



No. 11, December 1995

'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 more tractable, content and happy.' (Bishop George Hay, Rector of Scalan 1788-93)



This first page is being used for a plea by the editor speaking on behalf of a decision made by the local committee (see next page). In the last issue 1 signalled a further increase in size and expressed a hope that the newsletter would still be read. The longest item ('light scholarship without footnotes') widened the focus to include Tombae, but came back to Scalán with the whisky smugglers.

What is *Sealán News* for? It started as two folded sheets of paper and was deliberately 'short enough to read over breakfast'. Now it runs to 25 pages: long enough - there are no plans for further expansion. Many people contribute articles and letters. A member of the Association recently came up with a neat summary of my policy: 'I always enjoy the newsletters - such a good mixture of news, scholarly research, bringing people together and fun!'

Is there a problem? I arrived at the last committee meeting ready to suggest that an extra issue could be produced in 1996 on the basis of articles held over from this one. Jane McEwan (our onewoman marvel as Secretary and Treasurer) arrived with a concern about the £300 per newsletter as a proportion of the budget. Now you have to understand that this is a very friendly committee. It meets at Keith in Mgr Copland's presbytery, and we always end with his delicious selection of hams. Even the business part of the meeting is informal - jolly, in fact - so there was no argument. We arrived amicably at a solution - one which depends on you.

A substantial offer by Fr Colin Stewart out of his youth work budget for the St Michael Centre, Tomintoul, led to the idea of members earmarking money to finance the newsletter. Dr A. T. Macqueen has already done this (I jokingly asked him which bit he would like to sponsor) so others may welcome the chance to be 'angels' - the word is used of people who finance theatrical productions, so why not for dramatising the Scalán news?

We considered raising the £5 subscription but quickly rejected it: times are hard. (*The Treasurer's address is inside the baek eover for those who fear they may have forgotten.*) People quite often pay more, however. If in future such generous souls wished to tell Mrs McEwan that part of their cheque was for printing costs and postage stamps then we would have the makings of a Newsletter Account. That's the solution - if you want it.

At a recent meeting of the Scottish Catholic Heritage Commission, held at Blairs under the chairmanship of Bishop Conti of Aberdeen, members were given complimentary copies. The majority already in our Association explained it to the rest, and I spoke about the 'notes and queries' nature of the enterprise. The potential role of Scalán in relation to the main business of the day, the Blairs Heritage Museum, was fully discussed. People thought the newsletter was 'just right' in length and content, the only criticism being that it does not appear clearly who the editor is. For communications, cheques, etc.:

Mr Alasdair Roberts, Editor *Sealán News*, Chapelhouse, Chapeltown, Glenlivet, Ballindalloch AB33 9DD.

This first page is being used for a plea by the editor speaking on behalf of a decision made by the local committee (see next page). In the last issue I signalled a further increase in size and expressed a hope that the newsletter would still be read. The longest item ('light scholarship without footnotes') widened the focus to include Tombae, but came back to Scalán with the whisky smugglers.

What is *Sealan News* for? It started as two folded sheets of paper and was deliberately 'short enough to read over breakfast'. Now it runs to 25 pages: long enough - there are no plans for further expansion. Many people contribute articles and letters. A member of the Association recently came up with a neat summary of my policy: 'I always enjoy the newsletters - such a good mixture of news, scholarly research, bringing people together and fun!'

Is there a problem? I arrived at the last committee meeting...D.g ready to suggest that an extra issue could be produced in 1996 on the basis of articles held over from this one. Jane McEwan (our onewoman marvel as Secretary and Treasurer) arrived with a concern about the £300 per newsletter as a proportion of the budget. Now you have to understand that this is a very friendly committee. It meets at Keith in Mgr Copland's presbytery, and we always end with his delicious selection of hams. Even the business part of the meeting is informal - jolly, in fact - so there was no argument. We arrived amicably at a solution - one which depends on you.

A substantial offer by Fr Colin Stewart out of his youth work budget for the St Michael Centre, Tomintoul, led to the idea of members earmarking money to finance the newsletter. Dr A. T. Macqueen has already done this (I jokingly asked him which bit he would like to sponsor) so others may welcome the chance to be 'angels' - the word is used of people who finance theatrical productions, so why not for dramatising the Scalán news?

