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news

No. 9, December 1994

'I never was happier since I came to the Mission than I am' at Scalan, and were it not for the other duties of my Charge, I would be content to be never without the limits of its enclosures ... I have got an excellent set of Servants, who go hand in hand for the good of the place and live in the most perfect harmony ... My boys are every day m~re tractable, content and happy.' (Bishop George Hay, Rector of Scalan 1788-93)



The Annual Mass

One of these days the press will actually send someone to cover the event, and the the words of young Alexander Geddes will carry new meaning: 'Pray be so kind as to inquire after the health of the Sun.' This year the *Scottish Catholic Observer*, no doubt up its ears in pilgrimages, got the story half right: 'A piper led a large number of pilgrims to Scalan for the annual Mass on the site of the ancient seminary in the Scottish highlands. Kindly weather made it possible for the Mass to be celebrated in the open air at the

entrance to the seminary.'

As photographs sent to the editor show, the now traditional party led across from Well of the Lecht by *your* editor was quite small, most of the crowd arriving by way of Chapeltown. But the fact that two of those who made the steep ascent and then followed the piper down through waist-high heather were in their sixties (one of them diabetic) proves that considerably more people could travel the northern route.

Mr and Mrs McDermott were supported by their son Fr Gilmore from Hastings, who concelebrated with a record number of priests for this occasion - twelve were present, although the local man Fr Colin Stewart, having already said mass in Glenlivet that day, stayed in mufti and confined himself to leading the singing. The chief celebrant Mgr Copland could not name them all, nor could Fr McGregor of Deeside ('Charlie'll know - he talks to people') but definitely on the altar in fine weather - this year - were the Revs. McGhee (Salt coats), Traynor (Buckie), McQuade (A viemore), Cunningham (Renfrew), Briody (Glasgow), Morrow (Braemar). Fr McGregor glowed in a multi-coloured stole, received on a visit to Africa as Secretary of the Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund.

Perhaps members can write in so that all may be placed on the record, especially the unknown Ethiopian priest who was *not* Fr Simon Assamoah of the Cathedral in Aberdeen (from Ghana). Last year we had Fr Philip Foster of Newe (Strathdon) back from South Africa, but the presence of a black priest at the Scalan Mass is of considerable symbolic importance: missionaries are now coming in the opposite direction, and why not to the source in Glenlivet? But shame on the Scalan Association if no one can identify the Ethiopian!

Missing on the day were Bill and Jane McEwan. Bill was rushed to hospital with severe nose-bleeding - long since healed, but it's been a trying year for these two, and Jane has asked for thanks to be expressed in these columns to all those who wrote to her out of concern. Bill Grant stepped into the breach and took over the job of signing up new members. This year our President, Mgr Copland, was able to give the address on Bishop Geddes which had been rained off in 1993. He spoke without notes on a subject both dear and familiar to him. The type script version follows.

John Geddes:

Co-adjutor to Bishop Hay

Rt. Rev. Mgr. John Copland

The Catholic history of Scotland in the second half of the eighteenth century is dominated by two characters, George Hay and John Geddes. They are the Peter and Paul of the Catholic revival in Scotland: two persons very different in temperament who complemented each other very well - the strict, almost Jansenistic Hay and the cultured, diplomatic Geddes.

John Geddes was born at Corriedoun in the Enzie district of Banffshire, that fertile source of so many priests, on 9th September 1735. He was a cousin and contemporary of the controversial genius Alexander Geddes who wrote *The Book of Zaknim*. By the age of seven he was not only well ahead in reading and writing English but had begun to study Latin.

In 1750, after a year of tuition under the priest Alexander Godsmann at Preshome (not Scalan) the young Geddes went to the Scots College Rome, which was then under the supervision of the Society of Jesus. His academic ability was soon recognised by his superiors, who tried to persuade him to become a Jesuit. However he consulted Peter Grant, the Scots Agent in Rome, and he advised against it. Shortly after his ordination in 1759 Geddes set off for Scotland with two men who later played a great part in his life, George Hay and William Guthrie.

His first appointment was to the Shenval in the Cabrach, known as the Siberia of Scotland because it suggested exile as well as very cold winters. The story is told that when Bishop Hay appointed a young priest to this mission he replied, 'Very well; I can have no objection; it is very proper that everyone should take his turn at that place.' 'Stop!' said the Bishop, 'That is not a proper way of speaking of it; you should be willing, if necessary, to go and labour there for the rest of your life.' 'Of course,' said the young priest; 'But if that should happen, may the Lord have mercy upon me.' Although based at Shenval, John Geddes was also responsible for Keithmore (Dufftown), Beldorny (Glass), Aberlour and Achanachy (Keith).

In 1762 Bishop Smith put him in charge of the seminary at Scalan. The College was still recovering from the aftermath of the '45 Rising, and Geddes had the task of not only establishing a sound curriculum but of replacing the rather dilapidated building, on the left bank of the Crombie, with a much more substantial and commodious structure on the right bank. That is the building which the Scalan Association is trying to restore to its original condition. It was here that George Hay was consecrated bishop in 1769, but by that time John Geddes had gone to Preshome, where he acted as Procurator (or financial manager) to the Scottish mission.

In 1770 it was decided to re-open the Scots College in Madrid. Like that of Rome it had been under the superiority of the Society of

Jesus, and when that order was expelled from Spain the property was taken over by the Irish who used the rents to support their own colleges in Seville and Alcala. The task was to require all John Geddes's diplomatic skills. The Irish were reluctant to give up this source of revenue, and it was only when Geddes, with some help from Dr Perry the rector of the English College in Valladolid, succeeded in putting the case before the Spanish Government that the matter was resolved - with the addition of a generous grant to the Scots College.

The College building presented problems, however, since it had been turned into apartments for rent. To restore it for use as a college would not only be expensive but would involve loss of the the revenue from the apartments in Spain's capital city. Once more Dr Perry proved helpful, pointing out that the former Jesuit College in Valladolid was vacant; also that the climate in that city would be more suitable for Scots students than that of Madrid. The sanction of the Royal family was required for such a move and this they were reluctant to give. Here again John Geddes displayed tact and diplomacy; not only was permission granted, but he became a friend of the King. On his return to Scotland he was given a pension of £120 a year - though it was said that this was not usually paid punctually.

