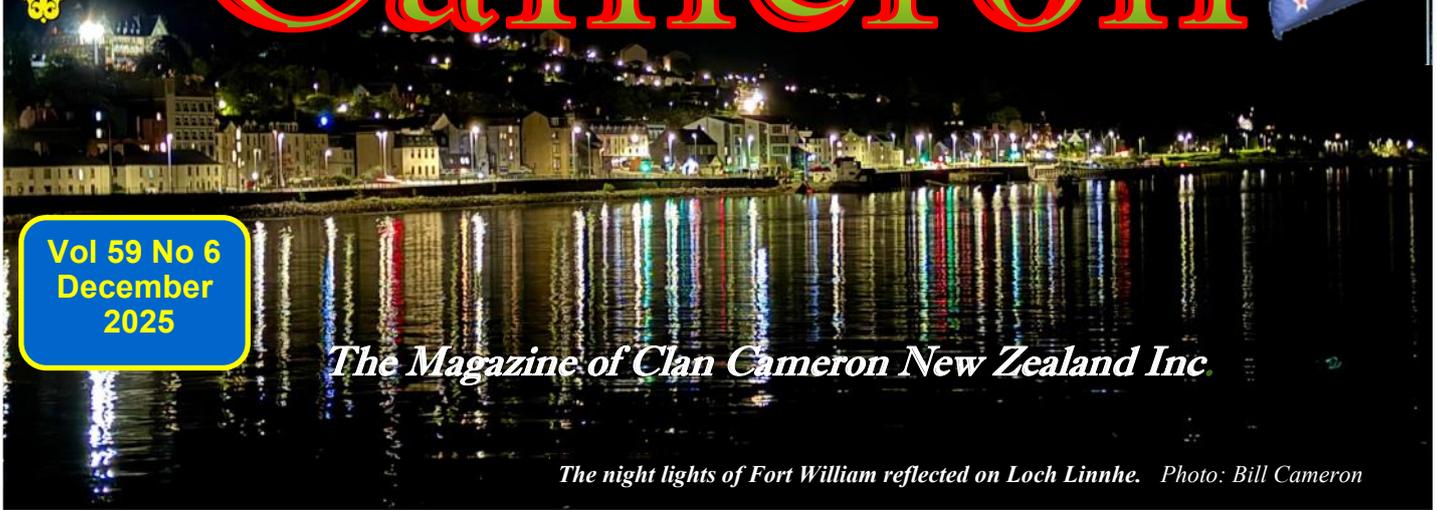




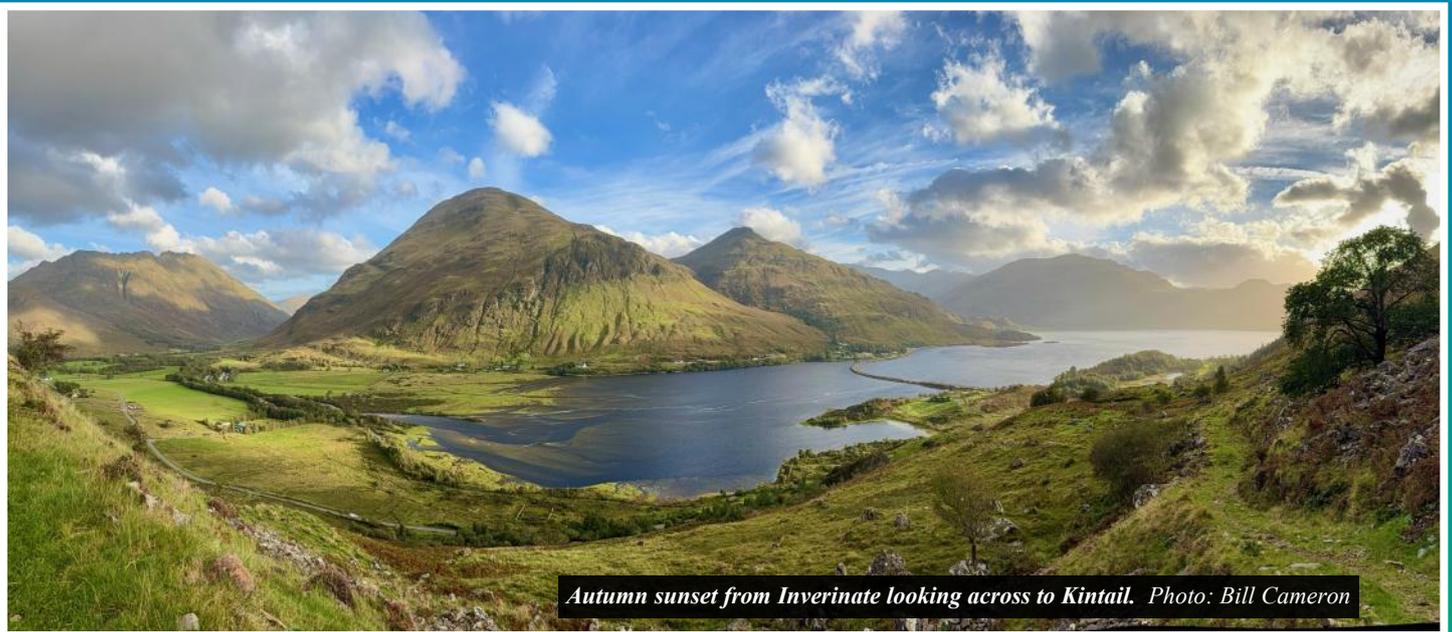
Cameron



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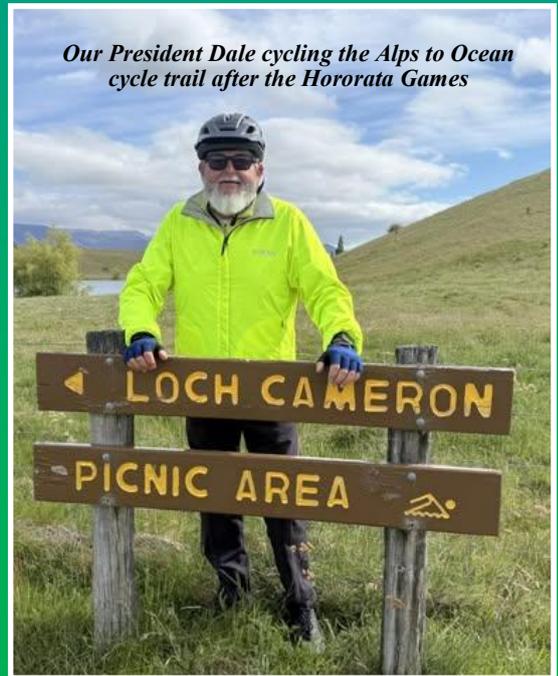
The night lights of Fort William reflected on Loch Linnhe. Photo: Bill Cameron



Autumn sunset from Inverinate looking across to Kintail. Photo: Bill Cameron



Lest we forget. Devonport Field of Remembrance 11 November.



Our President Dale cycling the Alps to Ocean cycle trail after the Hororata Games

A Happy Christmas to You All and Best Wishes for 2026



“Cameron”

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

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A Message from our Commissioner....



Naumai haere mai, Failte, Welcome

Well another year has ended and it seems to have gone quite fast. The Highland Games season has commenced with a great event in Hororata in Canterbury. Thousands of people attended on a very warm day. A great turnout of Camerons too, thanks to those who helped manage the tent hosting a very steady stream of visitors interested in the clan, telling us stories of their families and having a taste some haggis. Thanks to Nick and Julie for arranging a great space for us. Roger Tobin journeyed from Dunedin to help along with Allan and Morea Cameron from Blenheim. Thanks for travelling so far. Rob Cameron travelled from Auckland

to help at the tent.

What was great was to welcome 9 new members on the day and thank you for joining us. It is so important to be able to recruit new members to keep our clan vibrant. If you know of people who would like to join why not invite them personally as that makes a big difference.

There was a lot of interest by other clans as to our First Light Exchange. We will have our Clan tent this year at highland games at Waipu, Turakina and Paeroa, along with a stand at the National Pipe Band Championships in Inglewood. These are great events and a wonderful opportunity to connect with other members. I hope to see you there.

Planning by the Auckland Branch is well advanced for our 2026 Annual Gathering to be held on the weekend of the 16-18 May in Parnell. You can be assured a very warm welcome and some enjoyable time with fellow Camerons

Can I wish you all very much for the festive season. Christmas and Hogmanay are important times for family and friends. Wishing you the very best for 2026.

Aonaibh ri Cheile

Dale Cameron Bailey

And from our Chief.....

May I take the opportunity to wish all members of Clan Cameron New Zealand, and their families, a very happy and fun Christmas, as well as the very best for a prosperous and successful New Year.

I hope 2026 sees Clan Cameron in New Zealand continue to go from strength to strength.

