

EST. 1916

History of the Scots College Houses



Introduction to the Houses of Scots College

Scots College was founded as an independent Presbyterian Boys' College in 1916. As part of its mission it espoused the development of the all round man, now all round character.

Scots College's purpose is to give each student a life long commitment to education and to provide the environment in which they can achieve their academic, spiritual, physical, cultural and social potential for the greater good and in service to others. In order to achieve this, the College provides a caring and supportive school environment which involves students, families and staff.

Integral to the operation of the College is the House system which provides for the pastoral care of the students of the College. The House system provides for the students in three ways:

- Firstly, it provides an intimate environment where each student is known, valued, and cared for.
- Secondly, it encourages all students to participate in the College's wide ranging co-curricular programme where the Houses compete for the highly sought after Caradus Shield.
- Thirdly, it provides opportunities for students to develop valuable leadership skills.

Each House has its own proud history and traditions. Students over the years develop a close affinity with their House, and as Collegians they define themselves by both their year group and House. The History of each House reflects an important part of the people who have contributed to the College over its long and proud history.

I am sure you will enjoy the historical information contained in this booklet. As we move forward it is important we acknowledge the contribution of those who have gone before and value the traditions that have formed the proud history of Scots College.

Graeme Yule
Headmaster

History of the Scots College Houses

- 1935** Three School Clubs were formed. Gibb for boarders only. Fergusson and Aitken – for day boys only.
- 1941** New activities introduced and rules changed. New points system devised.
- 1949** MacKenzie was formed but only lasted that year.
- 1950** Back to Gibb, Fergusson and Aitken again.
- 1961** Headmaster Leary saw the dominance and attitude of Gibb House boarders as a countering problem and undesirable so in 1961 Glasgow was established and MacKenzie reintroduced. They joined existing houses: Aitken and Fergusson. Each House consisted of both boarders and day boys.
- 1968** House System revised. Gibb reintroduced as a competitive House for boarders only, and combined Glasgow/Aitken and Fergusson/MacKenzie for day boys.
- 1973** Boarders were again divided up into all Houses along with day boys, although Gibb House remained one of these, along with Glasgow/Aitken and separated Fergusson & MacKenzie.
- 1993** Headmaster McKinnon revitalised the House system which included introducing a vertical system for pastoral care with the House Dean looking after a student's welfare throughout his time at Scots. A proper inter House competition was established to be a vehicle for students to develop leadership and loyalty and for teachers to get to know their students. Gibb House was disestablished as a competitive House, and Plimmer and Uttley Houses were added.
- 2004** Prep (Junior) School Houses are established. Bedding, Macarthur, McKelvie and Potatau.
- 2009** Headmaster Yule added Mawson and Smith Houses. At this stage all Staff were aligned to Houses as tutors.
- 2011** When the College moved to three schools the House system was again further developed with the introduction of weekly tutorials and the incorporation of Years 7 and 8 into what were previously secondary Houses. The House competition was also reviewed at this stage and the Middle School House competition was initiated.
- 2020** The College moved to a co-educational school and girls were welcomed into the existing eight Middle and Senior School Houses.

Aitken House



Aitken House and the Aitken building were named in honour of the Hon John Guthrie Wood Aitken, co-founder of Scots College, Vice Chairman of the Board of Governors (1914-1921) and the first layman to be elected as Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand.

Aitken House was first established as a 'club' in 1935. The emblem of Aitken House depicts a burning bush on a dark blue background. It is the symbol of the Presbyterian Church, thus tying in the College with the Church and our co-founder.

Further notes on JGW Aitken, are taken from *The First Seven Thousand, Jubilee History of Scots College* (1991) by James Brodie.

Hon JGW Aitken, MLC

John Guthrie Wood Aitken was born in 1849 in Kintyre, Argyllshire, the son of a farmer. He was educated at Campbelltown Grammar School and as a young man went to work in the offices of a carpet manufacturer in Glasgow and in London. Eventually he decided to go to New Zealand and with a friend, George Wilson, came to Wellington where in 1882 they established the firm of Aitken, Wilson & Co, General Merchants. They managed to make a considerable success of the business despite the long-continued depressions of the 1880s and 1890s.