By this time in the late 1770s Bishop Hay was finding the burden of office increasingly difficult, and he asked for an assistant or co-adjutor bishop. It surprised no one that the lot should fall on John Geddes, and in 1779 he was appointed Bishop of Morocco in *partibus infidelium*. He was consecrated the following year by the Bishop of Toledo. In 1781 he returned to Scotland and took up residence in Edinburgh.



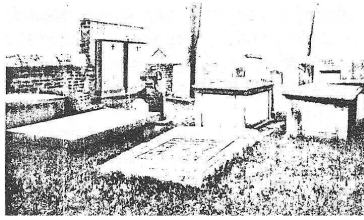
This was an inspired move. 1779 had seen riots in the capital when Protestant feelings were running high over a proposal to lighten the penal laws against Catholics. Animosity had centred particularly on Bishop Hay, who deemed it prudent to move to Aberdeen. The result was amazing. Bishop Geddes took an active interest in the literary life for which Edinburgh was becoming famous, and made such an impression on some of the city's leading men that they became active in support of toleration for Catholics.

Among those whom he met was Robert Burns. In a letter to Clarinda, Burns wrote: 'The finest person I have ever met is a Roman Catholic Bishop, John Geddes.' The friendship progressed. On one of Burns' Highland journeys he visited Geddes, now an invalid, in Aberdeen. On leaving he picked up a copy of his own poems which he saw in the room. 'I will return it to you at the end of my journey,' he said. When the book was returned there were thirteen additional poems in it. On the Bishop's death this volume passed to his sister Margaret and then to her daughter, who emigrated with her doctor husband to America. What is now known as the Burns-Geddes Manuscript has become the property of the Pierpoint Morgan Library in Santa Barbara, California. Geddes gave copies of Burns' poems to all the Scots colleges abroad with the exception of Rome; it is my belief that he had intended this very special edition for his *alma mater*.

Despite his confidence in the salons of Edinburgh, Geddes was no mere socialite. Responsible for the whole of Lowland Scotland including Glasgow, his journeyings on foot became legendary. On one occasion he left Galashiels on a Sunday and arrived at Preshome on the Thursday. In 1790 he made a visit to Orkney, walking all the way, for the sake of a convert he had made in Edinburgh. The journey sapped his strength severely. By the spring of 1793 Geddes was advised to go to Scaln to recuperate, but his condition deteriorated so much that on a Sunday in October, although vested for Mass, he had to tell the congregation: 'I cannot move, I cannot say Mass, you will have to go to Caanakyle.'

Shortly afterwards John Geddes left for Aberdeen, where over the next few years his paralysis became so complete that even his tongue was affected. In spite of this, Geddes remained mentally as active as ever, writing several treatises including a Life of St Margaret and 'A method for a Scotch clergyman to direct him from his youth to the last'.

John Geddes continued cheerful and resigned to the end, which came on 11th February 1799. The funeral was attended by a vast crowd including civic dignitaries. His body was interred in the 'Snowy Churchyard' at King's College. For this the University authorities would take no payment, as they said 'it was doing them great honour to have so great and good a man lie in their ground.'



Readers Write

The first item, which contains an interesting suggestion, arrived on 17 November just as the finishing touches were being put to the newsletter. The letter was accompanied by the photocopy of a water colour of Scalán painted in her teens by Veronica McHardy, the writer's aunt, who left the area with her parents in 1919.

My sister has the original, which is now flaking as the watercolours dry with drawings of Scalán and the Braes that have been in the Scalán News are very interesting. Did I read in one news that someone is making a collection of them - to be kept in the Scalán house, perhaps? If a 'Scalán Card' - postcard or notecard - was produced, e.g. of Peter Anson's drawing in Scalán News 4, it would be very popular and profitable and bring Scalán to the notice of people worldwide.

Lena Parcell, Cardiff.

Yes, Ann Dean is collecting drawings, photos and paintings (in addition to her own) and agrees that it would be good if visitors could see them. Maybe the chapel-house at Chapeltown would be a safer place though. The postcard suggestion is a good one, but Anson's drawings may be copyright.

May I say how very much I enjoy your Scalán News booklet? It is a little 'gem' of its kind, and gives that timeless quality of the faith of our forefathers. Although I knew of Scalán, it was a Church of Scotland lady who directed me to it when I was holidaying in Grantown-on-Spey. She had been to Iona, but said it could not (for her) compare with Scalán, where she said the atmosphere was something near to heaven and certainly not of this world. Perhaps if more Glasgow parishes arrange transport I will be fortunate to attend the Annual Mass next year, DV.

Jane Sweeney, Glasgow.

In two separate contributions Maurice Caillet has suggested a 'meditation on tolerance' in these columns and inspired Marion Donald, architect of our success on behalf of Castlegate Design, to write a Franco-Scottish ecumenical letter of her own. Now M. Caillet professes embarrassment: Cette publication me fait vraiment trop d'honneur; je pense que vous n'y êtes pas étranger et que je pourrais faire suivre mon nom sur mes cartes de visite du titre prestigieux de 'Correspondent exclusif des 'Scalán News' News" sur le Continent'!

Maurice Caillet, Paris.

So far is M. Caillet from being our exclusive correspondent on the Continent, he is not even the only one to write from France. Roger and Jeanne Licin sent a postcard showing their lovely part of Provence. They happened to be at the Well of the Lecht on 3 July when the editor was tuning his pipes, and in the course of a halting bilingual conversation it transpired that they were touring, and open to the suggestion of a walk over to Scalán. Before setting out Mme Licin produced Gallic food and drink from the camper-van, the blowhard being short of a packed lunch. The card came later in response to a copy of the newsletter.

Merci de votre envoi. Nous gardons de cette rencontre un souvenir exceptionnel. Le symbole de ces retrouvailles dans cet ancien collège nous a émus.

Roger Licin, Esparron de Verdon

Another overseas correspondent is someone we will surely hear more from - the Italian student who made Scalán his research thesis, and who missed the editor there in October because of tea and cake at Nether Clashnoir. Claudio Fontana has combed the archives in Edinburgh and Rome. The following passage concerns George Hay's successful attempt to get compensation from the Edinburgh magistrates, following the 1779 destruction of his chapel in Blackfriars Wynd:

Di nascosto Hay rimase ad Edinburgh per tre settimane, per osservare la reazione dei magistrati (non fecero niente). Si trasferisce a Londra, ove chiede l' aiuto del governo. Degli amici influenti gli promettono di presentare in Parlamento una petizione per evitare

assalti simili in avvenire.

