



Welcome to the June, 2025, edition of the newsletter

The centennial year of the Otago Scottish Heritage Council

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## Success for local piper at Kings Birthday competitions

### Increase in entries

The Otago Centre Piping and Dancing enjoyed a large increase in competitors in the lower grades for the Kings Birthday annual solo piping competitions.

Spokeswoman Julie Marshall said the weekend was successful. Competitors ranged in age from under 16 years to over 60, proving age was no barrier in the world of piping. Young local piper Logan Dale was "stoked" with his biggest success ever, winning the South Island Championship Open Strathspey & Reel and the Otago Championship open gold medal piobaireachd.



Page 2. Big year for the OSCHC

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Otago piper Logan Dale (left) shown here receiving his gold medal from adjudicator Greg Wilson (Christchurch). Logan, won the Open Gold Medal Piobaireachd Otago Championship. **Photo: Supplied**

## **Big year ahead for OSHC**

**By Dene Mackenzie**

The year ahead is proving to be an exciting one for the Otago Scottish Heritage Council and it appears to be the busiest the council has been in nearly two decades

As has been well publicised already, the council celebrates its centenary this year with the launch of a book in November, a centennial dinner in October, along with a centennial afternoon tea being organised on October 17 by the Combined Clans & Societies Group Otago.

The OSCHC has also taken a major role in organising this year's Robert Burns Poetry Competitions, following the decision by the Dunedin City Council to step back from the administration of the globally recognised events.

OSHC and Burns Club president Dr Royden Somerville is the convenor of the newly established Robert Burns Poetry Steering Committee and Dunedin-Edinburgh Sister City Society president Sarah Davis is the facilitator.

The first meeting has been held, and it was an enthusiastic group which set about organising their respective roles.

A big thank you must go to our friends at the UNESCO Otepōti City of Literature for their commitment. Nicky Page has offered her team's help in setting up an online entry form on our own [otagoscottishheritagecouncil.org](http://otagoscottishheritagecouncil.org) website so we can receive entries directly from poets. Our webmaster Chris Watts will be overseeing the entry process once the online portal is finished.

Those who attended the first meeting were: Sarah Davis (sister city) Bruce Nicholson (OSHC, Combined Clans), Lyn Nicholson (Combined Clans president), Wayne Allen (Burns Club), Linda Geddis (Friends of the Library), Joy Baker (Southern Heritage Trust) and me, Dene Mackenzie as record taker.

Those who could not attend but are part of the

steering committee were Chris Watts, Dr Somerville, Nicky Page and Allie Carruthers (sister city). More people may be added.

The proposed theme is "The global influence of Robert Burns", which will be refined before the competition opens on September 1.

Allie Carruthers is talking to Otago Schools about pupils entering the Rock like Robbie youth section and Chris Watts has established links with the Edinburgh Education Department. He hopes to attract some young poets from Edinburgh high schools. This may be regarded as a work in progress, but the committee has high hopes for the future of attracting young poets from around Otago and from Scotland.

The rest of the committee have been allocated specific tasks.

Although prize money has already been pledged, the committee is looking for outside funding to pay for things such as posters and pamphlets. It is also hoped to advertise the competitions in places like the Listener.

The competition will open on September 1 and close on November 30. As usual, the winners will be announced on the birthday of Robbie Burns, January 25.

### **Burns Supper**

In separate news, Dr Somerville is negotiating on behalf of the council to reduce the costs of the Burns Supper dinner, held annually in Toitu on January 25. This will be welcome news to many people who feel they have been priced out of attending. More details when they arrive.

### **Website**

Our webmaster Chris Watts is uploading a new podcast fortnightly onto our website

[Otagoscottishheritagecouncil.org](http://otagoscottishheritagecouncil.org) from the Journey to New Edinburgh series. The council urges you to log on, enter your email to help promote the site and learn of any announcements.

## Combined Clans & Societies Group Otago Winter Hogmanay held on June 7



Top left is Clan MacKenzie piper Qwenton McKenzie leading the Haggis Party.

Bottom left is Otago Scottish Heritage Council president Dr Royden Somerville carefully carrying the Haggis.

Above. Joyce Shield (standing) and Sheila Wall folding and arranging table decorations.

Below. Joy Baker (left) and Daphne Macleod putting the final touches to the dinner tables.



