



# *Zorra Caledonian Society*

*1937-2024*

*87 years of History and counting....*

## *Writing Credits*

*Years 1-75: Gloria Muir*

*From 2012 and forward, each president is responsible to  
keep this history up-to-date.*

## Zorra Caledonian Presidents

1937 W.G. Forbes	1967 Archie McArthur	1997 Gordon Green
1938 Colin E. Sutherland	1968 John Campbell	1998 Rick Innes
1939 A.D. McCorquodale	1969 H. A. Armstrong	1999 Ken Minler
1940 Alex Campbell	1970 Roy W. Johnson	2000 Keith Matheson
1941 James Murray	1971 Rowland Rutherford	2001 Doug Ferguson
1942 Alex Sutherland	1972 Harold Ulch	2002 Dale Ross
1943 Alex Sutherland	1973 Wilson McBeath	2003 Kevin Fraser
1944 Alvin McKay	1974 Barry Wallace	2004 Ken Ulch
1945 William L. Sutherland	1975 J. Woodburn Lambe	2005 Alan Normand
1946 Charles Nichols	1976 Dr. Harold Arbuckle	2006 Jim Knudsen
1947 John McDonald	1977 James Strickler	2007 Paul Weber
1948 Burns McCorquodale	1978 Iain MacRobbie	2008 Angus Thomson
1949 William Campbell	1979 Wayne Uncer	2009 Grant Innes
1950 Charles Matheson	1980 John Innes	2010 Ken Minler
1951 Clark Murray	1981 Wallace Ross	2011 Helen Dowd
1952 James Hossack	1982 Tom Thomson	2012 Jim Grieve
1953 William Sutherland	1983 Wm Fleming	2013 Ron Marshall
1954 Wallace McKenzie	1984 Robert M Matheson	2014 Jamie McPherson
1955 James McKay	1985 Melvin Matheson	2015 Steven MacDonald
1956 Robert Blair	1986 Leonard Eaton	2016 Steven MacDonald
1957 George Glendinning	1987 Ivan Buchan	2017 Helen Dowd
1958 Robert C Matheson	1988 Eugene Ross	2018 Gord MacKay
1959 Russel Innes	1989 Jim Gibb	2019 Gord MacKay
1960 Allan C. MacKinnon	1990 Ron Totten	2020 Kevin Fraser
1961 Cecil Kerr	1991 Ron Thomson	2021 Jennifer Moodie
1962 Gilbert M. Ross	1992 Jack Matheson	2022 Jennifer Moodie
1963 James Fleming	1993 Graham Hart	2023 Geoff Innes
1964 Alvin Fraser	1994 Wm Matheson	2024 Geoff Innes
1965 Lloyd Johnson	1995 Fred Howe	2025 Alex McKay
1966 George Matheson	1996 Warren McKay	

## Secretaries

1937	H.W. Sutherland
1938-1944	W.G. Forbes
1945-1957	Alvin McKay
1958-1969	James D. Hossack
1970-1987	A.C. MacKinnon
1988-2001	Rowland and Dianne Rutherford
2001-2016	Warren McKay
2017-2018	Jennifer Moodie
2019-2022	Geoff Innes
2023 -	Helen Dowd

## Dance Secretaries

1969-1975	Helen Hossack
1973-1983	John and Margaret Campbell
1984-1996	J. Edgar and Jane McKay
1997-2001	Bill and Marlene Matheson
2002-	Gord and Laura Green

## Treasurers

1937-1945	William Simpson
1945- 1955	F. Clifford Spicer
1958-1968	Allan W. Brown
1969- 1980	James Strothard
1980-1981	Charles Cauchi
1982 -2006	Rowland and Dianne Rutherford
2007- 2015	Jim and Lydia Knudsen
2016- 2021	Peter Fleming
2022-	Scott Thomson

## Ontario Volunteer Service Awards

2010	Rowland and Dianne Rutherford (20 years), and Ron Totten (35 years)
2011	Robert M. Matheson (25 years), Jim Gibb (40 years) and Bruce McLeod (50 years),
2012	John Innes (40 years) and Bob Blair (65 years)
2013	Brenda Sim (20 years), Tom Thomson (30 years) and Wilson McBeath (40 years)
2017	Jim & Lydia Knudsen (10 years) and Rollie & Dianne Rutherford (35 years),
2018	Warren McKay (25 years), Jack Matheson (30 years) and Ron Thomson (30 years), Youth - Alexander McKay
2019	Jim Walton (20 years)
2020	Ron Marshall (10 years), Alan Normand (15 years)
2021	Grant Innes (15 years), Doug Ferguson (20 years), Youth – Megan Coghill
2022	Peter Fleming (5 years), Kevin Fraser (20 years), Keith Matheson (25 years)
2023	Angus Thomson (20 years), Kenneth Ulch (20 years), Gord Green (25 years), Laura Green (25 years), Dale Ross (25 years), Harry Van Egdome (50 years)

A group of Scottish settlers arrived in West Zorra in 1829. For several years their priority was to build homes and establish farms, businesses and trades. The Old Log Church and local schools were built soon after they arrived. Once established, the community members looked forward to occasions that celebrated their Scottish heritage. On March 18, 1856, the Embro Highland Society was organized to preserve the language, dress, music, literature, and games of Scotland. The early executives of the Society numbered 14, with at least 5 society officers having a conversational knowledge of the Gaelic language. Early newspapers reported the Highland Games prize winners including the local names of John Tait, of Embro in dancing, Sullivan Ross of West Zorra in piping and George Forbes, Angus Kerr, William McLeod and Donald Bain McKay in sports. Unfortunately, in 1888 this organization was disbanded and the Embro Highland Society Games were no longer held.



On March 31<sup>st</sup> **1937** gentlemen from West Zorra, Embro and Woodstock met to discuss the advisability of forming a society or organization to renew the old Scottish Games. The first course of action was to canvass for members at the yearly rate of \$1.00. Several honorary presidents were appointed, and a full executive was nominated and elected. W.G. Forbes took the president's chair. At a June 21<sup>st</sup> meeting, the treasurer's report showed receipts of \$573.00. It was decided that admission charges to the Highland Games on July 1<sup>st</sup> would be as follows: ages 6 to 12 be charged .10 cents, adults .25 cents, grandstand seating .15 cents and cars parked at .25 cents. The committee in charge of the first Highland Games planned a parade of school children in the morning, followed by a program of sports, dancing and piping. Dr. D. M. Sutherland officially opened the Games. The Elgin and Middlesex Caledonian Society loaned the "Late Colonel Alexander Fraser of Toronto" trophy to the Zorra Caledonian Society until such time as the Society could secure a suitable trophy. The Argyle & Sutherland Highlanders of Hamilton won the 1937 pipe band competition. In the evening, entertainment consisted of 2 orchestras in 2 halls. The proceeds of the first Zorra Caledonian Society Games totalled \$1,720.00 with expenses of \$932.13. The W.C. MacDonald Tobacco Company gave permission to use the "Scotch Lassie" on the Highland Games' program cover. The St. Andrew's Supper was held on November 30<sup>th</sup> with A.J. McKenzie D.D. of Detroit as guest speaker. On the back of the menu/program the Caledonian Society declared "it has been decided to erect a monument to the memory of the famous tug of war team of 1893. The opinion of all interested parties as to the most suitable site to erect the cairn will be appreciated by the committee". The Society elected a committee to canvass for the funds to build a cairn, a daunting task given the economic times.

In **1938** Colin E. Sutherland was president and W.G. Forbes was secretary. Once again, yearly membership fees were \$1.00. On July 1<sup>st</sup> the pipe bands assembled at the arena in Matheson Park. Led by the previous year's winner, the Argyle & Sutherland Highlanders, the parade moved through the village. The pipe bands were followed by township school children, dressed in highland costumes. The Games' program included tug of war, caber toss and the local West Zorra highland dancing students of W.A. McPherson. Total receipts for 1938 were \$2,584.85. The secretary's book gives an excellent account of the day. "Daylight came with rain & more rain. At 1 p.m. the rain turned to a scotch mist, so the program started in earnest with five pipe bands present, four score of pipers for contests and about one hundred dancers. We had a wonderful p.m. About five thousand at the grounds and all delighted with the events". In addition to the Ingersoll Pipe Band, pipe bands from Montreal, Detroit, Hamilton and Toronto competed. The C.N.R. Pipe Band from Montreal won first prize. The evening's entertainment was divided between an open-air concert in front of the grandstand and a dance in the Embro Town Hall. On November 30<sup>th</sup>, the St. Andrew's Supper was held in the Masonic Hall with 175 tickets sold. Rev. A. McLean gave the address to the haggis in Gaelic and the Hon. Colin Campbell was guest speaker for the evening. About 10:30 p.m. Pipe Major Collins piped everyone to the Embro Town Hall where they joined in an old time dance which lasted until the wee hours of the morning.

At the April 5<sup>th</sup> **1939** annual meeting, Alexander McCorquodale was elected president. On the 18<sup>th</sup> of June the cairn at the North Embro Cemetery was dedicated to honour the memory of the World Champion 1893 Zorra Tug of War team. Amazingly, the cairn committee of Wm. Campbell, Hugh McLeod, H.B. Atkinson and W.G. Forbes had raised the funds within two years. Although the secretary's notes record those individuals taking part in the event, no mention of the total cost was recorded. The unveiling of the cairn was made by Mrs. Alexander Clark, widow of a team member, assisted by Fred Hummason, son of another team member. On July 1<sup>st</sup> the Highland Games attracted 9,000 people to Matheson Park. Bands came from Ingersoll, Detroit, Hamilton, Montreal, Toronto, and St. Thomas. "Ford A" Pipe Band from Detroit won first prize. The Presbyterian Church women recorded serving 2,000 meals at .35 cents each, and the lawn tennis club sold 800 hot dogs at their booth on the grounds. The annual St. Andrew's Supper was held at the Masonic Hall. Hon. John Keiller MacKay of Toronto was guest speaker. Entertainment by W.A. Calder and Mrs. Hugh McIntyre was enjoyed. Local highland dancers, Joyce and Helen Campbell, Mary Muir, Margaret Smith, Mary McArthur, Janet Sutherland and Marjorie Youngs performed several numbers.

The June 15<sup>th</sup> **1940** meeting formally resolved to give permission to the ladies of the Presbyterian Church to serve meals on the grounds and to set the price to be charged for the meals. Permission was granted to the Oxford Rifles Regiment to have a tent in Matheson Park for the purpose of recruiting, and entertaining the soldiers attending. The Games attracted more than 10,000 people, with 5 pipe bands and 85 piping and dancing competitors. Ranks in the pipe bands had changed with many men serving in the Armed Forces and war time restrictions preventing the American bands from crossing the border. When a pipe major found several unattached pipers and drummers on the field, he quickly formed a band, named it the "Embro Highlanders" and after 30 minutes practice, entered the competition. The ladies' drill team of the Hamilton Caledonian Society performed after the band competition. An evening program ended the day with more than \$1700.00 in gate receipts, despite the fact that everyone in kilt or khaki was admitted free. On Oct 2<sup>nd</sup> the Zorra Caledonian Society held a "Bigoxshunsale". Four local auctioneers conducted sales of donated items. The proceeds of \$1,750.00 were presented by President Alexander Campbell to the Canadian Red Cross Society for the purchase of an ambulance to be used overseas. The St. Andrew's Supper was enjoyed by 185 guests, with the Embro and West Zorra Women's Institute in charge of catering. Rev. A. McLean gave the address to the haggis. The program featured local highland dancers Joyce and Helen Campbell, Mary Muir, Anna McPherson and Margaret Tatham.

James Murray was president in **1941** when 90% of the Highland Games proceeds were given to the British War Victim fund. Events started at 10 a.m. and the official opening by A.S. Rennie M.P. was at 1 p.m. The Detroit Police won the tug of war contest, but the Society noted in the next meeting's minutes that every man on the Detroit team was over 200 lbs, and the anchorman weighed 300 lbs. Fred Paveling, a Toronto policeman, set a world record at the Games tossing the 56 lb. hammer over 16 feet into the air. Pipe band competition started at 5 p.m. with six bands competing. An evening variety show was held in front of the grandstand with musical numbers, songs, dances and comedies. This was followed by a dance in the Embro Town Hall. The St. Andrew's Dinner in November featured a pipe band composed of all Zorra boys – Bill Sutherland, Ross Smith, Watson Muir, Roy Johnson, Bill Pearson, Symons Muir, and Ross Pearson. The guest speaker was Rev. Roderick D. McDonald of St. Thomas and the haggis was addressed in Gaelic by the Presbyterian minister, Rev. Alex. McLean. The evening's program closed with everyone singing Auld Lang Syne.

The **1942** Games were not held due to war rationing. The annual meeting and St. Andrew's Supper were the highlights of the year for members. D.M. Sutherland was the guest speaker at the November banquet, catered by the Embro and West Zorra Women's Institute and held in the Masonic Hall.

Alexander Sutherland served as President in 1942 and 1943. In **1943** the Highland Games were held on Labour Day, September 7<sup>th</sup>, with a crowd estimated at 2,500. Nine bands

began the program at 1:00 p.m. An advertisement for the day's events noted "Surplus Proceeds to the Boys Overseas". Admission was .35 cents for adults and .15 cents for children. Proceedings were stopped at 2 p.m. by a short rain shower, but most events resumed. Record crowds attended the dance in the Embro Town Hall in the evening. The St. Andrew's Night Banquet took place on November 26<sup>th</sup>. Rev. A. McLean gave the address to the haggis and R.A. MacDougall was guest speaker. Mrs. Hugh McIntyre of St. Thomas was the soloist.

Alvin McKay was president of the **1944** Highland Games held on Dominion Day, with attendance estimated at 6,000. The Games were dominated by a military air and the old spirit of "they may take Canada but they'll no' take Zorra" was evident. Once again, proceeds were designated to the war effort. Four buses brought people to and from the Woodstock rail station. A precision drill team and pipe band of the C.W.A.C. was a feature at the Games. A \$50.00 war bond was offered as a gate prize and won by John Piper Murray of Woodstock. An evening dance completed a successful day. The St. Andrew's Dinner in November was served to 242, with the address to the haggis in Gaelic by Rev. A. McLean. The Secretary's notes of the evening state that "Archie Ritchie of London gave an appropriate talk on the Scotch and the Caledonians".

Membership fees were kept at \$1.00 for **1945**. The annual meeting was held on March 28<sup>th</sup> in the Embro Town Hall. The Highland Games audience, estimated at 7,000, enjoyed 7 pipe bands. A committee was formed by President W.L. Sutherland to meet with the village council and Agricultural Society to discuss the condition of Matheson Park. A banquet for the Society members was held at the New Commercial Hotel in Woodstock in August with 75 members present. Max B. Cody, a West Zorra native and the publisher of the Regina Leader Post, was the guest speaker. The St. Andrew's Night Banquet was prepared by the Embro and West Zorra Women's Institute on November 29<sup>th</sup>. The guest speaker was Dr. D.M. Sutherland. Mrs. Besson was the soloist and George Green performed various strathspeys and reels on the violin. The evening closed with the singing of Auld Lang Syne.