Claudio Fontana, Ardrossan.

Claudio, it appears, has Scottish cousins on his mother's side.

I attended the open air mass and it was a lovely experience. Earlier this year one of my friends 'loaned' to me the Scalan newsletter No. 7 of December 1993. By any chance do you still have one of these which you could send to me? I found it very informative.

Frances Smith, East Kilbride.

Two years ago Miss Mary Hunter of Braemar interested me in the Scalan Association and sent me two copies of Scalan News 1991. I meant to join the Association then, as I think we Catholics owe so much to the brave people who kept the Faith alive in Scotland, but ill health put it out of my mind. However I have been reading these two back numbers and finding them so interesting that I would love to have further copies of recent years. I lived in our convent in Aberdeen for a few years, and some of the places and people mentioned in the News are not unknown to me. I hope I am not too late to join.

Elizabeth Howat, RSCJ, Dalkeith.

Never too late to join, Sister! Backnumbers are available free on request (direct to the editor if you feel like easing Jane McEwan's increasingly heavy burden) except for June 1991 and December 1992. All material published so far is on computer disc, so that it would be possible to offer our projected 'thousand members by the year 2000' (which now looks rather unambitious) a tastefully bound book of backnumbers to celebrate the first decade. It would need to have an index ...

The Visitors' Book

According to Sandy Matheson there has been a Visitors' Book at Scalan since 1961, but the early ones are now removed to a place of safety so it is not possible, on the basis of a quick scan through the present book, to show changing numbers or types of visitors yet: an item for another newsletter. Sandy himself is inclined to stress the fact that there have always been visitors, and even that Willie Stuart in the 1920s took pleasure in showing people round the college rooms in his own house; also that some of the most regular visitors down the years have been negative about change - objecting to the removal of box-beds and wallpaper, for example.

It is hard to be precise about visits to Scalan between 21 June 1991 and 5 November 1994, even with the pages available and open, because figures can be misleading. Rather than try to count up all those mentioned, when one parent enters the names of spouse and children, for example, a tally of *entries* was attempted. Unfortunately these include everything from '56 members of the Aberdeen Ramblers' (one entry, strong leader) to a school visit with every child anxious to leave a mark. For what the 'statistics' are worth, during more or less the period of the restoration programme there was an upward trend in visits but a fall during the summer of 1993, presumably because the college was then in the condition of a building site. Focusing on May to October, there were 498 entries in 1992, 387 in 1993 and 519 in 1994.

People come to Scalan in all months of the year, and January is the quietest. In 1992 that month saw two visits from committee members (keeping neighbourhood watch) and one from the Tomintoul Police. Members might expect July to be the peak month, but those who attend the Annual Scalan Mass in such numbers do not sign in to any great extent. Perhaps it needs something like solitude for visitors to feel like opening up the glass-topped case to inscribe their names - except in the case of schoolchildren, who egg each other on with entries like 'Diane was ere B4U but not 2CU'. (It was a relief, incidentally, on grounds of secular as well as religious education, to find that the self-styled but illiterate 'atheist from Aberdeen' was not on the roll of a Catholic school.)

This Visitors' Book leaves no particular space for comments, but there are enough to convey how most people .. feel about the place: 'First visit here. Most impressed. DG ... Prosit! In cruce poenaeque vita ... Great place ... An inspiration ... East Kilbride doesn't have weather as bad as this (often) - I want to go home ... Deo Gratias ... A happy find, this peaceful sanctuary ... From beautiful Leeds but not as beautiful as here. Hope you reach £21,000 soon Laudate Dominum ... Old but sweet Very windy and cold (Dufftown) ...

God bless your work. It has survived so long, let's hope it survives a few hundred years more ... Peaceful. .. Came on horseback

(from Cologne, Germany):



Foreign visitors are outnumbered by Scots and English, of course, but the range of countries (given here in order of appearance, though some are mentioned several times) is impressive: Canada, USA, Norway, France, the Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Eire (no connection), Germany, Iceland, Australia, Italy, New Zealand, Switzerland, Thailand, Brazil, India, Poland, South Africa, Austria, Denmark, Wales (own language), Czechoslovakia, Iran, the Isle of Man (own Parliament), Hungary, Taiwan, Ghana, Singapore.

Nowadays Scalan features in one of several walks around the Glenlivet area which are suggested by an active local tourist industry. Weather-sealed maps stand at strategic places including the Eskmulloch turn-off for that last rutted three-quarter mile - so we can expect more people to come from overseas. They will always be welcome, along with the many English visitors who have 'made it' (as one wrote) across the Border from places as diverse as Newton Abbot (Devon), Tynemouth (Northumbria), Bicester (Oxon), Andover (Hants), Barrow-in-Furness (Cumbria) and Bridgewater (Somerset). Essex man has been here, from Leigh-on-Sea and Rochford - also Essex wife and children. In the footsteps of Frances Blundell (her drawing was reproduced in the June *Scalan New s*) pilgrims came north from Chorley - also Preston - in Catholic Lancashire. *[The editor's wife's Aunt Janey Goodier, for many years a popular PE lecturer at Craiglockhart in Edinburgh and now retired to Preston, has established Chorley as the childhood home of Dom Odo Blundell OSB and his sister, who became a Benedictine Sister.]* There were visitors of distinction, too, from Westminster Cathedral Choir School and the Great Park, Windsor (no mention of Balmoral - so far).

Leaving aside the big towns and cities, Scots places at some remove from Glenlivet included Ardgay in Sutherland, Wick, Dulnain Bridge, Kintail, Benbecula, Morar, Roybridge, Saltcoats, Neilston, Blantyre, Glenboig, Tillicoultry, South Queensferry, Musselburgh, Haddington, Longniddry, Leuchars, Ceres, Glenrothes, Fauldhouse - country places to a great extent, not unlike the uplands of Moray. The idea of country people on a day out squares with the strongest impression from the book, of locals (and summer returners) from homes in Glenlivet or Tomintoul going regularly to the Scalan - and consulting the book to see who else has been lately. There is also an inner ring of motorists making short journeys from places like Elgin, Kennethmont, Banchory, Torphins: a toiler from there - no pleasure trip - added 'Taitt Building'. His companion, one Mark Hansford from Chapelton (the de-harler), styled himself 'another Taitt loon'.

