



No. 22, May 2001

'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 recorded concerning them will be recorded with care. . . ' (Rev. John Geddes, Rector of Scalan 1762-65)

The AGM of the Scalan Association will start with Mass at Scalan at 12 noon on Tuesday 5 June. A cost-saving decision made at last year's AGM was that Scalan News would come out in May, rather than June, so that the

minutes could be sent in the same envelope. This has meant a paper cover to keep the weight down, but no harm in that. It is another step towards streamlining the operation: not so long ago our Secretary Jane McEwan was addressing 600-plus envelopes by hand. Lunch will be provided as usual, and Jane requests that those who plan to eat should send £6 on top of the £5 annual subscription. Apart from saving committee members the trouble of collecting money between meal and meeting, this will help the catering process. The Annual Pilgrimage Mass will, as always, be at 4 p.m. on the first Sunday of July which falls this year on 1st July.

Lady Lovat School in Morar is highlighted on the first page to atone for a mistake about the name on p. 10 and also to explain the new production process. This used to be based in Aberdeen (editor's home and place of work) and Dundee, which became the other campus of Northern College. As luck would have it, the college's print unit was based in Dundee, which meant 70-mile journeys to collect boxes of Scalan News. The service was excellent (low price, no VAT, and turn round within the working week) and the Association owes a debt of gratitude to Andy Whyte and staff. The same is true for teachers and pupils in several Aberdeen primary schools, and in particular Pat Pritchard and her P7 classes at St Joseph's School who have now been succeeded as packagers by the P4-7 children of Lady Lovat School - both local pupils and those from a wider area who attend the Gaelic Medium Unit. In exchange they were told the story of 'Lord Lovat at Eilean Ban': Ann Dean's drawing opposite shows one of the scenes in it.

Morar Station House is where your editor has been acquiring some basic skills as a printer for the monthly West Word, and this issue of Scalan News is being produced there. Desktop publishing up the lochside remains ridiculously primitive for this day and age (Applemac LC475, Stylewriter, scissors-and-paste). The West Word printing machine lurches between blotchy photos and pale print depending which button is pressed, but the whole process is very cheap. There is a super-duper computer in the Station House (yes, trains do rumble past every couple of hours) but it is not ours. It falls into the same 'possible' category as trying to get back on the internet after power surges destroyed modems - hence disappearance of e-mail address.

This issue is being produced under pressure as the clock ticks down to the closing time of the office with the last photocopier in Mallaig, needed to reduce pages to 70 per cent. Tomorrow it will be 'finished' (collated, folded and stapled) for £70 by Printsmith in Fort William, then back to Lady Lovat School for packaging. Please play your part by sending £5 or more to:

Mrs McEwan, Ogilvie Cottage, Gallowhill, Glenlivet, BALLINDALLOCH AB37 9DL.

## Committee News

The Chairman's Report to last year's AGM drew attention to a lack of meetings due to the illness of several committee members, so it is good to report a clean bill of health. Dr David McNamee and his wife Aileen have been added to the strength and the latter is helping Jane McEwan. The two most recent meetings were on 23 February and 1 May. The interior work at Scalan has been held up this spring due to the foot and mouth crisis, but painting of downstairs corridor and refectory (to the right of the front door) will be completed when the plaster dries and before the AGM. Castlegate Design have been asked to instruct Beverly & Sons to carry out repair work on chimneys, and Crown Estates have been approached over the repair of pot holes and the planting of rowan trees at the toilet end of the building. Funds are up somewhat on what appears in the Treasurer's Report.



### Citizen of the Year

From The Northern Scot

‘Monsignor John Copland of St Thom-as’ RC Church has been named Keith Citizen of the Year 2000. The octogenarian has devoted his life to his vocation and has no plans to retire, even though he is battling throat and lung cancer. Mgr Copland’s 80th birthday on Boxing Day saw 240 people attend his weekday mass, and 130 cards were sent to the well-loved priest.’

### Blairs Reunion

Hugh Farmer

A version of what follows was prepared for The Universe. Hugh kindly agreed to share it with our readers.

Former pupils of St Mary’s College Blairs are ready to keep the history of Scotland’s Highland seminaries at Scalan, Aquhorties and Blairs alive in the Church. And they want the former students who attended the senior seminaries in Scotland and abroad, whether they were ordained or not, to join them. For they feel that they also have a role to play in the Church, even a supportive one to the dwindling number of priests in the country.

This was one of the main proposals made at a reunion which took place at Blairs, the former junior seminary, on 28 April 2001. It was a day of nostalgia as the former students strolled round the grounds and the majestic granite

building which was once their home. Many were seeing it for the first time since they left. Almost certainly this was the last time any old student would see Blairs before work begins to turn it into something quite different.

The future of Blairs will be decided very soon. James Adams is in close contact with the Muir Group, on behalf of the 'old boys', and he unveiled the latest planning application. The 1986 agreement which followed the closure of the college included a clause providing additional cash to the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland once development began. Fifteen years have passed without any planning permission being granted for the 100-acre estate. Early plans to build an urban village for up to 5,000 people were turned down, to the disappointment of Prince Charles who is a royal neighbour on Deeside. At the reunion it was announced that permission was now likely to be granted by local councillors for an 18-hole golf course and a luxury hotel.



Mostly the mood of the day was one of nostalgia. Paddy Sweeney, head teacher of Edinburgh's Holyrood Secondary, set the tone of the day as he mimicked rectors and members of staff. Men wept tears of laughter as Paddy made their memories come alive. The oldest Blairentian present was George Mackenzie, who was at Blairs from 1928 to 1934 before he went on to senior seminary in Paris. This was his first time back. He left Paris and returned home to his family home at Culter, outside Aberdeen, in 1937. He led us through the corridors and reminisced:

'I had an uncle on the staff, Fr William Wilson, who went to a parish near Elgin when I left for France. In those days life was hard at Blairs but you just got used to it. I only lived a few miles away but did not get home at Christmas or Easter - none of the boys did. I remember we got one egg a year and that was on Easter Sunday. Every morning we had porridge, and dinner was usually shepherd's pie or stew, followed by rice or bread pudding.'

