

Clan Matheson New Zealand

Chair's corner

Greetings to all with an interest in Matheson heritage.

It is with great sadness that we mourn the loss of Queen Elizabeth, Queen of Scotland and Queen of New Zealand. Her love of Scotland, its people, land and heritage are well known as was her support for Scotland as a nation. Our thoughts are with her family.

Hearing King Charles III take an oath about the security of the Church of Scotland was enlightening. I now understand that this oath ensures that the self-governing status of the church is preserved, and also that the monarch attends this church as an ordinary member of the congregation. Again, I was reminded of the long history and special nature of the nation of Scotland.

I am pleased to confirm that Clan Matheson in New Zealand is now supported by a trust that has been incorporated as a charitable trust board. An application has been made for that trust board to be registered as a charity. The background to achieving this new status is told from page 4 of this newsletter.

We are still the New Zealand branch of the international Clan Matheson Society. The charitable trust board is the legal entity that underpins our work. Obtaining registered charity status will recognise the public benefit of our activities, and help with attracting donations and other financial support.

**We are still the New Zealand branch of the international Clan Matheson Society.
The charitable trust board is the legal entity that underpins our work.**

The trust deed is [here](#) and you can contact the trust by email at trust@clanmatheson.org.nz. A special tribute goes to Andrew Matheson for leading this development, to all committee members for their ongoing advice and support, and to Andrew, Graeme and Blair Matheson for agreeing to be the inaugural trustees.

Newsletter of the
New Zealand branch of the
Clan Matheson Society

September 2022

Issue 168

In this issue

Chair's corner <i>Lena Orum</i>	1
Queen Elizabeth II	3
New status for Clan Matheson in New Zealand <i>Andrew Matheson</i>	4
Clan Matheson New Zealand Trust	6
Eilean Donan Castle	7
Family history research <i>Andrew Matheson</i>	8
Kiwi Mathesons <i>Lena Orum</i>	9
Kirkin' o' the tartan <i>Rodger Matheson</i>	10
News and events	11
How to connect with us	12

Editor: Andrew Matheson
news@clanmatheson.org.nz



Connecting people with Matheson heritage



The New Zealand branch of the Clan Matheson Society still has the same objectives, which are to:

- foster an interest in Matheson heritage
- forge links between people in New Zealand with Matheson heritage, and between them and kinsfolk in other countries
- help people with Matheson heritage find out more about their family history and family stories.

Working with the trustees, the branch committee is drafting plans to further the purpose and objectives in the year ahead.

We welcome your input to these plans. At Highland games over the next summer there will be opportunities to hear about Clan Matheson, make suggestions and be involved in its activities. At 2.00 pm come along to the clan tent at the Hororata, Auckland, Waipu, Turakina and Paeroa Highland games — details are on page 11. If you can't make it to the games, please feel free to email me.

We welcome your input to our planning

Is there a member of your family who would consider applying for the Clan Matheson New Zealand grant? It was established to help those with Matheson heritage carry out an activity or project to foster interest in Matheson or Scottish heritage.

Applications for this grant were due to close on 30 September 2022, but this has been extended to 15 October as this newsletter has come out only at the end of the month. You can find more in the June 2022 [newsletter](#) and on our [website](#).

I look forward to meeting more Mathesons soon.

Lena Orum
Chair, Clan Matheson Society New Zealand branch
chair@clanmatheson.org.nz

Clan Matheson New Zealand grant

Don't forget that applications close soon for this grant. We're looking for imaginative ideas for projects or activities that align with our aims.

Check out details on our [website](#). Applications close soon — on 15 October 2022.



Clan Matheson New Zealand

www.clanmatheson.org.nz

[www.facebook.com/groups/
ClanMathesonNewZealand](https://www.facebook.com/groups/ClanMathesonNewZealand)





People around the world — in the United Kingdom, Commonwealth nations and other countries — have mourned the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. From the time of her death at her favourite Scottish residence of Balmoral to the funeral in London and interment at Windsor Castle, hundreds of millions of people have watched events unfold in a way that most of us have never seen in our lifetime.