We considered raising the £5 subscription but quickly rejected it: times are hard. (*The Treasurer's address is inside the back cover for those who fear they may have forgotten.*) People quite often pay more, however. If in future such generous souls wished to tell Mrs McEwan that part of their cheque was for printing costs and postage stamps then we would have the makings of a Newsletter Account. That's the solution - if you want it.

At a recent meeting of the Scottish Catholic Heritage Commission, held at Blairs under the chairmanship of Bishop Conti of Aberdeen, members were given complimentary copies. The majority already in our Association explained it to the rest, and I spoke about the 'notes and queries' nature of the enterprise. The potential role of Scalán in relation to the main business of the day, the Blairs Heritage Museum, was fully discussed. People thought the newsletter was 'just right' in length and content, the only criticism being that it does not appear clearly who the editor is. For communications, cheques, etc.:

Mr Alasdair Roberts, Editor *Sealan News*, Chapelhouse, Chapelton, Glenlivet, Ballindalloch AB33 9DD.

## Committee News

The most recent meeting was held at Keith on 10 October 1995 - present Mgr Copland in the chair, Rev. C. Stewart, Miss A. Dean, Mr and Mrs W. McEwan, Mr W. Grant and Mr A. Roberts. An apology was received from Mrs A. Baxter. The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted. It had been held in a private house in Keith because of the illness of the Association's President, and a key item read: 'Mgr Copland joined the meeting later to everyone's delight.'

At the October meeting the work done on the former chapel building by Hugh Drysdale the dyker was approved. Mr Drysdale came up from Thornhill with his son in September and spent a week on site staying in a caravan. They used scaffolding to repoint the gable and make it safe. Next year outside work will be completed with the removal of ivy and the raising of side walls so as to keep out sheep ..

Toilets were discussed further. The plans submitted by Mr Terry McIntosh of Slateford, Glenlivet, had been passed to Moray District Council, and a Mr Robertson of MDC paid a visit to Scalán in the summer. He indicated that planning permission was unlikely to be given for the free-standing toilet unit envisaged. A discussion involving the Treasurer and Elizabeth Beaton of the Vernacular Buildings Trust led to an agreement that the 'milk house' rear extension, not part of the original building, should be used, with another similar extension being constructed against the rear wall. The committee resolved to seek a second estimate from Mr McIntosh.

Considerable work is still required on the interior of the building, particularly to make the attic safe. It was agreed that cleaning up the interior should go along with plastering the walls. A plain effect would be aimed at for rooms, with notices explaining their function in seminary days. The advice of Dr Ian Gow would be sought, through Anne Baxter, on the display of old wallpaper.

Membership is now in excess of 500, with 340 subscriptions already paid for 1995. There is approximately £15,000 in hand to meet the costs, sure to be beyond that sum, of future work. We decided to approach the Millennium Fund and to seek alternative ways of financing the newsletter - see previous page. A collection of £501 was taken at the Annual Scalán Mass.

Other items included affiliation to the Scottish Churches Scheme, recruitment of an international membership, the near clash of dates

with the Aberdeen Diocesan Pilgrimage to Plus carden, and the success of Cardinal Winning's visit - see p. 4.

## Braes Hall Birthday Party

There is a video circulating in Glenlivet. Its occasional shoogles catch the merry atmosphere of a double birthday party held in the Braes Hall on August 16. This was the actual birthday of young Douglas Hogg and the 'official' one of Isobel Grant, who reached eighty earlier this year at her home in London. There was another party on the day, with bagpipes in the neighbourhood Turkish restaurant, but the Braes one was better:

'It was a great success. Buffet, drinks, concert. Joan Milne at Broombank made a huge cake for me and one for the piper, Douglas Hogg, who was 15 that day. She also made a large cloutie dumpling for Margaret Turner at Comelybank - just as large as my mother used to make for all birthdays. I recited "Scotland" by Sir Alexander Gray. Part of it goes, "This is my country, the land that begat me. These windy spaces are surely my own. And those who here toil, in the sweat of their faces, are flesh of my flesh and bone of mybone."



