



Connecting People with Matheson Heritage

The Chair's Corner

At the end of 2019 and nearly half way through the term of the current committee, it's worth taking stock of progress on the eight priorities we set for this year.

Outreach and profile building

As announced in our last newsletter, we've **instituted an award scheme**. The first one is to help Patsy Matheson attend the 2020 piping summer school. Look out for her report in a future issue, and for details of how to apply for an award.

The **Clan Matheson international gathering** is now only seven months away. There's lots more information in this issue of the newsletter, and we'll be adding more to our website. I hope there will be a good contingent from New Zealand.

A **visit to New Zealand by the Chief** is still an aspirational idea, as he's focussing his international travel on next year's gathering in the USA. We will keep the idea alive.

You can see a list of **website** updates on the home page. There are many more photos of Matheson headstones to help you with your family history research. Thanks to a family history blog you can now read letters between members of a Matheson family at Omaha, and understand their experiences and tragedies during the First World War.

Membership activities and services

Read in this issue about Rodger Matheson's work at **local and regional gatherings** at the Auckland and Hororata games. If you can, try and attend the highland games at Waipu on 1 January or Turakina on 25 January.

The **newsletter** continues to be the main way of connecting branch members and sharing their stories. Please think about what family stories you might contribute.



Inside this issue

The Chair's Corner

Andrew Matheson 1

The international gathering

Andrew Matheson 3

More about the Mathesons of Paparimu

Andrew Matheson 5

Highland Games: Auckland

Andrew Matheson 6

9th Hororata Highland Games: Christchurch

Rodger Matheson 7

DNA and the Dark Ages

Andrew Matheson 8

Musings from the editor..... 9

Clan Matheson events 10

How to connect 11



The Chair's Corner (cont)

Organisational

We're still working on the two questions of **streamlining membership renewals** and whether to establish the branch as an **incorporated society**.

The branch exists to foster Matheson heritage in New Zealand, but is only as strong as its membership. If you have any suggestions or offers of assistance, I'd love to hear from you.