There has been pageantry on an remarkable scale, reflecting the importance of the occasion and the rich heritage of the monarchy. But there has been a very personal element too, as people in their own way recognised a life of devoted service by an exceptional individual.

Through the Chief, Clan Matheson had a link to the central events of Monday 19 September. The current and 28th Chief of Clan Matheson is Sir Alexander Matheson of Matheson, 8th Baronet of Lochalsh. He is a senior member of the Royal

Household as the Queen's Senior Gentleman Usher and Extra Equerry to Her Majesty.

This means he has had a close association with the Queen, so he had an important role in the funeral arrangements. The photo indicates him in the procession of the Queen's coffin from Buckingham Palace to Westminster Hall, where it lay in state.

Sir Alexander was in a similar position in the two funeral processions in London — first from Westminster Hall to Westminster Abbey, and then after the service to Hyde Park Corner. On those processions he marched on the right-hand side of the carriage (in the direction of travel) rather than the left-hand side as shown. He also accompanied the state hearse for the later procession to Windsor Castle.

This was a solemn duty for Sir Alexander, and Clan Matheson can be proud of his involvement.



New status for Clan Matheson in New Zealand

by Andrew Matheson

Chief's Lieutenant for New Zealand and trustee of Clan Matheson New Zealand

The New Zealand branch of the Clan Matheson Society is now supported by a trust — Clan Matheson New Zealand — which has been incorporated as a charitable trust board. An application has been made to have this trust board registered as a charity.

This is a major step in strengthening the future of Clan Matheson in New Zealand. The move has established a legal entity where there was only an unincorporated society, and obtaining registered charity status will both recognise the public benefit of what we do and will help us secure our financial future.

Back in the beginning

There has been a New Zealand branch of the Clan Matheson Society for 33 years. It held its first meeting in 1989 after much preparatory work led by the Reverend Roy Matheson, his wife Joan and their friends Ailsa and Gordon Matheson. It was intended that the branch be set up as an incorporated society, which is the most suitable structure for a membership-based organisation. But this never happened, perhaps because of Roy's death soon after the branch was formed.

*A Gathering of New Zealand
Mathesons
at St. George's Church Hall,
Takapuna N.Z.
on Sunday, 25 June, 1989*



*Interim Committee:
Convenor: Roy Matheson
Secretary: Ailsa Matheson
(1/254 Lake Rd, Takapuna (09) 463-471)
Today's Chairman: Gordon Matheson
Piper: Norman Matheson*

Admission: One kumbee!

The branch has continued ever since as an unincorporated group. This means it exists in fact but has no legal status. There has been a system of membership and election of a committee and officers, though this is fairly informal. Branch funds are held in the branch's name, even though it isn't a legal entity.

Why change?

Continuing with a membership model is the main challenge. Despite the small subscription there has been a gradual decline in membership, and the average age of members has been increasing. People interact with others in different ways, connecting online and not joining clubs as much as they did a generation ago.

People have also changed how they give and receive information, expecting information to be instantly available and generally free of charge. One of our main products is the newsletter, and it seemed a pity to keep it behind a paywall and available only to a diminishing number of people.

Responding to the challenges

The New Zealand branch committee has spent a lot of time considering the best model for the branch in the future, working openly and in full consultation with members of the branch. You can read about plans for the future of the branch in [newsletters](#) from September 2020 onwards. The summary in the June 2021 [newsletter](#) gives the background to moving away from a subscription membership model for the branch, a proposal that was endorsed unanimously at the 2021 annual general meeting.

The branch has increasingly made information available free of charge through its website, and provided communication channels such as a Facebook group and family history forum.

... New status for Clan Matheson in New Zealand ...

Our newsletter is now available free to anyone who wants an emailed copy (there is a small fee for hard copies and postage). About 30% more people are reading it now than when it was available only to paid-up members.