In **1946** the July 1<sup>st</sup> Games were attended by close to 7,000 spectators. W.A. McPherson continued to organize the Highland Games program. The ladies served 1,900 roast beef dinners in the Crystal Palace in Matheson Park. Two pipe bands were paid travelling expenses – namely St. Catharines (\$35.00) and Hamilton's Argyle and Sutherland (\$25.00). Charles Nichols and the executive committee were pleased with the "favourable" treasurer's report. The Society donated \$100.00 to the Woodstock Lions Club to build a swimming pool in Woodstock and \$50.00 to the Ingersoll Pipe Band. The St. Andrew's Night Banquet was held in November at the Masonic Hall.

President John McDonald and executive requested quotations to build booths in Matheson Park in **1947**. Pictures of the executive were taken for the Highland Games program. Attendance records were shattered on July 1<sup>st</sup> with more than 12,000 people attending. Five pipe bands and 100 dancers competed. The Detroit Highlanders Pipe Band won the Colonel Alexander Fraser Memorial trophy. In addition to tug of war, the sports program included pole vault, high jump, caber toss, shot put and the 56 lb. hammer toss. The St. Andrew's Supper was held for over 300 people at Chalmers Church in Woodstock on November 27<sup>th</sup>. William French gave the address to the haggis and the guest speaker was Rev. W.J. Johnston of Toronto.

In **1948** the Society decided that a picture of president Burns McCorquodale would appear in the Highland Games' program rather than the traditional picture of the executive committee. Prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> of July, the memorial gates and booths at the entrance to Matheson Park were built. Used by the Society on July 1<sup>st</sup>, the buildings were rented out to community groups during the year. The 11<sup>th</sup> annual Highland Games were officially opened by Kenneth Daniel M.P. and Tom Dent M.L.A. with an estimated audience of 10,000. The 1,000 programs were sold at .10 cents each. As always, the tug of war contest between Detroit and Toronto Police was a popular event. The St. Andrew's Dinner returned to the Masonic Hall in Embro on November 26<sup>th</sup>. Dr. G.E. Reaman of the Agricultural College in Guelph was guest speaker and Rev. J.A. Isaac gave the address to the haggis. The toast to Zorra was responded to by the pipers playing the tune "The Zorra Highland Gathering".

Prior to the Highland Games, the traditional committees were implemented in **1949** with William Campbell as president. A committee arranged for permanent road signs at the village entrances, and 24 additional bleachers were built. Prize money for piping and dancing was budgeted at \$1500.00. For the first time, the band competitions were divided into A and B levels with prizes for both classes. Twelve bands entered the competitions. More than 16,000 people braved the heat, including over 80 individuals competing in the piping and dancing events. On November 26<sup>th</sup> Zorra Caledonian Society members met to honour Scotland's Patron Saint. Rev. Duncan McTavish was guest speaker and Rev. J.A. Isaac quoted Burns for the address to the haggis. Miss Jean McLeod of Toronto was soloist and Helen Campbell performed the Highland fling.

An annual meeting was held on March 4<sup>th</sup>, **1950**. Ongoing discussions resulted in the increase of the prize money for piping and dancing to total \$1,800.00. President Charles Matheson reported an estimated crowd of well over 12,000 attended the Saturday Highland Games. Drum Majors lead 8 bands in the massed bands. Once again, the Toronto and Detroit Police competed in the sports program. The Thames Valley Ranch Boys were the orchestra for the July 1<sup>st</sup> evening dance in the Embro Town Hall. The St. Andrew's Night Banquet was held on November 30<sup>th</sup> to a "sold out" crowd. Rev. Crawford Scott from Hamilton Presbyterian Church was the guest speaker. Once again, the Toast to Zorra was responded to by Pipe Major Collins playing "The Zorra Highland Gathering". Margaret Stillwell sang traditional Scottish songs and Helen Campbell performed several highland dances.

The Secretary's report of March 31<sup>st</sup> **1951** states that 15 bands could be expected and it was decided that the same dollar amount as in the previous year be budgeted for prize money. To that end, President Clark Murray and executive decided to raise admission charges to .75 cents for adults and .50 cents for children over 8 years. The Games were held in perfect weather on July 2<sup>nd</sup> with close to 15,000 attending. The Bennington Junior Farmers operated the booth on the grounds and also entered the square-dancing demonstration in the afternoon. The Society voted to forego the evening dance traditionally held in the Embro Town Hall. The Society continued to maintain the North Embro cairn. The St. Andrew's Night Banquet on November 30<sup>th</sup> featured Marjorie Kelly, Miss Canada 1951, as the soloist. Rev. Isaac addressed the haggis.

In April of **1952**, President James Hossack and the executive committee discussed raising prize money to \$2,000.00. Over 10,000 spectators enjoyed the Highland Games on July 1<sup>st</sup>, once again organized by W.A. McPherson. Twelve pipe bands competed, and the C.N.R. Pipe Band from Montreal won for the second year in a row. The Society's records note that the 'Fraser trophy' was in need of re-silvering and the expense was approved. The St. Andrew's Supper was held in the Masonic Hall on November 28<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Phimister, Superintendent of Ontario Elementary Schools from Toronto, was the guest speaker. Mrs. McIntyre was the soloist and John Gates gave several violin numbers. The evening's program closed with the singing of Auld Lang Syne.

William M. Sutherland was president in **1953**. He had the unique distinction of being the Society's youngest president to date and the first son of a former president. His father was president in 1945. At the March 7<sup>th</sup> meeting, it was moved that W.A. McPherson act as Master of Ceremonies and be given \$200.00 to cover expenses of meeting with the Society and in representing the Society at various meetings. In May the Society donated \$100.00 to the West Zorra Tornado fund. The highlight of the July 1<sup>st</sup> Games was the participation of the Winnipeg Girls' Pipe Band. Close to 10,000 came to the annual Highland Games and watched the 48<sup>th</sup> Highlanders Pipe Band from Toronto win the Fraser Memorial trophy. As always, the massed bands played "The Road to the Isles". In November, the Society hosted the St. Andrew's Night Banquet with guest speaker Rev. H.S. Rodney from St. Thomas. William French addressed the haggis and local pipers and dancers performed at the event.

General executive meetings in **1954** were held at either the Embro Legion Hall or the Royal Bank. Traditionally, the treasurer of the Society was also the Royal Bank manager. President Wallace McKenzie and executive decided that the admission charges on July 1<sup>st</sup> should be raised to \$1.00 for adults and .50 for children. The Thursday Highland Games were opened by the Hon. Douglas Stuart, U.S. Ambassador to Canada, and a descendant of a Zorra pioneer. As usual, R.A. McDonald was the announcer and Jack Simpson broadcasted. Annual repairs and painting of bleachers and washrooms were completed. The November St. Andrew's Night Banquet was enjoyed by 250 guests, with entertainment by Jean Ann Miller of Golspie, Scotland. Rev. Findlay Stewart was the guest speaker and Dianne McCorquodale performed selections on the violin.

The **1955** Games were opened by Dr. Gordon Murray, surgeon and famous "Blue Baby Doctor". Dr. Murray had been born in West Zorra. President J.J. McKay estimated that 6,500 spectators filled the grandstand and bleachers. A thunderstorm in the early afternoon dispersed the crowd to available shelter. Once the rain had stopped, the scheduled events continued with 11 bands participating in the final massed bands. William French addressed the haggis at the November 30<sup>th</sup> St. Andrew's Night Banquet at the Masonic Hall in Embro. The guest speaker for the evening was Rev. W.A. Young. Jim Jackson and Miss. M. MacRae provided the musical entertainment.

In **1956**, Robert Blair became the youngest Society president to date. In his acceptance speech, he noted that 1956 was the 100th Anniversary of the Society in Zorra, a reference to the 1856 organization of the Embro Highland Society. On July 1<sup>st</sup> a church service was held in Matheson Park. Rev. A.J. McQueen, Moderator of the United Church of Canada, was guest minister. The Highland Games were held on Monday, July 2<sup>nd</sup>. Weekend souvenir programmes were printed by Huddleston and Barney of Woodstock and sold at .25 cents each. The Games were opened by Dr. D.M. Sutherland and 10 bands formed the massed bands. A picture of past and present executives was taken. The Society gave \$46.00, as their part, to paint the arena at Matheson Park. Mr. T. Hislop, the New Zealand High Commissioner to Canada, was the guest speaker at the St. Andrew's Night Banquet on November 26<sup>th</sup>. Alister Clarke gave the address to the haggis.

George Glendinning was president in **1957**. Discussions were ongoing on the repairs to the grandstand, with the final bill reaching \$1,857.60. The 20<sup>th</sup> annual Highland Games hosted 8,000 people who enjoyed the 9 pipe bands competing. The pipe band competitions were now under the direction of the Pipers' Society of Ontario. The Games were opened by the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Canada, Rev. Archibald McKinnon. Other successful events during the year were enjoyed by the membership, including the St. Andrew's Night Banquet on November 25<sup>th</sup>. Norman Moore was guest speaker and in addition to the piping and dancing entertainment, Ed Gyurki gave several selections on the violin.

In March of **1958**, the organization of the Ontario Pipers' Association (O.P.A.) met with the Zorra Caledonian Society to outline their responsibilities in regards to the program and judges. With the O.P.A. now in charge, the Society under President Robert C. Matheson felt the services of W.A. McPherson were no longer required. A social evening was held on April 16<sup>th</sup> to honour Mr. McPherson who had been in charge of the Games for over 20 years. Mr. McPherson was presented with a cane and the good wishes of the Society. The village council and the fair board were approached about the upkeep of Matheson Park. Prior to the July 1<sup>st</sup> Highland Games, further repairs were made to the venue. Grant Smith, Warden of Oxford County, opened the 1958 Games which had the largest number of dancing competitors to date. The St. Andrew's Night Banquet was held on Nov 24<sup>th</sup> with ticket price at \$1.75 each. Alexander Thompson gave the address to the haggis and Angela Armit, Dean of Continuing Education at University of Western Ontario, spoke after dinner.



In **1959**, Russel Innes took the president's chair. The executive decided to charge \$1.00 admission to the Games and that a complimentary ticket should be sent to each contestant. The official opening was conducted by Rev. L. T. Barclay of Avonton. Ten bands entered competition. The day was hot and humid and a 5 p.m. downpour brought the celebrations to a close. Rain prevented the completion of slow march band competitions and prize money was divided equally to all bands registered. The Society worked with the Fair Board to improve the washroom at the park. The St. Andrew's Night Banquet was held on November 30<sup>th</sup>. Days before the event the Society learned that the speaker was unable to attend the dinner. Other arrangements had to be made for entertainment. At the December 30<sup>th</sup> meeting it was decided to present gold lanyards to the Ingersoll Pipe band on the occasion of their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Executive meetings were held in the Euchre Club building in **1960**. The W. Roy Geddes Memorial Trophy was implemented for the Class B bands. The Society engaged Dave Ritchie of Ingersoll to teach highland dance classes at the Embro Public School. In May a social event was held and the students were given certificates for completion of classes. July 1<sup>st</sup> was a hot day, and A.C. MacKinnon, president, estimated that 8,000 spectators enjoyed the celebrations. Oxford County Warden Donald Hossack pronounced the Highland Games officially opened at 1:30 p.m. There were over 93 individual pipers and 235 dancers competing. A record number of 22 bands from as far away as Indianapolis filled Matheson Park for two massed bands. Caber Feidh Pipe Band of Toronto took top honours and the Fraser Memorial Trophy. The Society formed a committee to meet with the Fair Board and the village council to upgrade the Matheson Park facilities. The St. Andrew's Night Banquet held on November 29<sup>th</sup> featured Major John Anderson as guest speaker. The Major also sang a couple of solos to the delight of the audience.

The annual meeting in **1961** was held on January 27<sup>th</sup>. After the business meeting several solos were given by Robert Graham from Woodstock, accompanied by Jane Ross. Attendance was down slightly at the Highland Games. The executive and President Cecil Kerr increased the prize money and a fourth prize of \$75.00 was added to Class B band competition. Once again the Society sponsored dance instructions under Dave Ritchie for local children. The St. Andrew's Night Banquet was held on Nov 27<sup>th</sup> and tickets were \$2.00 each. Mr. Joseph Connell spoke to the guests after the dinner.

The Western Ontario Pipe Band Association was formed to promote piping at Fergus, Dutton, Embro and Brantford Highland Games. In **1962** the July 2<sup>nd</sup> Highland Games attracted an estimated crowd of 6,000. Over 79 individual pipers and 275 dancers competed. There were 4 bands in Class A and 11 bands in Class B with the City of Toronto winning the Fraser Memorial trophy. The Games were officially opened by Gordon Innes, M.L.A., with Gilbert M. Ross as president. The most noticeable change was that the noon meal was now served at the Presbyterian Church, rather than at the Crystal Palace. Don Hossack and Stu Thurtell were masters of ceremonies at the Highland Games.

In **1963** there were changes to the piping and pipe band competitions and the Society met with representatives of Dutton and Fergus Games and the Western Ontario Pipe Band Association. A proposal was made to offer a C Band competition in addition to the A and B levels but was deferred. Jim Fleming and the executive planned the annual parent night on May 25<sup>th</sup> for the Ritchie dancing class. July 1<sup>st</sup> was a hot day and over 6,000 spectators watched 98 solo pipers and 253 dancers compete. There were 8 bands in the massed bands lead by Drum Major Kenneth Candler. The St. Andrew's Dinner was held on November 30<sup>th</sup>. Rev. A.G. Pease was guest speaker after the dinner.

Attendance at the **1964** Games increased to 10,000 with 22 bands registered to compete. Many changes were made to the program to accommodate the Piper Society standards. Prizes for the A and B bands were set to the following; A bands 1<sup>st</sup>- \$300.00; 2<sup>nd</sup>- \$250.00 and 3<sup>rd</sup>- \$200.00 and B bands 1<sup>st</sup>- \$175.00; 2<sup>nd</sup>- \$150.00 and 3<sup>rd</sup>- \$125.00. It was decided to charge admission to all band members at the gate and to refund that amount to the pipe majors at the

end of the day. Meeting with Dutton and Fergus Games committees in February prompted the addition of a C band competition. Bands not winning a prize received \$35.00 for travelling expenses. As the afternoon's events were finishing, a downpour put a quick end to the program. Major The Rev. Michael Griffin from Stratford was guest speaker at the St. Andrew's Night Banquet. Alex Thompson addressed the haggis and local dancers and pipers entertained.

In **1965** the new Canada Flag flew in Matheson Park on July 1<sup>st</sup>. The executive decided to add a demonstration by the Woodstock Royal Scottish Country Dancing Society to the Games' program. With 78 solo pipers, 170 dancers and 19 bands competing, the day was busy for President Lloyd Johnson. Toronto City Pipe Band won the A Class. During the year the Wesley Masters family donated a money box to the Society to be used by the treasurer in the ticket booth at the Highland Games. The St Andrew's Night Banquet was held on November 22<sup>nd</sup>. Rev. J.P. Arbuthnott from St. Marys Presbyterian Church was the guest speaker. Local pipers and dancers provided the entertainment.

