



No. 28, May 2004

'The time by the goodness of God will come, when the Catholic religion will again flourish in Scotland; and then, when posterity shall enquire, with a laudable curiosity, by what means any sparks of the true faith were preserved in these dismal times of darkness and error, Scalan and the other colleges will be mentioned with veneration, and all that can be learned concerning them will be recorded with care. . . ' (Rev. John Geddes, Rector of Scalan 1762-65)

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The Scalan Association AGM takes place on Tuesday 1 June, preceded as always by Mass in the Old College at noon. Our Secretary Fr Michael Briody's report of last year's AGM is enclosed with this issue, as also Jane McEwan's audited statement of accounts as Treasurer. Her address is at the foot of this page for the sake of those who would like to join the 650+ members of the Association which is dedicated to restoring the Glenlivet seminary. It may also serve to remind existing members that the annual subscription (which has been kept at £5 since 1990) is due. The report by our President Canon Brian Halloran gives a good idea of how your money is being spent, as George Beverly and his team approach the last stage of interior work while keeping the exterior in good condition. On the following page Mike Morrison gives an update from last month and indicates how you can 'see for yourselves' through the Scalan Trail website which he maintains so splendidly.

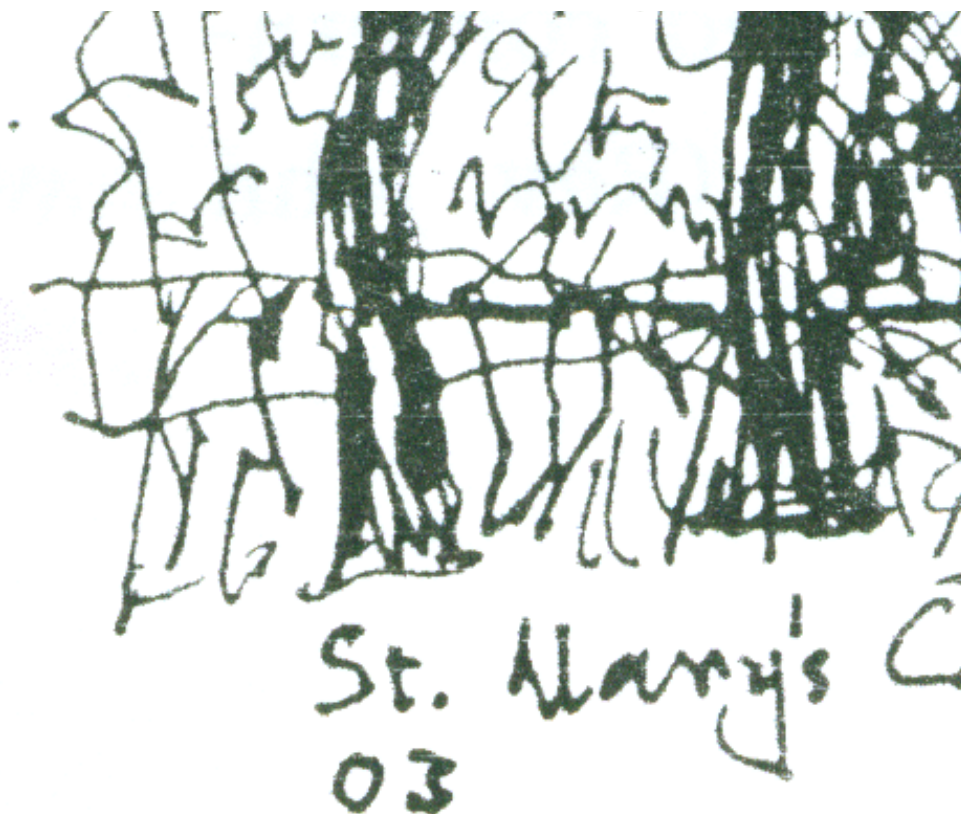
The Annual Scalan Mass will take place at 4 p.m on Sunday 4 July – easy to remember if you are American! Already there is word of bus parties, with plenty of time for more to be arranged. Those who are wondering whether to leave their cars at Eskmulloch and walk the last mile may like to be reminded that, thanks to local farmer and committee-member Gordon McGillivray (and considerable expenditure from the coffers of the Association) the track is now free of pot-holes as far as the bridge across the Crombie which takes you over to Scalan. It is 'high time' (!) some of the fitter members considered leaving their cars at the Well of the Lecht picnic site and tramping the 'Whisky Roady'. Last time this was done one walker had no hesitation about walking back afterwards, but someone will always be ready to give tired walkers a lift round.

This issue of Scalan News conveys an impression of growing world-wide interest in our heritage stories, through the internet, and a parallel interest in family history. That ties in with publicity for Glenlivet and the Highland areas round it (visitors are welcome) but one article focuses on a Lowland area close to the Moray Firth. It is at the end, which explains why the back-cover map shows the Braes of Enzie. The drawing opposite honours Bishop Peter Moran who was consecrated there earlier this year. People came from all corners of the Aberdeen diocese, and Willie McIvor drove Bill and Jane McEwan to what was, by all accounts a very happy occasion.

Mrs Jane McEwan, Ogilvie Cottage, Gallowhill, BALLINDALLOCH AB37 9DL







The Scalan Renovation 2004

Mike Morrison

In April I like to get out, and one of my trips is to Scalan to see where we are in the renovation project. I later update the Scalan Trail article for those who are not able to visit Scalan, or indeed Scotland. This year I found the old college looking splendid, although the blue front door had expanded through the winter and was sticking. Inside the rooms are now excellent: windows magnificent, walls bright and clean. The toilet facility is finished to a very high standard.

As in former years I took photographs and posted a slide show on the Scalan Trail (www.scalan.co.uk) on the Scalan Renovation (April 2004) page. I also made a short video film using a walk-through technique that shows graphically the fine condition inside which so greatly pleased me - I have an intuitive love for Scalan, and feel stronger in my faith after each visit.