All sorts of people did turns at the request of a sparkling MC, Doreen Turner, who was determined to do Auntie Isobel proud - but also to link in another local event of that day, the wedding anniversary of Irene and 'Beelie' Grant of Nether Clashnoir and the Scaln Association. Local opinion was that Isobel 'spoke very well' (the poem was an elocution exercise from schooldays - though not hers at Chapeltown). She enjoyed listening to the wealth of talent paraded in her honour.

Isobel's favourite 'Rowan Tree' (so many berries this sUIIUIJ.er) was sung by Gordon McGillivray of Achnascra and also played on the pipes. Readers of her articles in this newsletter will surely wish to toast this grand old lady and join in a far-flung chorus of 'Happy birthday, dear Isobel, happy birthday to you!'

## Red Light at the Kirkie

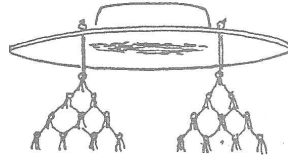
Isobel Grant

*Recently drivers have had to contend with traffic lights at 'the Kirkie', the former Presbyterian Church where the road turns sharp right at the Bochel. From her home near the thundering traffic of Oxford Circus, Iso.bel was quick to link this recent temporary holdup with tradition.*

My sister Jean has just phoned and said that someone ran into the fence at the Kirkie while her daughter was there last week. This is the third time. It is a dangerous blind corner. The car went right into the field. She says the Council is to put on a new bridge at the bottom, crossing the Culraggie Burn. At the same time they should be made to take away that bank opposite the Kirkie house. Twice the lilac tree has been smashed - one at the steps and the other in the corner. That blind corner at the W oodie below W oodend is also dangerous. The other side is a cliff right down to the bum and wearing away all the time.

Johnnie McKay Nether Clashnoir was killed on his bicycle at that brae coming down from the Sandy Hole to the bridge below the Kirkie. It's very steep. The priest went down with Holy Water to bless the road. Alex Grant late of Auchavaich and Eskmulloch was coming home from a dance at the same spot, fell off the bicycle and was found in the early hours of the morning in a coma. He was carried into the Kirkie house and his sister sent for. My mother and I were cleaning the school and Annie came in crying. She had to walk all the way - no cars then. He was in a coma for two days I believe. He was never the same after it and died of a heart attack at 52 at Eskmulloch.

## Cardinal Winning at Scaln



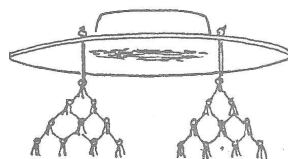
This is the third time these words have appeared as a heading, and the third time Ann Dean's illustration of a cardinal's hat has been used. The heading had a question mark, then an exclamation mark, and now it appears as a calm statement of fact. Cardinal Winning *was* at Scalan on 2 July 1995, fifty years after visiting it as a student and within a year of his elevation at Rome.

It always seemed likely that he would not be able to make it. A commitment in Kent on the Saturday sounded a world away from Scalan, but the Cardinal flew to Aberdeen as promised. He spent the night with Bishop Conti, who was starting a retreat the next day and could not accompany his visitor to the heart of the Diocese. Local Catenian Michael Henderson and his wife Marguerite gladly accepted a request to drive him into the Grampians. They now look on their passenger as a friend, having been with him again in Jerusalem this summer as Knights (and Dames) of the Holy Sepulchre - he being their Grand Prior. It must be pleasant for the Archbishop of Glasgow etc. etc. to get away from the public eye, but when they stopped to open a thermos at the Lecht a Scalan heading bus party spotted Scotland's Cardinal and made him a public figure once again.

Although the first Sunday in July was one of the few chilly days this summer a very considerable congregation had assembled. In the Gospel reading of the day 'Jesus resolutely took the road for Jerusalem', and Cardinal Winning linked this with Scalan's preparation of students for hardship in their lives as missionary priests. Bringing a group from Coatbridge into the homily, he spoke of 'faces to the front and set like flint'. Communion was distributed in that Scalan into-the-crowd way which recalls the feeding of the five thousand. As the priests came out from the altar Fr Colin Stewart's inspired choice of the Latin hymn *Pange Lingua* rose and fell.