George joined the Merchant Navy, and after coming ashore spent most of his time in hotel management. Married with a daughter in California, he lives in Durham. George would like to trace two old boys who were at Blairs with him, D. J. Boyle and A. J. Boyle. 'I don't know what happened to them but I have a feeling they were ordained,' he explained.

Mgr Boyle is retired at Kinross. A long-term member of the Scalan Association, his photograph of a 1960s group of the Blairs Society was published here in June 1996. The late Canon Charles McGregor was able to identify all

eighteen clergymen present. Danny Boyle went from Blairs to the Institut Libre de St Lo in 1935 and to St Sulpice a year later.

Young men were also there on the day. Tom Knight, a student from 1975 to 1979, is now a management consultant at Weston-super-Mare. He brought his wife Kathleen north to show her his alma mater. Then there was Joe Meehan, at Blairs from 1943-46, who went on to senior seminary in Paris before returning to become a student of Glasgow University. Already head teacher of St Bride's in East Kilbride, he emigrated to Canada and was put in charge of Holy Cross School in Port Colborne. Joe now lives at Niagara Falls, and is father to six and grandfather to twenty-one.

He said a short prayer at the grave of his student chum Alfred Farrell who died on 25 January 1946. He said: 'I remember Alfred had a twin brother. My memories of Blairs are mostly happy, but there are also sad ones. Today is a great day, but probably the last time we will be able to see the place as we knew it.' He and Peter Cairns (1942-46), who both came from St Joseph's Woodside in Glasgow, recalled that they were given a Pyke and Baps each year - Blairs slang for a suit and pair of shoes. Peter said: 'We are enjoying the day together and remembering our friends. It's my first time back and I'm very glad I came.'

Mass was concelebrated by Bishop Mario Conti, himself an old boy, and two former rectors Canon Bill Anderson and Mgr Ben Donachie. As they knelt in the chapel everyone felt emotional, for it was here they prayed for guidance so many years ago as they decided on their futures. Whatever may happen to the college buildings, the chapel which played such a big part in their lives will remain as they knew it.

## Departures

The man who raised the last building at Scalan was first to leave it. John Geddes returned briefly to his old room in 1793, health shattered by a walking tour to John o' Groats. He told his fellow bishop George Hay that the prospect of spending winter as an invalid in the Braes appalled him: Geddes was carried from Glenlivet to Aberdeen. There, unable 'even to move a fly from his face', he died in the year of Scalan's departure from the Highlands.

In July 1799 six students transferred to Aquhorties, set in rolling country near the market town of Inverurie. The new seminary had to provide a complete education, with abroad colleges closed by the French Revolution. That meant ten years from leaving home to ordination, with students at all levels from Elementary Latin to Theology.

Aquhorties was clearly superior to Scalan. No longer did boys wash away sleep in the burn after sharing a dormitory under heather thatch. Farm work was forgotten, and servants prepared these young gentle-men for the dignity of priesthood. Maybe something was lost. Mean-while the last 'West Scalan' struggled on, short of books and money, in a sea loch near Oban. Five Gaelic-speakers came in from Lismore to Aquhorties a year before the final move to Blairs. It was accomplished in style, according to the Aberdeen priest who paid the bills:

'Long before the buildings at Blairs were completed, the people at the Seminary of Aquhorties had become impatient for a removal. At length Tuesday the second day of June 1829 was fixed upon. On the morning of that day the whole family, Superiors and Students (twenty-six in number) came down to Inverury where they took the Fly-boat on the canal to Aberdeen. After dining they arrived in five carriages at Blairs.'

## Moray Church Trail

Dom Giles Conacher OSB

Moray is an ancient Scottish province centered on the Cathedral City of Elgin. It lies on the south of the Moray Firth, in the north east of Scotland between Aberdeen and Inverness. Moray climbs from a fertile coastal plain up to hills and moorlands, and the rivers Spey and Findhorn run through it. Picts, Romans, Vikings and Normans have all been here and left their mark. Prosperous or ravaged by war at different periods, Moray people have built

as their purses and theology inspired.

Were our first Christians Romans, or did Christianity come later? Certainly Moray's Christianity is ancient, and its monuments remain. Probably the earliest distinguishable are churches like Birnie or Mortlach. The Middle Ages gave us Elgin Cathedral, monastic Pluscarden and Kinloss, and Elgin's Greyfriar's. The Reformation adapted and built anew, in different architectural and religious flavours, as later once more did Catholics - sometimes deliberately hidden, like Tynet and Scalan, sometimes landmarks of civic and religious pride, like St Lawrence's at Forres or St Peter's, Buckie. Newest of the Moray churches are the rebuilt Kirk at Knockando, and St Aidan's ecumenical centre at RAF Lossiemouth.

This diversity would have astonished our ancestors of any epoch, but not more than the co-operation and goodwill which is evident among Christians of 21st century Moray. Unity without uniformity, charity in diversity - in buildings and also in people - gives life to Christianity in Moray. Inside the churches visitors may admire a rich heritage of stained glass, from Burne-Jones and Strachan, as well as the work of living masters like Gilbert Taylor. Outdoors, the burial grounds are full of interesting monuments. If you like digging up your ancestors (please replace the turf!) Moray Council's local history database will help you find them. This is a genealogist's paradise.

#### How to Use the Trail

The trail is organised around a few major centres, always open, from which you can obtain information and literature. You can plan to visit one site, and leave it at that, or one thing can lead to another. . . We ask you to remember that many of these places are still at the heart of living Christian communities and used for the worship of God from cradle to grave. Please show respect for people's feelings and places of worship.

Dom Giles understates the importance of Pluscarden, but thousands of visitors do find their way to the Abbey every year. The Scalan Association welcomes this initiative which should lead in-creasing numbers of people from Elgin's ruined cathedral to the restored seminary.

#### Readers Write

My sister in Portsmouth has sent me a copy of Scalan News along with Tales of the Braes of Glenlivet. I read with great interest of the work being done by Messrs. Beverly. I was parish minister at Rhynie from 1959 to 1966, and had the opportunity to admire the craftsmanship of George and William's father which has been passed on down the generations of that family.