With fondest regards,

Lochiel.



Dale toasting our Chief, Lochiel in 2025



Next Magazine Deadline is 15 Jan 2026

Printed By

Welcome to the following Members who have recently joined us:

Canterbury Branch :
Kendyl Taylor
Christopher Cameron
Chris MacKay
Cameron Taylor
Alexander Cameron
Phillip and Ally McDouall
Ernst Botha
Tammy Cameron
Morag Cameron-Craig

Merivale
Hornby
Redwood
Mairehau
Barrington

Rolleston

Christchurch
Christchurch
Blenheim
Christchurch
Christchurch
Twizel
Christchurch
Whitecliffs
Lincoln

*Ceud Mìle Fàilte One
Hundred Thousand
Welcomes*

Patron's Corner *by Neil Cameron*

We are now in the Highland Games season and I would like to repeat something I wrote as President in 2001:

"I have just returned from the exhilarating and friendly atmosphere of the Auckland Highland Games, which continue to grow in scope and popularity year by year. There appears to be an awakening interest in things Scottish—not surprising I suppose considering the current interest in researching our roots and the Celtic background of so many New Zealanders.

It was heartening to see so many young people both from New Zealand and overseas who showed a genuine interest in our history and culture.

It was disappointing that so many members did not give their support, either by helping or just coming along. However, we were encouraged by the visits to the Cameron tent by the few members who did come. Somehow these made the work done by a few to display our heritage seem very worthwhile.

Looking along the line of Clan tents and seeing the same old faces makes me realise how much we owe to a dedicated group in each Clan who give so much time and effort to furthering the aims of our Clan Associations. These include displaying what we stand for, our history, heritage and culture and talking about these to interested visitors. At Highland Games and like events throughout New Zealand they deserve our support."

Very little has changed except that some of the old faces have gone and not been replaced. Membership of Clan Associations is falling and we are in danger of losing something precious.

It is very encouraging to see how successful the recent Highland Games in Hororata were, with good crowds and nine new members joining Clan Cameron Canterbury. It would be nice if we could emulate Hororata in our coming Highland Games in Waipu, Turakina and Paeroa by you coming along and giving us some support, either by helping for a short period in the tent or just visiting to say hello. We hope the Auckland Highland Games will be re-instated next year.

Our tent will be at all venues. We look forward to seeing you and enjoying your company.