Developing a foundation for the future

The next move was to decide on the best form for the branch in the future.

First we established a trust, Clan Matheson New Zealand. The trustees are me, Blair Matheson and Graeme Matheson. We happen to be the Chief's Lieutenant and the two Deputy Lieutenants for New Zealand, but there is no automatic link between the lieutenant positions (which are appointments of the Chief) and being a trustee. It's just that using the holders of the lieutenant positions was a good place to start when establishing the trust. Over time there are likely to be changes in who are trustees and who are lieutenants.

Being registered as a charity gives the branch more credibility when seeking support. It gives tax advantages to donors.

How will things change?

The trust Clan Matheson New Zealand is the vehicle to provide a continuing legal identity for the New Zealand branch of the Clan Matheson Society.

This is explicitly stated as one of the trust's purposes and objects: "provide continuance of interests in perpetuity for the non-incorporated group originally established as the New Zealand branch of the Clan Matheson Society".

Trustees are the legal owners of the trust's assets, and have a special duty to hold and manage those assets for the benefit of others. They have duties and responsibilities set out in law.

Our newsletter is now available free to anyone who wants an emailed copy

Secondly, we applied for that trust to be incorporated as a charitable trust board. A charitable trust board is a trust and has trustees in the same way as other types of trust — the difference is that it is an incorporated body and has a separate legal identity. Trusts are not incorporated and don't have a separate legal identity, though the status of the trustees is essentially the same for both.

Thirdly, we have applied for the charitable trust board to be registered as a charity. At the time of writing we are still waiting on the results of this application. If it is successful, this will be recognition that the charitable trust board provides benefit to the public for a charitable purpose that is specified in the Charities Act.



... New status for Clan Matheson in New Zealand

Trustees have a governance, ownership and oversight role. They are more like a board, with a focus on the long-term future of the organisation. If Clan Matheson New Zealand becomes a registered charity, they will also be responsible for ensuring that the activities of the branch continue to fulfil charitable purposes.

There will still be a committee for the New Zealand branch of the Clan Matheson Society. A committee has a management or executive role, and ensures that things get done. In a small group like ours committee members often are also the people who actually do those things.

Another feature of small groups is that there can be some overlap between governance and management, though it is helpful to recognise the difference. At the moment two trustees are on the committee and one is not, so there is both strong links between the trust and the committee and a degree of independence.

What now?

We breathe a sigh of relief! It has been a lot of work getting to this stage.

The trust and the branch committee will work together in planning the future of Clan Matheson in New Zealand, and leveraging off its new status and structure.

Clan Matheson New Zealand Trust



The charitable purpose and objects of the trust are to:

- protect, preserve, enhance and promote the history and heritage of Clan Matheson for the educational and recreational benefit of the public
- encourage and support research, investigation and preservation of Scottish heritage, history and culture, particularly as it relates to Clan Matheson in Scotland and wherever in the world descendants have migrated
- encourage and support the study of genealogy, family history and personal heritage through promotion, information-sharing, training and preservation of material in oral, written or any other form
- record, publish and otherwise disseminate the heritage, history and culture of Clan Matheson
- promote fellowship and awareness of kinship between all present day descendants of Clan Matheson
- provide continuance of interests in perpetuity for the non-incorporated group originally established as the New Zealand branch of the Clan Matheson Society
- establish, maintain and administer a fund of money for the use of the trust
- work collaboratively with the Clan Matheson Society and its branches anywhere in the world
- work collaboratively with other Scottish clan organisations, Caledonian and Highland game societies and family history organisations, to further the objects of the trust.

Eilean Donan Castle — Matheson links

Our website has had a refresh, and the home page now sports a wonderful view of Eilean Donan Castle. Why this castle in particular? There are historical links between this castle and Mathesons.

Stories about the origins of the castle include a founding legend that the son of the chief of the Mathesons acquired the power to communicate with birds. As a result of this power, and after many adventures overseas, he gained wealth, power and the respect of King Alexander II, who asked him in the 13th century to build the castle to defend his realm against Norwegian invaders.