There was a new link with Blairs in the person of the Rev. John Woodside, who lives there with his wife working on the heritage project. As one of the Aberdeen Diocese's permanent deacons, Johnnie McKay Nether Clashnoir was killed on his bicycle at that brae coming down from the Sandy Hole to the bridge below the Kirkie. It's very steep. The priest went down with Holy Water to bless the road. Alex Grant late of Auchavaich and Eskmulloch was coming home from a dance at the same spot, fell off the bicycle and was found in the early hours of the morning in a coma. He was carried into the Kirkie house and his sister sent for. My mother and I were cleaning the school and Annie came in crying. She had to walk all the way - no cars then. He was in a coma for two days I believe. He was never the same after it and died of a heart attack at 52 at Eskmulloch.

### Cardinal Winning at Scalan



This is the third time these words have appeared as a heading, and the third time Ann Dean's illustration of a cardinal's hat has been used. The heading had a question mark, then an exclamation mark, and now it appears as a calm statement of fact. Cardinal Winning *was* at Scalan on 2 July 1995, fifty years after visiting it as a student and within a year of his elevation at Rome.

It always seemed likely that he would not be able to make it. A commitment in Kent on the Saturday sounded a world

away from Scalan, but the Cardinal flew to Aberdeen as promised. He spent the night with Bishop Conti, who was starting a retreat the next day and could not accompany his visitor to the heart of the Diocese. Local Catenian Michael Henderson and his wife Marguerite gladly accepted a request to drive him into the Grampians. They now look on their passenger as a friend, having been with him again in Jerusalem this summer as Knights (and Dames) of the Holy Sepulchre - he being their Grand Prior. It must be pleasant for the Archbishop of Glasgow etc. etc. to get away from the public eye, but when they stopped to open a thermos at the Lecht a Scalan heading bus party

spotted Scotland's Cardinal and made him a public figure once again.

Although the first Sunday in July was one of the few chilly days this summer a very considerable congregation had assembled. In the Gospel reading of the day 'Jesus resolutely took the road for Jerusalem', and Cardinal Winning linked this with Scalan's preparation of students for hardship in their lives as missionary priests. Bringing a group from Coatbridge into the homily, he spoke of 'faces to the front and set like flint'. Communion was distributed in that Scalan into-the-crowd way which recalls the feeding of the five thousand. As the priests came out from the altar Fr Colin Stewart's inspired choice of the Latin hymn *Pange Lingua* rose and fell.

There was a new link with Blairs in the person of the Rev. John Woodside, who lives there with his wife working on the heritage project. As one of the Aberdeen Diocese's permanent deacons, he was Deacon of the Mass. Concelebrating with the Cardinal were Mgr Copland, Canon Charles McGregor (now with the Blairs parish added to his responsibilities at Banchory) the Rev. Derick McCulloch (who has relieved him of Upper Deeside), and old Rev. friends Briody, McGhee, McQuade and Traynor. As a particular old friend of Seal an and Blairs (the last rector) Mgr John McIntyre was there, fresh from his term of office as rector of the Scots College Rome.

After the crowds had dispersed (not much picnicking but no hurry) Cardinal Winning dined in style with the local committee and their spouses in the Gordon Arms Hotel. This was recently refurbished at the expense of the Metropolitan Police by the 'Laird of TomintouY. With so many people around the Square who had come from Seal an, it was obvious who was laird for the day. TJ' spent that night in Keith with 'Johnny Cope' before returning to Glasgow.

## A Tale of Two Scalans

Deirdre Roberts

It was a blustery rain-on-and-off sort of Sunday - more typical of the Braes than the long hot summer - as we gathered round the temporary altar with its bright blue plastic canopy in front of the old seminary.

By bus, by car and on foot we had gathered there from places round about and from the cities of the south. For some it was their first visit to the Scalani some were regular visitors over the years, and there were others who had long since left the Braes but were returning to the place of their youth.

In anoraks and plastic macs, collars up and hands deep in pockets, sitting on wet grass, folding chairs and high walls, sheltering under trees, umbrellas and rainmats we gathered round. It was 4 o'clock on Sunday 2nd July - the day of the Annual Scalan Mass when the principal celebrant was Cardinal Winning.

Exactly a week earlier - at 4 o'clock on Sunday 28th June - I had been at Mass at an old penal Mass site up an Irish glen. The Mass Rock in Glendun, County Antrim, is one of many such sites throughout Ireland. Its carved stone of Christ crucified is believed to have been brought over from Scotland.



