea being grown in Ceylon, now Sri Lanka, after disease wiped out the coffee plantations. Until Taylor started exporting/importing tea, the Scots drank coffee.

Prof McCarthy also worked on literary projects, including *New Scots*, a book coming out in July of new migrants arriving in Scotland after 1945



Up and Coming Events:



Gaelic classes: The Gaelic Class is being held on Wednesdays at 7-8pm at the University of Otago, St David Lecture Theatre complex, room 3. (Entrance from Castle Street and St David Street corner.) Contact Rob McLaren on rob.mclaren73@gmail.com Easy conversational Gaelic. Everyone welcome – no prior knowledge required. Free entry.



3rd April: Clan MacKenzie's Canada representative Sharie Argue will be speaking at the council meeting on April 3, in the Athenaeum library

22nd April: Combined Clans: Meet & Greet, Janet Cameron Hall, Green Island @ 1.30pm to 4.30pm.

23rd June: Combined Clans Mid-Winter Hogmanay @ St. Peter's Hall, Hillside Road, @ 6.30 for 7.00pm.





University of Otago 150th celebrations

Dr Somerville updated council members on the 2019 University of Otago 150th celebrations and the opportunity for Scottish organisations to join together to promote the Scottish heritage of the university and Dunedin.

The council will be involved in the organisation of the Burns Supper on January 25th. The speaking line-up is being finalised. Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has been invited.

A supper for about 400 is being planned for the Burns Supper.

A grand entrance, complete with music from pipes and organ will indicate the start of the official celebrations. A Ceilidh will complete the evening. Dr Somerville asked for names for a caller for the dancing. Demonstration dances were likely.

Heather Hay was asked to inquire about the availability of dancing clubs and a coordinator for the dancing. Julie Marshall and Mike Moroney were suggested as people to be involved in the dancing and music.

Inquiries were being made about sponsorship of the dinner to keep costs down.





Unsung Hero “Jack McLeod” (Article in the January issue of the NZ Thoroughbred Racing Magazine.) Jack has been involved in racing for 61 years. He’s described as a people’s man, with decades of work with the Otago Racing Club. Jack has been known to run the jockeys from the airport to the Wingatui race course, wash and clean the horse blankets and see to it that the Otago flag flies high in the sky. He also drove the stewards around the race track in the region for the trots and gallops.

Jack has lived most of his life in St Clair, and drove a taxi in his early years until his friend suggested he take up a job with the racing club. “He said he was a country lad at heart and would fit in fine”. Jack was made a life member in 2011 and catches up with old friends on race days. He and his wife Doreen have three children and five grandchildren. When Jack isn’t involved in racing he is playing bass drum for the Pipes and Drums of Dunedin band, and helping the Caledonian Society and the Burns Club or shooting at the Waikoaiti Gun Club. He’s a life member of all four organisations. (Go to www.nzracing.co.nz to view the full article).



Past Events updates:

City Of Edinburgh Quaich: Clan MacLeod Society of Otago nominated the High Commissioner of Clan Gunn New Zealand Branch, Duncan Todd Wall, and his wife Sheila Wall.



Brief Historical Notes on Clan Gunn of New Zealand

The Clan Gunn Society of New Zealand was established in April 1989. Prior to this the New Zealand Branch of the Clan Gunn Society was formed in February 1986, with close affiliation to the parent international Clan Gunn Society. The parent Society has an elected Council which meets six times a year in London to administer the affairs of the Society. Close links are maintained with New Zealand, Australia, Canada and the U.S.A.

The original Clan Gunn Society (the Loyal and Benevolent Society of Clan Gunn) was founded in Thurso, Caithness, Scotland, in 1821; it was revived in London in the late 19th century, and the present Society was formed in Edinburgh in 1960.



Todd and Sheila Wall - Profile:

Todd and Sheila are both English born but both have Scottish heritage, the same heritage in fact. Todd's grandfather, who was a Wilson, a Sept of Clan Gunn, traced his line back to that Clan. Sheila's grandmother, was a Johnson, also a Sept of Clan Gunn.

Todd and Sheila immigrated to Dunedin, New Zealand in 1971 and have now been members of the Clan Gunn Society of NZ for approximately 17 years. Todd is currently the Past President of the Clan. Clan Gunn has approximately 120 members nationwide. Most are in Christchurch or Dunedin but with individuals scattered all over New Zealand.