Rhynie Parish Church had a very severe outbreak of dry rot, and all the work of removing pews individually and later replacing them after a new floor had been made, plus the re-positioning of some of the pews and all the painter work, was undertaken by Mr Beverly. I shall never forget the expertise with which this huge job was done. The architect was Mr William Willet from Elgin, who said to me at the conclusion of the restoration, 'I shall take that man anywhere, any time.'

The Beverly family have remained our very close friends all down the years. I am delighted that they are doing work at Scalan.

Rev. J. F. Scott, Callander.

By coincidence the man who, on 29 April, brought Martin Farrelly and his stained glass from Aboyne to Mallaig, whence it went out to Canna with him the next day, was William Beverly. Bill and his wife Mabel came up the side of Loch Morar for a bite to eat (and a sight of the spring lambs) before returning to Rhynie in the firm's van. Martin had written to the editor long before.

You describe the excellent work being carried out at Scalan by George Beverly and his team. George and myself are involved in the renovation work at Achill, Canna, George fabricating oak window frames to which I will supply the stained glass. He recently made two superb easels for my studio at St Margaret's Aboyne which enable me to adjust the glass to any size of window. I can confirm that 'Scalan is in the safe hands of a family firm which is used to country ways and conditions.'

When I make delivery of what you described as the 'see-through' Sanday shrine Madonna by Dom Ninian Sloan OSB, my mentor at Pluscarden, I will offer a version of it for Scalan News. As a Scalan member, it gives me great satisfaction to return this to its site by the bridge linking Canna to Sanday. The Marquis of Bute's former church of St Edward is now open as a study centre, for bird-watchers in particular, and the little chapel at Achill will soon be dedicated to St Columba. I hope that the new stained glass windows reflect the Islanders' Columban roots through Iona. On a lighter note, I read this in a book called West Highland Summer: 'Rum Canna Coll Eigg Muck.'

Martin N. Farrelly, Aboyne.

I was pleased to receive the latest Scalan News. I have always been interested in that great and holy place, and often promised myself a pilgrimage, but am now too well on in years to have any prospect of getting up there. I am now eighty-one, but still like your magazine. I was born in Glasgow and went to St Mungo's Academy. The war brought me to the Westminster Diocese, but I am still conscious of my roots.

Canon Charles McGowan, London.

I found the last Scalan News of great interest, as I did Tales of the Braes of Glenlivet. After reading this book, memories of my own childhood were reawakened, since much of what was described in it was not dissimilar to my own recollections of life in Lower Glenlivet.

I was reminded of this again by Isobel Grant's 'More Tales of the Braes of Glenlivet' in Scalan News. The Dr Elder whom she describes was the same doctor who brought me into the world on that stormy day in March referred to in my story. Her article reminded me that his party piece was 'The Lum Hat Wantin the Croon', and I recall him singing it at concerts in the Glenlivet Village Hall.

Dr Norman Imlah, Birmingham.

You asked for information on the Rev. Alexander Bennett, who was brought to Tombae in the blizzard of March 1924 by Dr Imlah's father. I seem to recall that the priest himself raised pedigree cattle during his twenty-five years in Glenlivet, so the association with the grievie at Minmore would have been kept up. He appears in Peter Anson's book The Caravan Pilgrim:

'I pointed out the famous Minmore distillery to my companion and then, on reaching the hamlet of Tomnavoulin, we turned left along a narrow road.

Isobel Grant recalls: 'When the burns got bigger only one bridge broke, on the way to Tombae Church. It was never replaced, and there's still a bit of it left. It was on the road from Croftbain - people from as far up as Knockandhu went to Mass at Tombae on Sundays.'

'I walked on ahead as I wanted to find out from the priest, who was awaiting our arrival, where the horses were to graze. It was about nine o'clock when we arrived at Tombae. . . Fr. Bennett had almost given up hope of our arrival that night. He pointed out a field for the horses and told us that we could park the van in a yard behind the "chapel house".

'It was so hot that we decided to sleep in our little tent in preference to the stuffy caravan, which felt like an oven. But we were rudely awakened about 4 a.m. It was raining hard and the water had found its way through the canvas. We made a hasty retreat into the caravan, one of us laden with blankets, the other with pillows. . . Tombae certainly seemed a charming spot during the three days we spent there, and nothing could have exceeded the kind hospitality shown us by Fr. Bennett behind whose presbytery the caravan rested.'

It was during this rest period, in a pilgrimage which began at Windsor on Ash Wednesday 1935, that Anson went further: 'From Chapeltown I took a rough track through fields and then across moorland. My way led me still further into the heart of the Braes where the steep mountains seemed to prevent any further advance.' Here he discovered the neglected seminary building, its gable seemingly beyond repair: 'It is a pity that Scalan cannot be purchased by the Scottish bishops and put to a better use.' The rest is history - the history of the Scalan Association.

Frances Bruce, Aberdeen.

Your notice of Aberdeenshire's Historic Kirkyards ends: 'Unfortunately the site which includes the last resting place of Bishop George Hay, St Ninian's at Fetternear, does not come under the control of the local authority.' In fact St Ninian's is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 that gives the local authority a locus in this case. St Ninian's is listed as a category C (S). It had also been identified in Aberdeenshire Council's survey of Historic Kirk-yards as being possibly at risk. The authority remains concerned over the state of the entrance archway and the general condition of the structure [a 19th century chapel built by the Leslie family to dignify their family vault] which has been destabilised by stone robbing relatively recently.

Aberdeenshire Council is currently promoting a Heritage Lottery Fund application for a major three-year project on its Historic Kirkyards. The aim is to consolidate and interpret a certain proportion of them. It is too early to say whether, should the application be successful, further work could be promoted at St Ninian's. The Council remains keen to work with the owners, who appear to be the Roman Catholic Diocese of Aberdeen, to ensure the future of this important historic site.

Dr Ian Shepherd, Aberdeen.