## More from the Hogmanay



Above. Diners enjoying their meal

Left. Brian Fitzgerald addresses the haggis watched over by Bruce Nicholson (left) and Royden Somerville. Photos. Dene Mackenzie

Each year, the Combined Clans & Societies sponsor a dancer from the Jacquie Seque dancing school. As a thank you, dancers perform at the annual winter Hogmanay.

Front left. Dusty Rose O'Mahony was dancing for the first time. Centre. Aya Waldrom had learned her dance two weeks ago and had competed the previous week. She was this years sponsored dancer. Right. Elise Cookson became the fourth generation of her family to become a Highland dancer,

Hannah Hamilton (16) (rear) had only recently received her eye catching pink outfit. She performed two outstanding items.

All the dancers performed to a very high standard and received warm applause for the more than 40 people attending the Hogmanay.

The Combined Clans raise money through raffles to support young dancers to attend a summer dance school, usually held in Christchurch. The group believes in encouraging young people to develop their skills essential to the maintenance of Scottish culture in Dunedin.



## Poetry Corner

### Scottish Winter

#### By Edwin Muir

*Now the ice lays its smooth claws on the sill,  
The sun looks from the hill  
Helmed in his winter casket,  
And sweeps his arctic sword across the sky.  
The water at the mill  
Sounds more hoarse and dull.  
The miller's daughter walking by  
With frozen fingers soldered to her basket  
Seems to be knocking  
Upon a hundred leagues of floor  
With her light heels, and mocking  
Percy and Douglas dead,  
And Bruce on his burial bed,  
Where he lies white as may  
With wars and leprosy,  
And all the kings before  
This land was kingless,  
And all the singers before  
This land was songless,  
This land that with its dead and living waits  
the Judgement Day.  
But they, the powerless dead,  
Listening can hear no more  
Than a hard tapping on the floor  
A little overhead  
Of common heels that do not know  
Whence they come or where they go  
And are content  
With their poor frozen life and shallow ban-  
ishment.*

Edwin Muir

1887-1959

Edwin Muir was a Scottish poet, novelist, and translator. Although he began writing poetry in the



1920s, Muir is generally grouped with the poets who came to prominence in the period after World War II known as the Movement. These poets, including Dylan Thomas and Philip Larkin, favoured a more restrained and less ornate style than many of their Modernist predecessors.

Muir's poetry is characterised by its exploration of themes of time, memory, and the search for meaning in a world that often seems chaotic and absurd. He was influenced by the work of William Blake and John Keats, but he also developed a unique voice that was both lyrical and philosophical. One distinctive feature of his work was his use of traditional forms and meters, which he infused with a contemporary sensibility.

Today, Muir is remembered as a significant figure in the development of modern Scottish poetry. His work continues to be studied and admired for its intellectual rigor, emotional depth, and timeless relevance. While Muir was also an accomplished translator (of, notably, Franz Kafka) and novelist, it is his poetry which most strongly continues to speak to readers.

## The Quaich

**This month, Historian John Stinson delves into the history of one of the OSHC's most coveted trophies.**



The City of Edinburgh Perpetual Challenge Trophy is regarded as the pinnacle of recognition for Otago organisations who do the most each year to promote our Scottish heritage during the previous year.

Known as the Edinburgh Quaich, it is a solid silver drinking vessel which was presented to the Otago Scottish Heritage Council in 1987 by the Lord Provost of Edinburgh. It had been held in a vault at Edinburgh Castle.

At the Otago Scottish Heritage Council meeting on February 5, 1987, council delegates were told the Quaich would be sent out from Edinburgh in time for Dunedin Scottish Week in March of that year.

When the Quaich arrived, it was shown on local television, and a photo had appeared in the *Evening Star* newspaper. The council had paid \$97.80 to claim the Quaich and it was reported the council would try to reclaim that amount as the Quaich had been a gift. Insurance would be paid by the council.

The point was made that Scottish Clans and Societies of Otago would include Oamaru, Queenstown and Milton, along with places throughout Otago. It was decided there would no reason why any club could not apply to become a council member and in so doing they would become eligible for entry.

The council sought quotes for miniatures to provide to the winner each year with the idea the

Quaich would be held in the office of the Mayor of Dunedin, or somewhere else to ensure its safety.