The annual meeting was held at the IOOF Hall on February 5<sup>th</sup> **1966**. President George Matheson took the President's chair. In April the Western Ontario Pipe Band Association amalgamated with the Pipers' Society. It was estimated that over 6,000 spectators gathered at Matheson Park on a very hot Dominion Day. Fourteen bands competed, with St Thomas Legion band winning A division and St. Andrew's Pipe Band of Detroit winning B division. During the year the Society donated money to the Embro Legion to help with the renovation of the hall. The St. Andrew's Night Banquet was held on November 29<sup>th</sup> with tickets priced at \$2.50.

In **1967** the Highland House Band of Woodstock presented a concert in the park on the evening before the Saturday Games. Earlier in the year the "Ontario Piper and Pipe Band Society" was organized, with more changes to how the Highland Games were conducted. After negotiations, the Pipers' Society cooperated with the Zorra Caledonian Society to ensure success on July 1<sup>st</sup>. It was estimated that 5,600 people came to the Highland Games to watch 129 dancers, and 10 pipe bands in competition. Warden Vern Cuthbert opened the Games for President Archie McArthur. The City of Toronto won the Fraser Memorial Trophy and Embro and West Zorra won the tug of war contest. The 30<sup>th</sup> annual St. Andrew's Night Banquet was held on November 28<sup>th</sup> with ticket price set at \$2.50 each.

John Campbell was nominated president at the annual meeting was held on February 1<sup>st</sup>, **1968**. The Karen Campbell dancers, Tom Mitchell, Iain MacRobbie, Jim Muir and Angus McArthur took part in the meeting's program. On July 1<sup>st</sup> the Highland Games were officially opened by Glen Kitchen, Warden of Oxford County. Attendance was estimated at 12,000. The on-going discussions with the Pipers' Society lead to the addition of a drum major contest. Other stipulations on how many bands must be entered in each class to warrant the numbers of prizes were agreed. Six dancing trophies were donated by dancing teachers. Alice Wright of Toronto, who had herself competed in the 1937 Embro Highland Games, donated one of these trophies. The Society purchased a trophy for the Western Ontario Indoor Highland Dancing contest held in Woodstock. The St. Andrew's Dinner was held at Zorra Highland Park School on November 29<sup>th</sup>. Dr. Robert Smith was the guest speaker at the dinner and Wilson McBeath gave the address to the haggis.

The **1969** Highland Games attracted over 12,000. Earlier in the day, 169 dancers had started competitions. An annual memorial service was conducted at North Embro Cemetery where a piper played the lament at the grave of Past President Alexander Campbell and at the cairn. Gordon Innes, M.L.A., officially opened the Highland Games for President Bert Armstrong. Massed bands featured 16 bands and at the 5 p.m. massed bands, spectators noticed that The City of Toronto drums were draped in black. Once the bands had finished playing into the park, City of Toronto marched forward to perform a lament to Pipe Major David Adamson who had been killed in an auto accident on June 23<sup>rd</sup>. The St. Andrew's Night Banquet was held at Zorra Highland Park School on November 29<sup>th</sup>. Karen Campbell and Helen Geddes were asked to take part in the program.

In April **1970** the duties of the Society Secretary were divided into General Secretary and Dance Secretary, The Western Ontario Highland Dancers' Association was formed and close to 200 dancers competed at the Highland Games. President Roy W. Johnson estimated that over 12,000 attended the Games opened by Wallace Nesbitt M.P. There was no tug of war competition, but the caber toss was popular. Sixteen bands appeared in the massed bands. A bass drum competition was added to the program, with a trophy prize. In attendance were 3 of Canada's remaining military pipe bands; the 48<sup>th</sup> Highlanders of Toronto, R.C.A.F. from Downsview and the Highland Fusiliers from Preston. The bands competed for \$2,000.00 in prize money, the Col. Alexander Fraser Memorial Trophy and the W. Roy Geddes Memorial Trophy. The MacDonald Tobacco Company contributed \$400.00 to the Society for Highland Games expenses. The St. Andrew's Night Banquet was held on November 27<sup>th</sup> at Zorra Highland Park School.

In **1971** the 34<sup>th</sup> Highland Games featured 81 individual pipers, 219 dancers and 11 pipe bands in competition. The morning memorial service in North Embro Cemetery honoured the memory of Past President James Hossack. Donald Hossack, former reeve of Embro, Warden of Oxford and vice-president of the Zorra Caledonian Society, came from Arizona to open the Games. A Drum Major competition was introduced and the MacDonald Tobacco Company supplied a suitable trophy for this competition. St Thomas Police placed first in Grade 2 and Slow March competitions. Five teams entered the tug of war competition that was won by Fullarton Township. President Rollie Rutherford and executive planned the St. Andrew's Night Banquet on November 19<sup>th</sup>. Rev. George Goth was the guest speaker and Iain MacRobbie gave the address to the haggis.

On February 9<sup>th</sup> **1972** the Society held the 35<sup>th</sup> annual meeting when Harold Ulich was nominated President. On Dominion Day spectators enjoyed 21 pipe bands, 194 dancers and 68 solo pipers at the Highland Games with perfect weather. Several changes were made to both the piping and dancing program. Ellice Township won the tug of war contest against five other teams. The Society purchased a trophy for the Western Ontario Indoor Highland Dancing Competition held on November 12<sup>th</sup>. The St. Andrew's Night Banquet held at Zorra Highland Park School on December 1<sup>st</sup> was limited to 275 tickets at \$3.00 each. Iain MacRobbie addressed the haggis.

In April **1973** the executive met with the Piper Society. On July 1<sup>st</sup> Wilson McBeath, President, estimated 10,000 spectators enjoyed the 36<sup>th</sup> annual Highland Games, officially opened by Dr. Harry Parrott M.P.P. Massed bands combined 12 pipe bands. Grade Four competition was added to the program. During the day 194 dancers and 36 solo pipers competed. North Easthope Township took first place in the tug of war competition. The ticket price to the St. Andrew's Night Banquet on November 30<sup>th</sup> was raised to \$4.00. The Embro and West Zorra Women's Institute catered to the dinner.

The July 1<sup>st</sup> **1974** admission charges to the Highland Games were set at \$2. for adults and \$1. for children aged 8 to 15 years. Travel expense money was once again offered to the pipe bands. Robert McKay, son of Alvin McKay a founding member of the Zorra Caledonian Society, gave a historical sketch of early Zorra to open the Games. Despite the heat 10,000 spectators watched 13 bands compete, including the Vancouver Girls and the City of Victoria pipe bands. This was the first year 19 different classes of dance competition were offered rather than the traditional 8 classes. It was also the first year that the Scottish Lilt was performed in competition. North Easthope won the tug of war contest. The St. Andrew's Night Banquet was held on November 29<sup>th</sup> at Zorra Highland Park School. The price of the 275 tickets was raised to \$5.00 each. The after-dinner speaker was Dr. Watson from London. Helen Geddes' highland dancing students entertained.

The **1975** Highland Games were highlighted by the Triumph Street Pipe Band and 40 highland dancers from Vancouver. A new feature was the cross-country race. Admission charges were \$2.50 for adults and \$1.00 for children over 8 years. Dr. Bruce Halliday M.P. officially

opened the Games at 1 p.m. followed by 10 pipe bands in massed band formation. Despite the 33-degree temperature over 8,000 spectators attended the Highland Games and watched 250 dancers compete. The Embro team defeated the Fullarton Township team within 14 seconds to win the tug of war contest. During the year President Woody Lambe and the executive made a donation towards the building of the new Embro–West Zorra Community Centre. The St. Andrew's Night Banquet on November 28<sup>th</sup> was a successful social event with Bruce Murray as guest speaker.

**1976** was an exciting year for tug of war. The 1890, 1891 and 1893 tug of war trophies were returned to Oxford County and displayed at the Highland Games in Matheson Park. For many years the trophies had been in a private collection in Winnipeg. Major Donovan Carter of the Fraoch Eilean Society of Montreal, a group dedicated to preserving Scottish traditions in Canada, opened the Games. Over 200 dancers, 75 solo pipers and 10 pipe bands thrilled the crowds. President Dr. Harold Arbuckle reported the July 1st attendance was down, partly because the holiday fell on a Thursday. The spectators who came were disappointed by the absence of pipe bands at the official opening ceremony. The Pipe Band Association had decided not to have the bands perform before competition. All pipe bands participated in the 5 p.m. massed bands. Embro and West Zorra won the tug of war contest. The 40<sup>th</sup> St. Andrew's Supper was held at the Embro-West Zorra Community Centre on November 26<sup>th</sup>. Rev A.G. Pease addressed the haggis and Bill Brady was guest speaker. Tickets were priced at \$6.00 each.

In **1977** a crowd of 10,000 watched 17 bands in four grades of pipe band competitions. Dancing competitors numbered over 230. The 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Highland Games was officially opened by Robert Blair, Mayor of Zorra and Past President. An Anniversary Booklet was prepared by Helen Hossack, and included the history of the Zorra Caledonian Society, and the photographs of the executive and past presidents. A social evening held on March 5<sup>th</sup> at the Embro-West Zorra Community Centre showed a profit. President Jim Strickler and the executive planned the St. Andrew's Night Banquet for 350 people. Edward Johnson gave the address to the haggis and the guest speaker was Rev. E.T. O'Rourke.

The Tartan Ball was held on February 18, **1978**. The Highland Games' attendance dropped because there were several other competitions on July 1<sup>st</sup> and a loss was reported. Dancing competitors numbered 156. The Erskine Pipe Band won the Grade 1 and Niagara and District Pipe Band won Grade 2, with 17 bands registered. The Society had booked the Embro-West Zorra Community Centre in the event of inclement weather, but it was not required. The 42<sup>nd</sup> St. Andrew's Night Banquet was held at the Embro–West Zorra Community Centre on November 24<sup>th</sup>. Tickets were limited to 325 at \$6. each. Tom Thomson addressed the haggis. After dinner, Rev. Grant Muir was the guest speaker. Karen Campbell Millard School of Dancing and the Ingersoll Pipe Band provided the entertainment.

The annual meeting and the Tartan Ball were held in February **1979**. The Highland Games were held on July 2<sup>nd</sup>, with inclement weather in the morning resulting in lower attendance. Andy McDonald opened the Games. Those in attendance watched individual piping contests held in Memorial Park while Matheson Park remained the venue for 240 dancing competitors. Twenty bands participated in the massed band. This was the inaugural year for the farmer's walk. President Wayne Uncer made the weights that few found easy to carry. One young Zorra lad was able to walk to the marker and back. At that point he asked what he was supposed to do next. He was able to walk to the mid-point and won the event. The 43<sup>rd</sup> St. Andrew's Night Banquet was held on November 30<sup>th</sup> with ticket price at \$8. Helen Geddes School of Dancing provided the entertainment.

The annual meeting was held in February and the Tartan Ball in April **1980**. President John Innes estimated that over 5,000 spectators attended the Highland Games. The dancing competitors numbered 200 with over 20 entries in the baby class (under 6 years). There were fewer dancing classes judged at these Games. Fifteen bands competed and marched in mass bands. J. Finlay Fergusson officially opened the 43<sup>rd</sup> Games. Jim Strothard retired as treasurer in 1980. The Brooksdale Women's Institute catered the 44<sup>th</sup> St. Andrew's Night Banquet. Donald

MacIver was engaged as the guest speaker. Karen Campbell Millard School of Dancing students performed several dance numbers.

Dr. Bruce Halliday M.P. opened the **1981** mid-week Highland Games for President Wally Ross. A reported 6,000 spectators enjoyed more than 200 dancers, 62 solo pipers and 8 pipe bands. At massed bands a lone piper played a lament for Terry Fox who had died the previous week. Other events on the program were the caber toss, tug of war, and various sports. Embro Fire Department acted as night security for the grounds. During the year more repairs were required for the bleachers, and the cairn at the North Embro Cemetery was renovated. The Tartan Ball held in April showed a profit. Alex Graham introduced Ed Neigh from Guelph, the guest speaker, at the 45<sup>th</sup> St. Andrew's Night Banquet held in November.

The **1982** Highland Games (45<sup>th</sup>) were opened by Lt. Colonel James E. Parker of the Toronto Scottish Regiment. Over 200 dancers, 60 pipers and 7 pipe bands participated. President Tom Thomson introduced Embro Minor Soccer and two visiting teams from Woodstock to the Highland Games. Mr. Fred Parker made all the arrangements for this event. Also, eight students from Zorra Highland Park School danced the Eightsome Reel, with music supplied by the pipers. The Society presented the dancers with a plaque to be hung in the school. The students participating were Helen & Dorothy McKay, Cheryl Green, Kathy Howe, Kim Freeland, Jan Howard, Jennifer Buchan and Pam VanderWalle. A meeting was called to discuss moving the Games to the Embro-West Zorra Community Centre for the benefit of space. The Games remained at Matheson Park. On April 3<sup>rd</sup> the Tartan Ball was held, music supplied by the Royalaires. The annual spring President's reception featured a table spread with Scottish culinary delights. The 300 tickets printed for the 46<sup>th</sup> St. Andrew's Night Banquet sold at \$10 each. Dr. Sharon Arbuckle addressed the haggis. Professor E.J. Cowan of the Dept. of Scottish Studies, University of Guelph, was the guest speaker. A ceilidh and Auld Lang Syne concluded the evening.

Held on a hot hazy Friday, the **1983** Highland Games attracted record numbers of individual dancers, pipers and drummers and an audience of well over 6,000. Walter MacDonald officially opened the Games for President Bill Fleming. Sixteen bands competed and travel expenses for pipe bands were increased. The tug of war prize money stayed at 1982 rates. Soccer games were played in the morning. The Tartan Ball held in April showed a profit. Memberships were continued in the Highland Games Council and the Clans and Scottish Societies of Canada. The 47<sup>th</sup> St. Andrew's Night Banquet on November 25<sup>th</sup> was enjoyed by 280 guests. Doug Hillcoat from Cambridge provided the entertainment.

The 47<sup>th</sup> Zorra Highland Games were held on Saturday, June 30, **1984**. Unfortunately, this was also the date of the Kingsville Highland Games. The crowd was estimated at 5,000. There were 14 bands and 94 individual pipers competing. Over 150 dancers, with 2 competitors from California, began competitions in the morning. The Games were officially opened by R.L. Treleaven, Q.C., and M.P.P. of Oxford County. The cross-country race commenced at 2:30 p.m. A tent to exhibit crafts, in conjunction with the Bi-Centennial of the province of Ontario, was well attended. An old steam engine was also on display. The Province of Ontario, as part of the Bicentennial Year, took submissions for awards to individuals who had given outstanding service to their community. The Society nominated Helen Hossack, James Fleming, A.C. MacKinnon, and John Campbell. Admission price to the Highland Games was set at \$3.50 for adults and \$1. for children 8 to 12 years. Donations were contributed by the Society towards the tree planting at the Community Centre and to the 125<sup>th</sup> Celebration Committee. On October 31, 1984 the grandstand was destroyed by fire along with the bleachers owned by the Society. President Robert M. Matheson and executives planned the Tartan Ball on April 21<sup>st</sup> and the 48<sup>th</sup> St. Andrew's Night Banquet on November 30<sup>th</sup>. Rev. Roger McCombe was the guest speaker at this event. Soloists, Kathy Fraser and Tom Mitchell, and dancing students of Jennifer Matheson performed.