I was delighted to receive Scalan News and sat down to read it straight away. I also enjoyed West Highland Priests of the Scots College Rome, which my sister Mairi MacLellan sent me. It helped my research into family priests of the 19th century, and I was pleased to see my Great-uncle Canon Angus MacDonald in print at No. 35. I sent my notes to Mgr Roderick MacDonald at Ballachulish and received a lovely letter from him promising to help. I sent copies of the Historic Catholic Sites pamphlet to an Episcopalian lady in Australia whom I correspond with by email on family history. Her great-great-grandfather's brother at Murlaggan, near Roybridge and Cille Choirill, was the grandfather of Mother Mary McKillop who is in line to become Australia's first saint.

Gay Giulianotti, Perth.



Thank you for Scalan News, and for promoting me to an 'angel' - I hope I don't suffer a fall! As I write, the snow is lying and it is a real January scene here at Pluscarden. It was very kind of you to so amply cover your visit, and with such zest and humour. All the brothers much appreciated it.

Fr Martin OSB, Pluscarden.

## Mass at Loch Morar

Shortly after he arrived to take charge of the parish of Morar and Mallaig (with its associated charges of Knoydart, Rum and Canna) Fr Michael Hut-son said mass on the seminary island of Eilean Ban in Loch Morar. That was in June 1996, 250 years after Culloden. Occupying forces came to the island with orders to destroy house and chapel as happened at Scalan, and Fr Michael was aware of it. He has since led parishioners on summer pilgrimages to other mass centres: InbhirBeag, Brinacory, Tarbert, Canna and the Tigh-Phobuill or people's house, far up Loch Morar at Romasaig.

As a music teacher in North Uist, Michael Hutson became friendly with Fr James MacNeil, who was then priest in Benbecula. In the course of time he became a priest himself, succeeding his mentor in Morar. Fr James has recently come back to the Highlands from lecturing in Glasgow University. In June Fr Michael starts a two-year course at Notre Dame university in Indiana. Thus it was a uniquely significant occasion on Saturday 6 May when the two priests said mass together on Eilean Ban. As well as members of the local Church of Scotland (Ministers' Fraternals have also reached the laity) there was a large party over from Skye and, from Dornie in the Aberdeen Diocese, where Fr James makes good use of the Skye Bridge in linking two communities.

We had sunshine without midges, beautiful singing led by the Morar choir, bagpiping for the picnic, and a short less exciting version of the story (over) which local children had heard the day before. There was a good proportion of young people among the seventy who were ferried across, and looking up into the trees before preaching Fr James said his text should be 'Zacchaeus, come down!' In fact his theme was the need for faith to be passed on by Christians who were 'convinced and convincing'. As a sort of early Pentecost in tongues, mass ended with 'Gu robh Chrìosda dlùth riom air gach taobh', and 'Salve Regina': as Father Michael recalled, the boys who studied on Eilean Ban would have ended their days with this, the Night Prayer of the Church.

## Lord Lovat at Eilean Ban

This is the story of an island in Loch Morar, the deepest lake in Britain joined to the sea by the shortest river. There is a group of islands near the shallow end, and the first one you see coming from Morar village is Eilean Ban. That Gaelic name means the White Island, from the sandy beach which could once be seen from the shore. You don't see it now because the level of the water has risen, due to the hydro-electric dam at the Falls of Morar.

Another thing which has changed about the island is that it is now covered in trees and bushes. Some of these have been cut back recently, with a new jetty to encourage visitors. The islands were planted quite a long time ago by the owner of the estate, Lord Lovat, and the Lady Fraser School is named after his wife.

The story is about an earlier Lord Lovat who came to the island when it was still owned by the MacDonalds of Morar. They were in the area from ancient times. At the time I'm going to tell you about, in the early 1700s, a school was opened on Eilean Ban for boys who thought they might like to be priests, like Father Michael. Everybody in Morar spoke Gaelic, but Mass was said in Latin so they had to learn it. You can read about the

school, or seminary, in a book called 'A Cairn of Small Stones'.

Eilean Ban was also the head-quarters for all the priests and Catholics of the West Highlands. Nearly every-one from Knoydart down to Glenuig was Catholic then, and so were the people of Eigg, Canna, Uist and Barra. There were no roads, and priests travelled by boat when they could. If there was a child to be baptised in Knoydart, the priest would get someone to sail him up the loch to Tarbet, and someone else to take him over Loch Nevis.

A short time before the exciting part of the story, a priest called Hugh Mac-Donald became the people's first Bishop. He was a brother of the Laird of Morar, Angus Roy MacDonald, who lived at Cross farm. Bishop Hugh studied Latin on Eilean Ban as a boy, but at the time I'm telling you about the seminary was at Guidal near Arisaig. Eilean Ban still had the Bishop's house and a chapel. Nowadays Bishop Ian Murray's house is beside the Catholic Cathedral at Oban.



#### Bonnie Prince Charlie

1745 is such a famous date in Scottish history that the Rising of that year is called the '45. The cover of a book shows 'Lord Lovat of the '45'. Another shows the man it was about, 'Bonnie Prince Charlie' - handsome Prince Charles, whose Gaelic name was Tearlach. He came to this part of Scotland to raise an army for his father in Rome, because many people thought he should be brought back and crowned King James III of Great Britain.

The place where Bonnie Prince Charlie came ashore from a French ship near Arisaig is signposted 'The Prince's Cairn'. The flat place where the Highlanders gathered to become an army is at Glenfinnan, with its monument at the head of Loch Shiel. When the Prince's banner was raised on a flagpole, Bishop Hugh blessed it, and the men prayed they would come home safe. These Highlanders won their first battle, and marched right down to the middle of England. Few people came out to join their army, so they turned north again. The 'Forty-five ended with the last battle which ever took place in Britain, at Culloden near Inverness on 16th April 1746.

#### The Last Battle

The Highlanders were tired and hungry that day. They had no cannons but still expected to win, as usual, by charging straight at the enemy with claymore and targe. But the redcoat soldiers had practised using their bayonets, and the Highlanders could not break through. After half an hour Bonnie Prince Charlie ordered them to retreat.