The Quaich is now awarded to a clan or society and is kept safe by the respective winners. In true Scottish fashion, the winners pay for the inscription noting their success.

The first winner was Clan Campbell for its work in promoting the 1987 Scottish Week. At the time of writing, the Dunedin-Edinburgh Sister City held the quaich.

Former Dunedin mayor Sir Clifford Skeggs suggested the Quaich should only be held for one year as that would give all clubs, clans and societies an incentive for applying each year. The winner could reapply after a year.

The Quaich is meant to be presented at the first possible opportunity at a Otago Scottish Heritage Council meeting but is often presented at the Burns Supper on January 25.

*A quaich (pronounced kway-ch) is a shallow two handled 'loving cup' which comes from the Gaelic word 'cuach' meaning 'shallow cup'. However, it is more than a two handled cup, the quaich is a symbol for Scottish hospitality and people coming together.*

## Clan Guthrie saves historic Kirk

Clan Guthrie has purchased the historic 199-year-old Guthrie Church in Angus, Scotland, transforming it into a heritage hub for clan members and visitors. The \$140,000 purchased was completed through the Guthrie Heritage charity which will oversee the restoration.

The Kirk, once listed for sale by the Church of Scotland, will be repurposed as a community and visitor centre celebrating Guthrie and Scottish clan history. More than 30 clan members will launch the project on June 14.

Proceeds from Gardyne Castle's gardens will support the project.