Todd has had a varied career, starting his working life as an apprentice compositor in the printing trade, after which he served in the British Army for 12 years, five of which were in a Gurkha Regiment in Malaya. He was a cipher operator. He has also worked on occasions in the printing trade, as a prison officer, communications officer in broadcasting, potter and a jeweller. He retired in 1998 and now helps Sheila with her business.

Sheila has had an even more varied career, working in various office positions leading to being the equivalent of a secretary to the CO of British Army Counter Intelligence in Malaya. She has been in charge positions with several companies and eventually ended her working life as the Administration Manager of a private psychiatric hospital, a position she held for nine years. Since leaving the workforce she has formed her own counselling service and has had her own business for 24 years.

Todd and Sheila had three children, one of whom is now deceased, seven grandchildren and 17 great grandchildren.

Todd and Sheila have just celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary. Many congratulations to you both and we look forward to your 70th.



Short History of Clan Gunn

The Clan Gunn claims descent from the Norse Jarls or Earls of Orkney, and from the ancient Celtic Mormaers of Caithness through Ragnhild, daughter of Moddan in Dale, son of Moddan, Mormaer (High Steward) of Caithness, who was killed in 1040, and grand-daughter of Saint Rognvald, Jarl in Orkney, who married Gunni, the reputed name-father of the Clan. Gunni was himself a grandson of Sweyn, Asleif's son, the "Ultimate Viking" and hero of the Orkneyinga Saga.

Sweyn Asleif's son had his long hall on the island of Gairsay, off the east coast of the mainland of Orkney, and lands in Caithness at Freswick, a few miles south of Duncansbay. The principal Gunn lands were, however, acquired through Ragnhild, who inherited great estates in Caithness and Sutherland on the death of her brother, Harold Ungi, Jarl in Orkney and Earl in Caithness, in 1198.

These were inherited by Snaekoll (White Head), Gunni's son, the second chief of the Clan. His rights to the Norse Earldom were, however, forfeited as he had murdered John, the then Jarl in Orkney, over a land claim dispute arising from their mutual descent from the ancient Jarls of Orkney. Thus from the middle of the 13th century the Gunns were essentially a Caithness family.

At this time the Clan Gunn was at the height of its power. It appeared to possess virtually the whole of Caithness, which was then passing from the influence of the Norse Earldom to that of the King of Scots. Snaekoll, Gunni's son, is reputed to have built Castle Gunn at Bruan, on the east coast of Caithness south of Wick. There is a tradition that Castle Gunn was destroyed by the King of Norway, whose daughter one of the Gunn chiefs had married, though he already had a wife at Castle Gunn. When the second wife sailed to Caithness to join her husband, the Gunn Clan arranged for the beacon to be placed on a dangerous rock at Ulbster and so wrecked the ship and all on board were drowned. The Castle was destroyed in revenge and the Gunn chief and his retainers were slain.

Little is known of the history of the Clan during the 13th and 14th centuries and it is not until the 15th century that history records the exploits of the Clan and its chiefs. Nonetheless, it is clear that during the 14th and 15th centuries the Gunns were gradually dispossessed of their lands in the fertile parts of Caithness by the Sinclairs, Keiths and others, who obtained grants of land from the Scottish kings, anxious to increase their influence over the fringes of their kingdom. Consequently by the mid-15th century George Gunn of Ulbster, Chief of Clan Gunn and Crouner of Caithness, held his main lands at Ulbster and Clyth on the rocky coast of Caithness in what are now the Parishes of Latheron, Halkirk and Reay.

It was George Gunn, the Crouner, also known as "Am Braisdeach Mor", or "Big Broochy" from the insignia worn by the Gunn chiefs, as Crouners of Caithness, who after many skirmishes with the Clan Keith over rival land claims, sought to reach a conciliation with the Keiths at St. Tayres Chapel, near Ackergill Tower, the seat of Keith of Ackergill, in 1478 (others say 1464) and was killed in the unequal battle at the chapel where the Keiths arrived for the twelve aside parley with two men to each horse. In 1978 the Earl of Kintore, Chief of Clan Keith, and Iain Gunn of Banniskirk, the Commander of Clan Gunn, signed a Treaty of Friendship between the two clans at the site of the chapel, bringing to an end the 500 year old feud.