To balance the idea - not a bad one of Scalan as somewhere to go for a run, and a walk, the book shows that many of those who come are Christians, including clergy of several denominations and of different positions in the Hierarchy (Catholic). Pluscarden monks have prayed here. Carmelites have come from abroad led by the Rev. Donald Grant, O.Carm., of the Braes and Aberdeen University Chaplaincy Centre. Groups of young people enrolled in new colleges like Gillis and St Andrew's Bearsden - filling that all too obvious gap in the pews above childhood - have started to arrive at the old college, much as Blairs boys came in the past. A young man known to the editor, apparently visiting the seminary on his own (from Aberdeen, where priests under forty are hard to find) has since gone on to try his vocation at Scotus College.

One name appears regularly, to keep himself right as he says. Bill McEwan has 'replaced glass' and 'erected sign' showing the Bishop's Well - incorrectly, but it keeps the sheep away from Sandy's episcopal drinking well a few yards away: they like to scratch on the signpost! Bill's regular entry, however, reads 'emptied box'. Placed (or rather cemented) to the left of the book, this receptacle yields a steady income of £20-£30 a month in summer. He is always being thanked, for a variety of good reasons, and will not object if this time thanks are extended more generally to the many visitors who have helped to put Scalan to rights. And for the opponents of change out there: box-beds will be restored in due course.

The many readers who enjoyed Isobel Grant's article in the last issue will be glad to read this sequel, and to learn that she has sent in such a quantity of excellent material (in a series of letters to the editor) that active consideration is being given to the production of a book. Other local people (and exiles) have indicated their willingness to contribute, and the idea is to bring out a first edition for members of the Scalan Association and then try for a large audience of potential visitors with a commercial publisher. Title, without a doubt, Tales of the Braes of Glenlivet.

Childhood in the Braes

Isobel Grant

In my childhood we always had May and October devotions in church - 7 p.m. for grownups and after school at 4 p.m. Some children forgot to bring a head-dress and the teachers would make a fuss about it so they ran to my mother at Comelybank and she managed a beret or tammy or else a scarf. Ladies and girls always wore a hat or veil in church then.

We loved all the Catholic Feast Days as we got the day off from school, but that finished when the schools were taken over by the Education Authority. We used to attend all funerals until one day an inspector from Keith turned up at 9.30 a.m., when we were all in church, and found the school door locked. The schoolmaster was a bit worried when he saw the luxurious car at the school door. But we still got out if it was a relative's funeral.

On Shrove Tuesday we got a half-day; home at 2 p.m. .. All the housewives on the roadside made oatmeal brose and pancakes for the children. They tapped on the doors and called 'Brose and bannocks'. My mother made brose in a big basin and put a thimble, a button and trinkets in the mixture and all had spoons to sup it with and hoped to get a enrolled in new colleges like Gillis and St Andrew's Bearsden - filling that all too obvious gap in the pews above childhood - have started to arrive at the old college, much as Blairs boys came in the past. A young man known to the editor, apparently visiting the seminary on his own (from Aberdeen, where priests under forty are hard to find) has since gone on to try his vocation at Scotus College.

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One time at school we had just got a cookery class going. The teacher asked to bring an egg each to make panes. They got so many eggs we took them to the shop and bought sweets to e out with the money we got for the eggs. One girl put too much baking da in the pancakes she made. owever we ate them up. No school - ers in those days - just a slice of ead and jam and a drink of cold water ,ut of the pump well in the playground.

We said 4,000 Hail Marys in Advent memory of the 4,000 years people Taited for the coming of the Lord at istmas. And we wished for some. g. I asked for a doll and I got it from y aunt in London who didn't know ,-hat I'd wished. My sister prayed we -ould never be without food so my mother took her to the larder on Xmas Eve. We'd got rabbits, a hare, and I think a couple of grouse. Neighbours were kind and we had a lot of relatives around the Braes. In fact all are cousins, if one finds out in the family trees. The priest gave all the widows £1 at Christmas.

Widows got no pension if their husbands died before 1916, as that was the year it started. I think old age pensions at 70 years started in 1912. Ten shillings a week and they were delighted with it. Men could buy black twist tobacco for their pipes, which lasted a week, and the women bought groceries - a basket full. My mother cleaned the school and church; she also did washing for her Uncle and Aunt who had the shop. Another lady helped her, and both got five shillings for the day.

The church in the Braes was built with money from all over Scotland. The local priest wrote to all his friends, and the money rolled in. I see it's the hundred years in 1997, so I hope there will be a celebration. When the new church was built in Chapeltown, the Stations of the Cross were all donated by parishioners or their friends in memory of people; a brass plate under each one. I read them all one day. Mary Stuart went and cleaned them every week. She lived at Comelybank after marriage. The statues were all paid for by parishioners; they held concerts to raise the money. M y mother said everyone paid one penny entrance money.

Several marriages took place as the young girls met the workmen at the building and painting of the church. A Mr Anderson and a Mr Copland married locally. Mass was said in the schoOl, while building went on. The only church with the same decoration in the interior was St John the Baptist's, Kemp Town, Brighton. Sadly the last time I was there it is all changed and painted over.

The next article is written by a member of the Association who lives at Forres, and it concerns an ancestor of hers who studied at Scaln. Would-be writers approach editors as best they can: in this case Mary made herself

known after the Annual Mass. The idea was accepted at once and the typescript duly arrived in good time.

Fr Andrew Oliver (1740-1812)

Mary Harding (nee Oliver)

In the first Scottish issue of the Catholic Directory, in 1848, there is information about many priests of the previous century who had studied at Scalán. Among them is a modest account of one Andrew Oliver from near Hawick in Teviotdale.

His father was a shepherd, of a Protestant family in a traditionally Covenanting area. Andrew, the fifth son, intended for the ministry, took a tutoring job with a Catholic family, the Fletchers of Dunans in Argyllshire. He stayed with them for two years and converted to the Catholic faith, to the fury of his father who threatened to tear from the family bible the page recording his birth. His elder brother, Robert, managed to prevent this and to make an uneasy peace between them.