The later history of clan feuding to control this important castle includes that during a surprise attack in 1539 the recently-appointed constable, Iain Dubh Matheson, was killed defending the castle with one other, the warden of Clan Macrae.

Eilean Donan Castle was bombarded and destroyed in 1719 by the English fleet at the time of the Battle of Glenshiel.

When Sir Alexander Matheson bought the land in 1851 the ruin must have been included. It was later sold by his eldest son Sir Kenneth, 2nd Baronet, to Major John Macrae-Gilstrap, who restored the castle to its present state. In 1983 the Macrae family established a trust to own, maintain and restore the castle.

This is a famous Scottish landmark and is now a beautiful place to visit. The photo shows Lara Penman (our previous newsletter editor) and Isobel Murphy (Lara's mother, and daughter of Gladys Orum, née Matheson) looking out to the loch from the castle on the island of Eilean Donan.

This was during their family history-focussed trip to Scotland, which Lara wrote about in an earlier [newsletter](#).

Snippets about Eilean Donan Castle

In Gaelic, Eilean Donan means 'The island of Donan'. The name refers to the legend that the 6th century Irish Saint Donnán lived on the island for a time, before being martyred on the island of Eigg.

It is quite possibly the most photographed castle in Scotland.

It's set on a small rocky island where three lochs meet: Loch Alsh, Loch Duich and Loch Long.

A Pictish fortress may have existed on the site during the 6th or 7th centuries.

It has featured in many movies, including the Bond film 'The world is not enough'.



Family history research

by Andrew Matheson

In this issue we look at three more types of material available on the internet.

Family history forums

One of the great pleasures of exploring your family's origins is connecting and working with people around the globe. The family history community is friendly and collaborative, and joining it can lead to significant discoveries.

There are many online forums for you to pose questions and offer your own advice. We have our own for Clan Matheson New Zealand, both through our website [family history forum](#) and our Facebook [group](#).

If you want to reach out further afield there are many forums such as [Rootschat](#), [Rootsweb](#), [Family Tree Forum](#) and [Who When Where](#).

There is a Scottish-focussed forum at [TalkingScot](#), and all the major forums have boards specific to localities including Scotland and New Zealand.



It's worth browsing these forums to see the type of information that gets requested and posted, and thinking about how your research needs might fit one forum better than another.

To me there is a difference between genealogy and family history. Genealogy is finding out about relatives, their family connections and basic biodata. Family history is their stories: who they were, how they lived and what shaped their lives. Genealogy is the skeleton, which you need

to start with, but family history is the flesh on the bones.

So as you move from genealogy to family history, it's worth checking out specialist forums not just for family history but for wider historical research. These can be invaluable for finding out more about your ancestors.

For example, there are many to do with military history such as to do with the First World War, the [Second World War](#) (and also [here](#)), and even forces such as the different branches of the [Royal Air Force](#). There are forums on many subjects, which may be useful if you are researching a specific topic or location.

Wiki

You know what Wikipedia is, and in the same vein is a family history research wiki run by FamilySearch, the family history service of the Mormon church. It doesn't deal with individuals, but lists family history databases, websites and other resources to help you in your quest. For a location where you have ancestral connections, the wiki will link to resources of use.

Blogs

Blogs are websites used by people who write articles, make (and often invite) comments and link to other sites of interest. It's worth searching out blogs with a family history focus, and a quick search will link to articles that review blog sites.

Here are three with a Scottish focus. [The frugal family historian](#); true to its name, this links to a lot of free or cheap resources. Its tagline is 'Tips on researching your family tree without breaking the bank'. [The Scottish genealogy blog](#) and [Relatively Scottish](#) are also of interest.

Kiwi Mathesons

by Lena Orum

For parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles

Follow the interests of our children with Matheson heritage; start with what they enjoy

How can we involve our children in family history?

Our children's interests can be a good place to start to engage them in learning about their family and its history.