The 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Ingersoll Pipe Band in **1985** was acknowledged by the Society with a donation in appreciation of the many services rendered to the Society over the years. The memberships in the Canadian Highland Games Council and the Clans & Scottish Societies were renewed. Yantzi Brothers were contracted to replace the bleachers. The Highland Games were attended by close to 6,000 people and 14 pipe bands. Admission prices were set at \$4.00 for adults and \$1.00 for children 8 to 12 by President Mel Matheson and executive. There were 181 dancers including 23 from Argyll, Scotland. The Brooksdale Women's Institute catered to the 49<sup>th</sup> annual St. Andrew's Night Banquet with the tickets priced at \$12. each.

Len Eaton was elected President at the annual meeting held in the IOOF Hall on February 25<sup>th</sup>, **1986**. Ken Anderson from Braemar, Scotland, officially opened the 49<sup>th</sup> Highland Games. This was the first year that the annual memorial service was not held at the cemetery, but done during the official opening. Over 5,000 spectators and competitors attended the Games. There were 11 bands and 50 solo pipers and drummers competing. A group of dancers from Renfrew, Scotland, joined the 160 local dancing competitors. The Tartan Ball was held on April 26<sup>th</sup> and the 50<sup>th</sup> St. Andrew's Night Banquet was held on November 28<sup>th</sup> at the Embro-West Zorra Community Centre. Hugh McMillan was guest speaker and Len Eaton gave the address to the haggis. Students from the Cindy McIntosh School of Dance performed at the event.

The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Zorra Caledonian Society was in **1987**. President Ivan Buchan and the executive planned several events to celebrate the anniversary. The Tartan Ball was held on April 4<sup>th</sup> and a Wine & Cheese Party was enjoyed on June 27<sup>th</sup>. The following day the Society, in association with the Presbyterian and United Churches, held an open-air church service and "Kirkin o' the Tartans" in Memorial Park. Admission at the 50<sup>th</sup> Highland Games was set at \$5. for adults and \$2. for children 6 to 12. Although July 1<sup>st</sup> was mid-week, good weather brought out 8,000 spectators resulting in the best gate receipts in over 50 years. Dr. Bruce Halliday M.P. opened the Games. There were 175 dancers and 12 bands competing. A.C. MacKinnon retired as secretary and the task was taken up by Rollie Rutherford. A 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary booklet was published. Photographs of Past Presidents from 1952 to 1986 were taken for the booklet. The 51<sup>st</sup> St. Andrew's Night Banquet on November 27<sup>th</sup> was served to 300 people after Tom Thomson had addressed the haggis. Jack Carpenter, a Kitchener radio personality, was guest speaker. In 1987 the Optimist Club proposed the building of a Senior Citizens' Apartment building and the Zorra Caledonian Society supported the application to the Housing Consultants.

President Eugene Ross estimated that more than 4,000 Highland Games spectators enjoyed a perfect day on July 1<sup>st</sup>, **1988**. Admission was held at the previous year's price. There were 115 registered dancers and 15 bands competing. Sandy Ross, President of the Ross Clan in the United States, opened the 51<sup>st</sup> Highland Games. Earlier in the day a memorial service had been held in the cemetery. The 14-kilometre road race was a new event at the Highland Games. The Detroit Police team won the tug of war competition. During the year the Society held an appreciation night for Mac MacKinnon at the Quality Inn. The Society sponsored Dorothy McKay in the annual Agricultural Society Fair Queen competition. The Tartan Ball was held on April 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 52<sup>nd</sup> annual St. Andrew's Dinner on November 25<sup>th</sup>. Beverley Matheson addressed the haggis and the guest speaker was Bruce McCall.

In **1989** Heather Clark, International Rowing Champion and West Zorra native, officially opened the 52<sup>nd</sup> Highland Games. President Jim Gibb estimated that 4,500 spectators watched 11 bands compete and march in the two massed bands. Top prize went to St. Catharines. There were 105 dancers registered included 8 from Scotland. Once again, the Detroit Police team won the tug of war contest with great showmanship. Rick Cornelissen won the 14-kilometre road race. Donations towards the Games' expense were received from McDonalds Restaurant, Federal White Cement, Canada Trust, Lafarge Canada, Beachville Lime, Zorra Highland Bus Lines and RWF Industries. The Tartan Ball on April 1<sup>st</sup> showed a profit. The Society took part in the "Multi-cultural Heritage of Oxford County" held at the Woodstock Museum. The ticket price for the 53<sup>rd</sup> annual St. Andrew's Supper was set at \$12.50 each. Margaret Thomson addressed the haggis.

The guest speaker for the evening was Ed Kincaid. The Sim School of Highland Dance and The Paul Brothers and Shirley entertained.

The **1990** (53<sup>rd</sup>) Highland Games were held on Saturday, June 30<sup>th</sup>. Admission was set at \$6. for adults and \$2. for children 7 to 12. With rain clouds approaching Dr. Bruce Halliday M.P. abbreviated his speech at the official opening ceremony. Fortunately, the skies cleared for the afternoon and an estimated crowd of 3,300 watched the events planned by President Ron Totten and the executive committee. The Innerkip team took top honours in the tug of war contest. The log sawing competition was won by Jim Gibb and Eugene Ross and Embro's Paul Zavitz won the farmer's walk. Donations were given to the Sutherland Highland Dancers for the competition in Whistler, B.C. and to the Ingersoll Pipe band for Ingersoll Heritage Day. The Tartan Ball was held on April 7<sup>th</sup>. The 54<sup>th</sup> St. Andrew's Night Banquet was served to 340, the largest crowd ever hosted. Rev. A.G. Pease was the guest speaker for the evening and Dr. Sharon Arbuckle addressed the haggis. Festival Sounds Chorus, the Ingersoll Pipe Band and the Sim School of Highland Dance entertained.

In **1991** the Society purchased new dancing platforms and 122 dancers registered to compete. Ten pipe bands entered competition and Toronto and District Caledonian Pipe Band won the Grade One competition. Ben DeWettering walked off with most of the prizes in heavy events. Ron Thomson, president, estimated that close to 5,000 spectators took in the event at Matheson Park. Kimble Sutherland M.P.P. officially opened the 54<sup>th</sup> Games. Ellice Township won the tug of war competition. The older trophies were remodelled with new plates. The November 29<sup>th</sup> 55<sup>th</sup> St. Andrew's Night Banquet was held at the Embro-West Zorra Community Centre. Tim Matheson addressed the haggis and Ted Cowan from the Scottish Studies Department at the University of Guelph was guest speaker.

In **1992** the Tartan Ball was held on April 4 with ticket price set at \$15. per couple. The Royalaires supplied the music. On July 1<sup>st</sup> a memorial service was held at North Embro Cemetery in the morning. Close to 4,000 people came to the mid-week Highland Games where seven bands competing. This would be the last year the Highland Games were held at Matheson Park. Dr. Bruce Halliday M.P. and Kimble Sutherland M.P.P. opened the 55<sup>th</sup> annual Highland Games for President Jack Matheson. There were 175 dancers including 10 from Edinburgh, Scotland. In addition to the piping and dancing contests, spectators watched a soccer game and the finish to a 14-kilometre road race. There was a full slate of heavy events, including tug of war, log-sawing, sheaf pitching, and the farmer's walk. Ellice Township again won the tug of war competition. The 56<sup>th</sup> St. Andrew's Night Banquet was catered by the Brooksdale Women's Institute and Andrew Turnbull addressed the haggis. The evening's entertainment was double booked, so the musicians, the Caledonians, entertained during the meal and then left for another engagement. The Ingersoll Pipe Band and Sim School of Highland Dance took part in the program.

The **1993** Games were held at the Embro-West Zorra Community Centre with over 5,000 spectators. President Graham Hart and executive set the admission to the 56<sup>th</sup> Highland Games at \$6. for adults and \$2. for children over six years. In addition to the heavy events, 225 dancers and 8 pipe bands competed. There was a 10-kilometre road race starting at 10 a.m. The change of venue was to accommodate the crowds coming to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1893 World Champion of Tug of War. In recognition of the event, 1,000 commemorative coins were minted and sold at the Highland Games. The 1993 Memorial Tug of War Championship was won by South Easthope Township. Melbourne Monteith was asked to coordinate the tug of war event. The 57<sup>th</sup> St. Andrew's Night Banquet was enjoyed by 325 people. Iain MacRobbie gave the address to the haggis and the guest speaker was Gisele Ireland. Killiecrankie and the Sim School of Highland Dance provided the entertainment.

The weather was warm and sunny for the 57<sup>th</sup> annual Highland Games in **1994**, opened by Rev. A.G. Pease. About 5,000 people watched 8 pipe bands. Dancers from Scotland, Prince Edward Island and the United States joined 180 local contestants. Nine teams were entered in the tug of war and South Easthope took first prize. President Bill Matheson and the executive committee were pleased with the day's receipts. A donation of \$300.00 was given to the Embro

Pond Association. On November 25<sup>th</sup> the Society presented the 58<sup>th</sup> annual St. Andrew's Night Banquet prepared by the Brooksdale Women's Institute. Jennifer Matheson addressed the haggis and Duncan Beattie was guest speaker after dinner. The Sim School of Highland Dance performed several numbers.

The **1995** Highland Games attracted 3,500 spectators to the Embro-West Zorra Community Centre with perfect weather. President Fred Howe reported that there were 210 dancers competing in 4 age categories ranging from beginner to premier. Brenda Sim, as coordinator, did an excellent job of keeping the events on schedule. Seven bands competed and marched in massed bands. Ernie Hardeman M.P.P. officially opened the 58<sup>th</sup> Highland Games after Andrew Turnbull had led in the singing of the national anthems. Sporting events were enjoyed by a large audience. South Easthope won the tug of war contest in the Lafarge Canada Inc. Memorial Tug of War Championship against 11 other teams from Canada and the U.S. Earlier in the year Cliff Irwin had built 25 bleacher units. John Davidson was guest speaker at the 59<sup>th</sup> St Andrew's Night Banquet on November 24<sup>th</sup>. Tom Thomson addressed the haggis. The Ingersoll Pipe Band and the Sim School of Highland Dance were the evening's entertainment.

The 59<sup>th</sup> annual Highland Games in **1996** highlighted good weather, 10 tug of war teams, and 7 pipe bands. The Games were officially opened by Past President Wilson McBeath for President Warren McKay. Approximately 4,000 people attended the event at the Embro-West Zorra Community Centre. Simcoe won the tug of war competition. There were 170 dancers registered. The John Campbell Memorial Plaque was awarded for the first time to a dancing competitor. During the year the Society covered the \$450.00 cost of repairing the cairn. The 60<sup>th</sup> St. Andrew's Night Banquet took place on November 29<sup>th</sup>. Erin and Donnell Leahy, the Ingersoll Pipe Band and the Sim School of Highland Dance provided the entertainment. The Brooksdale Women's Institute catered the turkey dinner and 4-H members and leaders served the meal.

On July 1<sup>st</sup> **1997** the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Games were officially opened by Paul Matheson. President Gordon Green noted more than 176 dancers in 16 classes competed. Six bands were entered in the competitions. Admission to the Games was \$8.00 for adults and \$2.00 for children 7 to 12 years of age. The new 4-kilometre road race for elementary school age children was introduced along with the parade of tartans and a Ladies' Exhibition tug of war. Twelve teams competed for the Lafarge Memorial Tug of War Championship. The Society, with the help of the Agricultural Society, constructed a storage shed behind the Community Centre to store the bleachers and stages. The total cost of construction was \$14,029.00. Booklets were printed to mark the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Society. The 61<sup>st</sup> St. Andrew's Night Banquet was enjoyed by 325 guests on November 28. Iain MacRobbie gave the address to the haggis, and Warren Burger was guest speaker. The Women's Institute Tartan, celebrating 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of that organization, was used for the colour scheme at the dinner.

In **1998** Rick Innes was president when permanent large signs were placed at the corners approaching Embro. Past President Bill Sutherland opened the 61<sup>st</sup> Highland Games. Over 191 dancers were registered to compete in 19 classes. Prize money for the solo pipers was raised to the Pipers' Society standards. Tug of War was a popular event with Detroit Police winning. The Ladies' tug of war, now a regular event, was won by Zorra and a representative of Lafarge Canada Inc. presented the championship trophy at the Highland Games. In June, a summer barbeque was held at the Innes farm for the Society members. The Society contributed \$500.00 towards the heated viewing area at the Embro-West Zorra Community Centre. Len Eaton addressed the haggis at the 62<sup>nd</sup> St. Andrew's Night Banquet. Sharon Jones and the Canadian Celtic Kids from London and the Sim School of Highland Dance provided the entertainment.

In **1999** Oxford M.P.P. Ernie Hardeman officially opened the 62<sup>nd</sup> Highland Games. The 220 dancers registered, including 13 from Michigan and 9 from Scotland, were required to compete indoors because of the weather. A great team effort helped to move the dancing platforms into the arena quickly. Events included the road race and tug of war contests. Local high schools and the Taiwanese team from Toronto competed in the Friendship Classic contest.



Peel Regional Police won the tug of war championship. The November 28<sup>th</sup> 63<sup>rd</sup> St. Andrew's Night Banquet was served to 300. Valerie Easton gave the address to the haggis and the toastmaster was President Ken Minler. LaFarge Canada Inc. was presented with a framed photo of the 1893 Tug of War World Champions by Ron Totten. This recognized the company as the corporate sponsor of the tug of war event at the Highland Games. "McLeods", four of the best fiddlers in Canada, played a variety of old-time fiddle music after dinner. The evening ended with the singing of Auld Lang Syne.

The annual meeting was held at the Highland Restaurant in Embro on February 29, **2000**. The Saturday Highland Games were the 63<sup>rd</sup> and brought out 3,400 spectators, 225 dancers and 10 pipe bands. Three granddaughters of George Leslie McKay took part in the day's celebration. There were 20 tug of war teams entered in the Friendship, Ladies, High Schools, and Men's classes. Detroit Police team won the catch weight division. President Keith Matheson and members of the Society took part in the tree planting ceremony at the Woodstock Court House marking the twinning of Oxford County and Tamsui, Taiwan. The 64<sup>th</sup> St. Andrew's Night Banquet was held on November 24<sup>th</sup> with Celtic singer Laurie McCuaig MacDougall and guest speaker Sarah Davidson. Phillip Shalley addressed the haggis prepared by the Brooksdale Women's Institute. Dancers from the Sim School of Highland Dance took a part in the evening's program.

In **2001** President Doug Ferguson estimated the attendance at 3,000 on Saturday June 30<sup>th</sup> for the 64<sup>th</sup> Embro Highland Games. The Games were opened by A.C. "Mac" MacKinnon, a Society member since 1952, past president and secretary for 17 years. There were over 300 dancing competitors, including U.S. dancers and 25 dancers from Scotland. The heavy events were cancelled due to the rain showers. Twelve bands competed with Hamilton Police Pipe Band taking first place. Peel Regional Police won the tug of war contest which attracted a large audience. Tug of War Plaques of Honour were awarded to the following teams: the Oxford Zorra girls, Peel Regional Police, Bluewater and South Easthope. All teams had made significant contributions to tug of war. The Society made a donation of \$750.00 to the Oxford Zorra Ladies' tug of war team. The guest speaker at the 65<sup>th</sup> St. Andrew's Night Banquet was Ron Totten. Ron described a good will tour to Taiwan, honouring the 19th century legacy of Zorra-born missionary Reverend George Leslie MacKay.