John Aitken became known for his integrity as much as for his business capability. He was of quiet temperament, tactful and kindly in his dealings with others. A report of his memorial service in *The Scot* describes him as "A man to whom self-seeking and self-advertisement were anathema, who disliked the limelight". Nevertheless, those qualities of character, of Christian life and personal humility combined with his evident business capability, led to him being asked to serve on many boards and committees and to take a leading place in public affairs. He served as chairman of the Wellington Education Board and also of the Wellington College and Girls' High School Board of Governors. He helped to found the Boys' Institute in Wellington and was also a supporter of the YMCA.

In 1900 he was elected Mayor of the City of Wellington, heading the poll and held office until 1904. His term of office included part of the Boer War period and he was much involved with patriotic fundraising. An appointment to the Legislative Council followed in 1914.

Both Aitken and James Gibb shared the same concern for education in a Christian environment. As we have seen, Aitken was appointed by the Wellington Presbytery to its College Committee in 1915 and to him fell many of the practical tasks involved in establishing the school, not least of which was to secure the lease of the premises at 53 Hobson Street on very reasonable terms from the Hospital Board. It was his donation of money that provided the greater part of the initial capital required to set up the College. His position in church affairs at this time and later is clearly shown by his election in 1917 as Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand, the first layman to be elected to that office.

With Scots up and running, Aitken continued to lend his wise counsel to the affairs of the Board of Governors as Vice Chairman from its beginnings in 1916 until his death on 17 August 1921.

“The emblem of Aitken House depicts a burning bush on a dark blue background. It is the symbol of the Presbyterian Church...”

Fergusson House



Fergusson House was established in 1935 as a ‘club’ in honour of General Sir Charles Fergusson, Bart., KCB, GCMG, DSO, MVO, a former Governor General of New Zealand, 1924-1930.

Sir Charles Fergusson was born in 1865, the son of Sir James Fergusson who was Governor General of New Zealand from 1873-1874. Their son and grandson, Sir Bernard Fergusson, was Governor General of New Zealand from 1962-1967.

Sir Bernard’s son, Geordie, was the British High Commissioner to New Zealand from 2006 until 2010.

Sir Charles was educated at Eton and then went to Sandhurst Military College. In 1883 he joined the Grenadier Guards and a few years later married the daughter of the Earl of Glasgow, another Governor General of New Zealand.

In 1922 Sir Charles retired from the army having served in WWI with great distinction.

Two years later he came to New Zealand as Governor General from 1924-1930.

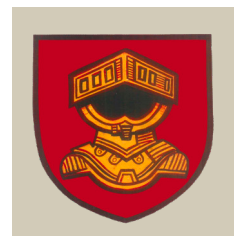
A true Scot, he took a great interest in Scots College and was a frequent visitor to the College. He gave permission for his Head Piper to give instruction to the fledgling Pipe Band established in 1925 and the use of his tartan.

The Fergusson tartan features in the kilts worn by members of the Pipe Band, the carpet in the Chapel, Junior School Reception, Middle School Principal’s office, Headmaster’s office and the main entrance to the Aitken Building.

Fergusson House honours this family and has adopted the Scottish thistle from the top of the Fergusson Coat of Arms. It is portrayed on a green background.

(The honey bee atop the thistle was turned down by the boys because it looked too much like a fly!)

Glasgow House



Named after a former Headmaster of the College 1938-39. (On leave 1939-44); 1945-58.

Keith William Rutherford Glasgow was born in Wellington on 15 November 1902. He attended Otago Boys’ High School and Otago University where he gained his MSc (Hons) and MA.

His first teaching appointment was as Science Master at Otago Boys’ High School where he taught for a few years before taking the position of First Assistant and Head of the Science Department at

King’s High School, Dunedin. From there he became lecturer in Education at Otago University (1935).

He was appointed Headmaster of Scots College in July 1938. A year later he was given leave of absence to go overseas with the 2nd NZEF. During the war he commanded three regiments and was in charge of the training brigade in the Middle East.

While on active service he was twice mentioned in dispatches and awarded the Distinguished Service Order (DSO).

After five years of service in the army he retired with the rank of Colonel and returned to his position as Headmaster.

During his term as Headmaster the College roll grew from 206 to 472 and many new buildings were erected, among them the primary school and the Headmaster’s residence.