2026 AGM and Annual Gathering

On behalf of the national executive and the Auckland branch you are warmly invited to attend the 2026 annual gathering of Clan Cameron New Zealand. It's going to be held in Parnell, Auckland's oldest suburb, from **Friday 15th May to Sunday 17th May 2026**.

This is a gathering for all Clan members and friends, not just for the committee members. There is no danger of being elected onto any committee, so do not let that put you off. Rather it's a time for friendly experiences with Clan Cameron people from all walks of life and across the country.

The local team have an opening barbecue event planned for Friday evening, the AGM on Saturday morning and our wonderful annual dinner in the evening. We are planning an excursion to an Auckland treasure on the Saturday afternoon.

There will be some great food, customs and traditions to participate in. You can be assured of a very warm and friendly welcome. On the Sunday morning we will have a church service at St Andrews to round the weekend out.

The cost of all these events is being kept to \$150 for the entire weekend, including two dinners, lunch and morning tea. We will have a registration flyer in next newsletter. So mark up your calendars for a great weekend in Auckland Tamaki Makaurau.



This morning's views on the morning run. Bill Cameron

Coming Events

Wednesday 31 December 2025
153rd Waipu Highland Games

Caledonian Park, Waipu.

Our tent will be there. A great place to meet Cameron visitors from overseas.
www.waipuhighlandgames.co.nz

Saturday 31 January 2026
161st Turakina Highland Games

Cameron Road, Turakina.

Great country games.

<https://turakinahighlandgames.co.nz/>

14 February 2026
33rd Paeroa Highland Games

Paeroa Domain

Join us in our tent. Enjoy the piping and Tattoo.

<https://paeroahighlandgames.co.nz>

Friday/Saturday 20/21 March 2026
NZ Pipe Band Championships

TET Stadium and Events Centre,

1 Elliot Street, Inglewood, Taranaki.

Friday-Sunday 15-17 May 2026
National Clan Cameron AGM and Gathering.

The Parnell Hotel and Conference

Centre, 10/20 Gladstone Rd, Parnell.

Flyer will be enclosed with the February 2026 newsletter.

From the Branches....

Auckland by Rob Cameron

On the 20th of September I meet up with Gary and Mallisa Neilsen as they returned from their holiday in Scotland. They had a tight turn around flight back to Wellington, so the catch up was very quick. It sounds like they have had a great family holiday while in Scotland leaving their daughter, Lochiel, to finish her First Light experience. I have to thank them for bringing back the posters of Achnacarry from last year's gathering which were advertised in the last newsletter.



On the first Sunday in October we had our mid year executive meeting which was held online. Dale hosted the Auckland members at his work for the online conference. I feel it went well and could be good for future meetings. The meeting was held online as the scheduled meeting in Hawkes Bay was cancelled due to many apologies. Dale, Nick, and I had purchased our tickets early and flew into Napier for the scheduled meeting the following week. We were able to all catch up with Hamish and Joan with a meal at the Clubs of Napier. Dale and I also decided to test out some hiking gear and while we were there and walked the Te Mata Peak track.

The Scottish Clans Association held their AGM, and I was elected President for the third term. There are some rumblings around the Auckland Highland Games next year which sound promising. I can't say too much at the moment as it is still early, but hopefully will have some news before the year is out.

I decided to join Dale and travel to Hororata for the Highland Games. I travelled down before Covid and have been meaning to travel back ever since. It was a great day and I got to meet and chat with many Clan members and bands people. I have to thank Nick and Julie for allowing me to stay with them during the weekend.

We will have a presence at the Waipu Highland Games, hopefully the weather will be better this year. It looks like our branch will be attending the Nationals on behalf of the clan. There will be a couple of vehicles travelling down, so we will take our boards and banners down. It maybe cheaper hiring a tent, much like we did last year. Either way we hope people attending will come and see the clans.

Plans continue with our branch AGM next year dated Sunday March 29th. We are expecting to have it at the Carlton Cornwall Bowling Club.

Our committee has been working with Dale, to get the pricing and program for the National AGM finished for this newsletter. The plan is to get this as early as possible so that people can start planning any travel and accommodation costs.

Manawatu by Anne Walker Long



At the time I am writing this I'm travelling in south western Victoria in Australia, and listening to Auld Lang Syne playing over the bus stereo.



We are driving into Camperdown, Victoria, where the oldest statue of Robbie Burns in the World is located. Commissioned in Scotland the statue was erected in the Camperdown Botanic Garden in 1883, where it remained for 125 years. Following restoration after vandalism, it was moved to the Municipal Offices in town in 2012.

Yesterday 12th November 2025, 374 bagpipers gathered in Federation Square in Melbourne to play, and set a Guinness

Book Record for the number of pipers playing together in unison. They played AC/DCs 'Its a long way to the top'. A massive crowd of folk gathered to watch. Piping is certainly alive and well in Australia.

Manawatu are planning for their attendance at Turakina on Saturday 31st January. A very warm welcome will be given to all who visit our hospitality tent in Clan Alley.

We still have a handful of our special 2026 calendars available for purchase. The branch has just approved a donation of \$500 from the profit from the 2025 calendar sales for the First Light Exchange. More will follow once the 2026 sales are completed. If anyone would like to order one of our exclusive calendars, please email clancameronmanawatu@gmail.com. Price is \$25, plus postage if needed.

We wish all Clan Members a wonderful Christmas and New Year.

Hawke's Bay by Hamish Cameron

Once again the calendar has outstripped my ability to complete tasks I've preset for completion [such as the printing deadline for this newsletter....]



This whole year has seen myself and immediate family totally immersed in a futile battle for medical answers from our broken Health System. A system designed – it seems-to involve as many unavailable specialists as possible !.....There-by creating a long list of pre-appointments and referrals with no hope of completion.....