The 65<sup>th</sup> Highland Games in **2002** featured 140 adult runners in the 10-kilometre road race. Tom Thomson and Ron Thomson provided trophies for the winners of the road race. President Dale Ross reported that there were 224 dancers competing throughout the day. Warden Dave Oliphant opened the Highland Games on a very warm Canada Day. Nine bands competed and participated in the massed bands. Earlier in the year Marlene Matheson copied the Secretary's books from 1937 to 1991. A set of copies was placed in the Embro Public Library and the original books were taken to the climate-controlled facility at the Oxford Genealogical Society. Andy Longridge addressed the haggis at the 66<sup>th</sup> St. Andrew's Night Banquet. Doug Symons was the guest speaker at the event, catered by the Brooksdale Women's Institute.

At the annual meeting in **2003** Past President Dale Ross presented a gavel, used by his father Wally Ross to the Zorra Caledonian Society. The gavel would henceforth be referred to as the "Wally Ross Presidential Gavel" and passed to the incoming President at each annual meeting. Gilholm Stone Works from Mitchell were contacted to renovate the cairn at North Embro Cemetery. Total cost to the Society was \$4,601. July 1<sup>st</sup> was a beautiful day for the 66<sup>th</sup> Embro Highland Games. There were 193 participants in the dancing competitions. Tug of war contests were popular, and Peel Regional Police won the championship. The 10-kilometre road race attracted 133 adult runners and 19 elementary school children competed in the 4-kilometre race. Steve and Linda VanWinden coordinated the sports program for children. The ticket booth recorded the attendance at 3,669. Scott Thornton, San Jose Sharks NHL player, presented some of the prizes at the Games and took part in the tug of war ceremony. The 67<sup>th</sup> St. Andrew's Night Banquet was held on November 28<sup>th</sup> with 270 guests enjoying a roast beef dinner served by the Brooksdale Women's Institute. Len Eaton delivered the address to the haggis. Entertainment was

provided by the Sim School of Highland Dance, Cantabile Singers of Woodstock and the Ingersoll Pipe Band.

July 1<sup>st</sup>, **2004** was a beautiful sunny day in Zorra. Linda Watson of Parkhill and Darlene Ulch of West Zorra sang the anthems at the opening ceremonies. Lord Simcoe (aka J.Woodburn Lambe) officially opened the 67<sup>th</sup> Embro Highland Games and Mayor Margaret Lupton, M.P. Dave McKenzie and M.P.P. Ernie Hardeman took part. Gord Green reported that 193 highland dancers had competed including 11 U.S. competitors. Sherry Sim was the Scott Dance representative. Piping and the heavy events filled the program for President Ken Ulch. A large group of Taiwanese enjoyed the day's celebrations. Earlier in the year Rollie and Dianne Rutherford formally retired from the Treasurer's position, but agreed to continue until the position could be filled. Carl Mills from Exeter gave the address to the haggis at the 68<sup>th</sup> St. Andrew's Night Banquet. The Singing Sisters (Darlene Ulch, Linda Watson, and Isabel Jones) and Bill Gibson provided musical numbers. The Sim School of Highland Dance also entertained. Several members of the Eastern Star Lodge attended the dinner and continue to support the Zorra Caledonian Society going forward.

At the annual meeting held on February 1, **2005** in Woodstock Alan Normand was nominated President. The 68<sup>th</sup> Embro Highland Games, landed on a Friday and were officially opened by Past President Robert C. Matheson and drew traditional crowds to the Embro-West Zorra Community Centre. The Dance Committee reported that 192 competitors including 5 dancers from the U.S. registered to compete. Amanda Green was the Scott Dance representative. In the afternoon the focus was on the tug of war contests. Wisconsin teams, Blue Water, South Easthope, Zorra, Nissouri, Ellice, Peel & Toronto, and the Petawawa Army team competed. The road race had 100 runners in the 10-kilometre event and 26 youth in the 4-kilometre event. Discussions with Zorra Council and the Recreation and Parks Committee regarding the tug of war pitch were ongoing. A new sign was placed at the south west corner of the Community Centre: "Home of the Highland Games and the Embro Fair". The 69<sup>th</sup> St. Andrew's Night Banquet was held November 25<sup>th</sup> and Harold Arbuckle gave the address to the haggis. The Brooksdale Women's Institute prepared the meal. Sim School of Highland Dance entertained at the event.

In **2006** Past President Wilson McBeath officially opened the 69<sup>th</sup> Highland Games after Julie McIntosh sang the national anthems. Bands from Brantford, Ingersoll, Dundas and the London Firefighters competed. Unfortunately, Kincardine Highland Games took place on the same day so there were fewer bands attending. President Jim Knudsen reported that over 177 highland dancers competed before 3,700 spectators. The Ingersoll Pipe Band paraded through the vendor and exhibition alley and took part in the massed bands. For the first time, a Juvenile Pipe Band contest, with trophy prize, was staged. Prior to the games the tug of war pitch was brought up to standard measurements. Zorra tug of war team won the Lafarge Canada Championship. The Zorra/ Bluewater Ladies tug of war teams were permitted to set up a fund raising and information booth regarding the World Championship in Holland. Jim and Lydia Knudsen, with the assistance of Dianne Rutherford took on the position of treasurer. The Society donated \$500.00 to both the Embro Fire Department for rescue equipment and to the Embro and West Zorra History Book project. The annual donation of \$25.00 to Zorra Highland Park School for the "Mac MacKinnon" award was won by graduate Kelly Wade. At the 70<sup>th</sup> St. Andrew's Night Banquet Iain MacRobbie addressed the haggis and Bruce Murray was the guest speaker. The Sim School of Highland Dance entertained during the evening. Dianne and Rollie Rutherford retired as Treasurer and received a gift in appreciation for many years of service to the Society.

The Highland Games in **2007** were the first Zorra Caledonian Society Highland Games held on a Sunday. Mayor, Margaret Lupton officially opened the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary games on a cool sunny day. Jim Brownscombe released homing pigeons at the opening ceremonies. Descendants of the members of the 1893 Tug of War Championship team were introduced as platform guests. Representatives from the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office attended the day's celebration. Parking space was expanded onto Jim Caddey's property. This was the first year the George

Leslie McKay display was set up in the hall. With 246 dancers registered, a third judge was booked. Jim Walton reported that 18 concessions set up and Lindsay Ryder, a photographer, took photos at the dancing stage which generated good reviews. The Society asked Christoph Wand and professional heavy event athletes to demonstrate 3 sports; sheaf toss, weight for distance and caber toss. The Wisconsin Mt. Vernon and GLD team won almost every tug of war event against 12 local teams. Tim Whetstone, Kevin Fraser, and Alan Normand coordinated the children's sport events. Ongoing discussions focussed on diversifying the Highland Games to become a family-oriented event. The 71<sup>st</sup> St. Andrew's Night Banquet was held at the Embro-West Zorra Community Centre in November with snow on the ground. To mark the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, the Past President's names were recorded on the dinner program. Slight changes to the program included a Toast to the Community. Linda Arthur catered the meal. Meaghan Hominick, a step dancer, performed. The Sim School of Highland Dance and the Ingersoll Pipe Band provided traditional entertainment.

At the annual meeting on February 19, **2008** the presidential gavel was handed to Angus Thomson. On July 1<sup>st</sup> more than 4,200 people came to the 71<sup>st</sup> Highland Games where Jim Gibb, former Mayor of Zorra Township and Past President, officially opened the games. Julie McIntosh sang O Canada and God Save the Queen. The descendants of piper Sullivan Ross attended the Highland Games. Sullivan Ross (1828-1904), a native of the Harrington area, was one of the first pipers in Canada to compose bagpipe music. Gate receipts were the highest in recent years. There were 251 registered highland dancers, with 11 from the U.S. and 1 from Prince Edward Island. Wisconsin's Mount Vernon tug of war team won the Lafarge trophy. South Easthope ladies won the 560k division and Nissouri ladies won the Ladies' Invitational Pull. In total, 26 tug of war teams competed in the various categories. This was the first year that the community centre hall was used first for the noon meal provided by the Presbyterian Church women and then in the afternoon as a 'beer garden' run by the Harrington Community Group. Iain MacRobbie was presented with a plaque recognizing the musical contributions that he had made to the Society. Rev. Angus Sutherland was the guest speaker at the 72<sup>nd</sup> St. Andrew's Night Banquet catered by Belmont Catering. Alan Normand addressed the haggis and entertainment was provided by the Sim School of Highland Dance.

The mid-week **2009** 72<sup>nd</sup> Highland Games were officially opened by Rollie and Dianne Rutherford. The village Embro was under sewer and road construction and the township made arrangements to defer construction for the day to allow the road race to take place. The 4- and 10-kilometre road races had the highest number of entries with 171 runners. The Society added the dog agility display by the Middlesex Agility Club to the sheep herding, and sheep shearing events. Rain showers necessitated the dancing and solo piping event be held in the arena. Eight dancers from Scotland joined 180 dancers in a full program of competition. Ten bands competed. The Woodstock Museum brought the 1893 World Championship Trophy for display on the grounds. Mount Vernon from Wisconsin, along with 12 others teams, competed in 5 divisions of tug of war. Bleachers were rented from the Paris Agricultural Society. Once again, the Presbyterian Church women served a roast beef dinner in the community centre hall at noon. The executive and President Grant Innes reported a break-even point on the 73<sup>rd</sup> St. Andrew's Night Banquet with 200 tickets sold. Brian Innes was guest speaker and entertainment was provided by the Sim School of Highland Dance and Brian Emery.

The 73<sup>rd</sup> Highland Games in **2010** were officially opened by Raymond Daniels, Grand Master of the Masonic Lodge in Ontario. The games featured sheep herding and shearing, and heavy events, in addition to the traditional dancing and piping. The 228 dancing competitors, included the largest primary dance class of 49 dancers, were moved into the arena because of rain. Ten bands competed. There were 188 runners in the 10 kilometre and 29 in the 4-kilometre road race and medals were awarded to the top three runners in men's and women's categories. The runners received t-shirts with the sponsors RWF Bron and Runners Choice printed on the back. Construction within the village presented challenges and concerns for the runners' safety. Tim Whetstone coordinated the junior sport events. Ten teams were entered in the tug of war contest and the Wisconsin teams won all three categories. The event was sponsored by Federal

White and new signs were built to reflect the new corporate sponsor. Sean Borland from Dorchester organized the professional "Strongman Events" demonstration. The Zorra Caledonian Society, the Embro Fair board and the Township of Zorra shared in the cost of improving the electrical panel on the east side of the parking lot. The Society contributed \$5,000.00 towards the Community Centre Building Fund. The St. Andrew's Night Banquet on November 26<sup>th</sup> was attended by 260 people and catered by Belmont Catering. Sim School of Highland Dance and the Ingersoll Pipe Band provided the traditional entertainment. Also on the program was the Celtic music group called 'Kettles On'. Terese Seliske, Paul Tratnyek and James Bickle wowed the audience with their musical talents. Rollie and Dianne Rutherford and Ron Totten were awarded the Ontario Volunteer Service Award.

Helen Dowd had the unique distinction of being the first female president in **2011**. Helen was also the third generation to serve the Society; her grandfather, Gilbert M. Ross was president in 1962 and her parents J. Edgar and Jane McKay coordinated the highland dance competitions from 1983-1996. The 74<sup>th</sup> Highland Games had near record-setting attendance and the use of 70 white director shirts and red volunteer shirts identified those making the event a success. Don McKay, Warden of Oxford County, opened the Games and also spoke at the St. Andrew's Night Banquet. Massed bands were dedicated to Garrett Style, a York Regional Police Officer who died in the line of duty the week before July 1<sup>st</sup>. There were 191 dancers. The dancing awards were presented in the arena during the opening ceremonies because the competition had run late. Sean Borland representing the Canadian Scottish Athletic Federation, proposed five professional heavy events. There were 126 runners in the 10-kilometre race and 29 in the four-kilometre junior road race. The 75<sup>th</sup> St. Andrew's Night Banquet was catered by Nancy Hazeleger. Jennifer (Matheson) Moodie addressed the haggis. Richard and Dorothy Moon once again made the haggis from the traditional recipe. Dave Pounds from Orangeville was the soloist and the Ingersoll Pipe Band and Sim School of Dance entertained. Plans were made to create a Society Tartan for the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, to hold a 75<sup>th</sup> celebration in April 2012, and to begin work on a history book and DVD to record the history of the first 75 years. During the year the Ontario Volunteer Service Awards for service to the Society were presented to Bruce McLeod, Jim Gibb and Robert M. Matheson.

The 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of the Zorra Caledonian Society began with the AGM on February 14, **2012** at the Embro Legion, with dinner catered by Nancy Hazeleger. Approximately 50 people attended the Valentine's Day-themed event; members were encouraged to bring their spouses and ladies were treated to a red rose. The new executive was presented: President Jim Grieve, Past President Helen Dowd, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Ron Marshall, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President Jamie McPherson, 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President Steven MacDonald, Secretary Warren McKay and Treasurer Jim Knudsen. Ontario Volunteer Service Awards were presented to Bob Blair and John Innes. The official 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary year celebration was held on Friday April 13<sup>th</sup> at the Embro & Zorra Community Centre. A segment called "Celebrities in Tartan" featured several well-known guests dressed in tartans including; Stratford Mayor Dan Mathieson in the new City of Stratford tartan, Oxford County Warden Don McKay in the MacKay tartan, Zorra Township Mayor Margaret Lupton in a different MacKay tartan which represents the township, Brooksdale Women's Institute President Marilyn Herman in the Federated Women's Institute tartan, actor Seanna McKenna and Zorra Caledonian Past Presidents in family tartans. Children and grandchildren of the Caledonians, representing the future, completed the evening's fashion show, all introduced with the authentically Scottish voices of Alan and Diane Normand. The Taiwanese Cultural Association were unable to attend but honoured the event with a generous gift. A comical guest (Jennifer Moodie) in disguise parodied the Address to the Haggis. Being held on Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>, many old Scottish superstitions were shared. The evening's proceeds of \$1,500 were donated to the Embro-West Zorra Community Centre Building Fund. A digital 30 minute video of the history of the Society was enjoyed by a full house. Entertainment was provided by the Ingersoll Pipe Band, the Sim School of Highland Dance and Scottish Country Dancers. This was also the occasion for the unveiling of the new Zorra Caledonian tartan – items available for purchase included ties, scarves, hats and fabric by the metre. The program ended with the singing of Auld Lang Syne. Traditional Scottish food was served as the guests mixed and mingled. Shortly after

the event, the ZCS 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary History Book and DVD were for sale so those interested could purchase a permanent record of the first 75 years of the Society.

Here is the menu that was served that evening...