Every year the local population and some from further afield gather in the little parish church and process half a mile to the Mass Rock. The outdoor altar is a large rock set into the hillside at the edge of an ancient forest. An arch of fresh flowers (and above that the branches of an oak) form the canopy or *scathldn* - *sgdilean* in Scots Gaelic.

Mass was said here from the 17th century but stopped in 1814 when the parish church was built. Then from 1891 there was an annual procession of the Blessed Sacrament to the 'old altar'. The present custom of having an annual Mass there started in 1976. My cousin was the one of the first priests to say Mass there since penal times.

As at Scalan, people crowded round on the hillside, leaning or sitting on the surrounding stone dyke. Unlike Scalan, it was very hot - thin dresses, rolled-up shirt sleeves, insects buzzing in the still air and the tree branches providing a dappled shade from the heat of the sun.

Two Masses a week apart - one held in front of an innocent-looking cottage among the Scottish hills, there to serve the whole country; the other at a rock in the old forest of an Irish glen, serving the local community.

Two places miles apart - in different countries, but sharing a simplicity and a hiddenness. Both of them witness to the surviving kernel of the faith held by our forebears - and to our faith today.

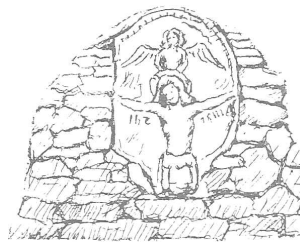
## The Old Tongue in Tomintoul

James Cameron Stuart

Tomintoul comes from the Gaelic *Tom an t-sabhail*, the barn knoll. Although a 'Falkirk bairn', I have long had a close affection for the village and for the nearby Braes of Glenlivet. I could hardly have guessed that my work would finally take me quite close to the glen of my forebears. Noranside Prison nestles in the foothills of the Angus glens and I was appointed there as governor in 1987. The prison service had taken me to many parts of Scotland, and I was then in Glasgow as deputy governor of Barlinnie. I contemplated the Braes of Glenlivet, which my paternal grandparents had left before the turn of the century.

### Family Connections

My grandfather James Stuart was well over six feet and a Highland games athlete in his youth. He left the Braes to become a policeman and ended up as a County Antrim, is one of many such sites throughout Ireland. Its carved stone of Christ crucified is believed to have been brought over from Scotland.



Every year the local population and some from further afield gather in the little parish church and process half a mile to the Mass Rock. The outdoor altar is a large rock set into the hillside at the edge of an ancient forest. An arch of fresh flowers (and above that the branches of an oak) form the canopy or *scathldn* - *sgdilean* in Scots Gaelic.

Mass was said here from the 17th century but stopped in 1814 when the parish church was built. Then from 1891 there was an annual procession of the Blessed Sacrament to the 'old altar'. The present custom of having an annual Mass there started in 1976. My cousin was the one of the first priests to say Mass there since penal times.

As at Scalán, people crowded round on the hillside, leaning or sitting on the surrounding stone dyke. Unlike Scalán, it was very hot - thin dresses, rolled-up shirt sleeves, insects buzzing in the still air and the tree branches providing a dappled shade from the heat of the sun.

Two Masses a week apart - one held in front of an innocent-looking cottage among the Scottish hills, there to serve the whole country; the other at a rock in the old forest of an Irish glen, serving the local community.

Two places miles apart - in different countries, but sharing a simplicity and a hiddenness. Both of them witness to the surviving kernel of the faith held by our forebears - and to our faith today.

## The Old Tongue in Tomintoul

James Cameron Stuart

Tomintoul comes from the Gaelic *Tom an t-sabhail*, the barn knoll. Although a 'Falkirk bairn', I have long had a close affection for the village and for the nearby Braes of Glenlivet. I could hardly have guessed that my work would finally take me quite close to the glen of my forebears. Noranside Prison nestles in the foothills of the Angus glens and I was appointed there as governor in 1987. The prison service had taken me to many parts of Scotland, and I was then in Glasgow as deputy governor of Barlinnie. I contemplated the Braes of Glenlivet, which my paternal grandparents had left before the turn of the century.

### Family Connections

My grandfather James Stuart was well over six feet and a Highland games athlete in his youth. He left the Braes to become a policeman and ended up as a sergeant in Falkirk. My grandmother Sophia McHardy was born at the Scalán. Their son Charles McHardy Stuart (my father) played left back for Falkirk FC on his return from service in the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders in the first world war. He regaled me, as a boy, with stories of Tomintoul, the Braes of Glenlivet and Strathavon.