Meanwhile, time marches on , and as I flip over another calendar page I find myself staring at the big block of red days telling me its Christmas time again.....and I'm asking that same old question - " where has the year gone-" (gee...I thought only old people say things like that...)

However, on reflecting on this year, the Clan has achieved a great deal- with its modernisation and future-proofing of our constitution to the point of now meeting all the latest legal requirements. This has involved a great deal of time and research by a dedicated team of the executive led by Dale Bailey and Scott Turner. To this team I say....well done and may you enjoy your Christmas break.....In fact – Merry Christmas to everyone – and remember to be extra vigilant around the Bar-BQ this summer for its already tinder dry out there....

Canterbury by Nick Cameron

It has been an interesting time for our family in the last two months. I made a quick trip to Napier to catch up with Dale, Rob, and Hamish and Joan on the original weekend planned for our executive AGM since I had already booked my air fare. As it turned out we had a very nice meal together at the Napier RSA. This was followed by a quick trip for me up to Taupo the following day to pick up a new utility vehicle for my brother Paul who farms at Porangahau with my brother Andrew.



Two weeks later I was back in Hawkes Bay to stay at the farm in Porangahau to support my daughter Rowan who entered a "Back Yard Ultra" run in Waipukurau . She ran for 12 hours and completed 80.4 kms. We managed to catch up with my brother Andrew who had just completed a mission with an American medical group in Gaza, Palestine. He is to return to Gaza in January.

On the 8th November we once again participated in the Hororata Highland Games with a Clan Tent. I was very pleased to have the very able support to look after the tent by Alan and Morea Cameron from Blenheim, Rob Cameron from Auckland, Roger Tobin from Dunedin, our Commissioner Dale, and my wife Julie. My grand-daughter Andrea was disappointed not to be involved in the free Haggis distribution but has told her

mother Rowan (my daughter) in no uncertain terms that she is not to miss out next year!!.

We decided to try out the West Coast Blackball Butchery haggis this year which had won a haggis prize earlier in the year... and this was appreciated by all who tasted it. The free haggis tasting is certainly a draw card to our tent display.

We were lucky with a very fine day and little wind with a very large crowd (over 11,000) turning up to the event. Of note that one of the founding members of our Clan Canterbury branch ... Mike Fraser-Milne ... was appointed Chieftain of the day.

The band turn out was impressive with over 20 bands competing. As I was competing in 2 bands on the day, I was unable to support the tent except for delivery and retrieval of the necessary table, banners, clan items and haggis ... which we cooked at 5am on the day of the event.

We had 9 new members join our branch on the day. Alan informed me that McKenzie Woolley of Cameron ancestry... who he knows well and has coincidentally recently joined our Canterbury Caledonian Society 4A clan as a piper ex the Blenheim Pipe Band... is very keen to join our branch. I have spoken to her since at band practice.

Our next event is to host a meeting of our branch on the 14th December at our home in Kimberley, Darfield.

First Light News

by Bryan Haggitt—First Light Convenor



With autumn receding into winter in Lochaber, the Highland Games and Piping season is over, the tourists have largely departed and those in the Highlands are now hunkering down around their fires.

Our First Lighter, Lochiel Nielsen, is now looking for work – her parents have returned to the Wairarapa and the

Glengarry Castle Hotel is now closed for the “off season”. Lochiel is again staying with Ken and Rhona Cameron who have been absolutely wonderful to her. Lochiel recently qualified in early childhood education – she had an interview in Edinburgh last week and hopes to find such work either there or in Glasgow.

Meantime back home we, Commissioner Dale, Treasurer Hillary and I, interviewed our next outward First Lighter, Isaac Grant of Tullochgorum, Turakina. This had to be done by Zoom as Isaac was still at Lincoln and we were all in Auckland. And a good cheerful chat it was which reinforced our expectations that Isaac will be a top First Lighter. Then, early this month, Isaac departed for West Australia where he will be driving tractors north of Perth harvesting all manner of crops from wheat to sunflowers. Isaac will be back in NZ for Christmas and we hope to see him face to face then. He expects to be in Auckland for the Clan’s AGM and Dinner on 16 May before flying to Scotland a day or two later.

Back in Scotland, the Clan held its AGM and it was very pleasing to learn that Kyle Cameron, the very promising piper and prospective First Lighter, attended by Zoom. However, it will be a year or so before Kyle is able to travel and we in NZ would very much like to see a young Scot here before then. So, last week, I phoned Bill Cameron, one of the original First Lighters from Scotland. After a very cheerful and positive conversation we came to the conclusion that an advert. needs to be placed in the Lochaber Life magazine in an effort to find a suitable Scottish First Lighter. I have undertaken to draft a suitable flyer and it will be intriguing to see if an adventurous Scot can be found. Watch this space!

Word of Bill, I learned from him that his mother had passed away and that, in recent times, he had been embroiled in dealing with her estate. Very time consuming but he has agreed to be our liaison with First Light in Lochaber and his experience and local knowledge will be invaluable. And Bill, our very belated condolences and a huge thanks for agreeing to assist First Light!

With Lochiel in Scotland

I will share a little update on what I’ve been up to lately. Over the past few weeks, I’ve been back working at the Glengarry Castle Hotel, after my awesome 6 weeks travelling around Scotland with my family. On my days off, I’ve been making the most of the gorgeous scenery and I’ve done quite a few walks, around the local area. One of the highlights was definitely the Falls of Foyers. The autumn colours were spectacular. Even though it’s been getting very cold and wet here in Scotland, there’s something really special about this time of year.