Andrew wished to be a priest and was sent to Scalán; being by now twenty-three years old, he must have been conspicuous among the youngsters who made up most of the students. He was probably frequently home-sick and lonely, for he was later to describe his time at Scalán as consisting of 'some happy days but many sorrowful'.

He persevered, however, with the help and encouragement of John Geddes, later Bishop Geddes, the Rector at that time. Andrew kept up with him in later years, and this correspondence provides much that we know about him. He was ordained in minor orders in Aberdeen in 1768, completing his studies at Scots College Douai to be finally ordained in 1770.

For a time he stayed on at Douai as 'Prefect of Studies' but the job does not seem to have been the gentle studious existence it suggests. He complains that he had to run the practical side of the college, seeing to such matters as daily marketing and even the 'washing of doaths', and that 'good servants were as scarce as Catholicks in Teviotdale'. He does not appear to have got on with the Rector, a busy man, much occupied with making contacts and fund-raising. He asked to return to Scotland 'when he could be replaced'.

Andrew was eventually called to Aberdeen in 1776 and served there for a short time. Sadly it was not a success. He seems to have rubbed people up the wrong way. Perhaps he was too eager to teach the Faith, but he was personally insulted, threatened with death and the burning of his chapel by local Presbyterians. Maybe this was not altogether surprising in those times, but his superiors moved him to Mill of Smithston in the hills west of Aberdeen [*This occasional mission station just north of Rhynie was associated with the Cordons of Lesmoir - Ed.J.*]. He had about 200 souls to care for, scattered over a wide area, but he seems to have remained almost desperately anxious to make converts. Once again, he managed to upset people and complaints were made. The priest admitted that he had been able to bring 'only' five or six people to the Faith during the few years he was there. His health broke down and he asked for a move, hoping for Glasgow. His superiors, however, sent him back to Douai.

Before leaving, Andrew visited his old home, where he found his father 'much changed, almost become a child again'. Faithful Robert gave him a warm welcome, as did his old schoolmates. There was much less antagonism to the Church than in former times. He would have liked to stay and work there, but it was 'not the wish of his superiors'. He set off for London on the first stage of the journey to Douai. On the way he again became ill, and after nearly dying at Ostend, was taken to Bruges where the nuns of the English Convent took him in and nursed him back to health.

The convent was Augustinian and the nuns mostly English women unable to follow their vocation in their own country. The superior, Mother More, a descendant of St Thomas More, was a very remarkable lady. Andrew describes her in a letter as the 'most sensible, prudent and pious woman' he had ever met. From the first he felt himself to be understood and appreciated. It happened that the nuns needed a chaplain, so permission was asked and eventually granted for 'Mr Oliver', as they called him, to stay on in that capacity.

For a while he was able to enjoy some peace and quiet but it was not to be for long. In 1789 the storm broke which was to engulf Europe for a generation - indeed it would never be the same again. In 1793 fighting broke out between the Belgians and their Austrian masters. Then in the next year the French army invaded. They were viewed with absolute terror by occupants of the many convents there. Andrew Oliver travelled to England to see if any arrangements could be made for his community. A Catholic gentleman with whom he had become acquainted offered them Hengrave Hall in Suffolk, and he returned to Belgium to bring them out.

The journey was an ordeal. The nuns had to change into unfamiliar lay dress. Then they travelled by different forms of uncomfortable transport and (after six days at sea!) arrived in London. From there they eventually came to Hengrave. There Andrew stayed with them until 1802, when it was safe to take them back to their beloved convent in Bruges. They were welcomed enthusiastically by the local people: 'Long live the Nuns! Long live the Confessor!' was a thousand times echoed from one end of the street to another. They would have carried me on their shoulders if I had allowed them.' Andrew Oliver died peacefully there, in 1812, cared for and venerated by Mother More and her community.

Andrew never forgot Scotland and over the years wrote of his wish to return and help 'my poor country', in spite of all he had endured there. At Bruges the same order still occupies the English Convent, where they have several relics of him including his portrait and

the family Bible threatened by his father, so long ago in Teviotdale. No doubt he helps us all with his prayers.

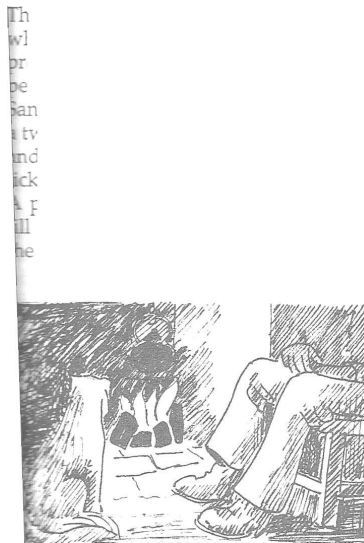
Crombie Television

Think back, if you will, to Isobel Grant's story in the last issue of crowds gathering at the Scalán in the 1920s to hear the first radio broadcast in the Braes of Glenlivet. A crystal set was brought to the head of this remote glen by a returned exile from the city - and promptly banned from the house: this media event had to take place in one of the Scalán barns.

Picture a wandering editor making his way up there this autumn to check on the harling - partly hearing, partly seeing that the nearer of the two water wheels was turning for the first time in its enclosed cabin. It is on the left of Ann Dean's big picture for this issue. Share his astonishment at learning from Sandy Matheson, when he emerged from a barn (maybe the same one) that the former mealmill was charging batteries for his television set. The barn can be identified by its now unused water-wheel (once powered by the Slochd burn) on the right of the frontispiece. Being gifted with mechanical skill, Sandy is renowned as a clockmender and radio-fixer (at least in the days of valve sets, when he even made radios). He refused electricity when it came to the Braes in 1961. No need for it: Sandy knew about batteries, and has been using them since 1924 when Scalán was ahead of both priest and schoolmaster at Chapeltown in getting radio dry batteries, valves, earphones for two. And Sandy's house is lit by electricity! He tried direct current from the Crombie but found that its varying current turned bulbs black, so batteries are used to control the flow.