**SMOKED SALMON with CREAM CHEESE on PUMPERNICKLE BREAD**  
**PICKLED HERRING SERVED WITH TOASTED CRISPS**  
**SCOTTISH MEAT PIES (beef)**  
**SCOTTISH SAUSAGE ROLLS (pork)**  
**SCOTCH EGGS (turkey)**  
**IMPORTED SCOTTISH CHEDDAR FINGERS**  
**SCOTTISH OATCAKES**                      **FRESH GREEN GRAPES**  
**HOMEMADE SCOTTISH SHORT BREAD**  
**DUNDEE CAKE**  
**ANNIVERSARY CAKE and CUPCAKES**  
**COFFEE, TEA, LEMONADE WITH FRESH LEMON SLICES**

**SHORTBREAD** - (from Kate Aitken Cookbook 1940's)  
(With thanks to Susie Strickler, February 2012)

1 cup butter  
½ cup corn starch sifted  
½ cup icing sugar sifted  
½ tsp salt  
2 cups sifted (all-purpose) flour

\*Start with cold butter; mix with hands quickly before butter starts to be greasy to the touch. Leave it if this happens, for a few minutes to cool. When it is coming together turn out onto a board and gather it, then knead until it cracks. Flour board very lightly and roll out to ¼" or desired thickness and cut into desired shapes. Watch that when baking the bottoms are very slightly tinged and not a deeper brown. Finished product should be a cooked white cookie. Cut into bars. Yield: Approx 3 dozen

#### **Dundee Cake**

¾ c. butter softened	¼ t. ground nutmeg
¾ c. fine white sugar	1 c. light raisins
finely grated rind of 1 lemon	1 c. dark raisins
3 large eggs	¾ c. currants
½ c. milk	1/3 c. slivered almonds
2¼ c. all-purpose flour	12 whole almonds for decoration
1 tsp. baking powder	

Wash the two kinds of raisins and currants, add clean water and leave overnight in the refrigerator to "plump" the raisins. Next morning, drain and dry well. Line an eight-inch spring form pan with parchment paper. Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Beat butter and sugar together until light and fluffy, add finely grated lemon rind. Add eggs one at a time, beating well between each. Stir in milk. Add flour, sifted with baking powder and nutmeg. Stir in raisins and slivered almonds. Turn mixture into prepared pan. Batter will be firm, so smooth top so the surface is even. Add whole almonds on top to form any pattern you choose. Bake about 50 to 55 min. When cake is done, put a glaze of corn syrup over top as soon as it comes out of the oven. I found that the cake unmoulds better after it has cooled an hour. Ideally it should "ripen" for a few weeks before serving.

**Here is a summary of the Society....**

In April 1937 the following committees were formed to organize for the first Highland Games: Program, Publicity, Grounds, Billeting, Reception, Decoration, Entertainment, Finances, Sports, and Trophies. With the exception of Billeting, these committees and others are implemented every year. Caledonian members and the community volunteers contribute countless hours to make the endless to-do list manageable. In return the Society continues to contribute funds towards many community projects.

The Annual Meeting, the Highland Games and the St. Andrew's Night Banquet are celebrated every year. On July 1<sup>st</sup> the traditional events of piping, dancing, tug of war and the caber toss continue to be perennial favourites. The St. Andrew's Night Banquet celebrates many of the Society's own traditions. Usually the vice president of the Society carries the haggis and the address of the haggis is performed by an invited guest.

New events are planned for each upcoming year. Soccer and the road race have opened the Highland Games to local youth. Ongoing discussions explore ways to make the July 1<sup>st</sup> Highland Games a family-oriented event with a Scottish flare.

So come ye one and come ye a'  
In Zorra we'll forgether:  
Canadian sons O'Scotia dear  
The maples fra' the heather. -Anon

The 75<sup>th</sup> Embro Highland Games, held at the Embro & Zorra Community Centre, were blessed with bright sunny skies and perfect temperatures. The 5 and 10 km road races, with over 100 runners, began the day. President Jim Grieve set precedent by running the 5 km race, in a kilt, and winning his division. Long-time Zorra resident Jean Matheson gave a well-considered address with Gaelic quotations learned from her grandfather to officially open the Games. The platform party included Oxford MP Dave MacKenzie, MPP Ernie Hardeman, Oxford County Warden Don McKay, Zorra Township Mayor Margaret Lupton, Councillor Gord MacKay, Jim and Katherine Grieve, Ron and Wendy Marshall, Jamie and Sandra McPherson, Steven MacDonald, Warren McKay, Jim Knudsen, and soloist Alec West. Popular attractions were the Heavy Events, Tug-of-War, Flying Disc Dogs, British Car Show, sheep herding, Highland dancing, piping, massed bands, food vendors and clan booths. Several Caledonians were guests at the Taiwanese Cultural Association celebration in Toronto in October. Among those attending were Helen Dowd, Warren McKay, Ron Marshall and Jim Grieve. Guests were treated to authentic food and celebrations including a dragon dance, and the Caledonians were honoured to be recognized as representing Zorra Township, the birthplace of Dr. George Leslie MacKay, the influential missionary from Zorra to Formosa, now Taiwan. The final event of the year was the 76<sup>th</sup> annual St. Andrew's Night Banquet, November 30. Over 300 guests attended the evening with a catered dinner featuring turkey, haggis and all the trimmings. The programme included piping of the haggis by the Ingersoll Pipe Band, with 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Ron Marshall carrying the haggis and Margaret Thomson giving the address. The Sim School of Highland Dance presented a dance medley, and the Ingersoll Pipe band played several selections. Pianist Joan Morris accompanied the anthems and guest soloist Jeremy Ludwig. Lesley Grieve gave an illustrated presentation entitled "Here's Tae Us", outlining important contributions to Canada by Scots past and present. The evening ended traditionally, with the singing of "Auld Lang Syne".

After being elected at the Annual General Meeting in February of **2013**, President Ron Marshall's first act of duty was to represent the society at the presentation of the Ontario Volunteer Service Awards to members: Brenda Sim, Wilson McBeath, and Tom Thomson. After an early morning mist, Monday, July 1<sup>st</sup> turned out to be a grand day with an exceptional crowd attending. The Games were officially opened by Past President Wilson McBeath and the crowd was led in the singing of O Canada and God Save the Queen by the Thistle Singers, a local choir.

New for this year was the band “The Mudmen” providing entertainment in the refreshment gardens. A highlight of the 76<sup>th</sup> Games was the induction of Past President Jim Gibb into the Ontario Tug of War Association Hall of Fame. A post games wrap up pot luck was hosted by Wendy and Ron Marshall on the Sunday evening following the games. In October the President and his wife attended the National Day Reception put on by the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Toronto further strengthening the connection that has developed between the Taiwanese Canadians and the Society. The 77<sup>th</sup> annual St. Andrew’s Night Banquet was held at the Embro – Zorra Community Centre on Friday, November 29, catered by Janice Mitchell Fine Country Catering. The haggis bearer was Vice-President Jamie McPherson and Wilson McBeath gave the address. In a move to streamline the event there was no head table and no guest speaker this year. Entertainment was provided by the Celtic group “The Shenanigans” along with the Sim School of Highland Dance and the Ingersoll Pipe Band. The year came to a close with a Christmas Pot Luck at the home of the President Ron and his wife Wendy in early December.

In **2014** the Zorra Caledonian Society presented the 77<sup>th</sup> edition of the Embro Highland Games and the 78<sup>th</sup> St Andrew’s Night Banquet. The year began with the AGM on Mon Feb 17<sup>th</sup> at the Embro Legion, with dinner catered by Janice Mitchell. Approximately 35 people attended event where the new executive was presented: Past President Ron Marshall, President Jamie McPherson, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Steve MacDonald, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President Geoff Innes, 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President Darrell Harper, Secretary Warren McKay, Treasurer Jim Knudsen. The Embro Highland Games were held on July 1<sup>st</sup>. The day began with an intense rain shower around 9:30 am, but the clouds gave way to sun shortly after and the rest of the day was quite beautiful. Due to the early rain, the dance stages were relocated into the arena for the day. The opening ceremonies were held in typical fashion, O Canada was sung by Christina Breen of Ingersoll, and the Games were officially opened by Gail McKay from the Ingersoll Pipe Band. The 2014 edition of the Games featured some new attractions, including women’s heavy events demonstrations, a wool spinning demonstration, and a youth activities program. The 78<sup>th</sup> annual St. Andrew’s Night Banquet was held at the Embro Zorra Community Centre on Friday, November 28, catered by Janice Mitchell’s Fine Country Catering. The haggis bearer was Vice-president Steve MacDonald. Lize Giffen of Stratford (originally from Scotland) gave the Address to the Haggis. Music and dance were provided by the Ingersoll Pipe Band and the Sim School of Highland Dance from Embro. Jim Brisbin from Exeter was the guest speaker and Ted Comiskey and friends provided enjoyable entertainment for the balance of the evening. The year also saw continual improvements to the Embro Highland Games website and the increased utilization of Facebook for reaching our spectators.

In **2015** president Steven MacDonald was elected. Immediately after acceptance Past President Jamie MacPherson made a motion to extend the President’s term to two years from the previous one year on the basis of knowledge gained was valuable for a second term. Motion was passed for going forward within the Society. The 78<sup>th</sup> Embro Highland Games were planned and executed with much success and a large attendance. The George Watson’s College of Piping from Edinburgh, Scotland, returning from a world tour of Japan and Europe, performed to the delight of the Embro audience. This college boasted the Premier 18 and Under Pipe Band in the World and the Zorra Caledonian Society presented them with an honorary plaque to show our appreciation of this magnificent event. The 79<sup>th</sup> St Andrew’s Night Banquet was also a great night; the Ingersoll Pipe Band entertained us as well as the Sim School of Highland Dance. Special guests were Dan MacDonald and friends with a great session of Celtic music. It was another good year for the Caledonian Society.

**2016** To quote Queen Elizabeth this was perhaps our “Annus Horribilus” (terrible year) however the Caledonian Society did manage through under President Steven MacDonald. We suffered through the loss of three key members of the Executive for various reasons, plus the foreshadowing of troubles with the Grounds for the next year. The effort of all our members who shouldered more than they should have been expected to showed just how strong the Scottish spirit still runs. The 79<sup>th</sup> Highland Games did turn out respectfully, even though we had a typically Scottish rain shower in the morning which dampened the crowd a wee bit. The 80<sup>th</sup> St. Andrew’s

Night Banquet was a success with a great meal from Janice's Fine Country Catering and the return of Dan MacDonald and friends for musical entertainment due to popular request. The highlight of the evening was a visual and oral presentation by President Steve MacDonald on the history explaining why St. Andrew is the Patron Saint of Scotland. Post - St Andrew's it became apparent that the minor refurbishments to the grounds of the Community Center would indeed cause major issues for the 2018 Games, our 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary and Canada's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary; however, we were confident, that with the strong commitment of our membership we would be able to succeed next year.

**2017** began with Jim & Lydia Knudsen (10 years of service) and Rollie & Dianne Rutherford (35 years of service) selected to receive the Ontario Volunteer Service Awards for their outstanding contributions to the Society. Both couples served as past treasurers for the organization. In February, at the Annual General Meeting, Helen Dowd was elected president for the second time (having first served in 2011). Everyone was aware that it was a very special year for the Games as July 1<sup>st</sup> would be the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary, which would also coincide with Canada 150. Since the Society had been incorporated in the fall of 2016, this would be the first Board of Directors to lead the organization into the future with the new legal identity. For the dinner, Janice Mitchell catered a delicious roast beef meal and after reviewing the business of 2016, the following members were elected to serve on the Board with the new president: Kevin Fraser, Laura Green, Jim Grieve, Jim Knudsen, Steve MacDonald (past president), Ron Marshall, Brian McMaster (vice president), Alan Normand and Jim Walton. Jennifer Moodie was appointed as Secretary and Peter Fleming was appointed as Treasurer for the new Board (for his second year). The layout for the Games was very different in 2017 due to the construction of a large soccer field to the south side of the grounds which meant almost 40% of the total footprint was out of bounds. The Society compensated by using more indoor space at the Embro Zorra Community Centre. Zorra Town Crier, Doug Turvey opened the 80<sup>th</sup> Games just before 9 am with soloist Philip Kerr from Harrington leading the morning and afternoon anthems. The Highland dancing was held inside the arena and 150 dancers registered. Out on the main field, 11 pipe bands formed the massed bands which were enjoyed at 12:30 and 4:30 pm. The opening ceremonies were shortened (no guests or dignitaries, just the president giving brief remarks) and the massed Highland Fling was reinstated with the morning dancers forming the Celtic cross on the field. Before the massed bands march off ahead of 1 pm, 40 white doves, owned by Gord Marshall, were released to mark the special occasions being celebrated. The Ontario Heavy Events Championships were held all day and two tug of war teams had a demonstration pull over the noon hour. There was also a reunion of former tug of war pullers of which 25 men attended. The Toronto Taiwanese Community Choir (consisting of 30 members) put on an interesting skit depicting how Rev. Dr. George Leslie MacKay would have been received in Formosa when he first arrived and the Taiwanese closed by singing several delightful choral numbers. Alan and Diane Normand served as co-emcees for the day and kept the crowd informed of the many events taking place through the day. Allison Lupton, Ian Bell and Dan McDonald entertained with some fantastic Celtic tunes in the afternoon. The annual road race, part of the Run Piker Series had 200 runners participate in the 2, 5, and 10 km runs. Many runners wore their kilts and ran for free. A part of the tradition, the Knox Presbyterian church served the beef dinner in the large hall and much excitement resulted in changing the location of the pie tables! Jennifer Moodie entertained the kids with fantastic Scottish crafts in the small hall and Rowena Ridder organized energetic outdoor Scottish activities for the 12 and under crowd. A unique Canada 150 Historical Display "Spurtles and Sporrans, Plaidies and Pipes: What the Scots Brought to Canada" was set up in the lobby and organized by Katherine Grieve with the assistance of Margaret Thomson and Nancy West. The Federated Women's Institute of Ontario (FWIO) Canada had their 150 Book Launch *Ordinary to Extraordinary* as well as Harrington & Area Community Association (HACA) promoted Harrington 150 Heritage Festival (Aug 12). Tourism Oxford also participated with a promotional booth. To tie into Canada 150, Sir John A. MacDonald (Thistle Theatre actor – Rob Brown) walked around the Grounds interacting with guests. The Visitor & Volunteer Services tent was once again the place to be to get a "selfie" with the bagpipes which 1973 Society president Wilson McBeath coordinated. Highland & Ayrshire cattle, sheep herding, dog agility and a NEW Scottish Dogs on Parade rounded out the animals at



the Games! This was the first Games in 80 years which the entire grounds were licenced by the AGCO which meant people could purchase an alcoholic beverage at the bar and take it anywhere! A large rain storm came through at 3 pm, but at that point mostly everyone was there so it did not dampen the ever importance admission. NEW, a “cash or pass” policy was implemented at the gates, approximately 1,000 passes and 3,000 paid guests attended. For social media, the website and Facebook forums were managed by Dave Knox from 5 Point Design in Ingersoll and Holly MacDonald looked after our NEW Instagram and Snapchat communications. Admission prices remained at \$ 15 for adults, \$ 10 for youth (13-17), while children 12 and under were free (the age was raised from 10 and under). With so many free events for Canada 150 it was found to be prudent to leave the admission prices alone. NEW for 2017, we asked 46 guests questions about their experience and found out some guests had travelled great distances: from Saudi Arabia, Japan, Germany, France and Alberta. As well an 80<sup>th</sup> Embro Highland Games Handbook was completed with all the details of what it took to pull it off – it turned out to be over 40 pages and all agreed it would be a good reference for the future. The membership wanted to add a historical/education component this year, so in October Karen E. Armstrong from Toronto came to speak on the John Crellin stone farmhouses that dot the Oxford County countryside. There were over 60 people who attended and it was a wonderful evening with her talk, prizes and a delicious late lunch! The 81<sup>st</sup> St. Andrew’s Night Banquet took place Nov 24, 2017 at the Embro Zorra Community Centre with Janice Mitchell catering a turkey meal with all the fixings. The Sim School of Dance and the Ingersoll Pipe Band performed and the guest speaker was Ken McGoogan from Toronto who had written several books on the Scots & Scotland. Having a speaker of this calibre proved wise as the banquet sold out three weeks early and a cap had to be set at 240 guests. Bob Breen of Armour Pro in Woodstock was hired to provide two screens and two projectors for the evening so everyone could see the slide shows and watch the live entertainment. Fanfare Books from Stratford set-up a book table so that guests could purchase from several titles Ken had authored and have them autographed – making excellent Christmas gifts. Ken and his wife Sheena Fraser McGoogan stayed in Embro at the Miller’s Keep Bed & Breakfast owned by Wayne & Mary Ellen Garner. A St. Andrew’s Night Banquet handbook was also created for future reference. At the December general meeting, the membership voted unanimously to move the Games to Canada’s Outdoor Park for a one-year trial, pending approval by the City of Woodstock. A Christmas social followed and was enjoyed by all present!