During one of my days off, I took a trip down to Stirling to attend the Clan Cameron AGM. It was my first time going to one of these meetings, and it was fascinating to see what happens behind the scenes. There were interesting discussions about heritage, history, and the clan’s future plans. I also enjoyed meeting new people who share that same sense of

connection and pride in Scottish roots. Very excitingly, I had a ladies' kilt made by the Lochcarron mill in Cameron of Erracht Modern tartan, and I was able to wear it for the AGM.

I’ve now finished up my job at Glengarry and am currently staying with Ken and Rhona in Inverlair. It’s been lovely spending some time here — it feels like a bit of a pause before the next chapter. I’ve started applying for jobs in my degree of early childhood education mainly for Edinburgh and Glasgow, hoping to find something to gain more experience in my chosen career and to see what early childhood education is like in Scotland

To round off the year, I’ve got a trip planned soon to Edinburgh, London, and York. I’m really looking forward to doing a bit of sightseeing and, of course, visiting the Christmas markets. It’ll be a nice way to recharge before deciding what’s next.

I hope everyone’s keeping well and enjoying the lead-up to Christmas!



Roddy Cameron with Lochiel and parents outside V&A Museum, Dundee



Malissa and Lochiel on the Brough of Birsay



Shetland Ponies in Shetland



We had a quick look around the Earl of Orkney's palace

Hororata Highland Games



The Cameron tent at Hororata and the Clan Banner Bearers.

Photos Rob Cameron



The Italian Chapel in Orkney. The Italian Chapel is made up of two Nissen huts transformed into a beautiful chapel built by the Italian prisoners of war during the Second World War



Malissa outside the House where her grandad Alexander Thompson used to live in Shetland (Alexander founded St Andrew's College in NZ)



Loch Oich, near where Lochiel was working (M)



Loch Arkaig, near Achnacarry (M)



St. Machar's Cathedral in Aberdeen (M)



The Black house on Lewis (M)



Calanais standing Stones on Lewis (M)



Lochiel in St Magnus Cathedral on Orkney (M)



Dunrobin Castle, family seat of the Chief of Clan Sutherland.. (M)



Inside the Black house (M)



Two Invergarry local highland coo (L)



View of the snowy hills from Spean bridge (L)



Trying on my new Cameron of Erracht tartan ladies kilt (L)

The Royal New Zealand Navy and some Scottish Links

By Editor

When I joined the Navy over 75 years ago and for some seven years afterwards my eyes were always drawn to four trim little vessels of the Reserve Fleet cocooned in the Basin at the Naval Base. These were Isles (sometimes called Scottish Isles) Class antisubmarine minesweepers. Based on a North Sea trawler design, these seaworthy little vessels were built in large numbers for minesweeping, patrolling and escorting coastal convoys.

Four of these ships were offered to and accepted by the NZ Government in 1941. These were Scarba, Sanda, Inchkeith and Killegray, all named after Scottish Islands. The ships were worked up in Scottish waters and did escort work until early 1942 when they sailed for home being part of convoys' escorts to Canada, then to the West Indies and through the Pacific. Being coal burners, getting to New Zealand was a story in itself but they all arrived, some under tow after suffering from a shortage of poor quality coal taken on en route, ready to start minesweeping in NZ waters in late 1942.

After a busy four years mainly spent on minesweeping and antisubmarine patrols in the Hauraki Gulf and Bay of Islands and with the odd escort duty to Norfolk Island and Noumea, these four ships were paid off in 1946 and laid up at the Devonport Naval Base, Auckland until finally being scrapped in 1957.

Only Killegray was, in fact, built in Scotland - the remainder were built in the North of England. I will describe the four Scottish Islands they were named after.

Scarba (Gaelic: Sgarba.)

The nearest to Cameron country, Scarba is located to the north of the island of Jura, half a mile across the Strait of Corryvreckan. The island is uninhabited. It has an area of 3640 acres, with a peak rising from the sea to 1473 feet. On the eastern side of the island there are ruins of crofts and a chapel. Covered in heather, it has a population of red deer, wild goats and sheep and Luing cattle are grazed here in the summer months

Sanda (Gaelic: Sandaigh)

Sanda is a small private island lying just off the south tip of the Mull of Kintyre. There is a small population and the island is busy with boat trips and self-catering accommodation. It is a favourite for yachties and is a site for scientific interest (SSI).

Sanda Island has the distinction of having the remotest public house in the British Isles. Called the "BYRON DARNTON", It is named after a Liberty ship that ran aground, on March 17th 1946, in dense fog, 100 yards South West of the Sanda Lighthouse.

Legend has it that St Ninian himself is buried on Sanda and that death within a year will fall upon anyone who stands on his grave.

Inchkeith (Gaelic: Innis Cheith)

An island in the Firth of Forth. It is part of Fife. Inchkeith has had a colourful history as a result of its proximity to Edinburgh and strategic location for use as home for a lighthouse and for military purposes defending the Firth of Forth for attack from shipping, and more recently protecting the upstream Forth road



HMNZS Scarba in the Hauraki Gulf. Photograph courtesy of the Navy Museum

bridge and Rosyth Dockyard. Inchkeith, by some accounts, has been inhabited (intermittently) for almost 1800 years. Inchkeith is approximately half the size of the Isle of May at the mouth of the Firth, but is higher.

Killegray (Gaelic: Ceileagraigh)

An island in the Sound of Harris, in the Outer Hebrides. Killegray supported a small permanent population until just before the Second World War. The 19th century Killegray House was renovated as holiday accommodation in the early 1990s. A jetty lies on the northeast coast opposite Killegray House and the remains of an ancient chapel and graveyard lie on the coast to the north.