Let's not think about the wounded Highlanders: the leader of the winning side is remembered as 'Butcher' Cumberland. Let's follow the MacDonalds back to Morar. The redcoats advanced into the Highlands to punish the people for rebelling, and also to search for Tearlach. He was in Uist then, looking out for ships that might rescue him, and came to Morar soon after - but that's another story. This one goes on with the report of an English officer, but the 'Forty-five was not just about England versus Scotland. Some Highlanders were old enemies to the MacDonalds, especially the Campbells. They wore kilts, not red coats, and pinned a red ribbon on their

bonnets. Tearlach's followers wore the White Cockade. Here is the officer's report:

'On the 8th June 1746, Major-General Campbell sailing with the bulk of his forces from Tobermory up Loch Sunart, he detached Captain Fergusson of the "Furnace" to look for the Pretender's son and other rebel chiefs.' The cover of 'Summer Hunting a Prince', gives an idea of this, but the map shows that the searchers did not know that Loch Morar existed. However Captain Fergusson learned that 'Lord Lovat, with his servants and a guard of well-armed and resolute men, had retired to an island in Loch Morar.'



#### Lord Lovat

Lord Lovat was old and hardly able to walk. Several drawings were done of him at the time, by enemies, which made him look quite ugly. The officer's report (which appeared in 'The Scots Magazine') goes on: 'In this pleasant little island his Lordship lived with MacDonald of Morar, the proprietor of it, his brother Bishop Hugh MacDonald, and several others of that rebellious family. Here they thought themselves perfectly safe, having brought all the boats on the lake to their island; never once suspecting the possibility of His Majesty's forces being able to bring any boats from the sea over land into the lake. Three hundred men were quickly landed from the King's ships.'

Picture the scene on Eilean Ban. We don't know when the enemy arrived, only that they left Tobermory on 8th June. Maybe it was as late as the 16th, a month after the battle of Culloden, with the men's wounds beginning to heal. They must surely have prayed with Bishop Hugh in the chapel during their time of danger. And they had this old man Lord Lovat to look after. It's difficult to understand the order of events from the report. Boats were finally carried into Loch Morar from the sea, but it took them some time to find Morar Bay. The first troops were put on shore near Arisaig.

Captain Fergusson commanded the ship, but there were two other captains in charge of soldiers. Both had the same name: 'Captain Dougall Campbell of Achachrosan and Captain Dougall Campbell of Cruachan, east of Oban, were in Moidart and Arisaig, where they found a great quantity of arms [swords and muskets] and forty barrels of gunpowder hid among rocks and woods.' But now the Campbells lost their way - perhaps a MacDonald helped them lose it! There is a short path of only three miles from Borrodale to Scamadale on Loch Morar, but they went round by 'a most difficult and dangerous march of nine miles from Arisaig to Morar over inconceivably rugged rocks, where oft-times but one man abreast could clamber.

#### At Loch Morar

'Upon their arrival at the lake, they immediately spread themselves opposite to the isle and in view of the rebels.' I picture them coming round from Scamadale to Rhubana, within shouting distance: 'The rebels, concluding themselves quite free from danger, fired upon our people, at the same time calling them insulting names being near enough to be heard.' The Campbells shouted Gaelic insults too, and fired back. A Londoner called Jim Emmerson, who has been coming to Morar with his brother since they were boys, wrote last month about what they discovered in their wet suits diving at Eilean Ban - a lead musket ball half an inch in diameter, 'found in the

southern part of the lagoon in just a few feet of water.’ He added: ‘A lot of the area round the island is very silty, so perhaps there is more to be found.’

The officer goes on to describe the shock being prepared for the Mac-Donalds: ‘The King’s ships had sailed round to that part of the coast where boats had little more than a mile to be carried overland to the lake. The rebels immediately lost all courage upon observing the boats moving overland towards the lake, and suddenly taking to their boats they rowed up the lake with utmost speed, so much that though the Argyleshire men pursued on both sides of the lake and our own boats followed as soon as they could be got into the water, yet all the rebel Mac-Donalds escaped into the mountains - except Bishop MacDonald who was arrested and brought back to the island, together with the boats of those rebels.’

### Eilean Ban Invaded

A man told me recently he heard from Canon MacInnes (who was priest here) that the soldiers and sailors did not destroy the house, but only removed the thatched roof. That may be right, but according to ‘The Scots Magazine’ there was quite a bit of destruction and no doubt a bonfire of books:



‘They found the Bishop’s house and chapel, which the sailors quickly gutted and demolished, merrily adorning them-selves with the spoils of the chapel.’ In other words they dressed up as priests for a laugh. Bishop Hugh wasn’t laugh-ing, but he would have been glad that the best vestments had been taken down the loch. They are kept safe behind glass in Morar Church.

What happened to the old man? ‘Upon examining the prisoners, it was concluded that Lord Lovat’s lameness must have made it impossible for him to travel in such a rugged country, and that he must probably lie concealed in one of the numberless caves at the upper end of the lake.’ It took three days of searching before one of the Captain Dougall Campbells ‘found that unhappy Lord lying on two feather beds not far from the side of the lake.’ That was at Meoble, or maybe Romasaig. Another version of the story is that Lord Lovat sent a messenger asking to be taken in.

### Lord Lovat’s Lament

When I started to learn the pipes, about your age, one of the first tunes I played was ‘Lord Lovat’s Lament’. Laments are sad and slow, and I could never understand why it was played quickly. It has to do with the way he left Morar: ‘His Lordship was put into one of our boats and rowed down the lake. At the lower end the sailors “made a run with him” over land to the seaside, the pipers all the while playing the tune called Lord Lovat’s march, with which his Lordship pretended to be pleased.’

There are pictures of Lord Lovat in England. He was kept prisoner in the Tower of London, and went to the Houses of Parliament for trial. He was tried in the House of Lords and sentenced to death by the axe. Great crowds turned out to see the execution at Tyburn, and stands were erected like a modern football stadium. He was proud to die a Catholic. Word had got reached London about the priests’ vestments on Eilean Ban, and later a rumour started that his ghost haunted the Tower of London. The vestments he was shown in, with his head tucked

underneath his arm, make a final link with Morar.