**2018** will be remembered as a year of change in the Zorra Caledonian Society. Elected to the Board at the 2018 AGM were: Geoff Innes, Angus Thomson, Jack Matheson and Gord MacKay, joining Jim Grieve, Steve MacDonald, Helen Dowd, Kevin Fraser, Laura Green, Ron Marshall and Alan Normand. Immediately after the AGM, Gord MacKay was elected President, Kevin Fraser elected Vice President, Jennifer Moodie was appointed Secretary and Peter Fleming appointed Treasurer. With the Society adding more events and the world becoming more electronic, Holly MacDonald was hired to the newly-created position of Coordinator. A unanimous decision in December 2017 to move the Embro Highland Games to Canada’s Outdoor Park for a one-year trial triggered: approval from the University of Guelph to hold our event on their property, a zone change application to the City of Woodstock for proper zoning to host the Games, a Land Use Agreement with Canada’s Outdoor Park and a detailed Emergency Management Plan.

After all these details were complete, for the first time in our 81-year history the Games moved out of Embro to Canada’s Outdoor Park just outside Woodstock. The NEW location provided abundant space to hold our events and lots of parking. With the new location came a new look at advertising, signage, gates, parking and grounds layout. With the help of a lot of dedicated volunteers the Games were successful even with: a change of location, the extreme heat (the humidex value hit 47 degrees Celsius in Ottawa – the hottest July 1<sup>st</sup> on record) and the fact that for only the second time in our 81-year history the Games were held on a Sunday.

March 16<sup>th</sup>. we partnered with the Township of Zorra to offer our first ever Scottish Day at their March Break camp! Jennifer Moodie led 12 children in a fun and creative day of learning about the Scottish culture of our founding fathers and mothers! March 29<sup>th</sup>. we helped usher and

provide snacks for Thistle Theatre's production of *Kai the Barbarian* and again on December 9<sup>th</sup> for *Brigadoon*. Donations added up to approx. \$600 directed to the Kai Farm Gate Restoration project. April 6<sup>th</sup> we celebrated our first-ever National Tartan Day event at the Embro Legion with live Celtic music performed by the band "Shepherd's Knot", the Sterling Thistles dancers from the Sim School of Highland Dance, a skit by Jennifer Moodie and delicious Scottish treats. It all combined to make a very enjoyable evening on a snowy and blustery "spring" night!

June 2<sup>nd</sup>, we had our inaugural Caledonian Scottish Open at the Stonehaven Golf Course outside of Embro. It was an afternoon "best ball" golf tournament followed by an evening steak (or chicken) dinner which 45 guests truly enjoyed! July 8<sup>th</sup> the annual President's Party was held at the home of Gord & Jo MacKay with 20 members and their guests attending. The temperatures proved to be much more seasonal than at the Games the Sunday before and a lovely afternoon socializing was enjoyed by all. At the October Caledonian meeting, after a good and open discussion, it appeared the majority of our members still had their hearts in Embro and so by a vote of 20 – 9 it was decided that the 82<sup>nd</sup> Embro Highland Games would move back to the Embro Zorra Community Centre. It was also decided to donate \$1,000 plus coat check tips from the St. Andrew Night Banquet to a group of Woodstock Collegiate Institute students travelling to Taiwan for an educational exchange in March 2019. Their plan is to make a presentation to the Caledonian Society upon their return. November 19<sup>th</sup>, we hosted our annual education night at the Embro Legion with a very interesting slide show dubbed "Scotland in a Nutshell" which Doug Fyfe presented. Doug moved from Scotland in 1997 to Perth County but makes frequent trips back across the pond every year. November 30<sup>th</sup>, we celebrated a very successful 2018 with a sold-out St. Andrew's Night Banquet. The 240 guests enjoyed a delicious meal served by Janice Mitchell with performances from Sim School of Highland Dance and the Ingersoll Pipe Band. Our guest speaker was Dan Needles from Collingwood who kept us entertained with his stories of farm life sprinkled with Scottish humour. It was the perfect way to finish off what was a very productive and successful year in the 82-year history of the Society! Thanks to everyone who made 2018 a year to remember!

**2019** will be remembered as the year the Embro Highland Games moved back to Embro and what a successful year it was – not only did we have our best financial showing in the past decade, we welcomed 2,241 paid visitors on July 1<sup>st</sup> and the year-round event schedule was full and well-attended. At the AGM on February 25<sup>th</sup>, Jim Grieve retired from the Board after many years of dedicated service. Elected as new directors were Paul MacLeod, Jennifer Moodie and Keith Matheson who joined president Gord MacKay, vice president Kevin Fraser, Steve MacDonald, Angus Thomson, Jack Matheson, Helen Dowd, Laura Green, Ron Marshall and Alan Normand. Geoff Innes was appointed Secretary and Peter Fleming re-appointed as Treasurer. Holly MacDonald's role as Coordinator worked out well in 2018 and her contract was renewed for a second year in 2019. Jim Walton was our Ontario Volunteer Service Award nominee and was recognized by the province. 2019 was a busy year with a variety of different events. March 15, we participated in Scottish Day at the TWSP run March Break Camp. April 6, we held our National Tartan Day pub event at the Embro Legion with band music by "Shepherd's Knot" and Scottish Dance lessons with the Stratford Scottish Country Dancers which made for a very enjoyable evening. June 1, we had rain which shortened the Caledonian Scottish Open golf tournament with an evening dinner at Stonehaven. July 1<sup>st</sup> with renewed enthusiasm we celebrated a very successful 82<sup>nd</sup> Embro Highland Games back in Embro. July 7, we had a well attended President's BBQ at the farm of Gord & Jo MacKay which provided a nice social time for our members. October 21, we had our annual Education Night with Don Hilborn as our guest speaker on his trip to Tanzania to provide agricultural advice. November 24, we provided snacks for Thistle Theatre's production of "*The Gentleman Clothier*" with proceeds again going to the MacKay Farm Gate Restoration Project. November 29, we celebrated a very successful year with our 83<sup>rd</sup> "St. Andrews Night Banquet" with entertainment by Sim School of Dance, Bagpipes from Ingersoll Pipe Band and Kiley Joe & his Rhythm Associates. The Embro Splash pad committee did the coat check and table cleanup for a donation of \$250 and proceeds from the coat check. In December, we donated \$1,000 to the Embro Splash Pad Committee for their help at the Embro

Highland Games and purchased our own data projector after always having to borrow one over the years. Donations were also made to honour the lives of the following past presidents who passed away in 2019: Ron Totten, Warren McKay and Wilson McBeath. Thanks to everyone who made 2019 a year to renew enthusiasm and bring our Highland Games back to Embro.

**2020** - First COVID-19 president of the Embro Caledonian Society. What a year it was for second-time elected president Kevin Fraser! It was the first time the Highland Games had to be cancelled since 1942 (during WWII) as well as the first-time the popular St. Andrew's Night Banquet had to be cancelled since it first began in 1937. Our lives have changed so much since March 2020. Even with the restrictions we still carried on with business. Two signs (at the southwest corner of the Embro Zorra Community Centre grounds and at the northwest corner of the Embro Pond property) were replaced, the Village of Embro flower beds were mulched, and for July 1<sup>st</sup> flags were on display in Embro for celebration purposes. On July 1<sup>st</sup>, with COVID-19 social-distancing restrictions in place, the bag pipes were heard in Embro courtesy of the Ingersoll Pipe Band. We managed to hold an outdoor board meeting as well as a couple Zoom meetings which challenged this president to no end. It was also a difficult year because of the loss of some very important members of our Society. Our thoughts and prayers are with the families of Robert M. Matheson, John Innes, Rollie Rutherford and Jim Walton. Each one of these members were outstanding volunteers and we are grateful for their combined dedication over several decades. The 2020 Ontario Volunteer Service Awards were presented to Alan Normand (15 years) and Ron Marshall (10 years) as appreciation for their years of service to the Society. Thanks for all the help received during the year from the board members as well as technical assistance from our coordinator, Holly MacDonald, to keep our members informed.

**2021** - This year will be hereafter be remembered as one of the most pivotal years for the Society. Our membership jumped years ahead as COVID-19 quickly forced us to adjust to the digital world of virtual events and online meetings. We achieved success again and again becoming experts at posting, blogging, Zooming and Googling. Kudos to all of our members and executive for adapting to this new way of doing business. These unique circumstances also highlighted the necessity to focus on our social media platforms and we significantly increased our presence on Facebook, Instagram and took steps maximize the use of our website. The year began on February 22 with a virtual AGM, the first meeting of this type for many of the 24 participants. There was very little business to discuss that this year's annual meeting as many of the year's activities had been cancelled due to the worldwide pandemic. There was little to report in the way of financial activity and the report was examined by Ron and Laurence Marshall since the father-son duo were part of the same social-distancing bubble. Gord MacKay was called upon to oversee the election for the 2021 Board of Directors. The nominations were received, and one new director was elected: Angela Langlois joined President Jennifer Moodie, Vice-president Wally Matheson, Gord MacKay, Steve MacDonald, Paul MacLeod, Jack Matheson, Keith Matheson, Ron Marshall, Diane Normand, Alan Normand and Angus Thomson on the Board of Directors. Peter Fleming let his name stand for re-appointment as Treasurer. Geoff Innes let his name stand for re-appointment as Secretary. Holly MacDonald's coordinator contract was renewed for 2021. We were proud of our Ontario Service Volunteers for the 2021 year; the Youth Award was given to Megan Coghill and Volunteer Awards were presented to Grant Innes (15 years) and Doug Ferguson (20 years). National Tartan Day was celebrated virtually with a fun game of Scottish Kahoot. Participants dressed in their finest plaids and logged on to play an entertaining and educational game of Celtic trivia. The spring saw a restoration project come to fruition with the complete reconstruction of the Dr. Rev. George Leslie MacKay historical gates at the site of his birthplace and the family's homestead, located at 911 # 495688 in East Zorra Tavistock. The Society had fundraised a total of \$720 over the past couple years by serving refreshments at Thistle Theatre performances and the total project cost was \$5,384.45. Thank you to Dean Masson Construction, not only for his hard work on the restoration, but for the generous donation of the commemorative plaque. We were disappointed to have to cancel the Embro Highland Games for a second consecutive year; however, we were thrilled with the alternative events that our Society offered in order to celebrate July 1<sup>st</sup> and Scottish Heritage in our Community! Wally and Sherry Matheson, Alan and Diane Normand along with Angus

Thomson planned and executed two very innovative and interactive virtual events to involve all community members. The *Tartan the Township* contest encouraged inhabitants of Zorra to decorate their yards with a Scottish flare. Our Scottish Scavenger Hunt got people out of their houses and travelling to all edges of Zorra Township to investigate evidence of Scottish influences in our area. The fourth annual Scottish Open Golf Tournament was able to take place at Stonehaven Golf Course with a few additional Covid restrictions. Still, 44 golfers turned out to play the links, take part in some fun contests, show off their tartans and enjoy an outdoor meal together. The Zorra Agricultural Society invited the Caledonians to participate in the Embro Fair Parade and we proudly portrayed our Scottish themed float, complete with Nessie from the Loch and towed by a Mighty Man of Zorra! It was wonderful to find these moments to be together after months of social distancing. A significant initiative was born during the 2021 year as we approached the Township of Zorra with a proposal to construct a covered permanent pavilion on the grounds of the Embro Community Centre. Commitments were made by both the Society and the Township and if all goes according to plan, construction will begin in the fall of 2022. Restrictions were back in effect in the fall resulting in the second consecutive cancellation of our St Andrew's Night Banquet in November. In its stead, we took the opportunity to broaden our cultural awareness by hosting an Education Night called "Métis 101". We welcomed guest speaker Kathleen Anderson, President of the Bluewater Metis Council, Metis Nation of Ontario, who eloquently spoke about the connection between Indigenous peoples and Scottish settlers in this area. We hope to continue to develop this new found relationship with the Métis as well as to expand our awareness of other cultures in the Zorra area as well. The December meeting was held in person followed by a scaled down Christmas social where we all still managed to have fun and share the holiday spirit (and some holiday spirits) together. The new year brought new hope that life will return to normal in 2022 and we look forward to hosting our events and Games with stoic resilience and renewed enthusiasm for our Scottish Heritage!