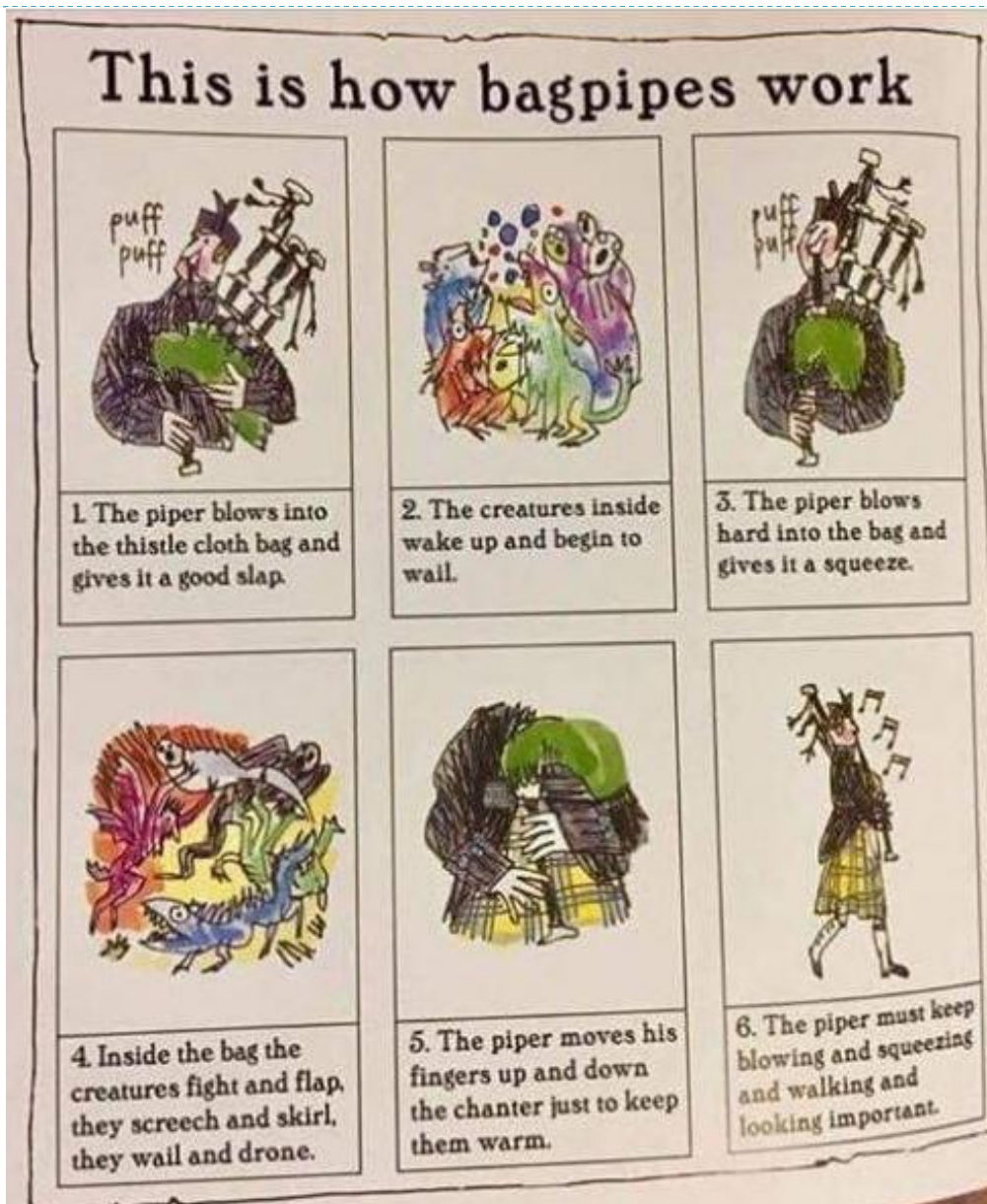
Andrew Matheson

Chair, Chief's Lieutenant for New Zealand

chair@clanmatheson.org.nz



“If you have any suggestions or offers of assistance, I'd love to hear from you.”



The international gathering

As 2020 is almost upon us, we're pleased to announce more information about the Clan Matheson international gathering. It will be held in conjunction with one of the world's largest Highland games, and is the first formal gathering and Clan Matheson parliament since the 2014 event in Scotland.

Note the dates: Thursday 9 to Sunday 12 July 2020. The Clan Matheson international gathering will be held in conjunction with the Grandfather Mountain Highland Games in Linville, North Carolina, USA. This is a great opportunity for you to enjoy both traditional and modern Scottish culture, meet Mathesons from around the world, and experience a beautiful and less-visited part of the USA.



“A great opportunity to enjoy both traditional and modern Scottish culture and meet Mathesons from around the world.”

Clan Matheson events

Clan Matheson is the honoured clan for the 2020 Grandfather Mountain Highland Games, and our Chief, Sir Alexander Matheson, is the honorary chief for the games.

Mathesons were at least 80 strong marching into Edinburgh Castle for the 2017 tattoo, and we are hoping to overwhelm the field at Grandfather Mountain in 2020! So come and meet your Chief and his family, and connect with your Scottish heritage. Introduce your children and grandchildren to their heritage and far-flung kinsmen. There will be plenty of activities for all ages.

Travel and accommodation

Clan Matheson activities will be centred in the town of Blowing Rock, a short distance from the games venue. There are plenty of accommodation options including hotels, motels, inns, B&B and home rentals such as Airbnb and VRBO.

The most convenient airport to fly into is likely

to be Charlotte, North Carolina, which is 145 km from Blowing Rock. There are direct, non-stop flights to Charlotte from the most convenient entry points from New Zealand, Houston and Chicago, and connecting flights from LA and San Francisco. Other airports are Raleigh-Durham (300 km) and Knoxville, Tennessee (270 km).



The international gathering (cont)

The Programme

Thursday 9 July 2020

The Bear. A challenging 8-km race in the early evening with nearly 500 m of elevation, to assault Grandfather Mountain. Register separately.

Opening ceremony. This is a moving, well-attended evening ceremony as clans are called and each clan lights its torch. This is the first official event that you would want to attend. We will have two Clan Matheson tents and will provide our own Clan Matheson registration. We would expect a few wee drams to be poured as part of that welcome.



“The Bear” running race—at Forrest Gump curve

“If you're planning to attend, please let the chair, Andrew Matheson, know.”

Friday 10 July 2020

Games commence with an opening ceremony, and continue with Highland competitions and festivities. Matheson tents will be our central meeting point. You are free to spend as much time as you like at the games, and there will be plenty of places to sightsee and opportunities to enjoy other activities.

The patron/sponsor's dinner requires formal highland dress and separate registration. Patron tickets sell out early and are limited.