### The Duchess of Gordon

Further to what has appeared here about events following the death of the second Duke of Gordon, here is an extract from a letter of 29 March 1729 by the Rev. James Carnegie, then in Edinburgh, to William Stuart who represented the Scottish Catholic Mission in Rome. 'Mr' Gordon is the bishop who founded the Scalan seminary.

Mr Gordon is come safe and in good health to Edinburgh. The bad accounts we had before of the Duke of Gordon's death are as we heard at first. He was really taken prisoner by one Grant, a Captain of one of the Highland Independent Companies, but the Duchess of Gordon caused immediately set him at liberty knowing it to be false that he and the small handful of Catholics there about designed to carry off the young Duke. He writes to me she is very friendly to him, and he hopes to procure great favours from her for the Catholics [including the continuation of Scalan] under her son, but he dares not speak to her of the pacton made between her deceased husband and her that the sons were to be educated in the fathers religion and the Daughters in the Mothers, she is so much byassed the other way.

### From Canna to Morar

Martin Farrelly has featured in the last two issues and will do so again. He spent part of Monday 7 May at St Cumin's Morar examining the work of those who went before him in the art and craft of making stained glass windows. He spent a considerable time on the altar admiring the windows of John Duncan, especially the one on the left which shows St Columba supported by two angels in a composition which conveys both strength and repose. Then, after letters back and forth about Canna, he finally met the parish priest for both places, Fr Michael Hutson.

Martin spent four days on Canna, checking last year's windows at St Edward's and installing this year's at St Columba's, Achill, the heart of the island's Christian origins. Martin also brought back the restored Madonna to the island, and he is confident that it will grace the bridge from Canna to Sanday for many years to come since it is now better adapted for the Atlantic storm path!

Martin is an old family friend, and was delighted when his few days in Morar, after Canna, coincided with school holidays, so that our daughter Catherine and six-year-old Thomas were visiting from the east coast. She is an artist on paper, he in glass, and they both tried their hands at producing an illustration for Scalan News. Neither will be wasted.



When Martin was about Thomas's age he became afflicted with meningitis, and has been profoundly deaf ever since - but without losing his distinctive Dublin accent! Despite the handicap of more than half a century, Martin is a spirit-ual, cheerful extrovert, and made new friends every day in Morar, not least on the seminary island of Eilean Ban. He will always be welcome in the west.



## Glenlivet Recollections

Georgina McAllister

Mrs McAllister (née Grant) is a long-term member of the Scalan Association and represents the Avonside Conservation Group. She wrote in response to Dr Imlah's query.

Father Bennett of Tombae was a great friend of my parents - Bob and Gladys Grant of Auchorachan - all over the years from his coming to Tombae until they moved to Blairnamarrow, Tomin-toul, in 1935 when I was ten years old. Blairnamarrow was my father's family home, farmed by generations right up until my cousin Alick Grant sold up and retired to Tomintoul last year. At Glen-livet School I remember a Peter Imlah.

Isobel Grant is very wrong in say-ing that Irene Tocher married John Mc-Grath. She married Bill Grant of the Grant Backside family and is still mar-ried to him.

An apology is due to Mrs Irene Grant who was misleadingly linked with John McGrath in the last issue. She was a small child then, and he died shortly after the concerts described by Isobel Grant. The fault is entirely the editor's. Mrs McAllister again:

My mother first came to the Braes on holiday as a young woman and while there she met my father. She stayed with Mrs Grant and often told us of the three little girls - Mary, Meggie and Isobel - going to bed looking like little angels in their long white nighties, long blonde hair, and carrying their candles. Mum kept up the friendship with their mother until she died.

Isobel mentions Mrs Grant of Auchorachan singing 'Ye Banks and Braes'. Older Glenlivet folk will remember how accomplished a musician she was - by the time she died in 1981 she had played the piano for 84 years and the organ (Aberdeen, Glenlivet Parish Church and Tomintoul) for 67 years. She was a trained singer and choirmaster as well, and had great artistic talent.

Going back to Dr Imlah - he mentions Tom Stuart and thinks that Mary Stuart was Tom's sister. Not so. Mary Stuart was married to Charles Stuart, Postman, and they lived at Edina Cot-tage next door to the Pole Inn. She was Registrar for many years and signed the Birth Certificates of all the six Grant Auchorachan children. In fact I think she was the last Registrar for that area of Glenlivet before I took over from Bessie Leslie, Tomintoul, and the Districts had been amalgamated.

My parents were good friends too with Capt. and Mrs. Smith Grant, and my elder sister Gladys and I were often at Minmore House as children. I have happy memories too of the years Mrs Smith Grant took the Glenlivet School children to Delnabo on summer picnics.

It may interest some of your read-ers to know that my mother-in-law Mrs. Jane McAllister (née Leslie, of the

Stuarts of Gaulrig family) was god-mother to Bishop Matheson, and that through Gaulrig she was related to the McWilliams. Canons Sandy and Lewis were always special friends of our family and Sandy, like my son Stuart, had Stuart in his name from the Gaulrig family.

Your mention of Canon Lewis's work in restoring St Margaret's in Huntly brings to mind how hard he worked, as Administrator, to restore the roof of St Mary's Cathedral in Aberdeen. In fact I'm sure that the pressure during that time contributed to his good health in later years. We all thought at the time that the Bishop could not have found anyone better to undertake that immense task.

From the Comelybank memory bank: Mrs Grant Auchorachan was called Gladys. As a young woman she came to Comelybank on holiday with a friend, Dolly Stevenson, and they went to the tennis court at Glenlivet. Robbie Grant the farmer at Auchorachan by Achbreck fell in love with Gladys, and they married and had five children. When Mam's 90th birthday was to be held in the Hall they wrote to ask if they could come, as it was mainly for Braes folk. Robbie led the Grand March with Mam. He was a gentleman farmer, but all the men who worked there liked him.

The two girls who worked in the house were very young. One looked after the children and the other cooked for the men. Once at mid-day they complained she hadn't done enough potat-oes and Gladys came in to see what the noise was about. 'Never mind, boys,' she said, 'I'll give you bacon and eggs for your tea.' They smiled at that, and she cooked the promised bacon and eggs herself. When Mr and Mrs Grant first retired from the farm they lived in a house up the Lecht road. Someone asked how she liked it up there, and she said, 'It's just like one long picnic!'