His brother Donald Stuart was another giant of a man and wore a full beard. Uncle Donald had the capacity to walk phenomenal

distances over the Cairngorms, and he helped to found the Falkirk Mountaineering Club which gave me my love of the hills. When I was quite young we would sit together on a summit in the Ochils, after early morning mass in Falkirk, and I would benefit from his wide knowledge of the countryside and Scotland's history.

My father's cousin Alastair: Stuart came from Achavaich (the last farm on the left as you approach Scalán) and he was the well known hammer thrower A. J. Stuart of Glenlivet, a contemporary and good friend of the equally well known athlete Geordie Clark. Neighbours in our little village of Laurieston, outside Falkirk, would speak of all the big highlanders being down at the Stuarts' house for the Games at Bridge of Allan and Airth. I remember my mother talking about the nights when Uncle Donald, Alastair Stuart, Geordie Clark and my uncle Sandy Stuart were newising together and having a dram, and of the ample breakfasts she cooked before they set off north again. Uncle Donald was to die as a relatively young man falling from a roof at his work in Bonnybridge. His cairn and memorial

plaque still stands on the summit of *Stuc*, a *Chroin* in Perthshire, where it was erected by members of the Mountaineering Club.

#### Gaelic in the Grampians

Coming from such a background, it was with more than a little pleasure that I opened an invitation, one morning at home in Forfar in 1989, to attend a wedding in Tomintoul. I knew it would be a Gaelic affair, and found myself wondering when Gaelic would last have been used at a Nuptial Mass up there. I had learned from Robbie Lamb of Fuarandearg and other older farmers in the Braes, during the early sixties, that Gaelic was not the language of their fathers. My father's cousin Charles McHardy (also in Falkirk but with grandparents from the Linn O' Quoich, a hamlet west of Braemar) told me that as a young boy he spent his holidays with them and met an old friend of theirs. I have a letter from him which is worth quoting on the subject of Gaelic in the Braemar area:

'Jamie Downie lived in Fern Cottage at the top of Chapel Brae and never passed my grandparents' house without calling in. He lived at Tomintoul farm, up on Morrone. When we visited him my young brother and I always received a big glass of warm milk and a scone from his sister Jessie. As town bairns we could not understand why she spoke to her cow in Gaelic, and never ceased to wonder how a cow could understand it. Many Braemar folk still had some Gaelic at the start of this century.

sergeant in Falkirk. My grandmother Sophia McHardy was born at the Scalán. Their son Charles McHardy Stuart (my father) played left back for Falkirk FC on his return from service in the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders in the first world war. He regaled me, as a boy, with stories of Tornintoul, the Braes of Glenlivet and Strathavon.

His brother Donald Stuart was another giant of a man and wore a full beard. Uncle Donald had the capacity to walk phenomenal distances over the Cairngorms, and he helped to found the Falkirk Mountaineering Club which gave me my love of the hills. When I was quite young we would sit together on a summit in the Ochils, after early morning mass in Falkirk, and I would benefit from his wide knowledge of the countryside and Scotland's history.

My father's cousin Alastair: Stuart came from Achavaich (the last farm on the left as you approach Scalán) and he was the well known hammer thrower A. J. Stuart of Glenlivet, a contemporary and good friend of the equally well known athlete Geordie Clark. Neighbours in our little village of Laurieston, outside Falkirk, would speak of all the big highlanders being down at the Stuarts' house for the Games at Bridge of Allan and Airth. I remember my mother talking about the nights when Uncle Donald, Alastair Stuart, Geordie Clark and my uncle Sandy Stuart were newising together and having a dram, and of the ample breakfasts she cooked before they set off north again. Uncle Donald was to die as a relatively young man falling from a roof at his work in Bonnybridge. His cairn and memorial plaque still stands on the summit of *Stuc*, a *Chroin* in Perthshire, where it was erected by members of the Mountaineering Club.