Scalán's TV reception turns out to be the clearest in the Braes - not merely on Sandy's word, but on the authority of an engineer who came to fix the aerial to the roof in the days of black-and-white: 'Beamed in from Rosehearty' is the secret - a chance air wave coming unimpeded across the left flank of Tom of Scalán. The aerial has now, to this observer, become something of a distraction from the bright new harling of the college - which Sandy doubts was necessary at all (and he always knew about the hidden windows). On the subject of air waves, Sandy recalls picking up radio programmes on medium wave from the USA (Schenectady) in the middle of the night, and also hearing American 'hams' speaking to Australia - no replies, so perhaps they went back the other way from down under.

The television set is an Amstrad, a firm 'hich moved on to other things after producing colour battery sets for a brief period. That was nine years ago when Sandy bought his - all four channels on twelve-inch screen. Usually it's blank, and not only when visitors call. Clocks tick on the sideboard, chiming in unison. peat fire glows, as lights are left off dark. Glen, the collie, lies asleep on floor - and an old man remembers.



We are all environmentalists now, or we are, but Sandy Matheson shows the way.. While the great world talks about pollution, congested motorways petrol at £5 a gallon, this quiet man steers his bicycle between puddles - in winter the tractor with the cab (two old ones available, still in running order) when snow drifts allow. At Chapeltown he becomes a car-sharer and heads for Tomintoul, or mass at Tombae every second Sunday. Home again, he mends clocks and watches a little television. He lives at the end of the world but is better placed to survive it than most people..

Lena Stewart is known to some as 'Lena the Shop', because her parents sold a wide range of goods there at Chapeltown before the War, and to others as 'Miss Stewart' who taught English to secondary girl pupils in the Convent of the Sacred Heart at Queen's Cross, Aberdeen. The Convent is to celebrate its centenary in 1995 and Lena is one of the old girls (she went there from Chapeltown School) who are putting their memories on paper. No doubt her next task, in Aberdeen's Cowdray Club where she now lives in retirement, will be to do the same for Tales of the Braes of Glenlivet.

Lena was at the Scalan Mass, driven right up to the 'back pews' by Deirdre Roberts who normally takes her to Our Lady of Aberdeen Church in Kincorth. She stayed in the car for warmth and didn't hear everything that was said or sung, feasting her eyes instead on the Slochd hill behind where, as a young girl, she used to gather blaeberrries. Sandy Matheson came up and had a news with her afterwards.

Publicity

The *Scottish Catholic Observer* picked up on the flier which went out with the last issue:

'Dr Watts, the Rector of St Kentigern's Academy and a member of the Scalan Association, has taken a major step in an attempt to raise the profile of Scalan and encourage young people and schools to take an interest in it. He has asked teachers to introduce a "Scalan" theme in the school curriculum and to build up a classroom resource of published work and pupils' work on keeping the Faith alive in Penal times. Dr Watts is also encouraging schools to make a residential visit to the area using St Michael's Centre in nearby Tornintoul and to take part in the rescue work being carried out at Scalan.

'Dr Watts points out: "Scalan is not just part of Catholic history but of Scotland's history. It touches on issues of general importance such as Civil Liberty." He suggests that some teachers might know colleagues in non-denominational schools to whom Scalan might be interesting.'

Architectural Support

Dr Charles McKean is one of Scotland's leading architectural historians. He is currently editing a series of books on the subject from his base in Edinburgh, 15 Rutland Square, which is the headquarters of the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland. He will become Professor McKean in the New Year (Chair of Architecture) in the University of Dundee.

That northward move should help to develop his interest in Scalan, which became evident when the editor was interviewed under the north gable (very much an 'outside' broadcast on a bleak October day) for a radio programme which came out soon after. Charles McKean, interviewing, conveyed his own sense of wonder at the possibility of a seminary in Banffshire: 'When I was at school we were simply told that Scotland was a Protestant country, because of the Reformation. But here in Glenlivet they never stopped being Catholic.'

Dr McKean is very positive about the article (sampled on the back page) by Ann Dean and Michael Taitt and he sent, 'by way of thanks', an extract from *McFarlane's Geographical Collections*, dated 1723, showing the existence of another Catholic institution (certainly a school some years before this, under a Mr Farquharson) in the shelter of the patron's residence, at the same time as Scalan was becoming established in the wilds:

'Houses of note in this parish are the House of Gordon Castle *alias* Bog of Gight with large gardens, orchards plantings, entries and parks ... Closs upon the Garden Dykes on the S. lys the town of Fochabers from the church one mile, a countrey village of above 600 inhabitants, but within 60 years consisting not above six or seven houses ... In which town is also a Grammar School, several good lodgings & inns. Lykways a large sclated house in the lower storey of which ar maintained several popish beadmen wearing their bleu gowns, the upper storey furnished with altar &c, for popish mass.'

Members will of course recall that the first Scalan was also created with a certain attempt at grandeur: 'There is lately built a fashionable House with suitable office houses, a large Garden and guest Park for grasing well fenced about, this place belongs to Duke Gordon. ' ' Finally from Charles McKean, in his illustrated architectural guide to *The District of Moray* we read that the Buiternach cemetery was consecrated by a priest from Scalan for the Cordons of Minmore, near The Glenlivet Distillery.

The Buiternach is at the same elevation as Scalan and visible from it, three miles to the north-west. There is a 'burial road', marked by resting places for coffins, from Strathdon to Strathavon for more miles than that. It seems very likely, therefore, that the young rector who died there (John Paterson, whose coffin had to be lowered from a window - see Dean and Taitt, 1995) was buried at the Buiternach.

Why not book a Catholic history holiday in Glenlivet? The recently famous 'Laird of Tomintoul', apparently funded by the Metropolitan Police, has made available some very luxurious accommodation for the super rich among our members, but the area is also full of reasonably-priced hotels, guest houses and B & Bs - not forgetting St Michael Centre for self-catering groups. Apart from the restored Scalan and the tidied up Buiternach there is the recently cleared site of the Battle of Glenlivet (or Alltachoileachain to our Gaelic readers - see last issue), 1594.

A letter was received from Sir Edward Peck: 'Thanks for sending that most scholarly Innes article on "The Spanish Blanks" by Francis Shearman. I had read various accounts before writing my very summary paragraphs for "The Battle of Glenlivet", but none so full as his, which confirms in detail what was no more than

a "hunch" that it was probably a Protestant plot! I am glad to be supported in this view by such an authority.'