To use the film, however, it is necessary to have a broadband computer connection; more people are acquiring this now, and it will be useful for Scalanites overseas. On clicking the video link the film clip loads into the Windows Media Player Browser, and after roughly three

minutes plays the clip – which last about one minute. I had the idea of checking whether Scalan could be accessed by mobile phone technology – I had a sort of vision of Scalan as a research centre, once restored, where people could access information and study using laptop computers. It will be a relief for ‘Heather Priests’ and others to learn that there was no telephone signal!

Readers who recall ‘Crombie Television’ from December 1994 may be thinking that Sandy Matheson’s waterwheel technology, together with his skill as a clockmender-cum-ham radio buff, would have found an answer for the computer age. Sadly, however, Sandy has had to leave Scalan, which is now uninhabited like other old farms in the Braes.



However Sandy is well cared for and happy (especially when winter gales blow!) in Speyside Home at Aberlour. During his last years at the Scalan, after slipping on ice and breaking a leg, Sandy was supplied with a phone for emergencies. This was quite an advance on neighbours keeping an eye out for the smoke from his lum. On week days, of course, there was always the postie’s visit for a fly cuppie.

Priests, Patrons & Piety

The Scots College Paris, 1603-2003

This is the title of an exhibition which was opened in April by Archbishop Conti in the St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art. Situated at 2 Castle Street in Glasgow’s historic Trongate area, the Museum aims to promote mutual understanding between people of different faiths and none. According to publicity originating with the Scottish Catholic Historical Association (which is responsible for *The Innes Review*) the exhibition ‘charts the history of one of the most important seats of learning for Catholic Scots. Founded as a seminary, the Scots College existed through troubled and exciting times. From illustrious patrons and benefactors to famous and notorious students, this is a fascinating 400-year story of Scots abroad and the role they played in shaping their nation.’

The exhibition follows Edinburgh’s ‘Scots Colleges in Catholic Europe’ of 2002-3, and also

the 400th anniversary event of 24 April 2003 which was held in the old Paris building, as reported here last May. Scalan Association members take pride in the fact that our President, Canon Brian Halloran, gained his Ph.D. for research which led to the publication in 1997 of *The Scots College Paris, 1603-1792*. For information on talks and workshops accompanying the St Mungo exhibition, which runs until 27 September, phone 0141 553 2557 or visit www.glasgowmuseums.com.

*The following mostly comes from **St Peter's Church, Aberdeen, 1804-1979** by Scalan Association founder Canon Sandy MacWilliam. He was parish priest there for thirty years after his untimely removal from Chapelton in the Braes of Glenlivet. An updated version for the 19 August bicentenary can be obtained through your editor here at £5 including p.&p. Another account, which concentrates more on the Castlegate building, will appear in the June newsletter of the Aberdeen Civic Society.*

Priest Gordon of Aberdeen

Alexander S. MacWilliam

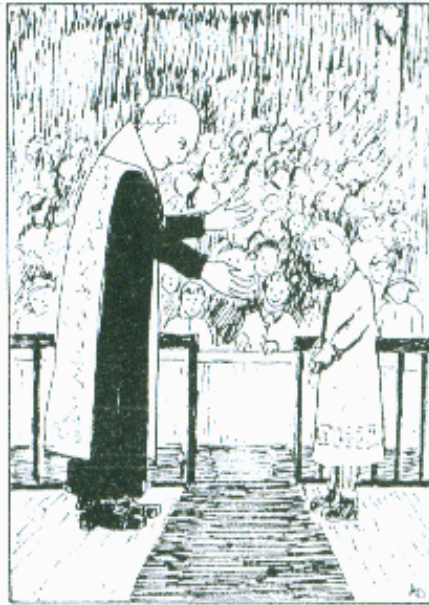
William Skene's *East Neuk Chronicles* celebrates Priest Gordon: 'Another denizen of Justice Port was the Rev. Charles Gordon, who for more than half a century performed more charitable acts than any other individual in the city. Every Monday morning Chapel Court used to be crowded with poor people from far and near, for on that morning every week throughout the year there was a bounteous distribution of "cloddies". . . The gifts were awarded not merely to Roman Catholics, but to the poor of every denomination.'

Images/eemages

In some anti-Popery lectures which had been delivered in certain Aberdeen pulpits, much had been said about the use made of images in the Catholic Church. Priest Gordon gave notice that he would answer his opponents on the evening of the following Sunday. The church was more than crowded by persons of all denominations, in expectation of hearing something pithy and perhaps peppery. In the course of the sermon, in which he sought to demonstrate the absurdity of the accusations levelled against his Church, he said – 'Weel sirs, they tell you we adore eemages; gin ony o' ye thinks that, jist ask the youngest skellach in the chapel and he'll laugh at ye. Come here, Johnnie' (to one of the altar-boys) 'Do we adore eemages, Johnny?'

Johnny, suddenly called upon to give witness to his faith before such a large congregation, got confused and did not reply. 'Come awa', man,' said the Priest. 'Tell them, do we adore eemages?' The boy, finding it necessary to say something and the question appearing to invite a positive reply, thought he would chance it and blurted out, 'Aye, div we!' 'Eh, man, ye hae deen for me noo. Gae wa' back tae yer seat; a'm thinkin' ye had best gang awa' to ma frien' Dr Kidd an' tell him that. Come here, Sandy' (to another boy); 'Do we adore eemages, Sandy? The reply this time was the orthodox answer of the Catechism – 'No, by no means, for they

have neither sense nor power to hear or help us.'



The Rev. Dr James Kidd delivered a lecture one Sunday evening in Gilcomston Church concerning the character and position of the Virgin Mary as set forth in Scripture. The next day Priest Gordon met Dr Kidd in the Castlegate and asked what he had been saying against the Blessed Virgin Mary. 'I only stated that she was a good woman, a saint in the same sense as my own mother was.' Priest Gordon replied: 'Weel, I canna jist tak' it on me t' say fit difference there might be atween the twa mithers, but I ken weel there's a mighty difference atween the twa sons!'