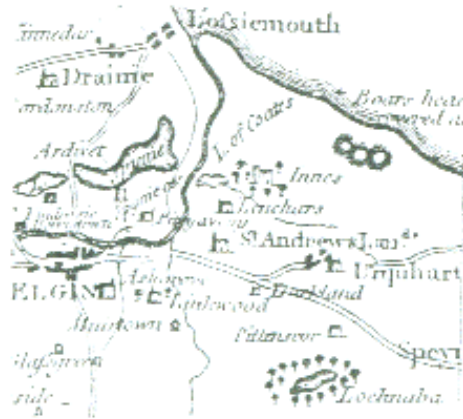
## The Rev. William Leslie of Darkland

Elizabeth Beaton

In the last issue information was sought on the Rev. William Leslie of Darkland who, in The Survey of the Province of Moray edited and published by Isaac Forsyth of Elgin in 1798, regretted the loss of Pluscarden Abbey. The area surveyed is larger than the Moray of today, stretching from the Black Isle and Loch Ness in the west to Keith and the River Deveron in Banffshire. Chapters are devoted to antiquities, landed families, a gazetteer of parishes, the state of agriculture and roads, besides 'A LIST OF SUCH OBJECTS OF CURIOSITY As are generally visited by Strangers in the Province of Moray': battlefields, the moor associated with Macbeth's witches, and much else!

### Darkland

The gazetteer covering 43 parishes was contributed by the Rev. William Leslie (1747-1839), Minister of St Andrew's-Lhanbryd Parish. His manse was at Darkland, five miles east of Elgin and immediately north of Lhanbryde (an E is added for the village).



William Leslie was born at Balnakeith, Forres, the son of the laird of that small estate beside the Findhorn River. After King's College, Aberdeen, and ordination he went to Auchindoir (beside the village of Rhynie, to the south of Huntly) where the medieval church was adapted for Presbyterian worship and is now a Historic Scotland Guardianship Monument; it is well worth a visit. From there he moved in 1783 to St Andrew's Lhanbryd, an amalgamation of two earlier parishes, where he served for 56 years and was still preaching a few days before his death.

William Leslie was described in Volume 6 of *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae* as 'original in mind and manners. Innumerable stories are related of his eccentricities, especially the certificates of character which he wrote from time to time for every type of applicant. He was a man of unbounded hospitality, and regularly entertained at his manse students from the West of Scotland on their way to and from the classes at Aberdeen.'

### Prolific

Leslie was a prolific author. Prior to *The Province of Moray* he described his parish in *The Statistical Account of Scotland* (1791-3), the unique compendium initiated by Sir John Sinclair of Ulbster, Caithness. Later Leslie wrote *The General view of Agriculture of the Counties of Nairn and Moray* (1813); *An Account of the Antiquities, Modern Buildings and Curiosities and Natural Curiosities of the Province of Moray*, worthy of the attention of the Tourist, with an Itinerary of the Province (1813, 1823); and finally *A Letter to William IV on Church Patronage* (1833).

William Leslie was equally prolific as a father, for his marriage to Margaret Sinclair daughter of Sir James Sinclair Bart. of Mey, Caithness, produced ten daughters and three sons. The lady died at Darkland in 1803 aged 36. Leslie's long life seems to have been a very busy one and his interests wide. Unusually for his times, he seems to have been ecumenical in his attitude to other denominations. His interest in tourism was also unusual for his time and his calling. Did he travel to all the places he describes? If so, then there were many miles on horseback, besides ferries, for neither the Spey nor the Findhorn were bridged at convenient places for these journeys.

So the Rev. William Leslie was neither an Episcopalian nor a High Anglican, as proposed in the last issue, but an ecumenical Presbyterian. The Oxford Movement of the 1830s restored many Catholic elements to the Church of England, provoking hostile response as quoted in John Henry Newman's *Apologia pro Vita Sua*: 'These doctrines had already made fearful progress. . . They are preached in small towns in Scotland. They obtain in Elginshire, 600 miles north of London.' Doubtless they obtained at St Andrew's-Lhanbryd.

Dom Giles Conacher OSB was kind enough to send a map of the area east of Elgin, along with several helpful



extracts - first from D. Matheson's 1905 *The Place Names of Elginshire*: 'Dark-land - The old form of this word was Dorland, which signifies the watery or marshy land from the Gaelic Dur or Dobhr.' However Dom Giles, a man in the mould of Stuart Mitchell (place-names expert in *Tales of the Braes*) was quick to add: 'Watson's Celtic Place-Names of Scotland does not mention it, and differs considerably from Matheson who seems to me to be far-fetched and unfounded in a number of places!' From Robert Young, *Annals of the Parish and Burgh of Elgin* (1870) we learn that Darkland was part of the estates of the Douglasses of Pittendrich, and that in the year 1698 John Innes of Darkland mortified £1000 Scots, the interest of which was to be divided among the poor of Elgin, Lhanbryd and Birnie.

## Memories, Mainly Food

Isobel Grant

As a small boy Charlie the Demick was taken to bed, and his mother was teaching him his prayers. She was saying the Our Father and she came to the bit 'Give us this day our daily bread,' when Charlie called out, 'And scones too, Mam!' He had lovely curly auburn hair. His mother cut the curls off at three years old and she kept them inside the back of the clock. When the clock stopped she gave it to my stepfather George Bochel to mend. When he went to take it to pieces he found Charlie's hair had got round the spring and choked it - nothing else wrong with it. It was a lovely clock on the mantelpiece with pansies on the front. When Charlie was a middle-aged man he only had a little hair left. He kept twirling it round his finger as he sat in an armchair, until the cat jumped on to his head.

The Hornbys had a Rhode Island Red which they called Jenny. It got old and fat helping to eat the children's pieces, but they couldn't think of eating Jenny so gave the hen to Mam. I expect we had it for Sunday dinner, but she didn't tell us we had eaten Jenny. The children searched for days.