Perhaps the thought of family history doesn't sound relevant to our children. So, start with their own interests and then link to the family, both in Scotland and in New Zealand. Interests might be sport, hobbies, pets, horses, fashion, dance, ships, cooking, technology, a family member

This involvement will be an opportunity for them to follow their interest and develop their computer skills to carry out research that contributes to their family history.

We can support our children to learn about using the internet (on a computer, tablet or phone), social media, search engines (Google and others), as well as family history and research sites to follow their interests.

Advice on using the internet

This [advice](#) from the National Library is useful for adults who are supporting children to find information, check its quality and then use it in a meaningful way. These skills are needed more than ever and can be developed by working together on a family project.



For young people and children

An idea to start ... stories

What do you like? Stories?

What stories are your favourites?

What stories did your grandparents, aunts and uncles like reading when they were children?

What stories did children in New Zealand read when your Matheson relatives arrived?

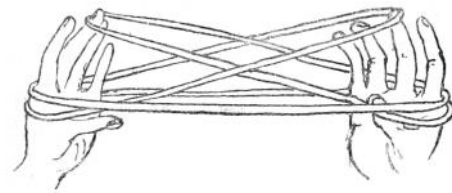
What stories might Mathesons in Scotland like today?

What are the stories from long ago in Scotland?

What about stories from long ago in New Zealand?

Another idea to start cat's cradle

Do you like the game called cat's cradle? It's a game played with a loop of string.



Cat's cradle is played all around the world and dates back to ancient times – possibly starting in China.

In New Zealand Māori children called it whai. Cat's cradle was played by children in Scotland too.

Do your grandparents, aunts and uncles remember cat's cradle when they were children? What shapes did they make as children in New Zealand?

A book that might help you with family history

The National Geographic Kids *Guide to genealogy* is available in the Christchurch, Auckland and Rotorua public libraries.

Kirkin' o' the tartan

by Rodger Matheson

The Scottish Clans Association of New Zealand and people in the Auckland region once again had the privilege of attending the Kirkin' o' the tartan service held at St Andrew's Presbyterian Church in central Auckland.

There appears to be a number of claims made about the origin of this church service. The Rev David Williams has presided over the Auckland service for several years, and has always related this service to a Scottish tradition.

After Bonnie Prince Charlie's forces were defeated by British forces in 1746 at the Battle of Culloden, wearing tartans and playing bagpipes were forbidden in Scotland for many years. Wearing or even displaying tartans was punishable by death. During those years, some Scots wore concealed pieces of their tartan when attending church. At a particular point in the worship service they would secretly touch their hidden tartan cloth, and the minister would offer a blessing.

Most accounts link the kirkin' o' the tartan back to the 18th century history and legend described in this article. But taking that history and making it into a custom is a 20th century phenomenon, and started in the USA.

Dr Peter Marshall was a Scot who was a Presbyterian minister in Washington DC and chaplain to the US senate. In the early years of the Second World War he held prayer services at which money was raised for war relief. At one in early 1943 he gave a sermon entitled "The kirkin' o' the tartans". The custom was revived to instil pride among Scottish-Americans in their Scottish homeland.

Kirkin' is from the Scots word kirk, meaning church, and in this context means blessing.

Rev David invites the clans to attend this service, blesses our banners (symbols of Scottish clans) and the tartans from our forebears.

Our response is "We offer to God the blue of our seas, and the green of our land, the golden wealth of hills and river, the blood of kinship" (so true even here in New Zealand).

David also likes to throw a curve ball during his service aimed straight at the clans — a history lesson on Scottish mythical creatures Bauchan, Brownie and Morag to name a few. Then onto William Wallace and some named places. We did not do very well. His response was that we should visit Scotland and learn our history. Typical David.

Being a long weekend the clan turnout was down on previous years but not the Matheson Clan, which was well represented.