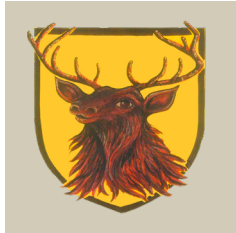
He held many outside positions, among which were President of Heads of Registered Secondary Schools, Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Cadet Training and Dominion Vice President of the NZRSA.

On 4 October 1958 Colonel Glasgow died in office at his home in Waikanae. In his 21 years as Headmaster he made many friends and it was a fitting tribute to his memory that at the beginning of 1961 a House at Scots College should be named after him.

It is symbolized by a soldier’s helmet with an open visor on a bright red background.

Motto: All for one and one for all. Theme song: I belong to Glasgow

MacKenzie House



MacKenzie House was formed in 1949 but only lasted a year. Reintroduced in 1961. The House was named in honour of Elsie MacKenzie, Mistress of the Junior Department at Scots College. The regal head of a stag on a yellow/gold background is the MacKenzie symbol.

Charlotte Elizabeth (Elsie) MacKenzie was born in Lyttelton in 1891, the eldest of three daughters. The family moved to Nelson where she attended Nelson College for Girls from 1905-1909. She attended Wellington Teachers' College then returned to teach at her old school from 1914-1916.

At the age of 26 in 1917, she took up a teaching position at Scots College and remained Head of the Primary School until her retirement in 1945.

In 1941, Chairman of the Board of Governors, Mr Leslie Wall, sent her a telegram which read:

As today marks the 25th anniversary of your joining the staff of the College, the Board wishes me to convey to you its sincere grateful thanks for your loyal service which throughout the years has been marked by great ability and success, thereby endearing you to many pupils of the College who counted it a privilege to have received their education at your hands. We look forward to a continuance of your association with the College.

To add to her teaching duties, from 1943 until the end of the war, Elsie MacKenzie took over the demanding task of House Mistress of Gibb House.

Thousands of students remember her with fondness. She was the first woman to be created an Honorary Life Member of Scots College. She died in 1985 in her 95th year – one of Scots College's most devoted servants.

Mawson House



Mawson House was named in honour of Brigadier John Webster Mawson, CBE, LVO, BA (Hons).

John Webster Mawson, the son of a Master Mariner, was born in Wellington in 1929.

He attended Scots College as a dayboy and a boarder from 1939-1946. During that time he was a Prefect (two years), Head of Gibb House, in the 2nd XV rugby team, the Pipe Band (the Mawson Sticks are named in his honour), was on *The Scot* magazine committee and was CSM Cadets and winner of the Friar Memorial Prize for the Best Cadet NCO in Central Military District.

On leaving Scots he joined the Old Boys' Association, 1947-2001, and served as President 1985-1988. He held the Association together through lean times and edited the SCOPA Newsletter. Many felt he 'was' the Old Boys. He had respect for the College history and was a strong voice in support of the establishment of the Archives in 1986.

Father of two most successful pupils at Scots, he served on the Parents' Association, 1974-1976 and 1983-1985. He became a member of the Board of Governors, 1985-1988, and again in 1992-2001.

In 1991 he drove the 75th Jubilee Celebrations and the written history, *The First Seven Thousand* by James Brodie.

John had a most distinguished military career in New Zealand, Korea, Malaysia, London, South Vietnam, Washington and Canberra. He was made a Lieutenant of the Royal Victorian Order in 1963 and a Companion of the Order of the British Empire in 1982.

Throughout his military career and his involvement with Scots College, he was strongly supported by his wife, Jenny.

John died tragically in a car crash in 2001. Scots lost a respected friend, "a voice of deep understanding and sound commonsense on the Board" and an irreplaceable member of the Scots College community. He was given a funeral with full military honours. He died a soldier and a gentleman.

The Mawson Foyer in the Chapel/Assembly Hall was named in his memory in 2003. His lone portrait faces ten of the Headmasters he served, a unique record for any Collegian.

The Mawson House emblem is represented by the gold crown of the Cadet Corps CSM badge awarded to John in the 1940s while at Scots College.