Sunday Evenings

When a commission on church accommodation came north it learned that St Peter's had 2,000 of a congregation, with two Sunday Masses at 8 o'clock and 11.15. For Sunday evening sessions Priest Gordon claimed an attendance larger than the chapel was built for. 'There were cries of "Oh" as if people thought the priest was not strictly adhering to the truth: "How can you know or think that there are from 1000 to 1200 in the chapel when you say it only holds 800?" The old man drew himself up:

"Well, we are not in the way of allowing anyone to get in but those who put a copper in the plate, and verra few pits in twa'." A university professor recalled these sessions: 'One of the relaxations of the Aberdeen students was to go to the Roman Catholic Chapel on Sunday evenings, partly to enjoy the music, partly to listen to the discourses of the Rev. Charles Gordon, the venerable priest in charge of the church. Mr Gordon was a dear old gentleman – adored by his own people, much respected by Protestants.

One of the attractions to his chapel was his strongly Roman sermons on Sunday evenings. Martin Luther and John Knox were held up to universal execration in the most delightful broad Scotch and with a vehemence that might have satisfied the Grand Inquisitor. Occasionally these

attacks produced outbursts of merriment from his Protestant hearers. If these became audible the author was ejected by the sexton.'

An organ built by the priest of Auchinhalrig (near Fochabers) proving unsatisfactory, another was brought from London for £441 and the gallery at the back was extended for it. A professor at the Aquhorties college by Kemnay (which preceded Blairs) wrote to the priest of Glenlivet: 'Mr Charles Gordon's grand organ has been set up and publicly exhibited. . . The concourse was prodigious. Among the other extraordinary persons present were four Parsons, and the admiration of the music, both instrumental and vocal, was universal.'



Priest Gordon's funeral took place on 28 November 1855, when there was a packed church hung with drapings of mourning, the congregation overflowing into Chapel Court and a dense crowd outside in Castle Street under the leaden sky. Within, Bishop James Kyle is celebrating a Pontifical Mass of Requiem for the Rev. Charles Gordon, late pastor of St Peter's, whose body lies before the altar. At one o'clock the funeral procession begins. An eye-witness tells of the scene – hushed crowds, closed shops; procession down King Street, with Lord Provost and magistrates following the coffin. It was carried by relays of members of the congregation between red-coated soldiers of the 19th Highlanders lined up on either side. As the cortège entered the Snow Churchyard in Old Aberdeen, the last mourners were leaving Castle Street.

Abbot Mark Dilworth RIP

Mark Dilworth died at St Columba's Hospice (appropriately, since he was Titular Abbot of Iona) in Edinburgh on 28 February 2004. As a leading Ben-edictine historian (of monasticism in particular) he had a long relationship with the Scottish Catholic Archives and was for several years Keeper at Columba House. His greatest sorrow was to be the last Abbot of Fort Augustus. After a Solemn Requiem Mass in St Mary's Cathedral, a simpler service was held in the gatehouse which now serves as a chapel near the foot of Loch Ness. Bishop Peter Moran

explained that the Abbey's present owner had granted permission for Father Mark, as he was known locally, to be buried in the Monks' Garden. Mindful of another solemn occasion in Morar (see p. 14) your editor donned a kilt and put bagpipes in the car in case they were needed. This time it was an old friend and fellow-scholar who was played to his final resting-place.

An SCHA conference on Scottish monasticism is to be held in Abbot Dilworth's honour on 12 June at New College, Edinburgh, starting at 9.30 a.m. This old site at the top of the Mound is where the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland meets; also the Scottish Parliament while awaiting completion of the much-discussed building at Holyrood. The full programme is available from Kimm Perkins of Glasgow University at 9 University Gardens kimm5466@yahoo.com. The afternoon has Abbot Hugh Gilbert speaking about Pluscarden and Michael Turnbull about Fort Augustus. Michael is the author of *Abbey Boys*, published in 2000. Copies can be obtained from Ralph Giulianotti, Mountview, Kinnoull Hill Place, PERTH PH2 7DD. Linked with the article by James Russell below, this acknowledgement by Abbot Mark appears in the Spring issue of *The Innes Review* as an introduction to 'An inter-church family in the north-east':

'The following is drawn almost entirely from the reminiscences of Sister Margaret Fraser, a Benedictine nun of Princethorpe Priory near Rugby in England. She dictated them to her great-niece Ethel Fraser in 1873, and in 1987 they were typed by Ethel's nephew, Lt. Col. Maurice Coleman. The latter's son Mr Nicholas Coleman in 1998 transferred the script to a PC file and added some annotations. The substance of the reminiscences was published in *Scalan News* No. 26 (May 2003) and I am grateful to the editor, Mr Alasdair Roberts, for supplying the script.'

The Rev. Charles Fraser in Ireland and Aberdeen

James Russell

Regular readers will recall Strichen, north of Aberdeen, from 'The Rev. Charles Fraser and his Forebears' (in the May 2003 issue) where priest and minister sat at the same family table. We followed Charles Fraser to the Scots Benedictine monastery of St James, Ratisbon; then to Stonyhurst College in Lancashire; and finally to the new Jesuit college of Clongowes near Dublin. The previous article ended: 'His obituary in Scotland states that Charles Fraser was Superior or head master there. This does not appear in the Clongowes records – for reasons which remain to be discussed.'