Chiefship 24th July 2015

It has now been declared by the Lord Lyon of Scotland that Iain Alexander Gunn of Banniskirk, the current Commander of Clan Gunn has now been elevated to the position of Hereditary Chief of Clan Gunn after the Clan had been 230 years without a Chief.



Clan Gunn in Scotland at the “Homecoming” in 2009. They marched up the Royal Mile to the top. They took a Maori contingent with them at that time when one of them, John Wilson, who was a Clan Gunn descendent and a Maori lawyer, who did a lot of work on the treaty settlements, wanted his Spirit taken back to his Clan as well as his tribe. His wife Christine did this in the form of a framed photo (customary to take the Mate home) that she presented to our then Commander. It is now in the Clan Gunn Heritage Centre in

Latheron, Caithness.

Caledonian Society Highland Events:





A selection of photos from the Caledonian Society Highland Events Demonstration held during the Owaka Cavalcade earlier this month, plus one John Stinson took on the spur of the moment of these “lovely bonnie lasses”

The Caledonian Society will be pleased to welcome any new or intending members. Annual fee, \$20.00. Please contact one of the e-mail addresses (below) or phone: Secretary, 021 217 6883.

President: Dr.L.M.J.Hewland. E: morganhewland@gmail.com

Secretary: Mrs.A.M. Lastovicka.

E: netty.last@xtra.co.nz

Further information: www.otagocalledoniansociety.co.nz

REF: Cabers and Ceilidhahs, a book outlining 150 years of `The Caledonian Society`. This is available for purchase, \$20.00.

Kindred Societies: Otago Scottish Heritage Council.

: Combined Clans & Societies, Otago



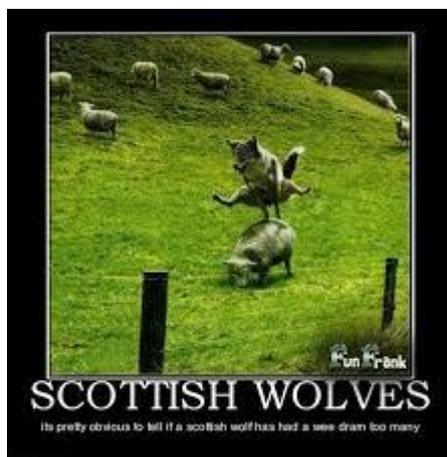
“Scottish Humour” Part one provided by John Stinson

The following joke was recorded at the Savoy Somerset Lounge in January 1929 during the reception for Major Colin MacRae, brother of the Chief of the Clan MacRae and an erstwhile Officer of the Black Watch Highlanders, Lady MacRae (daughter of the Marquis of Bute) and Miss MacRae. Major MacRae was in Dunedin as part of his visit to the Dominions in the interests of the Order of the Knights of St. John. During his lengthy reply to the Speech of Welcome accorded to him, Major MacRae recited the following.

"A Scotchman entered the queue at a Tube Station to obtain his ticket to London and since he had only a pound note to pay for it he had to spend some time at the Ticket Office counting his change to see that it was right. An American standing behind became very impatient at the delay and was at last moved to protest "I say" he said "I would rather have 20 Americans in front of me than 1 Scotchman". "Aye Mon" came the caustic reply "I mind well when the Germans were saying the same thing".

Arising from the same function the Council was later served with a summons for a breach of the Licensing Act. It was unanimously decided that the Council would defend the summons and that Mr. W.G.Hay would be engaged by the Council to act for them in defending this.

(More to come, watch this space)



What defines a castle? Every kid can draw a castle if you ask them to, and you would find more similarities than differences in their depictions.

Castles are such an intuitive part of our culture. Certain things come to mind: towers, walls, gates, drawbridges etc.

Not all castles are equal, however, and if you ask ten castle experts you would most likely get ten different interpretations. Depending on your definitions of a castle, you could say that there are anywhere from 1,500 to over 4,000 castles in Scotland.

Castles belong to a specific time period, just like cars or dinosaurs. They popped up in the 11th century and many still stand today.

A castle is fundamentally two things, a residence for a laird and a place that offers significant protection.

Dozens of towers such as Greenknowe or Whytbank dot the landscape, and while few could fight off a full-fledged army, many could hold - for a time- against the banks of Reivers that stalked the hills and valleys.



Favourite Pics of any future/past events or feedback on any events will be greatly received, please send them to, Charmaine Mundy - email: miss_pu@live.com so get snapping folks ☺



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