Plimmer House



Four grandchildren of early settler and ‘father of Wellington’, John Plimmer, were enrolled at Scots College as boarders all on the same day, in 1916. These four boys had a lasting effect on the College.

Maxwell Plimmer became a staunch member of the Scots College Old Boys’ Association (1922-1949) and held the positions of Treasurer, Secretary and President during that time.

Len (known as Ken) Plimmer wrote the Golden Jubilee History of the College, *The Story of Scots* published in 1966. He insisted that the 50 pounds given to him be put towards a cabinet that would house the Board of Governors’ Minute Books and Archives. He, along with Ken Dentice, provided this cabinet which is used for displays in the Junior School. Len’s name is on the Collegians’ Garden of Honour.

Geith Plimmer, Head Prefect in 1924, went on to teach in Australia and England. He became a leading lecturer for the Christian Science Church.

Clifford Plimmer served on SCOPA from 1927-1949 and was President in his last year. He was a member of the Board of Governors from 1928-1963, became an honorary Life Member of Scots College Inc. and was the first Chairman of the Scots College Foundation. His services to commerce in New Zealand were honoured with a knighthood, the KBE in 1967. His four sons attended Scots and when his second son, Richard, died in 1957 he presented a stone wall and new main entrance gates to the College as a memorial to Richard.

Years later his widow, Lady Plimmer and sons, Warren and Malcolm, made a considerable donation for rebuilding the present gates at the main entrance. Sir Clifford Plimmer’s name is on the Collegians’ Garden of Honour. Warren and Malcolm Plimmer restored the missing sterling silver Plimmer Cup originally presented by the London NZ Cricket Club, after the death of their teammate Richard and awarded annually to an outstanding cricketer.

Max, Len, Geith and Clifford had a sister, Anna. Although she did not attend Scots College she had a tremendous impact on it. Her son, Ian McKinnon became its Headmaster (1992-2002).

Plimmer House was established in 1993 and named after this family. The House adopted John Plimmer’s Ark – his fledgling warehouse on the foreshore opposite Barrett’s Hotel. Remnants of the Ark were found under the Bank of New Zealand on the corner of Lambton Quay and Customhouse Quay during excavations. These are now housed in a permanent display on Queens Wharf honouring John Plimmer.

John Plimmer’s Ark forms the symbol of Plimmer House and is featured on a pale blue background.

“John Plimmer’s Ark forms the symbol of Plimmer House and is featured on a pale blue background.”

Smith House



Smith House was named after Alexander Pringle Smith and his family.

Alex Smith was the son of James Smith, a Scotsman and the founder of the former prestigious department store, James Smith Ltd, which was established in Wellington in 1866.

Alex was born in 1873 at Te Aro House, Wellington, the famous establishment in which his father commenced business. He and his brother were sent to England to learn the trade before coming back to New Zealand and joining his father's firm James Smith Ltd. He rose to become company director.

In 1920, four years after Scots College opened and had moved from Hobson Street to Monorgan Road, Alex Smith became a member of the fledgling Board of Governors. He remained a member for the next 26 years and was its Chairman from 1930-1936.

The five loves of his life were his family, the church, James Smith Ltd, Scots College and farming.

The lineage of the Smith family at Scots College began when Alex Smith enrolled three of his sons, Douglas, Howard and Robert in 1926 and his youngest, Brian, in 1930.

In 1929 Scots suffered the biggest financial crisis in its history. £18,140 of debentures fell due and could not be repaid. Queen Margaret College (opened 1919) was run by the same Board and had become a drain on resources along with the looming Depression.

Without warning, the College was closed and sold to the Government. Shocked parents and Old Boys beseeched Alex Smith for help.

A *Save the College* Committee was formed to raise £10,000 in 14 days. The College was sold to the Government. Alex Smith was the first to donate. He offered £1,000 provided the total sum required was raised and with the late Headmaster having resigned, his successor had to be approved by all parties.

The entire College community and Presbyterians throughout New Zealand backed the campaign to a successful conclusion.

Scots reopened in 1930 with a new Constitution, a separate Board for each College and Alex Smith appointed as the new Chairman. He was hailed 'man of the moment'. He remained on the Board until two years before his death in 1948.