The archivist has since corrected her previous information and apologised for the state of the records. The Scottish obituary is also wrong, to the extent that the Rev. Peter James Kenney S.J. (1779-1841) was actually founding headmaster. Kenney was also one of the first Jesuits in Ireland when the Society was restored – from the Kingdom of Naples and Sicily, where he and other Irishmen took vows. However Charles Fraser, some ten years younger, was in direct charge of 200-plus pupils as their Prefect of Studies. Appointed before the opening of the school in 1814, he was still at Clongowes on 11 May 1830 when the youngest son of Daniel

O'Connell 'got up [to the school?] this morning with the rest of the boys and went to Mr Fraser with Russell to find out what school [i.e., class] Gregory and I would be in.'

Ireland and Emancipation

These were stirring times, as O'Connell (remembered as The Liberator) brought the Catholic Association into being. He recruited the kind of influential laymen who sent boys to Clongowes, and persuaded the clergy to abandon their 'dignified silence' on such questions as the paying of tithes to the Established Church of Ireland. His 1828 election victory in County Clare – as a Catholic who was unable to sit at Westminster – led to Catholic Emancipation in the following year for fear of civil war in Ireland. Protestant gentry close to Dublin Castle had been ready for it since Fr Kenney and the Society acquired premises for their school in County Kildare: 'The Jesuit at Castle Browne [the former name of Clongowes] is likely to do more mischief than a rebel army on the Curragh.' Dublin's race-course then served to exercise cavalry horses for the British garrison.



A Scots Ecumenist

It may well be imagined how little Charles Fraser sympathised with this heightening of party strife, coming as he did from the tolerant North-east of Scotland. Bavaria and Lancashire had provided Charles with further examples of civility among Christians, but he found himself going against the grain in Ireland. Fraser was ordained in his early thirties by Dr James Warren Doyle soon after he became Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin in 1819.

It has been suggested that Fraser's ecumenism matched that of Doyle, who sought a union of Christian Churches in Ireland. The Bishop was certainly outspoken on inter-faith questions (he gained a reputation writing as 'J.K.L.' for the press) but is best known for responding vigorously to an anti-Catholic attack by the Archbishop of Dublin. After Emancipation he exhorted the people to 'hate tithes as much as they loved justice': disestablishment of the Church of Ireland could scarcely be interpreted as ecumenism.

Although the Scottish obituary did not mention it, the word from Clongowes is that the Scots Prefect of Studies was dismissed from the Society of Jesus in 1830 for preaching in support of Protestantism. One implication from the imperfect records, indeed, is that Fraser actually joined the Church of Ireland. There is no doubt that he and headmaster Kenney fell out. This Irish Jesuit Provincial has been described by Fr Todd Morrissey S.J. as 'a man of the universal

Church'. He remained head of Clongowes despite frequent absences as far as Rome and the USA, and a debt to Fraser is suggested by his biographer's comment that 'the college functioned without notable damage under a delegated authority.' At the time of Catholic Emancipation Kenney was in open disagreement with Bishop Doyle of Kildare, and it may be significant that 1830 saw his departure from Ireland as well as Fraser's. But Kenney's four years in Maryland and Missouri added lustre to his name, whereas Fraser's last five years in Aberdeen were more of a penance than a homecoming.

Preacher and Fundraiser

Before moving with him from Ireland, we learn from the obituary that Charles Fraser was much more than a schoolmaster: 'During these years he gave all his spare time to preaching; he was constantly in demand . . . and he never refused any request which might help the cause of charity. There are innumerable institutions in Dublin which largely depend for their maintenance on the collections raised from these sermons. At times the collections which his powerful appeals produced amounted to two and three hundred pounds.' It is unlikely that all the institutions were Catholic, although his appeals were on behalf of poor Dublin families like those who would claim his attention in the slums of Aberdeen.

An Irish witness of Fraser's 'errands of mercy' wrote: 'I have seen persons frequenting his sermons who carried with them to church only their intended contributions, fearing that the eloquence of the preacher might extort more than their circumstances in life could spare. Yet, with all their caution, they have yielded to his powerful advocacy and thrown their jewellery, along with their money, into the coffers of the poor.'

The official death-notice makes Charles Fraser's health the reason for a return to his 'native climate'. According to Clongowes there was a letter by Kenney, now lost, to the Jesuit General in Rome. His reply implied that 'despite Fraser's many years at Clongowes, he had gone over to the Established Church.' In another letter to the General of September 1830 Kenney compared Fraser to a Cashel Jesuit who became an anti-Catholic writer: 'Since the apostasy of the too famous Andrew Saul in the seventeenth century we have not had a blow like this.'

Something spectacular must have happened in Ireland, but Charles Fraser returned to Aberdeen early that summer as assistant to 'Priest' Charles Gordon, and there is no doubt that he shared the faith of the man who had catechised him in youth. If there was expulsion from the Society of Jesus (again the documents have been lost) it hardly matter-ed as there were no Jesuits in Scotland.

Charles Fraser in Controversy

Father Kenney was able to follow the concerns of the Prefect who had kept Clongowes going during his away days. He passed on the news that Fraser was 'in Aberdeen preaching controversy, and much followed.' Controversy was a subject taught in seminary. As appears elsewhere (p. 6) the St Peter's Sunday evening sessions were regularly packed with university students and other Protestants when Priest Gordon defend-ed the tenets of the Catholic faith. Fraser stepped on to the same stage, where his performance lacked nothing in Catholic

orthodoxy.

His adversary the Rev. James Kidd was Minister of Gilcomston Church, an Ian Paisley type of figure from outside Ballymena. He had the dubious distinction of being Professor of Oriental Languages at Marischal College – dubious in the sense that Hebrew was then little regarded by Divinity students or ministers of the Church of Scotland. Kidd had made a particular study of the subject through a synagogue in Philadelphia in preparation for a visit to the Holy Land. He was on the one hand a Protestant counterpart to Priest Gordon, sharing his common touch and always ready for ‘controversy’; on the other hand he was the holder of a chair at Aberdeen University and used the initials LL.OO.P for *Linguarium Orientalium Professor*.