More on Alltachoileachain

Thanks to the efforts of the A vonside Conservation Group, prompting local forestry workers, there is now a broad sawdust path up from the marked forest walk from Morinsh car park. Cleared forestry sites were recently described on radio as resembling the Somme battlefield, and that is about right for this place where artillery was used for the first time against advancing kilted highlanders. There is now a clear view of Ben Rinnes from the ground where McLean of Mull lay dying, content that his remains would be buried in a land where no Saxon tongue was heard. And now that the Loch of the Swords has had its old cars and empty cans of McEwan's removed, maybe a metal detector could pick up some of these old weapons.

For those on touring holiday, there is a cannon left casually on the ground at Slains Castle, close to the picturesque village of Collieston. Francis Hay's caput was destroyed when James VI arrived to transform Glenlivet's military triumph into political defeat, and bring the physical aspect of Scotland's Counter-Reformation to an end. (England reached the same point eleven years later when Guy Fawkes failed to blow up Parliament.) That cannon may have been one of those blessed by the Jesuit superior James Gordon, and returned hurriedly to the coast for a possible defence against royal arms. Expert advice on cannons, please.

Before the quatercentenary year ends, a word about Francis Hay, Earl of Erroll. He brought a troop of Buchan's Catholic gentry to Glenlivet and led a bold - or rash - cavalry charge .. Accounted in breast-plates and helmets, Hay and his cavaliers escaped with their lives but horses were killed and many of the riders received leg and arm wounds.

There is a footnote to that other bit of bloody business, the hard to find the burial cairn of Patrick Gordon of Auchindoun - too busy organising the troops to be marked by his brother's sign of the cross. Two solitary searches having failed, the editor took his scientist wife (i.e., vague about history) for a stroll in the area. Oeirdre scouted ahead of the main force and found the cairn without difficulty. It is still quite substantial despite having lost many stones in the 'muckle spate of twenty-nine', and just at the point where the burn turns sharp left having done its destructive work in that cloud burst. There's another place to visit.



What follows next is an extract from A. Roberts, work in progress 'Popery in Buchan' becoming (at least in intention - too busy) 'The Catholic North'.

The Earl of Huntly's battlefield address linked Catholicism with social rank: 'Remember your quality as being all well-born gentlemen, possessing and owning more than a vulgar courage. Consider the weakness of your foes, no matter how superior their number, yet by nature such as know no order nor could hearken to discipline; and beside, most of them naked and open to all sorts of invasions and wounds. All of them are on foot, easy to be broken and overrun by horses. But you are about to fight for your estates and property. It is God's cause: for religion is our quarrell wherein He would not fayle valiantly to protect us. And therefore be ready to charge the enemy so soon as the word is given, which is "Virgin Mary".'

The northern cavaliers had field cannons at their disposal and were spurred on by a concern for crops and livestock, as well as a keen sense of God's judgement on the affairs of men. Mass had been celebrated lower down Glenrinnas at Auchindoun. The Jesuits who were with the army as chaplains heard confessions and sprinkled the warriors' arms with holy water; they in turn painted white crosses on their surcoats.

It was a thoroughly Catholic affair, although afterwards even the King's archbishop, John Spottiswood, gave a positive account of the Buchan men in action. At the first cannonade Argyll's Highlanders flattened themselves to the ground, and Erroll 'perceiving this made to give the charge, but by reason of the steep ascent he was driven to make a little compass, turning his side to the adversaries, who by that time were got on foot and resuming new courage did rain upon Arroll and his men in their passing such a shower of darts and arrows, that as they affirmed who were present, for the space of a quarter of an hour the light of day was palpably eclipsed. Auchindoun was at this time killed. Arroll was dangerously wounded in his arme and leg, many had their horses killed and were compelled to take to their feet. Macklaine whose numbers were greater environing Arroll and his company held them so engaged betwixt himself and ArgUe, as they had been all cut in pieces if Huntley had not with speed come to their relief.'

The engagement lasted two hours before the Highland army broke off, leaving seven hundred dead on the slopes of Alltachoileachain from a force of ten thousand. Only twelve died on the defending side (according to Archbishop Spottiswood's relatively unbiased

estimate) but 'many were hurt and wounded' - bearing their scars with pride, no doubt, in time to come. Glenlivet lived on as a powerful tradition in the minds of those families which were represented, 'God having proved by that victory which religion he favoured.' This consoling myth, in face of pressure to accept the new religious order, encouraged Hays and Gordons, Cheynes and Grays, Cons and Woods over a period of years, with the twice-wounded Earl of Erroll providing a focus for Catholic loyalties in Buchan. The Earl of Argyll, only eighteen at the time, became a Catholic in his maturity and went into Spanish exile in 1618.

Deceased Members

During the last year several members of the Scalan Association have died. It is a Catholic custom to pray for the souls of the faithful departed, and members may like to remember three people in their prayers. It would be a natural thing, too, to honour deceased members at the Annual Mass. The first is Barbara King, who did so much to bring back worship and community to the chapel at Corgarff (wine and nibbles after mass, but also a deep spirituality which attracted priests from far and wide). She was the recipient of talking book versions of the newsletter. Barbara was delighted to be able to make her first visit to Scalan, well-wrapped in a wheelchair, at the 'wet mass' of 1993.

Second, Jessie McHardy surprised the Treasurer by leaving £1,000 to the Association in her will. Miss McHardy came from Auchnarrow, near the turnoff for the Braes, and was for many years a priest's housekeeper. She was among the first to join the Scalan Association when, seven years ago, it widened admission beyond clergy educated at Blairs, allowing lay people to join.

Finally James Darragh died in September. A full obituary is being prepared for *The Innes Review* (he was a founder member in 1950 and wrote regularly for the journal). From the Lambhill area of Glasgow, Mr Darragh worked in London as a civil servant.

Author of *The Catholic Hierarchy of Scotland*, his last publication is in this year's *Catholic Directory for Scotland*. It marks the tercentenary of Thomas Nicolson's appointment as vicar apostolic in 1694, the first bishop in Scotland since the Reformation.

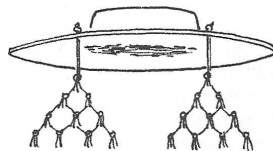
Requiescant omnes in pace. We will remember them.