Four generations of the Smith Family have been pupils at Scots. They have followed in Alex Smith's footsteps being like him the first to contribute generously to any worthy cause for the College, such as the Foundation, Building the Future and the Boundary Fence to name but a few.

A portrait of Alex Smith hangs in the main corridor. Previously it hung in the Smith Lecture Room along with a brass plaque which stated: 'In appreciation of the service to Scots College of Mr AP Smith and the Smith family.'

The Smith Lecture Room room was officially opened by his son, Douglas Smith, in 1995 but was demolished when the Creative & Performing Arts Centre was built.

The emblem of Smith house is a rampant lion as worn on the 1st XV rugby jersey. The House lion is gold on a dark blue background.

“Smith House has been named after Alexander Pringle Smith and his family.”

Uttley House



Uttley House is named in honour of the first fulltime Headmaster of Scots College, Dr George Harry Uttley, CMG 1916-1922. Dr Uttley's family originally came from Lancashire. The red rose of Lancashire and the Lancashire Cricket Club are depicted on a distinctive black background as the symbol of Uttley House, established 1993.

George H Uttley was born in Dunedin in 1879. He attended Union Street School, then Otago Boys' High School. His long career in teaching began as a pupil teacher at Kaikorai School. While at Teachers' College and Otago University he graduated MA (Hons) in Mental Sciences in 1902.

In 1901 he was a Science prizeman. While working at Waitaki Boys' High School he qualified with a BSc in 1910 and MSc in Geology in 1912. The following year he was elected a Fellow of the Geological Society of London. In 1922 he gained his DSc.

From being First Assistant and senior Housemaster at Waitaki, he spent two years as Senior Mathematics and Science Master at the Presbyterian Ladies' College in Melbourne, and then moved to Wellington to become joint Headmaster at Scots for two terms with his colleague, SR Dickinson, before becoming the sole Headmaster.

Over the next seven years it was his energy, dedication and his remarkable capabilities and capacity for work that built the College into a viable and effective institution.

Uttley stressed the importance of good discipline and high standards of behaviour, academic achievement and laid the foundation for cricket and rugby in the College. A keen cricketer he represented Otago and North Otago and played in the Scots 1st XI and later represented Wairarapa as a player and selector.

Having established the College at Hobson Street in 1916, he had to re-establish it at Miramar three years later in 1919.

In 1922 he was appointed Principal of Wairarapa College and later Southland Boys' High School. He retired from teaching in 1945 at the age of 66. His services to education were honoured in 1947 by the award of CMG. He continued with his scientific research through the 1950s. He died in Whangarei in 1960.

Junior School Houses

In 2004 four new Houses were established in the then Prep School, now Junior School. Officially dedicated in July 2004 the four new Houses, Bedding, Macarthur, McKelvie and Potatau marked the start of a new phase in the development of Scots College.

Bedding House



Bedding House is named in honour of Collegian Geoff Bedding who attended Scots from 1925 to 1928.

Geoff was born in 1909 in Eketahuna. He was the Dux and Head of Gibb House in 1928. A keen sportsman, he was a member of the 1st XI cricket team from 1927-1928 and the 1st XV rugby team from 1926-1928. Geoff was also the swimming, boxing and gymnastics champion and in the Pipe Band from 1927-1939.

Geoff Bedding later returned to Scots College as a Staff member from 1931-1938 where he was the Gibb House Housemaster and Master in Charge of Agricultural Science and Commercial Departments, and Director of Physical Education in 1939. He was also the Master in Charge of the Pipe Band from 1929-1939.

During WWII Bedding, a prisoner since being captured on Crete, convinced the Allies that all guns would be laid low and that there was no need to wreck the two historic towns, Bad Soden and Ahl in Germany. For that he won the undying gratitude of the people of Bad Soden and Ahl and the road between the two towns was named in his honour. Geoff later retired to Levin, then Masterton where he passed away in 1998.

Animal: Stag or Red Deer
Motto: Always Strive

Macarthur House



Macarthur House is named in honour of Ian Hannay Macarthur, the first student to be enrolled at Scots College in 1915.

Ian attended Scots from 1916-1923. During his time at Scots he was the Chairman of the Athletics & Tennis Committees, on the Swimming Committee and sub-editor of *The Scot* magazine. He was also in the 1st XI cricket team from 1922-23.