Dr James Stark, who wrote biographies of both pulpit rivals, has ‘Controversy with Priest Fraser’ as a chapter-heading. Stark confirms that Fraser’s lectures in the Castlegate were delivered too early for the speaker to have been in and out of the Established Church of Ireland since the previous May. Dr Kidd wrote on 9 November 1830 ‘To the Rev. Mr Fraser, Roman Catholic Priest. Sir, - You have, in your Sabbath Evening Lectures on "Purgatory, and Invocation of Saints", advocated tenets which I maintain to be contrary to the Word of God in the Old and New Testaments. I therefore invite you to a discussion of these and other doctrines of the Church of Rome, respecting which Protestants and Roman Catholics are at issue. I propose that we shall carry on our discussions before a general audience in one of the public halls of this city.’

Although well able to speak in public halls after Dublin, Fraser refused the challenge as issued and his reply was in Latin. Dr Kidd’s translation informed the wider world that his opponent proposed a debate not ‘in the vernacular tongue, but in the presence of the Professors of the University . . . and, as becomes Theologians, in the Latin language.’ Fraser knew that some of the professors had no great opinion of the Ballymena man, and was confident in the superiority of his Latin – and Theology. After a mock bow to the ‘Transatlantic doctor’ (whose studies in Philadelphia and Edinburgh had in fact been under scholars of real distinction) Fraser added: ‘There is here at present a very intimate friend of mine, who has resided just thirty years in eastern countries, who will dispute with you on the Sacred Scriptures in the Oriental languages.’

Dr Kidd’s response was, it may be thought, reasonable: ‘You promulgate your religious tenets

in the English language before a general audience. . . A discussion in the Oriental languages would neither instruct nor edify the public.’ His third and final letter on 13 November proposed an alternative to ‘a meeting of the ignorant rabble’ (Fraser’s phrase) by requesting publication of the Castlegate lectures. Pamphlets appeared on Fraser’s behalf with *Grammaticus* and *Veritas* as authors: perhaps he wrote them. Dr Kidd’s cause was taken up by *Philologus*, otherwise Grammar School Rector George Melvin, and the controversy reached its climax in the following year with *The Popery Exposer Exposed; the Trial of the Rev. James Kidd and the Rev. Charles Fraser at the Bar of Candour by a Layman of the Catholic Church of Christ*.

Friend of the Poor

By then Charles Fraser had scarcely four years to live (he died at the age of 46) and spent far less of his time in controversy than going in and out of disease-ridden tenements where typhus, cholera and consumption were rife. It was common for priests to suffer from their visits to the sick and dying, and he experienced the first fatal symptoms about Christmas 1834. Despite being taken to Edinburgh for treatment, the Rev. Mr Fraser continued to decline after being returned to the care of Aberdeen’s best doctors. Priest Gordon watched over the last few days of the man he had known from a boy, and gave him the last rites. He died on 12 March. At the Requiem Mass a week later there were two bishops at the head of a large number of clergy, and he was buried alongside two other bishops in the Snow Churchyard. There can be no doubt of Charles Fraser’s orthodoxy. His eulogist praised ‘that eminent man, the champion of faith, the orator of the pulpit, the glory of the priesthood, the light of the sanctuary, the friend of the poor. . . To them he opened wide his heart, which was large enough for every human misery. If his right hand had been gold he would have parted with it in charity to the poor. When asked to make his will, he said: "I have no will but the will of God!", and let it be told to his immortal honour that at his death he left only one single set of clothes; all the rest had gone to clothe the naked poor.’

*Last October a fuller version of the next item appeared in **West Word**, which is produced on the same printer as **Scalan News**:*

Bringing Back the Canon

Canon MacInnes was buried on 11th September. It was a great occasion and St Cumin’s Church was packed. The Right Reverend Monsignor Ewen Macinnes V.G., to give him his full dignity, came from South Lochboisdale in South Uist, and what partly made this a great occasion was the Gaelic spoken by islanders who had come over to pay their last respects. Listening to the voices at the graveside, with Loch Morar in the background, was like being taken back in time. . .



Rain drummed heavily on the roof throughout the service. At the end a Gaelic hymn to Mary, ‘A Mhoire Mhingéal’, was sung. As the church bell tolled, a piper played ‘Ronald MacDonald of Morar’s Lament’. The rain stopped, and many followed to the graveside, as relays of men took the coffin on their shoulders in turn. . .

*As might be surmised, it was your editor who played the Canon to his last resting place by the loch - conscious of the privilege of leading such a procession - and wrote about it afterwards. While walking back to the church car park I fell in with the writer of what follows. Canon MacQueen, though not quite a TV chef, has been filmed for the small screen in a Uist chapel-house kitchen. When my wife and I first met him at Bornish he was on the point of taking his sheep to market – a real ‘character’, in other words. The Canon is now at Northbay, Barra, and on that walk back from the graveyard I asked if he knew Compton Mackenzie, author of **Whisky Galore**, who had a house at Eoligarry. His reply was striking: ‘I buried him – at least I half-buried him!’ Canon MacQueen is ‘the priest’ in his own story.*

Death of a Piper

Angus John MacQueen

It was a bitterly cold day with frequent hail showers. We were clustered in groups outside the little airport building above the Barra beach. Eventually the small plane approached the sand, and Calum Johnston – in full Highland dress despite the cold – began to play. The plane came to rest below us, hailstones battering the *traigh mhor*, and as the door of the plane opened Calum sang a lament on the pipes while the mortal remains of Compton Mackenzie were lowered gently. Calum led the coffin and a small procession to the shelter of the airport shed. When we arrived at the newly opened grave in the ancient churchyard of Cille Bharra, we formed a tight group giving some small shelter to each other. The priest began the committal service – in Latin! The Bishop had insisted that (according to Compton’s wishes) all should be in Latin, not Gaelic as expected by the mourners.

