

Scottish heritage

Digging deeper...

Aside from the statue in Dunedin's Octagon, Sir John Steell, a notable sculptor of the period, cast three other statues of Burns that are almost identical to the statue in Dunedin. The first of these is at the southern end of 'The Literary Walk' in Central Park, New York; the second is in Dundee, Scotland; and the third is on the Thames Embankment, London.

Jargon hunter

Céilidh (pronounced 'Kay-lee') is a Celtic social gathering or party with Celtic music and dance. The word céilidh is of Gaelic, Scottish and Irish origin.

The Campbells have it all over their traditional enemies the McGregors in Dunedin. There are twice as many of them in the local phone book. But you'll see lots of other Scottish surnames as well, because Dunedin is New Zealand's Scottish city. Indeed 43% of Dunedin people still claim Scottish roots.

The very name is a hint – Dunedin is the Gaelic version of Edinburgh, its sister city. It has its own tartan, six pipe bands, there is a statue of Robbie Burns in the centre of town, and a Scottish Shop takes pride of place on the main street. Playing 'recognise the familiar street names' is a game for both Dunedinites in Edinburgh and for Edinburgh people visiting Dunedin.

In 2006 the Otago Scottish Heritage Council's Scottish week events included a tartan dance, céilidh at the Savoy, a Scottish Highland dinner, crowning of the Queen o' the Heather and Kirking o' the Tartan at First Church, as well as the opportunity to sample a specially blended local Celtic Ale.

A joint venture between the New Zealand Company and the Lay Association of the Free Church of Scotland led to an influx of Scottish settlers to Otago from 1848 onwards. There were Scots among the rush of 1860s goldminers, and assistance schemes enticed more Scots to Otago in the 1870s. Often people of modest means, farmers, artisans and tradespeople, they held high moral values, and believed in hard work and the benefits of education. These values can be seen to have shaped the character of Dunedin city as it is today.



The Scottish Shop on George Street



The Queen o' the Heather competition is a highlight of Scottish week