Sanda Lighthouse



Inchkeith from Portobello, Edinburgh

With thanks to Wikipedia

The Man in the Mural.

By Fiona Scott, *Lochaber Times*
(Transcribed by Bill Cameron)

A brief encounter between a World War II prisoner of war and a little girl from Fort William has resulted in a tale that has been passed on over eight decades and has now been encapsulated in a work of art.

Gerald Mulvey recovered from his WW2 ordeal in Fort William in the mid 1940's before returning to New Zealand. After his death, Gerard's family discovered writings including a poem with a reference to a four year old girl named Florence.

Following some investigation, Gerard's grandson, Matt, known only as Ling in the art world, discovered that Florence was still alive, and not only that she was living in Fort William. Taking up the story, Ling told us: "It's not lost on me how many things needed to line up to find a young child (Florence) who had an impact on a war veteran, who in turn returned home to have a family of his own. Through this a grandson he never knew turned out to be an artist, specifically a muralist, who paints and travels and happened to develop deep friendships with artist friends that have a fondness for the Scottish Highlands."

Ling's hope was to create two murals celebrating the connection between Florence and his grandfather - a portrait of my Gerard in Fort William and a portrait of Florence in his hometown of Tuatapere, New Zealand.

Ling added: "To be planning visits to Fort William that corresponded with Gerard Mulvey's daughter/my mother Christine Thompson and for Florence to still be in Fort William and Gowan Brad to still be in operation under the same family was all quite extraordinary."

As well as relying on a few coincidences across the generations, Ling also had assistance from the Fort William community when looking for Florence and indeed finding a wall for his mural.

Mary Philip from BID Fort William was instrumental in this through seeing and understanding the idea and seeking potential sires that would be suitable.

Ling and his mum travelled to Fort William in August where they met up with Florence (Sanderson) and the mural of Gerard Mulvey can now be viewed in all its splendour on the gable wall of the Highland Bookshop.

"This has been an amazing experience and I'm truly thankful to have been able to produce this piece and have it so well received by the local community," said Ling.



New Zealander Christine Thompson (left) daughter of Gerard Mulvey "the main man in the mural" with Florence Sandison from Claggan who was the subject of a poem penned by Gerard 80 years ago when she was just four years old.

To Florence (aged 4)

By Gerard Mulvey

*You have, Sweet Bird, without doubt,
heard Of the Knight in shining Armour?*

*Because if you haven't, it's time you had,
So ask your Mum and I'll ask my Dad;
When dusk comes down with the moon behind her
Let's go out and try to find her.*

*See the new moon come over Trislaig
It shines on the Loch for many a league
The mist comes down over Ben Nevis
And soon obliterates every crevice*

*So first hunt high and then hunt low
And go very carefully on tip-toe,
But if in the end it's nothing we see
We'll then come for a cup of tea.*

*If Brian and Phemie aren't too busy
The kettle will boil like an old Tin Lizzie
But when suppers' gone I'll go away to bed in Gowan Brae.*

News of Sarah, last year's First Lighter

Sarah, after returning from Scotland in 2024, has just finished her first year of medical school at the University of Otago.

She found this year to be both challenging and very rewarding.

She is looking forward to working at Pacific Edge, a cancer diagnostic company based in Dunedin, over the summer as an intern.

Sarah continues to play with the City Of Dunedin Pipe Band. This band is the second oldest pipe band in the Southern Hemisphere.



Vale

Elaine Cameron

By Mary-Anne Cameron

Cameron, Moira Elaine (nee Drake). Our beautiful Mum, affectionately known as Elaine passed away peacefully on the 6th November 2025. Elaine was wife of the late Fraser and cherished mum of Shona, Stuart, Darryl (deceased), Mary-Anne, and Vivienne. Loved mother-in-law to Jeff, Irene, Rhys and Butch (deceased). Dearly adored nana of 11 grandchildren and 21 great grandchildren.

Honouring Elaine's wishes a celebration of her life was held at her favourite venue, the Opotiki RSA, 103 St John Street, Opotiki, on Friday, 14 November at 1pm, followed by private cremation.



Malissa and Garry's Trip to Scotland.

By Malissa Nielsen

After Covid I felt that really New Zealand was the best place to be. Who needed to travel overseas? It was much safer here and really NZ is just so beautiful. "Yes, we have a Bach in Omori, that will do me" was my standard answer to anyone who asked if we would be travelling overseas, once Garry retires.

So, who is this Garry and Malissa Nielsen, I hear you ask. Well, the easiest way to introduce our selves is to say we are the parents of Lochiel Nielsen who is the 2025 First Lighter. I am a 6th generation descendant from Donald the Weaver – then down through Donald the Piper and then his son Donald John Cameron etc.

When Lochiel mentioned she was keen to go to Scotland and apply for the First Lighter programme I was still very much the same with my thoughts of staying in NZ. However, as time went by and I talked with people like some of you at Clan gatherings, the idea grew of going to Scotland while Lochiel was there.

I think I justified it by making it about Garry's 70th and encouraging our two boys and their wives to come with us to surprise Lochiel. Well firstly it was just too hard to keep it a secret. Plus, our eldest had commitments that just didn't allow him to travel with us. Hence, we planned our trip around our middle son Hunter who is very evolved with our local pipe band the Wairarapa Fern and Thistle as the lead snare drummer and his wife Laura who had never been overseas. Then of course including Lochiel in our plans to make the most of the opportunity. We had been to Scotland for 3 days in 2000 so you can imagine we wanted to do better with this trip and came up thinking 6 weeks should just about do it.

