

*A waverung caber upset the Scots*

Until late afternoon, New Year's Day, 1886, had been a grand day for the Scots celebrating Hogmanay at the Maryborough (Vic) sports ground, until an Irishman unwittingly spoiled it for them.

Marsh Cahn, the Australian champion walker, had walked a 6m 19sec mile for them and Donald Dinnie, the world-famous Scottish field games expert had given exhibitions of putting the shot, throwing the hammer and lifting huge bar-bells.

Opposing the Scot in these events, a local farmer, named Pat Brennan, had performed very well, so he decided to attempt tossing the caber after Dinnie had given a masterful display at handling the cumbersome object, at which he was expert.

The caber, in those days a small tree trunk about 20 feet long and weighing about 250lbs, is held upright before the body and tossed forward so that the tapered end of the trunk digs into the ground, to which point the throw is measured,

Brennan, a big man, had little difficulty in raising the caber from the ground, but getting it raised upright in front of the body was his problem. After some minutes of vain effort he desisted, and dropped the butt end to the ground. The caber wavered and slowly toppled sideways across the end of a canvas marquee which was filled with happy Scots enjoying refreshment. Guy ropes snapped and the whole roof fell in on the drinkers, none of whom was injured physically. But many suffered mental anguish when they surveyed the damage to their drinking equipment and supplies.

It is safe to assume that from that day no Irishman was invited to toss the caber again on the Maryborough sports ground.