In his last year at Scots College, 1923, Ian captained the 1st XI cricket team, played for the 1st XV rugby team and was the Head Prefect and Dux.

In both 1922 and 1923 he was the recipient of the Pattie Cup for 'the best all round contribution to Scots College'.

After finishing his schooling Ian's connection with the College saw him as the President of SCOBA from 1935-1937 and a member of the Scots Board of Governors from 1937-1940.

Ian graduated with a LL.M in 1931. He served with the NZ Expeditionary Forces from 1941-1944. Upon his return he was a University of NZ Examiner then President of the Wellington District Law Society in 1956.

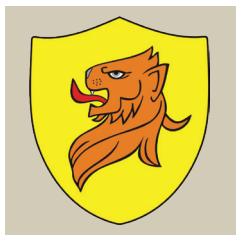
Ian was the Treasurer of the NZ Law Society in 1958 and 1959 and was appointed judge of the Supreme Court in 1959.

Ian Hannay Macarthur died in 1975.

Animal: Unicorn from the Scottish Coat of Arms
Motto: By Skill and Effort

“Ian Hannay Macarthur, the first student to be enrolled at Scots College in 1915.”

McKelvie House



McKelvie House is named in honour of parent and Board of Governors member Lynn Rutherford McKelvie, who drove and financially supported the building of the McKelvie baths.

Lynn Rutherford was determined to have a pool at the College so his two sons L J B (John) and H J M (Max) could learn to swim. The pools were opened in 1925 and served the College until a persistent leak eventually led to their removal in 2003.

The area the baths were originally located in is now the Junior School playground and the current Health Centre is located where the changing rooms once were.

Lynn was a member of the Scots Board of Governors from 1924-1925.

John McKelvie attended Scots College from 1919-1925. During his time at the College John belonged to the shooting and tennis teams in 1924 and was a Prefect in 1923-1924 and Head Prefect in 1925.

Soon after finishing at the College, John joined the Old Boys' Association Executive and was the Secretary from 1927-1928 and 1930-1931 later becoming the President from 1940-1942.

Max McKelvie attended Scots College from 1922-1928. During his time at the College, he was a Prefect from 1927-1928, the CSM of Cadets, hurdles champion and a member of the 1st XV rugby team from 1925-1928.

After finishing at the College, Max became a member of the Old Boys' Association Executive from 1934-1935; and 1938-1939.

Max established photography studios, Hurst Studios with his wife Audrey which later became McKelvie Studios.

Max was the Scots College School Photographer for many years. On retirement, his son Ross carried on the tradition, travelling to the College from Napier each year.

Animal: Lion from the Standard of Scotland

Motto: Faithful and Courageous

Pōtatau House



Pōtatau House is gifted in honour of Hēmi Pōtatau (Ngāti Kahungunu and Ngāti Rākaipaaka), the first student of Māori descent to attend Scots College. Hemi gifted the original form of the College Haka.

Hēmi Pōtatau was born in 1904 at Tane-nui-a-Rangi Marae, Nuhaka. He was sent to Scots College from 1920-1922, funded by the Māori Presbyterian Mission.

After finishing his schooling at Scots, Hēmi Pōtatau enrolled at Theological Hall, Knox College Dunedin to study for the Presbyterian ministry in 1925. He completed his studies in 1931 and was the first ordained Māori Presbyterian minister to graduate from Knox College 1933 and was ordained as a Prebyterian Minister.

Hēmi took part in Military service in the Middle East from 1941-1944 with the 28th NZ Māori Battalion.

Hēmi spent his Ministry serving various parishes throughout Aotearoa and was recognised as a kaumatua when he was appointed as the first moderator of what is now Te Aka Pūaho.

Hēmi completed his Bachelor of Arts at age 70.

His autobiography 'He hokinga mahara' was a finalist in the first Pegasus Prize for Māori Literature 1984. It was the first autobiography to be published in te reo Māori in 1991.

Hēmi Potatau died in Wairoa in 1994, he is buried beside his wife Ira Rangiatu (Ngāti Tuwharetoa).

Animal: Sea Eagle of the Highlands

Motto: Only the Best will Do

“Hēmi wrote the College Haka that we still perform today.”