Cardinal Winning at Scalan

Mgr Copland was among the crowds of Scots when the Archbishop of Glasgow received a Cardinal's hat in Rome on 3 December. Apart from receiving *Scalan News* along with the other bishops, does he have a connection with Scalan? Yes indeed. Thomas Joseph Winning was there in the summer of 1945, studying philosophy in Scotland because the Scots College Rome was unavailable due to the War.

One of the seminarians forced to return to Scotland was John Copland. He and his sister made seven trips to Scalan that summer from the family home at Tornnavoulin, walking over by way of Auchnarrow and the Buiternach cemetery, where they took more than passing interest in a cat and her kittens which had made a home under a table gravestone. On one occasion Tom Winning, a junior in the student hierarchy who was spending a couple of weeks in Tomintoul, came along. It was, Mgr Copland recalls, an unusually long holiday for Church students as dry rot had been discovered at St Peter's College in Bearsden. Perhaps 'TJ' had been there before while at Blairs, and he may have been back after Fr Sandy MacWilliam began the restoration programme that year on coming to Chapeltown.

The title is misleading, but this busiest of clerics might be prepared to write down for us his memories of 1945 - or even lead us at mass, fifty years on?



The Buiternach

Whether the Scalan Rector John Paterson is buried there or not (see p. 17) the Buiternach Cemetery is well worth a visit, especially now that it is being tidied up under the Community Service Scheme - young delinquents from the Elgin area who have become remarkably keen on the work. It is at the top of the fields belonging to Upper Clashnoir farm, and this autumn Bill Grant, who left Chapeltown school to work there for his father (without pay) led a two-man expedition up to it. He recalled the difficulty of opening up a new grave compared to an existing one, while talking his way round the various stones and remembered families. But perhaps

the most poignant monument lies outside the graveyard wall.

Now retired at Nether Clashnoir with his wife Irene, Bill has kept written records of many things including the cairn which was erected in 1910-11 by a young man of his own name (but no close relation). In the words of the Rev. R. H. Calder, Minister at Achbreck in the 1920s, the boy 'of his own accord in his leisure time collected a quantity of the loose stones lying around, and thereof with skill and taste constructed the shapely cairn. In 1916 this young man joined the Royal Garrison Artillery, and was killed in action near Arras on 28th March 1918 aged 21 years:

According to Bill the former herd died by a sniper's bullet. Most men of military age in the Braes went off to war; many had wounds or disabilities after the Armistice but few were killed, as the memorial tablet at Chapeltown shows - a bit like the Battle of Glenlivet. There's also an echo of Auchindoun's Cairn. Moved by the fate of Gunner Grant (who was not a member of his congregation) the ecumenically-minded Minister composed this poem:

The Buitemach Bairn

A herding lad beside the ground,
Where moulder human dust and bones,
A pastime for his leisure found Collecting scattered stones,
Whereof with toil and skill he wrought;
But what the end might be
As yet no one could see.
But soon arose the storm of war
And youths were called the foe to quell,
And on a gory field afar
The herd lad fighting fell.
And now the visitor may learn
The meaning of the lonely cairn:
His skill the builder spent
On his own monument.

New Address

One reason why this newsletter is bigger than before is that the editor and his wife have a new address:

Alasdair and Deirdre Roberts, Chapelhouse, Chapeltown, Braes of Glenlivet, BALLINDALLOCH AB37 9JS.

The Hansfords, who were in residence at the time of the Annual Scalán Mass, are now living in France and Robert has written to wish the new occupants well.

Renting the chapelhouse is an experiment which would not be possible if lecturers spent all their time with students. This one is able to spend most of his with a word-processor, and hopes to lead a double life between Aberdeen and Chapeltown - town house, country house (and worry, travelling betwixt, about burst pipes). The partners in this old firm intend to be together, *most* of the time, in one place or the other.

Old Address

Our Treasurer has ruled that the 'Scalán Fiver' is not due until summer, but anyone who wants to cross her palm with silver in the meantime (signing up friends and relations as new members) should write, cheques made out to 'The Scalán Association', to:

Mrs Jane McEwan,

Ogilvie Cottage,

Gallowhill,

Glenlivet, BALLINDALLOCH AB3 9DL.

Ann Dean and Michael Taitt (an extract from ...)

The Innes Review, Volume XLVI. No. I, Spring 1995.

Scalan Reconstructed: Architectural and Documentary Evidence

Bishop Hay refers in 1787 to 'the new building still unfinished'.¹ This appears to be a reference to the north wing being reshaped out of the 1773-4 Kitchen, 'which, with an addition, afterwards became the Chapel for the convenience of the Congregation, by that time grown too large for the little room upstairs.'² The latter continued in use, no doubt warmer for the community on winter mornings, and it was there that Hay carried out an exorcism:

The woman appeared next morning in the Oratory ... At first she was tolerably calm, though a little restless, till he came to the words, *Dic mihi nomen*, - "Tell me thy name," - when, all of a sudden, she started up quite furiously, so that we little fellows looked anxiously to the door of the small Chapel, which was shut, or probably some of us would have made our escape.

The relevant structural point here is that the door in question would probably not have opened on to the outside staircase but rather to the rear corridor from the Boys' Dormitory. At ground level everything could be on a larger scale, and a wooden tabernacle almost five feet high was constructed for the new place of worship.⁴ Bishop Hay's request for a suitable painting is on record:

I am at a loss for a good altar piece to our new Chappel at Scalan; & could think of none so striking & proper as an Ecce homo I got a present of from Lady Chalmers,⁵ & which I had upon the altar in the little closet of the back chappel in the old house (Blackfriars Wynd). Whether it be existing as yet or no I cannot tell, but if it be I would be glad to have it for the above purpose.⁶

John Geddes promised to send this *Ecce Homo* (depicting Christ after his scourging) although he regretted parting with it. Standing in front of the same altar-piece at Michaelmas 1793, Geddes was to explain to the assembled people of the Braes that, although vested and ready, he could not say mass due to a paralysing weakness in his limbs. They were sent several miles down Glenlivet to 'the public chapel'.

Why not become a member of the Scottish Catholic Historical Association? You will receive two issues of *The Innes Review* in 1995 for £14 including postage (cheques to SCHA). Alternatively you can sample Spring 1995, with its account of 'Scalan Reconstructed' for £7. Write to Dr Laura Cochran, Treasurer SCHA, 9 Armadale Crescent, Balbeggie, PERTH PH2 6EP.