**2022** - It has been my honour to act as President of the Zorra Caledonian Society for the past two years. Together with Vice-President Wally Matheson, it was our pleasure to endeavor to give back to a community that we love and to devote our time and energy in collaboration with all members of this organization to fulfill its mission to celebrate Scottish heritage in Embro-Zorra. 2022 began still under the cloud of a global pandemic and, although we managed to pivot and adapt in order to keep our Society vibrant and active, we approached the new year with optimistic anticipation that life would return to normal and that the Caledonians would be back in the business of hosting and celebrating our heritage hand in hand with our community! We slowly transitioned back to in-person meetings while retaining the new learning and experience that we gained around the benefits that the virtual world taught us, taking advantage of our new technological savvy to reach out to a greater audience for meetings, presentations, advertising, and general communications. In response to the needs of a more connected and digital world, members, guests, participants and the world will be able to access and learn about the ZCS by way of an updated and revised website that will go "live" in the spring of 2023. Our 2022 February Annual General Meeting was still conducted virtually. At this meeting, we thanked Peter Fleming for his many years of service on the executive as our Treasurer (2016 – 2021) and welcomed his successor, Scott Thomson. Scott joined the executive of myself, Jen Moodie, Vice-President Wally Matheson, and Secretary Geoff Innes. Jack Matheson also stepped down this year as a director but will continue to be an integral member of the Caledonians as our Tug-of-War Chair. Jack was President in 1992 which was the 55th annual Highland Games. He has been a member of the ZCS for 32 years. Other honorable mention goes to Grant Innes, Doug Ferguson and Megan Coghill (youth award) who received the Ontario Volunteer Service Award at a virtual awards ceremony in February 2022. We were thrilled to be able to host a Pub Night in April to celebrate National Tartan Day! Friends and family came to the Embro Legion to enjoy an evening of Live Celtic music by a live band called the Paddy Stones, partake of some Scottish fare, and be entertained by Highland dancers from Sim School of Dance. As has become tradition, our fantastic and generous community members attended our Embro Highland Games Volunteer Appreciation & Information Night in June, thrilled with the news that our beloved games were "a go"! A record number of people stepped up to ensure that our Games would come back stronger than ever after a two-year hiatus! On Saturday July 1<sup>st</sup>, we opened the gates of the 83rd Embro

Highland Games and they were a huge success! We are proud to say that we welcomed 2,743 paid guests (a new record in recent years), who were thoroughly entertained and enthralled by the Massed Bands, Highland Dancing, Piping and Drumming Competitions, Road Race, Heavy Events, Sheep Herding and Agility Dogs. Crowds raved about the engaging and educational entertainment in the refreshment area such as Live Music by the Steel City Rovers and Métis Strings who highlighted the cultural connections of Indigenous and Scottish peoples. More multiculturalism was appreciated in the hall with the Taiwanese Choir commemorating the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of G.L. MacKay beginning his missionary work in Taiwan. Yet another pillar of Caledonian tradition was beautifully restored at the 84<sup>th</sup> St Andrew's Night Banquet. Guests at this year's haggis supper dined in style at beautifully tartaned round tables as they enjoy a delicious turkey dinner – complete with haggis of course - prepared by Janice's Fine Country Catering. This year's entertainment included the traditional line up of Highland Dancers from the Sim School of Highland Dance as well as music by the Ingersoll Pipe Band. Also, we were very pleased to welcome the very talented Allison Lupton Band who rounded out a wonderful evening of celebration of the Scottish heritage which is evidently alive and well in our community! Over 30 ZCS members wrapped up the year by celebrating the holiday season together at our Christmas Social held at the Legion. 2022 also was notable for the many connections and contributions that we made within our community. We were happy to support students at ZHPPS and were thankful for all of their help as volunteers at the SANB. We also sponsored a Free Public Skate over the Christmas. The Caledonians are very proud to have spearheaded and driven the EZCC Pavilion project throughout 2022. The EZCC Pavilion Project Steering Committee is fundraising to build a permanent, outdoor, low maintenance pavilion that can be enjoyed by the community year-round! Located on the grounds of the Embro Zorra Community Centre (EZCC), the pavilion will be equipped with hydro and water and will provide shelter from the elements so outdoor events and activities are more enjoyable for all participants. We are working in partnership with Zorra Township, the Embro & Zorra Agricultural Society, Embro Minor Soccer and Thistle Theatre. By the end of 2022, our committee had already raised 60% of the total building cost. ZCS has pledged \$40,000 to this worthwhile community project! In other good news on the financial front, we applied and were awarded a Reconnect Ontario Grant in the sum of \$8,458.00. In September of 2022, Queen Elizabeth II passed away, ending her 70-year reign over the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth. The Zorra Caledonian Society also lost several important and beloved members this year. Bill Fleming passed on June 21, 2022, member Darryl Harper died on Sept 29, 2022 and my father, Mel Matheson (past President) passed away on Sept 6, 2022. They will all be deeply missed. All in all, 2022, complete with all of its unique challenges, will be remembered as a very successful year with a profit of \$36,000 thanks to EHG gate receipts that topped the \$ 50,000 mark for the first-time ever! The Caledonians triumphantly restored our longstanding traditions while simultaneously embracing this ever-changing world and planning for the future! Thanks goes out to ever member of the ZCS for your continued commitment and devotion. We are here to stay for another 85 years!

**2023** - As I look over my notes from 2023, what a year it has been for the Caledonians and the Embro Highland Games! At the Annual General Meeting, we thanked retiring Board members Ron Marshall and Paul MacLeod. New members elected to serve on the Board were Lisa Doney and Alex McKay joining Steve MacDonald, Keith Matheson, Alan & Diane Normand, who were re-elected. Scott Thomson was appointed Treasurer for a second year and Helen Dowd appointed as Secretary. At the Board meeting, following the AGM, Geoff Innes was elected as President and Steve MacDonald, Vice President. Holly MacDonald's role became more focused and after five years as serving as "Coordinator" she was hired on as our "Social Media & Website Coordinator." Our website team worked extremely hard and put in many long hours with 31<sup>st</sup> Line Strategic Communications on the new ZCS/EHG website. What an accomplishment and congratulations to all involved. The new website was unveiled in May and can be found at [www.embrohighlandgames.ca](http://www.embrohighlandgames.ca). The Board meetings, open to over 50 members, moved to a hybrid format which involved using a device called an "OWL". This technology, allows everyone at the meeting, either attending in person or virtually, to see and hear whom is speaking and be heard and seen themselves. April saw our **National Tartan Day** celebration move to a "pub-style" night with live music from the Paddy Stones. We had a full house with guests travelling from afar

for a fun night! May was a busy month for the Caledonians as it was announced that we would be receiving a \$20,000 **Community Services Recovery Grant** from the Federal Government. This grant allowed us to pay for the redesign of our new website, purchase the OWL and buy our very first laptop and accounting software. Also in May, a special general meeting was called to approved the purchase of six sets of aluminum bleachers for the Embro Zorra Community Centre property with a price of \$ 28,962.85. These bleachers can be used by all organizations/groups hosting events at the Grounds. The **130<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Mighty Men of Zorra winning the World Championships** was celebrated at Knox Presbyterian Church with a special memorial service. A plaque will be placed on the Memorial Cairn at the North Embro Cemetery to recognize this event. The first of July saw the 84<sup>th</sup> **Embro Highland Games** alive and thriving on the Grounds with 2,055 paid visitors in attendance. We had 10 pipe bands, eight Tug-of-War teams, 93 Highland dancers registered and the heavy events competitions rounded out the day. A highlight was having four professional videos created to capture the feeling of the Games for all to see. The videos can be found on our new website. The Caledonians recognized three volunteers with the **Ontario Volunteer Service Award** (Keith Matheson - 25 years, Kevin Fraser - 20 years, Peter Fleming - 5 years). In October, it was announced that the Township of Zorra would be receiving \$90,000 from the Ontario Trillium Foundation for the construction of the **Pavilion Project** at the Embro Zorra Community Centre. In November, we were one of the community groups asked to provide light refreshments to Thistle Theatre's production of *The Last Resort*. The 85<sup>th</sup> **St. Andrew's Night Banquet** was held on November 24<sup>th</sup> with guest speaker Senator Rob Black. Our new backdrop was unveiled depicting Kilchurn Castle in Argyll and more tartan banners and stands were built. **A Caledonian Christmas with Whisky Tasting** arrived in December. It was an educational and fun night to learn and taste four whiskies from four different regions of Scotland (Speyside, Lowlands, Highlands, Islay). The night was well received with 70 guests in attendance. Everyone enjoyed the tasting and visiting and the night ensured the 2023 Zorra Caledonian Society/Embro Highland Games ended on a high note! As with all things changes were happening in 2023 and we saw some things go and new ideas emerge. There was the adoption of a *Code of Conduct* for the Caledonians, online ticketing was used for all events and the Board agreed to move the St. Andrew's Night Banquet from a Friday night to a Saturday night for 2024 to attract more guests. We are all part of a team that works together and get many jobs (large or small) done throughout the year. It has been a year of great accomplishments and moving the Zorra Caledonian Society/Embro Highland Games into the future. Thank you to all that has made this happen!

**2024** – Just like 2023, what an amazing year 2024 has been for the Caledonians! At the **Annual Meeting**, we thanked retiring Board members Wally Matheson and Angus Thomson for their respective three and six years of service to the Board. Sherry Sim was elected as a new Board member to serve alongside re-elected Board members Angela Langlois, Gord MacKay and Jennifer Moodie. The four of them will serve from 2024-2027. They joined previously-elected Board members Lisa Doney, Geoff Innes, Steve MacDonald, Keith Matheson, Alex McKay, Alan Normand and Diane Normand. Scott Thomson was re-appointed Treasurer for his third year and Helen Dowd re-appointed Secretary for a second year. Geoff Innes remained as President and Steve MacDonald as Vice President. Holly MacDonald was hired for her seventh year with the organization and her second year in the role as "Social Media & Website Coordinator." In January, February and March we ran "**Computer Classes for the Caledonians**" paid for by the **Community Services Recovery Grant** which was received in 2023. There were over 30 members who signed up and participated either in person or on Zoom. The purpose of the funding was to increase basic computer knowledge, outline email etiquette and introduce the Caledonians to Google Drive, the new platform that was adopted for the "behind the scenes" operations. In April our **National Tartan Day "Pub Night"** celebration was enjoyed by a packed house at the Embro Legion with live music by the Paddy Stones. In June, the Caledonians had six volunteers recognized with **Ontario Volunteer Service Awards**; Angus Thomson - 20 years, Kenneth Ulch - 20 years, Gord Green – 25 years, Laura Green - 25 years, Dale Ross - 25 years and Harry Van Egdome - 50 years. Also in June, the much-anticipated **Embro Zorra Community Centre Pavilion Project** was completed with the Caledonians proudly donating \$ 40,000 – the highest donation the Society has ever made in the community. Luckily, the Pavilion was ready in

time for the **85<sup>th</sup> Embro Highland Games** on July 1, which landed on a Monday and had beautiful 22-degree Celsius weather! In honour of the grand occasion an 85<sup>th</sup> Embro Highland Game logo was specially created and merchandise (coffee mugs and travel mugs) were sold in addition to the Embro Highland Games hats and T-shirts. We increased the admission prices to \$30 an adult and welcomed 2,375 paid visitors. We had 10 pipe bands, eight Tug-of-War teams (five men's teams and three children's teams), 156 Highland dancers, and the heavy events competitions rounded out the day. An eight-panel historical display outlining the history of the Caledonians was completed and later six panels framed and placed permanently in the arena lobby. On July 16<sup>th</sup> we helped to promote the **Pride of the Birches Accordion Band** from Northern Ireland as they played a concert at Knox United Church. At the end of July, Gord & Jo MacKay held the President's Party at their home on behalf of Geoff Innes, with over 40 members attending. In August, Wendy & Ron Marshall organized a four-day bus trip to the **75<sup>th</sup> Glengarry Highland Games** in Maxville, ON for 22 travellers at a cost of \$ 750 each. It was an incredible two-day celebration of all things Scottish as these Eastern-Ontario Games attract over 30,000 visitors a year. The Zorra travellers stayed at the Best Western in Cornwall for three nights and were served a delicious hot breakfast each morning. The coach bus and driver were supplied by Badder Bus Lines. The weather was exceptional and a fun and safe time was had by all. The 86<sup>th</sup> **St. Andrew's Night Banquet** was held on a **Saturday night** for the first time ever and as luck would have it, the date landed fittingly on St. Andrew's Day - November 30. New this year a Celtic Concert (with the band, *Steerage* from Stratford), followed the usual hot turkey dinner with all the fixings prepared by Janice Mitchell. After dinner, the 137 guests were entertained by the Sim School of Highland Dance and music by the Ingersoll Pipe Band (who had to do double duty as the Embro Santa Claus Parade fell on the same night). Tickets to the banquet were increased from \$ 50 to \$ 60 this year to try help cover the cost of hosting such a great night. During the year, the Caledonians provided light refreshments for Thistle Theatre's productions in the spring and fall and a Christmas social for members in December rounded out the year. We continue to be part of a team that works together and gets many jobs (large or small) done throughout the year. Thank you to all that have made this happen!

## **History of Tug-of-War in Zorra**

In the 1800s Tug-of-War was a popular sport seen at highland games and fall fairs. Young men from Zorra enjoyed the friendly competitions. Five men, Alex Clark, Robert McLeod, Ira Hummason, William Munro, and Robert McIntosh and their captain E.L. Sutherland eventually formed a team that seemed to be unbeatable. Even the 1888 North American Championship was theirs. In 1890, the Zorra team travelled to Chicago and lost, due to conflicting rules. The Chicago team was invited to a re-match at the Embro and West Zorra Agricultural Society's Fair in October that year. The Zorra team won the first two pulls and received bronze medals.

The Chicago World's Fair took place in 1893. One of the major events was the Tug-of-War competition. Teams from Britain, France, Belgium and Germany were all eliminated. This left the old rivals, the Chicago Humboldt, as the final competitor for Zorra to beat. The first pull was won by the Zorra men in six minutes. The second pull went to the Chicago team in two minutes. The third and deciding tug was won by the mighty men from Zorra. They had become the World Champions of Tug-of-War and home town heroes.

In 1939 a cairn was built and dedicated by the Zorra Caledonian Society to honour the memory of the men that had represented Zorra and won the World's Championship. The Society has continued to maintain the cairn.

As the Centennial of the 1893 Championship approached, Ron Totten organized the Memorial Tug-of-War Championship. The event was held at the 1993 Zorra Caledonian Society Highland Games. The championship was started with 12 teams and became one of the largest and most prestigious Tug-of-War events held in Canada. It attracted teams from the United States and Taiwan. With such success, Ron recommended that the event become an annual addition to the Highland Games.

During 1998, a reunion of past and present tug of war members was held.

In 2005, Jack Matheson was presented a plaque by the Ontario Tug-of-War Association for 25 years of participating in tug of war. Jack had coached the girls' team for eight years and some of those girls, along with team members from the Blue Water team, travelled to Taiwan and to a world competition in Holland.

In 1993 Lafarge was approached to be a corporate sponsor of the event which became known as the Lafarge Canada Inc. Memorial Tug-of-War Championship. Management at the plant was interested in supporting community groups such as the Zorra Caledonian Society. This relationship continued until reduced plant operation made it no longer feasible. There was no corporate sponsor in 2009, but Federal White decided to be the corporate sponsor in 2010.

The Ontario Tug-of-War Association (OTOWA) originated in 1962 and was the governing organization for Tug-of-War in Ontario until 2000. In 2000, the Canadian Tug-of-War Association (CATOWA) was founded and incorporated. CATOWA follows the rules of the Tug-of-War International Federation (TWIF). Canada is one of the over 50 countries holding membership in the TWIF.

## **Tug-of-War Hall of Fame**

The 2007 inductions included the 1893 Zorra Champions and Rudy Kopp of Wisconsin, USA. In 2009, Tom Kempel of Kitchener was honored. The inductees in 2010 were Melbourne J. Monteith, Ontario tug of war league coordinator from Thorndale, and Bill Scanlan of Toronto. In 2011, Ron Totten of Embro and Mark Rotondi of Windsor were invested into the Tug-of-War Hall of Fame. Jim Gibb was inducted in 2013.