The day concludes with a family-oriented Celtic rock concert.

Saturday 11 July 2020

In the morning, more Highland games and a ceremony with the Chief, Sir Alexander Matheson.

In the afternoon, a Clan Matheson gathering in Blowing Rock. This will include activities for children and a clan parliament for official business. The clan dinner is likely to be a Carolina BBQ.

The evening also includes another music event at MacRae Meadows: Celtic Jam.

Sunday 12 July 2020

The morning includes the parade of tartans, where Mathesons assemble and march with the Chief. We will want as many Mathesons (hopefully in tartan) as possible at this closing ceremony. More details of the programme will be on our website as they're confirmed.

We hope to see many Mathesons from New Zealand join in the gathering, and take the opportunity to holiday in a fascinating part of the USA. If you're planning to attend, please let the chair, Andrew Matheson, know.



More about the Mathesons in Paparimu

Last issue featured a contribution by Keith Matheson telling the remarkable story of his family's role as owners and guardians of farmland at Paparimu near Clevedon, south of Auckland. This is exactly the type of article we love to see in our newsletter.

There's a bit more behind the story, too. Five generations have farmed the land at Paparimu, so it's natural that the farmhouse sits on Matheson Road. Keith says that two other street names in the area link to the same family: Matheson Street in Papakura and Matheson Way near Kingseat gained their names from Keith's uncles. Our website has more information.

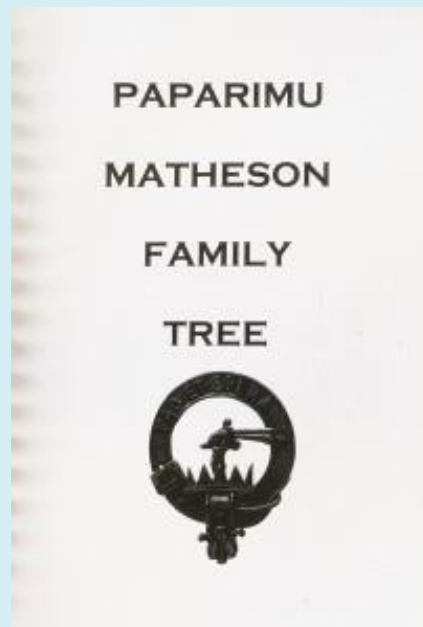
Several members of the Paparimu Matheson family have published a booklet about their ancestors. It contains family tree information and copies and transcripts of original documents, and again there is more information on our website.

It's great to see the stories of this family cherished and recounted to others. Every family's heritage contains stories worth telling, so please think about what you can share with other clan members.

Paparimu Matheson family tree

Clan Matheson Society stalwarts Graeme and Robin Matheson, and Keith and Shirley Matheson, researched and compiled this account of the Matheson family who have lived and farmed in Paparimu and nearby Clevedon (south of Auckland) since the 1850s.

It contains valuable copies and transcripts of original material, including a diary started by James Matheson in Scotland in 1848, and letters from the 1860s.



Highland games: Auckland

Rodger Matheson, Eden Matheson and Chris Binns once again represented Clan Matheson at this year's Highland games in Auckland. Branch chair and Chief's Lieutenant Andrew Matheson attended for part of the day, and carried the banner in the opening march.

The day was full of activities for all: including the traditional piping and dancing competitions, Scottish animals (think terriers and Highland cows), plenty of opportunities to buy Highland regalia — and some surprising links. One of the 'clan' tents highlighted early contact and fusion between Scottish and Māori societies. A local kaumatua with full facial moko took part in the opening ceremony. "I bet you didn't think I was Scottish", he said (and he was correct). But he was as proud of his Scottish ancestry as anyone. That's an interesting aspect to our Highland heritage in New Zealand, and one that warrants more investigation.

Do try and attend a Highland games near you, and meet up with Rodger in the Clan Matheson tent. The next ones are:

- Waipu Highland Games, Wednesday 1 January 2020. Check out the new website for the games, which contains a detailed programme.
- Turakina Highland Games, near Marton, Saturday 25 January 2020. Their website has more information.

The next Waipu games will be the 149th, while Turakina gets bragging rights by staging its 156th event. Highland games (earlier called Caledonian games) have been part of popular culture in New Zealand since the early days of Scottish settlement, as this article by Tanja Buelmann outlines.