Once again Calum set up his pipes to sing a gentle farewell to his good friend while hail battered the group. Calum was standing on the edge of the grave when suddenly the notes wavered and failed. The priest went to Calum and held him as he was dying. The committal was halted, and the priest gave the Latin service book to his assistant with an instruction to continue. Calum’s mortal remains were carried home for the Vigil.

On the day when this was brought back to mind I had been listening to the piping of Alasdair Roberts and looking across to the seminary island of Eilean Bàn. I thought of Bishop Hugh

MacDonald, who made it his headquarters for the Highlands and Islands. I recalled Lord Lovat, on the island after Culloden and captured further up Loch Morar, becoming the last man to be executed at Tyburn. As Alasdair ended with 'Lochaber No More', I turned from the hills and water so loved by Canon Ewen. May he rest in the peace of Christ.

Come Back to Blairs!

Prue King

Unless you visited in 2003 you will hardly recognise the place. Now that the restoration of the Chapel is complete, and the builders have gone, it is much easier to imagine past times. True, the building seems deserted, but computers chat quietly in offices which occupy rooms in the centre, while the college waits like a chrysalis for its next transformation. Volunteers care for the Chapel and oversee the grounds around it. Others help in the Museum, which now extends from the former Sacristy through the Oratory and into the Cloister, where there are story-boards from the Edinburgh exhibition 'To Bear the Bright Tradition Back'. Visitors often say they remember the former museum as dark and gloomy. Now it gleams with silver, sparkling display cases and lighting on the pictures. Bright paint-work and polished floors show how much it is cherished.

What is there to cherish? One display follows the transition from Scalán to Aquhorthies and thence to Blairs, with pictures of the old houses. There is a portrait of John Menzies, the benefactor who endowed the College, and another of Bishop Aeneas Chisholm who was responsible for major developments at the start of the 20th century. These two seem to look benevolently upon College mementoes and photographs showing the daily life of students. Prominent in the display are postcard-based memories of former students – not always enthusiastic in their comments!

On an adjoining wall hang portraits of ill-fated Stuarts: the Old Pretender and Maria Clementina Sobieski, his consort; Prince Charles Edward Stuart and his brother Cardinal Henry Benedict. A case below contains an exquisite watch with the portrait of Charlotte, Duchess of Albany, as well as other Stuart memorabilia. The third wall is devoted to Mary Queen of Scots, pride of place going to the recently restored Memorial Portrait. It contrasts very effectively with the miniature in a reliquary known as the Blairs Jewel.

The wall with the old vestment chest in front now shows part of the Museum's collection of silver chalices and monstrances. These gleam with a lustre which is well set off by the carved oak. The end cupboards have been transformed into display areas for vestments and other items, while the drawers have been glazed to allow sight of a rich collection of textiles dating from the 15th century. This conversion was made possible by a generous legacy from the late Anne Gallacher. Anne's kindness and that of her family has allowed access to many more items than was possible before, with imaginative use made of free-standing display floor cases.

All these changes have come about through the insight and expertise of David Taylor, the Museum's manager, and a management committee whose members pool a formidable array of skills and experience. Working to a strictly limited budget, their aim is to maximize the assets

of the institution, hosting study days, group visits, school visits, recitals and talks. If you thought Blairs was 'history', think again. It is living history!

Readers Write. . .

I was disappointed to read of Mr Noel Roger arriving at Blairs to find both chapel and museum locked. Can I clarify the situation? The Blairs Museum opens every weekend and holiday Mondays from April to September, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and twelve noon on Sundays. Visits can easily be made outwith these hours by phoning 01224 863767. Last year we welcomed 33 groups in addition to 14 school visits, and individuals are always welcome - by arrangement. The college building has been sold but permission is required for redevelopment. Former priests' rooms on the first floor have been leased for office accommodation, helping to pay for heating and maintenance. Thanks to the dedicated team who look after the estate, there are no blocked gutters or missing slates. The parishioners, who patiently endured builders' dust and scaffolding, now have the renovated Chapel restored to them.

David Taylor, Blairs.

There is a lively atmosphere of volunteers doing things at Blairs, quite unlike what people think of as a 'museum atmosphere'.

Please note that I have changed my address to The Pottery, High Street, as I would not like to miss my Scalan News. I have kept them all from the first issue and look forward to receiving No. 28.

Peter Loftus, Prestonpans.

Sounds like a nice place to stay. Do others have complete sets? They could be valuable.

Looking through the Abernethy parish records for the 18th and 19th centuries I found several references to Charn place-names. My great-great-great-grand-father John Grant married Helen Grant at Old Charn in 1753. I am interested to know if readers know about any of the following: Old Charn, Back Charn, Lite Charn, Alt Charn, Docharn.

James Grant, 130 Dark Lane, Bedworth

WARWICKSHIRE CU12 0JG

. . . and E-Mail

My name is Ian Scott Massie. I read with interest your reference to my great-uncle William Young on the Scalan site. My maternal grandfather Henry Young was also a gilder. I am trying to trace the relatives of William Young and wonder if any of your readers can help.

ism@scottmassie.u-net.com

I was given your address by Father Tom Wynne here in Roybridge. Is it possible to obtain copies of articles in Scalan News 13 and 26 on James Michie etc. My great-great-grandfather Philip Matheson came down to Glenlivet from Gruinard in Gairloch (parents Murdoch and Ann Matheson) in the 1820s. He married James Michie's niece Henrietta Clark and lived with her at Scalan. I am wondering why he chose Glenlivet and whether he converted to Catholicism. The Scalan website is excellent. I will be forwarding my subscription.

Ian Matheson natigh@globalnet.co.uk

Articles were sent, and the query passed to George Watt in Ontario. He has promised more on James Michie's nieces at Scalan. Sandy Matheson will be interested to learn he has an ancestor from Wester Ross!