# THE GOOD FATHER

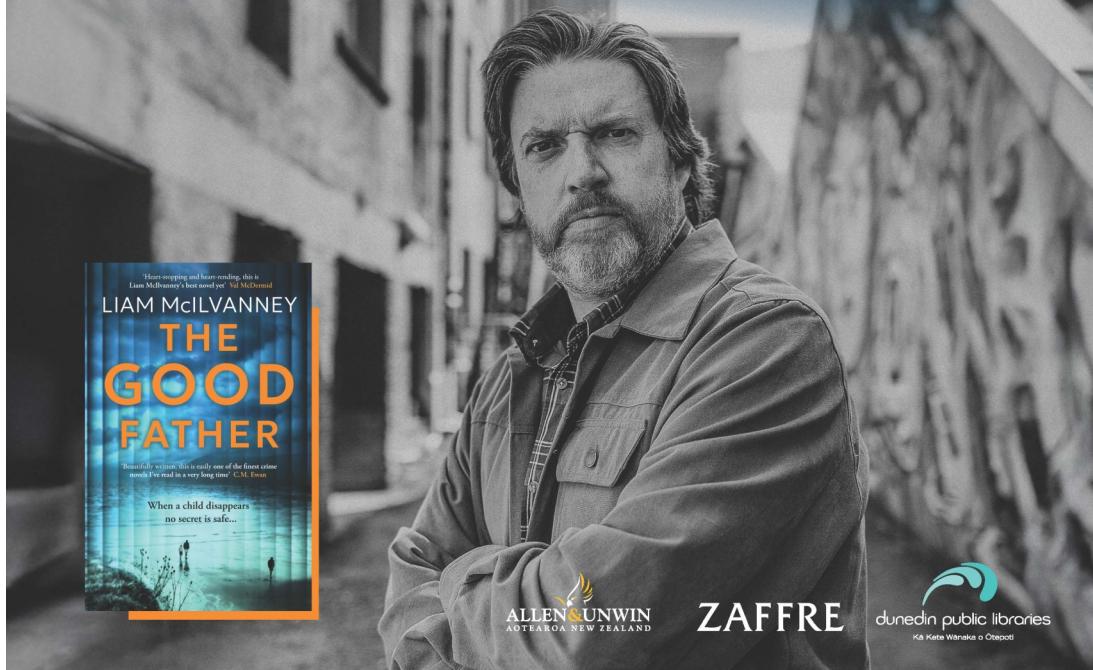
## 2025 Tour

### LIAM McILVANNEY

17 JUN DUNEDIN CITY OF LITERATURE  
City Library with Lynley Edmeades



27 JUN	<b>MELBOURNE</b> CITY OF LITERATURE Wild Geese Hotel with Jason Steger	10 JUL	<b>KILMARNOCK</b> Dick Institute Library with David F Ross	23 JUL	<b>BELFAST</b> No Alibis Bookstore with David Torrane
02 JUL	<b>EDINBURGH</b> CITY OF LITERATURE Golden Hare Books with Val McDermid	11 JUL	<b>LONDON</b> Auld Hag with Stephen Khan	25 JUL	<b>BRIDGE OF WEIR</b> The Ginger Cat Bookshop with Paul English
03 JUL	<b>GLASGOW</b> Waterstones with Lesley McDowell	13 JUL	<b>GLASGOW</b> Bookface Book Club with Heather Suttie	26 JUL	<b>IRVINE</b> Tidlines Festival with Katrina Tweedie
04 JUL	<b>HELENSBURGH</b> Helensburgh Book Festival with Neil Broadfoot	15 JUL	<b>SILVERBURN</b> Waterstones	29 JUL	<b>STIRLING</b> Bloody Scotland Pop-up with Craig Robertson
05 JUL	<b>ARDROSSAN</b> Seahorse Bookstore with Gordon Murray	15 JUL	<b>NEWTON MEARNS</b> Waterstones with Kirsty Strang-Roy	31 JUL	<b>GLASGOW</b> Mitchell Library with Valentina Bold
07 JUL	<b>STEWARTON</b> The Book Nook with Douglas Skelton	17 JUL	<b>BEARSDEN</b> The Bookmonger with Caitlyn Payne	1-3 AUG	<b>BUTE</b> Bute Noir Festival
08 JUL	<b>AYR</b> Waterstones with Michael J Malone	21 JUL	<b>WIGTOWN</b> Well Read Books with David Goldie	07 AUG	<b>HONG KONG</b> Club 1880



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CITY OF LITERATURE

ZAFFRE

dunedin public libraries  
Ka Kete Wanaea o Otago

Internationally acclaimed author Liam McIlvanney is taking his gripping new psychological thriller, *The Good Father*, on a world tour beginning on June 17 in Dunedin UNESCO City of Literature! The launch event, hosted in the Dunedin City Library's Dunningham Suite and introduced by poet, essayist and academic Dr Lynley Edmeades, marks the start of a 22-stop literary journey spanning five countries.

Liam's latest novel, *The Good Father*, published by Zaffre Books, has already drawn glowing praise.

Don't miss the opportunity to hear Liam as he starts his tour. Delve into the world of *The Good Father* and discover what makes Liam's writing so compelling.

June 17, 2025 5.30pm-7.30pm . Dunningham Suite, 4th Floor, Dunedin City Library. Free event, all welcome

## What's On Column

Tuesday, August 5. The OSHC will meet at 7pm in the Athenaeum Library



Tuesday, August 5. Annual meeting of the Burns Club of Dunedin. The meeting will follow the August meeting of the OSHC at 7pm in the Athenaeum Library.

**Monday, September 1. Burns Poetry Competitions open for entries. Details to follow**



Tuesday, September 2. 7pm. Annual meetings of OSHC, Queen o' the Heather. Athenaeum Library, the Octagon. Dene.mackenzie@gmail.com



Sunday, September 21, 1.30pm, Janet Cameron Lounge, Green Island. Combined Clans & Societies Group Otago annual meeting. lynnicholson@gmail.com or dene.mackenzie@gmail.com

Saturday, October 4, 6pm. Centennial Dinner, Edgar Stadium. Detail to follow



October 6, 7, 9 and October 13, 14, 16. Dunedin Public Library, heritage table display OSHC and Combined Clans

Friday. October 10. 6pm OAS, Dunedin Railway Station, the Otepotei Heritage Festival will hold the Heritage Bytes (quick fire talks, plus art exhibition).

Friday October 17, Dunningham Suite, Dunedin Library, 2pm to 4pm OSHC Centennial afternoon tea.

Friday, November 7, 6pm. St Peters Church Hall, Hillside Rd. Combined Clans Christmas dinner. Details to follow.

Thursday, November 20, Dunningham Suite, Dunedin Library, 6pm to 8pm. Centennial Book launch.

Sunday, November 23, 10am. The Octagon. St Andrews Day celebrations. Dunedin-Edinburgh Sister City Society.

Sunday, November 30 noon, Rope and Twine Restaurant. Combined Clans hold annual St Andrews Day lunch. lynnicholson@gmail.com

**Sunday, November 30. Burns Poetry Competitions close. Winners announced on January 25**

**Public announcement of winners made at Burns Supper on January 25.**