Once Allan McGillivray was carry-ing his mother's basket of eggs from Auchnascraw to the Shop. There was snow and ice coming down to the Clashdhu and Allan fell. Some had broken, and Allan went back home again. I would have sorted them out and taken the whole ones to the Shop, but his mother said no. The family had scrambled eggs for a week.

I was carrying a basket of eggs down the Bochel brae in winter one time. I crossed the bridge over the burn and was going up the little brae after it when I slipped on the ice. Mam happened to look out of the window and saw me fall. She saw me keep hold of the basket so that not one egg was chipped. I carried on to the Shop.

There were always two kinds of soup on Friday. It was a fast day with no meat, but tatty soup was good. When the war came it was announced in Church we could eat meat or rabbits if we could get them, but we liked John West's red salmon. Also a man came round with Icelandic cod, frozen, and everyone bought it. It was a stand by, hung out in the loft. We soaked it first then added milk. Mam always got something from the van as a present in return for the welcome plate of soup.

Allan MacGillivray once took his mother from Torvue out for a meal in a restaurant. She looked on the menu and said, 'I haven't tasted trout for a long time.' She chose that, but when she looked at it with its eyes looking at her she just couldn't think of eating it, and sent it back for something else. We always cut the head off and split it up flat, then dipped it in oatmeal. I was staying in the convent when I first came to London. A nun saw me cut the top off



*Ann Dean found this very challenging!*

my boiled egg. She sent a girl over to say, 'We just tap the top with the spoon, then peel it gently all round until there's enough off to start with a spoon.' I should have said, 'It is the custom in Scotland.' Maybe it's something to do with Mary Queen of Scots having her head chopped off - she was the rightful heir to the throne of England.

### Packy Sim and his Goat

Norman Imlah

Apart from the details given in Isobel Grant's book, Packy Sim was rumoured to be wealthy, and local legend said he had caches in the hills where he hid his money under rocks, or in holes in the ground. Though some searched, and some followed, nobody ever found this hidden wealth as far as I am aware.

He also had a habit which annoyed my houseproud mother intensely of coming into the house and, before sitting down and distributing his belongings, of removing his grubby bonnet to give the chairs a vigorous polish. He would then settle for an hour or two, eating mother's scones and rock cakes. Before he left there was the ritual of opening his pack, and a sale had to be made before he would depart, usually a pair of bootlaces or some small item.



His travelling companion for a number of years was a goat, until one day at Birchbrae when I was three years old he arrived, unheralded as usual, without the goat. After the ritual polishing and settling down, my father asked him what had happened to the goat. Packy replied that the goat had recently died. He then reached into one of the pockets of his coat and produced an evil smelling paper-wrapped parcel. He said he was remembering all his friends who had been good to him over the years, and was presenting my mother with a piece of the goat meat. I will never forget the look of horror on her face as she took the parcel of decomposing meat.

Eventually, as soon as Packy left, my mother looked at father, pointed to the parcel, and said 'What do I do with this?' Father replied 'Throw the stink-ing beast doon the brae, accompanying the directive with a few colourful expletives which I will omit.

The sequel to this story came the next time Packy visited. After a time he enquired of mother whether she had enjoyed the goat. As she hesitated I, precociously, stepped in and delivered a verbatim account of father's directions and remarks. In the consternation that followed I was sent to bed, where I reflected for the first time that there were occasions when one should hold one's tongue. That lesson was nullified later when the story was told to friends and visitors, to much amusement, so that I became the centre of attention.

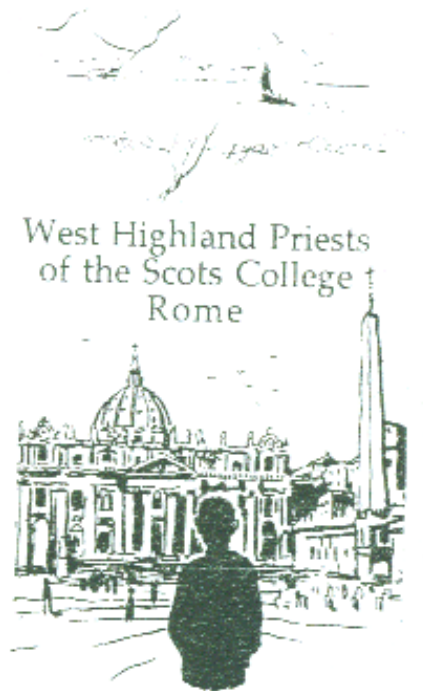
I am not sure what the incident did to my parents' relationship with Packy Sim. Soon afterwards we moved from Birchbrae to the griever's house at Hill View, and I cannot recall him visiting us there. Perhaps he never forgave the rejection of his offering, or perhaps the row of houses where Hill View stood was not on his visiting list. However he remains one of the more intriguing, and unforgettable, characters of my early childhood in Glenlivet.

### Ann Lamb (1902-2001)

On 27 April Ann Lamb died 'very peace-fully', according to the nursing staff in Stonehaven who have looked after her for many years. Nurse Lamb was an ornament to their profession, and the full version of her memoirs which were tape-recorded while she was in care describes challenging responsibilities in many places. To members of the Scalan Association she will always be known for her vivid account of a childhood at Larryvarry in the Braes of Glenlivet, which appeared here as well as in book form. How better to celebrate a life of 99 years, much of it spent caring for others, than to quote Nurse Lamb on her mother's early influence?

'I never remember any of us being ill - maybe it was because the doctor charged 7/6 for a visit - so Mother was our doctor. She really was quite good at prescribing for anyone who was sick, and was always asked to "dress" the folk who died. She didn't seem to mind doing it. . . She was a bit of a midwife as well, and the doctor always

told them, "Get Mrs Lamb until I come." Ann Lamb had a long wait and an easy death: may she rest in peace.



This has been quite a West Highland issue, and the cover of this booklet seemed worth reproducing although there are no more available. Catherine Roberts' picture of a priest sailing up Loch Morar contrasts with the young seminarian at the heart of the Catholic world. The lower picture also recalls the pilgrimage from Morar to Rome which Father Michael Hutson led in summer 1999. The back cover map was drawn for the booklet by Ann Dean.



Correspondence

Alasdair Roberts

3 Bracara

MORAR PH40 4PE