Winter was very cold here in Ottawa, but I was busy doing family research so it passed quickly. My husband and I plan to go up to the Braes again after seeing what primary sources can be consulted in the Elgin library. I have been immersed in the 1881 census and making a note of relevant homes – practically all of them. The same names and surnames kept coming up, which can be useful. A meeting has been arranged with Ian Cameron Stuart, and I look forward to discussing the ancestors we have in common. It would also be good to meet up with Isobel Grant in Tomintoul and ask her to sign my well-thumbed *Tales of the Braes of Glenlivet*.

Maureen Gibb, gibb@magma.ca

I am Marianne Payten. My husband Jim and I are coming from rural New South Wales to visit the Glenlivet area in May. We would like to make contact with people who know the family history of the area, especially Smiths and Macdonalds. Jim's ancestor Robert Macdonald was born at Morange about 1821 but we do not know who Robert's parents were. A family story says that he was connected with George Smith the Glenlivet distiller and farmer. I saw Veronica Gordon Smith's name on the website and wondered if she was connected with George Smith.

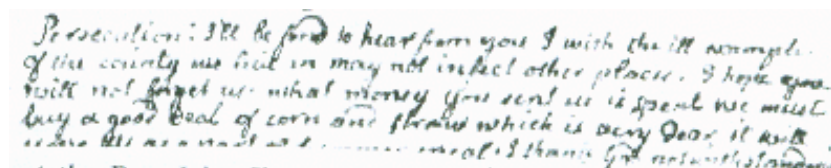
mepayten@westserv.net.au

Veronica made contact. She is enthusiastic about collecting and exhibiting (perhaps on a website) Glenlivet family histories. Remarkably full information was also forthcoming from Andrew Gaffney at Tomnavoulin, partly on the basis of the late Father Donald Grant's research, and it looks as if something really useful will emerge. We hear a lot about Visitscotland these days, mostly negative, but this kind of response really does boost an area's visitor potential. It also takes forward the great work of local historian Victor Gaffney.

Letter from the Lettoch

Veronica Gordon Smith

In 1753 the Lettoch farm in Glenlivet was occupied by my great-great-great-grandfather John Gordon (m. 1734) and his wife Isabella Ross, together their children John, William, Thomas, Helen, Penelope – and perhaps his natural daughter Isobel. The family tenancy began in 1726 and ended in 1922, when my father moved to Inverlochy and then Drumin. After Scalan was closed to students in 1799, and before the erection of a church at Chapeltown, it served as a Mass-centre, Braes folk gathering with their priest the Rev. John Sharp in the kitchen.



*Perseverance: It'll be fine to hear from you I wish the ill example
of the country we live in may not infect other places. I hope you
will not forget us: what money you sent us is spent we must
buy a good deal of corn and straw which is very dear it will
be the same as a small as a small as a small as a*

The letter (BL/3/111/1 (2), Scottish Catholic Archives, Edinburgh [GB 0240]) is dated

‘Lettoch 11th Nov^r 1753’ and initialled W.D. It was addressed to Bishop Alexander Smith at Blackfriar’s Wynd in Edinburgh under the code name Mr Robinson, and taken by a ‘bearer’ for additional security. I am grateful to John Watts for drawing the letter to my attention. W.D. is the Rev. William Duthie, master of Scalán from 1741 to 1758 – a period which included the destruction of the seminary after Culloden. In *Scalan: The Forbidden College, 1716-1799*, Dr Watts describes the situation in the Braes, with William Duthie being sheltered at the Lettoch and other places for fear of capture by night and imprisonment in Banff gaol:

‘The detachment of Pulteney’s Regiment that had been stationed in Upper Banffshire for the past three years had by now given up their post at Scalán and Achnascra, leaving Downan as their only outpost in Glenlivet. . . There was still a military presence in the neighbourhood because . . . some half-dozen men [were] lodged in pairs in several farms in the district. Their sergeant and one private were quartered at Demick-ore a mile-and-a-half from Scalán. . . On 4 October . . . Mr Tyrie [priest in Glenlivet] received word from an inside source that a raid was imminent. The other priests were warned immediately. Mr Duthie left Scalán and made a home for himself at Lettoch farm, close enough to visit the seminary secretly every days at keep it going.’

On 11 October at 11 p.m. the raid on Scalán took place, but Mr Duthie was not to be found. On 11 November he was in the Lettoch writing of his experiences to Bishop Smith. The extract from the final section of the letter is shown actual size: his writing (‘improved’ by ball point to show the 18th century way with run-on sentences) is actual size – small but neat:

‘We have had no search since my last letter but live in continual fear of one. Yet I hope none will happen by the soldiers just now in the country for our party are gone to Corgarff to winter quarters Monday last. The rest will withdraw in eight days time. This would procure us peace till next summer if no orders are sent to Corgarff, but if there are any given to that place it is next to impossible to escape.’

The next sentences electrified me when I first read them. Mr Duthie’s letters are extant only from 1748, but here he compares his current plight with the less stressful period of 1746: ‘I can assure you I never had such difficulty *even in 46* [my emphasis] as I have had these six weeks by past, yet never a whole day from home [Scalán] save a few days at Keithmore and Glenrinnas, in which last place a search was designed had I kept my station which I use to do once a month when the weather will allow. . . I have not been in my own bed two nights since our troubles began, lying many times in a cold barn, at other times in a rainy drafty hole, going to it in the silence of the night and coming away before day. My health has stood it out pretty well.’



Frasers of Strichen

From the wealth of material assembled by James Russell along with Nicholas Coleman, a link has emerged between the Leslie family of Balquhain, otherwise Fetternear, and the Frasers of Strichen. Their connection with the family of Charles Fraser has not been established. On 10 May 1800 at Fetternear House Alexander Fraser of Strichen married Amelia Leslie, oldest daughter of John Leslie of Balquhain. Their son Thomas Alexander was born at Strichen House on 17 June 1802 and baptised a week later by the Rev. James Carruthers. This Thomas A. Fraser fell heir to the Lovat estates in Strathglass and Morar while he was still a minor. After lengthy procedures involving the House of Lords and the Lord Lyon King of Arms he was eventually recognised as 14th Lord Lovat. It is likely that Bishop George Hay presided over the marriage of his parents. After the closure of Scaln Hay took up residence in the successor college of Aquhorties, on the Fetternear estate, and baptised several Leslies. Much followed from this union, not least the founding of Fort Augustus Abbey.