Eden, Rodger, Andrew and Chris at the Auckland Highland Games 2019

9th Hororata Highland games: Christchurch

Saturday the 9th was warm and partly cloudy. The number of visitors were down from previous years, with 8,000 members of the public passing through the gates. This was due to other activities being held around Christchurch that weekend. There were still good numbers in all the competitions, dancing and piping. There were 14 Clans represented coming from all over New Zealand. Two of our namesakes made themselves known, with one local couple carrying our banner in the parade. Hopefully they may forward a photo of themselves.

We would like to see more of our members turn out to the Highland Games. Check out their Face book site.

We will be at the following games.

1st January 2020 Waipu Highland Games

25th January 2020 Turakina Highland Games

8th February 2020 Paeroa Highland Games

Rodger Matheson

Clans getting into the spirit of the games, Hororata Highland Games 2019



DNA and the Dark Ages

It's been a long time since the Dark Ages — between 1,000 and 1,500 years to be precise. But a recent DNA study shows that many Scottish people still live in the same area as their ancestors from those times.

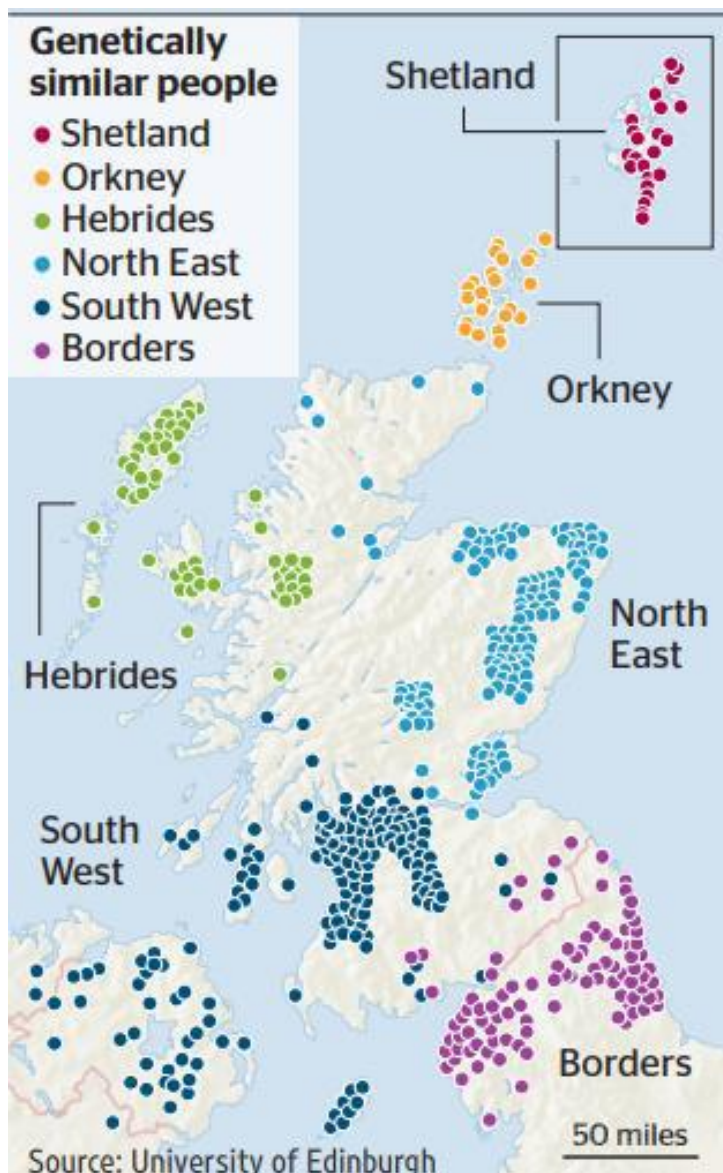
The study has resulted in Scotland's first comprehensive genetic map. It started by looking at the genetic makeup of about 1,000 people from Scotland, whose grandparents or great-grandparents were born within 80 km of each other. Researchers then compared this with the DNA of people who lived thousands of years ago.

The results show that the country is divided into six main clusters of genetically similar individuals: the Borders, the south-west, the north-east, the Hebrides, Orkney and Shetland. Our

Matheson ancestors are likely to belong mostly to the Hebrides group. These groupings are in similar locations to Dark Age kingdoms such as Strathclyde in the south-west, Pictland in the north-east and Gododdin in the south-east.