Planning

In early February this year we made the flight bookings for August/ September and started the planning of travelling with 5 adults and making decisions that would make everyone happy. I booked everything including flights. It is so amazing what you can do these days online. The consequences of getting it wrong meant it was wrong for 5 people which to be honest was a little stressful. This resulted in me being rather pragmatic, really planning what we wanted to see and do, getting to know a bit about Scotland before we got there so to speak. Sorting journey times that would work etc

Finding reasonable accommodation for 5 and fitting us all into a rental car with our luggage was going to be our first task. The 7-seater was the way to go.

Booking some pre-essential things to do and having an itinerary plan of ideas for certain days, made it so much easier to be flexible. If we wanted a rest or to see something else that we hadn't thought about, was the best way to go.

The Central Belt

We flew direct to Glasgow after 30 hours of flying and short stopovers. Be warned there is no duty free at Glasgow Airport but the good thing is customs in Glasgow appears to be non-existent and very easy to get through.

Staying in Glasgow for the first 9 nights, and making this our base to include Edinburgh, Falkirk and Stirling, worked well. Lochiel's host family in Roy Bridge are Ken and Rhona Cameron and we took their advice, to not drive in Edinburgh! They suggested using the Park and Ride near the Airport and catch the tram in. This worked well every time.

Going down to Loch Carron Weavers and seeing how



Malissa and daughter Lochiel (First Lighter)

tartan was made was not on our original itinerary, but we soon made it happen and very worthwhile it was too. It was something we should have organised earlier but lucky for us they were able to squeeze us in and lucky for them Lochiel decided to have a lady's kilt made. Fun times choosing which Cameron tartan to pick, with 5 of us all having a say.

On the way to Loch Carron weavers we stopped at Traquair House, the oldest inhabited house in Scotland and over 900 years old and former hunting lodge for kings and queens. You must use the temporary gates to enter as the main gates (known as the Bear gates) were closed during the Jacobite rising and never to be used until there was a Stuart king on the throne. So, the temporary gates have now been in use for just a few centuries.

Now we are back in NZ people ask us what was our biggest highlight other than catching up with said daughter? It would have to be, The Edinburgh Tattoo. To sit so close and see their facial expressions was truly wonderful. I took very few photos of the Tattoo; I just wanted to enjoy it. The next highlight was the World Pipe Band Champs in Glasgow. To see NZ on the world stage is special. But to have two children from our very own pipe band in the Wairarapa (one of whom was taught by our son Hunter) play with their mother for their uncles Dumbarton Pipe Band was heartwarming. To hear and see Inveraray and Districts Pipe Band's winning medley, using simple turns played extremely well, was just amazing.

Lochaber and The Isle of Skye

We then stayed 4 nights in Lochaber the home of the Camerons. Now in the highlands we came to realise that Scottish roads are worse than NZ roads. It's the side of the road that is the biggest problem the main reason being there is no side. It can have drop offs and holes up to 300mm waiting to take your suspension out. In our case it was run over something sharp where the edge line would be at home and have two flat tyres just like that. That was when we found the midges, nowhere to hide from them, while waiting for the repairer to arrive (which they say is what they do for tourists every day)

Of course, this area is a must see for all of us Camerons. We went to the Cameron Museum and bumped into Lucy (The Lochiel's Sister) who was so lovely. It was Lucy that explained to us the right to roam policy in Scotland. Basically, you can walk over any privately owned farmland, just not homes and gardens. She sent us for a walk over the White Bridge behind Achnacarry to see Loch Arkaig and more. Just beautiful.

The train ride from Tullock Station to the Corroul Station restaurant to have dinner with Ken and Rhona was a great thing to do too, but those midges were out in force that night. Corroul Station is the highest and most remote train station in the UK and only accessible by hiking or biking etc.

We did as much in this "Cameron" area as we could. It is where we come from and so important to us all, but I feel I am talking to the converted, so I won't go on. We did make it to where Lochiel works and all enjoyed a High Tea at the Glengarry Castle in Invergarry and Lochiel especially enjoyed being on the receiving end for a change.

We stayed 3 nights on Skye this too was truly beautiful. It was now that we realised how lucky we were to be experiencing the amazing weather. As for our whole 6 weeks we only had 3 days of rain! This meant we got to see the spectacular scenery with hardly any clouds. I will say though the waterfalls were rather lacking and the Torabhaig distillery we visited was getting rather anxious about the lack of rain as with no water they cannot make whisky. As the say in Scotland "today's rain is tomorrow's whisky".

Two nights in Oban. I did keep getting corrected on my kiwi accent for they do not pronounce Oban like we do, they say Aubin.

After a trip back to Glasgow Airport we said goodbye to Hunter and Laura who returned home via a few days in Singapore. Garry and I now downsized and were chauffeur driven by Lochiel in her recently purchased little Mazda 2. I called it the sardine tin, but we managed very well. As Garry

and I couldn't get insurance to drive her car she had to drive us everywhere and drive she did.

The Eastern Journey - Perthshire, Dundee Aberdeen

We stopped at Dunblane and its Cathedral on the way to Dundee. In Dundee we caught up with Scottish Clan Commissioner Roddy Cameron at the Victoria and Albert Museum who greeted us wearing his kilt. A charming gentleman who invited us to visit his wonderful home and garden the next day, Highlights of Dundee were HMS Unicorn being the oldest warship in the UK and the Discovery, the sailing ship that took both Shackleton and Scott to Antarctica. We took an afternoon trip down to St Andrews and around the coast to Elie beach and Kirkcaldy, all very beautiful.

Cathedrals and castles - oh gosh the history just makes NZ so young. On our way to Aberdeen we stopped at Dunn House where you can get so much inspiration for those who love gardening. Dunnottar Castle was certainly the landscape for a great impenetrable fortress above the sea cliffs.