Three Bishops from the Braes of Enzie

Donna Alden-Bugden

The Braes of Enzie (pronounced 'ingy') rise above Fochabers and Gordon Castle, with views over the Moray Firth. As most readers will know, Preshome in Rathven parish was a key centre of Scottish Catholicism until the death of Bishop Kyle in 1869. It is less well known that three bishops of the Western District, which joined Glasgow to the West Highlands in 1828, came from Wellheads and Chapelford in Bellie parish. These are close to the St Ninian's chapel-site and burial ground on Braes of Enzie Farm – see the back-cover map. The bishops were Andrew Scott (1772-1846); John Murdoch (1796-1865); and John Gray (1817-72).

For some time now I have been trying to find out more about my ancestor John Alexander Murdoch. He was the son of Alexander Murdoch and Helen Barron. He was baptised at Clochan (surely Preshome, which is very close) two days after birth on 18 August 1795, and died at Lanark, Ontario, on 9 December 1869. John Alexander was fifteen months older and first cousin to John Murdoch the future bishop - parents John Murdoch of Wellheads and his wife Helen Simpson. The Murdoch cousins were students at Aquhorties, but John Alexander left in the summer of 1815 while John continued his studies at Valladolid. He returned from the Scots College as a priest in 1821.



Dr John Murdoch, Bishop 1833-1865

The relationship between John Alexander and Bishop John is clear; although my ancestor's first name John does not appear on the College roll, Alexander Scott's mother is confirmed as Helen Barron. There is also some evidence to suggest that Bishop John's uncle Alexander Murdoch married the half-sister of Bishop Andrew Scott. Perhaps some reader can help? Anyone who would like to view the file built up with help from researchers in Scotland, or who has any suggestions about how the families of these three Scottish bishops were interlinked, should e-mail me at nurse@ualberta.net (I am a nurse practitioner in Winnipeg, Canada). Meanwhile here is some interesting human detail from letters which have recently come to hand.

Bishop Scott often wrote to the Northern District's Bishop James Kyle at Preshome. Scott, born at Chapelford, retired to Greenock after handing over Glasgow to Bishop Murdoch - who was born at Wellheads. Scott came north by paddle-steamer each summer to visit Highland missions, sometimes returning to his native Braes of Enzie. The first letter, written at Greenock on 9 November 1837, mentioned £20 'to be paid by me to you for my sister and her husband.' The sister was Janet Scott, who had married a builder: 'How much I may be due to William Gray after his return home I cannot say till he gives me an account of how he expended all the money I gave him during the summer to pay the other workmen employed, to buy materials &c., &c., and for his own subsistence money.'

Mistress Gray featured again on 15 February 1839, at a time when her son the future bishop was studying in Rome: 'I am much obliged to you for the information you give me relative to my sister. A more thoughtless woman I never knew. To have three of her children at home with herself in such a dear winter as this, and knowing at the same time that her husband could

not get constant work in his trade in winter, and consequently could send her little or nothing, is madness in the extreme, if she could have got them to any place even for their meat without wages. As spring is now coming on, I hope you will have the charity to get Mr Mac or some of your clergy to urge her to get a place for them in spring whatever little wages may be offered.' The Rev. James Mac-Naughten was priest to the Catholics of Bellie.



Dr John Gray, Bishop 1862-72

Almost a year later Scott wrote on 15 January 1840: 'I advised Gray to stop some time in Aberdeen as he went north, to look about him and see if he could get into some steady work there, and if he did so to go to the Enzie and take his family to Aberdeen. They would be much cheaper together than separated, and there would be a chance of getting some of his children into some public work. I hope you will have the goodness to advise them to do so when you see them. Should they leave before Whitesunday I shall pay the rent of the house at Oran at that term for them.' The farm of Oran is next to Preshome.

On 30 May 1840 the Rev. William Caven, who followed 'Mr Mac', wrote to Bishop Scott. He had paid a social call after leaving home at Auchinhalrig, near the Tynet chapel: 'P.S. I am sorry I have been under the necessity of opening the letter after it had been closed to say that your brother is very poorly. Last Tues-day I called accidentally at Chapelford on my way to Preshome and found him in bed, but as I thought at the time nowise seriously ill. He had been down at Port Gordon a few days before and caught cold by getting wet.' Perhaps someone can help by finding the Chapelford brother in the 1841 census: despite receiving communion from Mr Caven prior to the last rites, he survived:

'I was this day sent for and found him much worse. . . He has had scarcely any rest these three days and nights past, from coughing and difficulty in breathing. Dr Milne was with him this morning. . . I consider him in a very dangerous state, and he thinks himself dying. I administered the viaticum as he was anxious for it, and he was afraid he might not be able to receive afterwards from the closing at his breast. I will call tomorrow evening after returning from Fochabers and if he is not better I will probably give Extreme Unction. I told him I was writing to you, and he expressed a strong desire to see you. I much fear the worst.'



Dr Andrew Scott, Bishop 1828-1846

Scott received this at Fort William. He may have continued up the Caledonian Canal, then carried on by turn-pike road from Inverness to Fochabers. He wrote to Caven from Greenock on 1 July 1840: 'I thank you kindly for your account of my brother's recovery and for your attention to him during his illness. I hope he will take care and not expose himself to wet and cold again.'

Correspondence: Alasdair Roberts

3 Bracara, MORAR PH40 4PE.

alsadair_bracara@hotmail.com