Parallel work in Ireland, the Isle of Man and Iceland has shown some fascinating results too. Some of the founders of Iceland may have originated from north-west Scotland and Ireland. The Isle of Man is genetically predominantly Scottish. Orkney and Shetland have the highest levels of Norwegian ancestry outside Scandinavia, and many islands within the archipelagos have their own unique genetic identity.

The full study is here <https://www.pnas.org/content/pnas/116/38/19064.full.pdf>



Map credit: University of Edinburgh and The Times

Musings from the editor

Bagpipes with attitude!

So I have to confess, I have complex feelings about bagpipes. Sometimes my brain finds the sound, well, piercing. However, most times they make me feel nostalgic, uplifted and connected to my Scottish heritage.

So I was excited to find a music genre called 'bagrock', which is a fusion of rock and bagpipe music. I got hooked on watching the 'Red Hot Chilli Pipers' on youtube and enjoyed their clever and fun piping.

For a slower song check out their video with Tom Walker "leave a light on".

It got me thinking about how traditions can evolve over time so they are relevant for today, yet still connect us with our past and our communities. Christmas and new years traditions are good examples of that. I bet the secret santa gift giving and BBQ Christmas lunch that brings my family together each year looks quite different to the Christmases of previous centuries. I like to think of it as 'Christmas with attitude'.

I wish you all a very happy holidays and excellent Hogmanay spending time with the people you love, perhaps even creating a new tradition.

Lara Penman

We want to hear your stories!

Stories are a powerful way of connecting us to each other and to history, so I would love to share your Matheson stories in this newsletter. They could be anything from stories about your ancestors, to stories of migration, to stories of Matheson places, to your own story about connecting with your Matheson heritage. They can be a paragraph or a page, whatever you feel comfortable sharing.

Send your stories, news and photos to news@clanmatheson.org.nz

Many thanks to those who have shared their stories. I am so grateful for your wonderful words and photos.



Clan Matheson Events

Join us at a Highland Games event this summer

Clan Matheson members, and those interested in their Matheson heritage, will be getting together at these Highland games. Bring your lunch and meet Rodger at the Clan Matheson tent at noon.

Families are welcome to come and experience the Highland Games, march under the Matheson banner and share their Clan history and Family Tree.

We will be at the following games.

1st January 2020 Waipu Highland Games

25th January 2020 Turakina Highland Games

8th February 2020 Paeroa Highland Games



Fun at the 2018 Hororata Games

International Clan Matheson gathering, 9-12 July 2020

Grandfather Mountain Highland Games, Linville, North Carolina, USA.

For more information about the 2020 gathering go to www.clanmatheson.org and <http://www.gmhg.org/homepage>

Clan Matheson Society New Zealand Branch

If you are a Matheson, Mathieson, Mathison (and other variants of the name) by birth, kinship, maternal descent or marriage, why not become a member of the New Zealand Clan Society and enjoy the benefits of friendship, fraternity and family history



New Zealand branch website

www.clanmatheson.org.nz

International Clan website

www.clanmatheson.org

Membership

membership@clanmatheson.org.nz

Newsletter

news@clanmatheson.org.nz

How to connect with us

www.clanmatheson.org.nz/about/contacts

Chief's Lieutenant for New Zealand	Andrew Matheson andrew.matheson.nz@gmail.com
Chief's Deputy Lieutenants for New Zealand	Blair Matheson blairmatheson2@gmail.com Graeme Matheson gtoddmatheson@gmail.com

Clan Matheson New Zealand branch committee 2019–2020

Andrew Matheson (Chair, webmaster, genealogist)	chair@clanmatheson.org.nz web@clanmatheson.org.nz
Chris Binns (Secretary)	secretary@clanmatheson.org.nz
Doug Hayr (Treasurer)	doug.hayr@gmail.com
Lara Penman (News editor)	news@clanmatheson.org.nz
Graeme Matheson	gtoddmatheson@gmail.com
Joan Harbour	joanjharbour@icloud.com
Linda Matheson	lindawhitnew@gmail.com
Rodger Matheson	r.mat@xtra.co.nz
Wayne Matheson	waynejmatheson@gmail.com

Join the New Zealand branch of the Clan Matheson Society to connect with others who share your common Highland heritage.

You will receive a copy of our quarterly newsletters and be invited to clan events. You will also be able to use the services of our clan genealogist, for help with your family history.

If you want to find out about membership or to join the New Zealand branch of the Clan Matheson Society, please go to www.clanmatheson.org.nz/join-us/

Don't forget to re-subscribe for this year.