News and events



There is no healthier sign of any community than that they can unbend themselves from the tiresome, necessary drudgery of everyday life, occasionally to devote a fraction of their time and means to harmless, healthy amusements and national manly sports. It is pleasant to us that we need not yet take up the refrain of Goethe's lament when he said,—

They have left our hearts, and left them lonely :
The old gods that bright and jocund train,

but that we may record having witnessed yesterday at Waipu one of the best displays of keen, manly, generous competition that ever we have seen anywhere at the Caledonian games.

It was originally contemplated that the games should take place on January 3, 1870, but it was afterwards gleaned that it would interfere with other arrangements for recreation on that day; consequently the committee, Messrs. D. J. McLeod, D. McLean, William and K. McDonald, and N. McKenzie, decided on the earlier date. Too much praise cannot be awarded to the committee for their energy in completing their arrangements for the 27th instant, and the result has been equal to their most sanguine expectations. The meeting, or rather gathering, took place in a paddock kindly lent by Mr. W. McKenzie, adjoining Mr. McLeod's store. The day was very warm for so much exertion as some of the competitors displayed—entering for every game from 11 a.m., when the sports commenced, till half-past 7 p.m., with very little intermission, excepting the share of the programme allowed for the ladies and the boys.

Daily Southern Cross, 1 January 1870

Now that the worst of covid restrictions are behind us you can plan with confidence to take part in Highland games and other celebrations of Scottish culture in New Zealand. So far the summer of 2022—2023 is shaping up well.

Canterbury

The first are the [Hororata Highland Games](#). Clan Matheson will be there, so look out for the tent and come along to hear about developments in the clan and our work to promote Matheson heritage. Saturday 5 November at the Hororata domain.

Auckland

The [Auckland Highland Games](#) will take place on Saturday 26 November. The new venue is the Lloyd Elsmore Park in Pakuranga.

Northland

The [Waipu Highland Games](#) are back on, and will be the delayed 150th celebration of the first Highland games in the town, then called Caledonian games in 1871 (though there were games as early as 1869). Sunday 1 January 2023, Caledonian Park, St Mary's Road, Waipu.

Manawatu

The [Turakina Highland Games](#) (the 158th) will take place on Saturday 28 January 2023 at the Turakina Domain, Cameron Road (off State Highway 3 at Turakina).

Waikato

The [Paeroa Highland Games and Tattoo](#) will next be held on Saturday 11 February 2023 at the Paeroa Domain, 6 Willoughby Street.



How to connect with us

Clan Matheson Society New Zealand Branch

Our objectives are to:

- foster an interest in Matheson heritage
- forge links between people in New Zealand with Matheson heritage, and between them and kinsfolk in other countries
- help people with Matheson heritage find out more about their family history and family stories



New Zealand branch website

www.clanmatheson.org.nz

International clan website

www.clanmatheson.org

Newsletter

news@clanmatheson.org.nz

Website

web@clanmatheson.org.nz

News	news@clanmatheson.org.nz
Family history	web@clanmatheson.org.nz
Website	web@clanmatheson.org.nz
Secretary	secretary@clanmatheson.org.nz
Chair	chair@clanmatheson.org.nz

Clan Matheson New Zealand committee 2022

Lena Orum (Chair and secretary)	Auckland
Doug Hayr (treasurer)	Auckland
Andrew Matheson (news editor)	Wellington
Graeme Matheson	Christchurch
Rodger Matheson	Auckland
Wayne Matheson	Queenstown

Chief's Lieutenant for New Zealand

Andrew Matheson

Chief's Deputy Lieutenants for New Zealand

Blair Matheson

Graeme Matheson

Clan Matheson New Zealand Trust

trust@clanmatheson.org.nz

Support our work

The New Zealand branch of the Clan Matheson Society has moved away from a formal membership model. You don't have to pay a subscription to receive the newsletter, or to share your interest in Matheson heritage with others.

We welcome any support you can provide, whether a one-off donation or a regular payment just as you used to support us with an annual subscription.

Bank account:

Clan Matheson Society New Zealand branch

03 1559 0103339 00