A walk around Aberdeen took us through the garden and onto St Machar's Cathedral with its gruesome glass windows depicting how each king was killed. Then down through the old university and into the city centre and the oldest house in town which is now a museum. Late that afternoon we caught the overnight ferry to Shetland. It was not too rough for two of us lassies but was for the laddie.

Shetland Isles

Now the roads in Shetland are fantastic, all due to the investment from the North Sea oil industry. Here we were hosted by my distant cousins on my mother's other side of the family. They and their extended family were delightful and proud Shetland Islanders. It was obvious that they were so pleased we had come to see them. They took us to see the house in Lunning my great grandparents had lived in which is now in ruins (but had been lived in right up until the 1980s) and family graves at Luna Church. Shetland has different family ties for me and is such a special and unique place.

The archaeological site at Jarlshof is the 4000 years old Pictish and Norse housing remnants that were partially unearthed during a storm that took away sand in the late 19th century and excavation began in 1925

Orkney

Orkney was quite different from Shetland, but I'm really pleased we did both. The history here and in Shetlands is seeing to believe. The second world war had quite an impact on Orkney with its roading and so many islands connected with causeways (Churchill's Barriers) made it extremely easy to get around. The Italian Chapel, the Tomb of the Eagle and St Magnus Cathedral blow you mind away.

The North Coast 500

Retuning by ferry to the mainland at Thurso we drove to John o'Groats, the northern most point. We did a quick round trip down to Wick past the Queen Mother's Castle May and then returning to staying our first night on the north coast at Strathy Bay. We were now on the popular north coast 500. Totally recommend doing this. These roads, like many in the highlands, are often single track with regular passing bays and most drivers are all so courteous. Smoo cave was a welcome and interesting break on our longest day of driving on our way to Dundonnell Hotel near the port of Ullapool. We had a ferry to catch to the Isles of Lewis and Harris the next day.

The Isles of Lewis and Harris

Lewis and Harris were meant to be our chillout time, however the travel bug and wishing to see as much as we could, had us using our four days there all too quickly. Visiting the Black house is a must do. These have no windows. The animals were at one end, the open peat fire with no chimney in the middle and the sleeping room at the other. Surprisingly with no electricity, the house was lived in right up until the 1960s

The beaches here are simply beautiful with white sand and caves to explore. Luskentyre beach is said to be the best but sadly it was very cold that day. We walked along Garry Beach not far from Stornoway. It was still cold, and we got a fright when a lady ran past us on her way for a skinny dip in the surf.

The Calanais standing stones in Lewis are the best to see in Scotland. Tweed products were everywhere and we made some purchases to bring home.



Garry Beach on Lewis

Back on the NC500 - Ullapool to Inverness

Our 5th and last ferry ride brought us back to Ullapool where we continued on the NC500 staying next at Gairloch. One of the best experiences here was going to a falconry where we got up close and personal with an owl. Lochiel's very own Harry Potter moment.

South past Loch Maree is very pretty, and the trees here just make the view even better.

We stopped at the Rogie falls and, more by good luck than management, got to see salmon jumping up stream.

The Black Isle

Arriving in Digwall we used this as our base to explore the Black Isle and surrounding areas for three days.

Culloden now has a very purpose-built visitor centre. We took the guided tour and it was worth it. All the tourists on the popular Outlander fan tours just wanted to see the Fraser Clan stone.

The little town of Beaully is delightful, and the Campbells shop along with the old schoolhouse is a must visit.

We drove out to Chanorny Point near Fortrose to spot dolphins from the mainland - didn't get to see any so the highlight here was the view and driving right through the middle of a golf course and around the players and their balls on the road.

Our last castle was Dunrobin, the home of the infamous Sutherland Clan, and what a castle to finish on. It's simply spectacular. The famous Tain pottery to is not far from here and great to see its products.

Last days

Our last leg was to spend a few nights with Lochiel at Ken and Rhona's Inverlair Lodge where I got to use a Shepherd's crook. We went for a walk on the Glen Nevis waterfall walk up the gorge to the Steall Falls and gosh it didn't take much to convince me that I need and want one of these.

Our flight home was out of Heathrow as, by chance, we had happened upon a good deal with Air NZ. However, this meant we had to catch the seven-hour train ride from Kingussie to London which was quite doable. Alas the tears as we said goodbye to Lochiel until we see her again as we know she wishes to make good use of her visa.

We really had a wonderful time and seeing as much as we did was all worth it. I really don't think we would change what we did. A few more days here and there.

If you are planning to go to Scotland, we would recommend you sign up for the Heritage NZ / Pouhere Taonga membership which has reciprocal rights.

Lastly, I also should add that I got to see foxes, a red squirrel, salmon jumping up waterfalls, dolphins and pheasants all in the wild. However, try as I might, I never saw a deer. (only images on road warning signs).

[More of Malissa's photos to illustrate this article on page 7](#)



2003 First Lighters from Lochaber, Bill and David Cameron. David, who lives in New Zealand, meets up with Bill while on holiday in Fort William.



Clan Cameron member Roger Tobin from Dunedin at the ready in our Clan tent at the Hororata Highland Games



Wellington Camerons, most related to the Editor, meet in the Bread and Butter Eatery. From left; Eoin, Heather, Graeme, Hamish, Hazel, Cynthia, Peter, Callum, Ava and Hannah.



An important post parade debrief underway. Allan and Rob Cameron at the Hororata Highland Games



Hororata Highland Games. Allan Cameron preparing the Haggis at the Cameron tent



Previous Clan Commissioner Nick Cameron, playing with his band Canterbury Caledonian Society at the Hororata Highland Games