#### Gaelic in the Grampians

Coming from such a background, it was with more than a little pleasure that I opened an invitation, one morning at home in Forfar in 1989, to attend a wedding in Tomintoul. I knew it would be a Gaelic affair, and found myself wondering when Gaelic would last have been used at a Nuptial Mass up there. I had learned from Robbie Lamb of Fuarandearg and other older farmers in the Braes, during the early sixties, that Gaelic was not the language of their fathers. My father's cousin Charles McHardy (also in Falkirk but with grandparents from the Linn O' Quoich, a hamlet west of Braemar) told me that as a young boy he spent his holidays with them and met an old friend of theirs. I have a letter from him which is worth quoting on the subject of Gaelic in the Braemar area:

'Jamie Downie lived in Fern Cottage at the top of Chapel Brae and never passed my grandparents' house without calling in. He lived at Tomintoul farm, up on Morrone. When we visited him my young brother and I always received a big glass of warm milk and a scone from his sister Jessie. As town bairns we could not understand why she spoke to her cow in Gaelic, and never ceased to wonder how a cow could understand it. Many Braemar folk still had some Gaelic at the start of this century.

Tomintoul is now a ruin, though, and there can be few McHardys, Gruers or Lamonts left up there now.'



## Declining Gaelic

In his booklet 'Tomintoul: its Glens and its People' Dr Victor Gaffney (another of my father's cousins) has written, 'Place-names are all that remain of the "the Gaelic" in Strathavon.' The decline of the old tongue can be seen in a series of quotations, starting with the 1794 Old Statistical Account: 'The dialect spoken in this country is growing daily more corrupted by the admission of Anglicisms .. , It may therefore be well supposed that the language is upon the decline ... The young people speak Gaelic and English indifferently, and with equal impropriety.'

Next, a school report of 1824: 'Gaelic is taught only superficially at this school [Tomachlaggan 'in Strathavon] and not at all in the parish school [then at Tomintoul] although the people use no other language and there is a regular Gaelic service in the church.' Finally the New Statistical Account of 1842: 'The language generally spoken is the Gaelic, but it has decreased very considerably within the last forty years. There is not an individual between twelve and forty years of age who cannot speak English. They all read English, and there are many of the rising generation who cannot speak Gaelic.'

No provision was made for teaching Gaelic under the 1872 Education Act which brought in compulsory attendance. Four years later Gaelic church services were stopped in Tomintoul. A smattering of the language survived for a while among the older people. There is some comfort to be taken from the fact that the ancient tongue of Scotland has been replaced by a distinctive form of Doric, spoken by Stuarts, McGillivrays, McHardys and Grants and now beginning to be treated with respect by school teachers.

## Tomintoul Thravers

It was a glorious spring morning with a cloudless sky as I set off from Forfar and went north by way of Kirriemuir. The route went through Glenisla past the 'Bonnie Hoose o' Airlie', a favourite tune I have often played on the pipes and heard sung at folk festivals in Blairgowrie and Kinross. As I wound my way through the glen I wondered had my great grandfather Charles McHardy of Scalan passed this way on his road to the 'south shearing' at one of the large farms in Angus. It was a long standing tradition amongst the people of the Banffshire uplands to go south through the hill passes and glens. They used the 'mounth' passes across the Grampians.

The one most frequented by Tomintoul 'thravers' as they were known (after the thraves of 24 sheaves for which the reapers were paid) was over the Lecht to Donside and then by the Glaschoile, Glen Fenzie, and Glengairn to Ballater. They went on south by Glen Muick and over the shoulder of Mount Keen at a height of 2,500 feet. This brought them out at Invermark on the Esk, and another hill crossing provided a short cut to the West Water and Brechin. Some passed through Kirriemuir, where there was banter exchanged with cries of 'Toulers' and 'Kirriemuir Wyvers'.

Great-grandfather McHardy went south each year as a thraver but always returned to his shoe making at the Scalan. He lived and worked in the building (thatched then, with its walls intact) on the other side of the yard from Sandy Matheson's house. Workers from Strathavon~ Glenlivet and the Cabrach composed the bulk of these harvesters in Angus, with the Cabrach men going;mainly to the Laurencekirk area.

That day in 1989 my route went through beautiful Glenshee, then up over the Devil's Elbow to Braemar. I stopped to visit the Catholic church which still serves a dwindling band of McHardys and Stuarts, then after a *few* miles down Deeside (with Balmoral hidden in woods to the right) up the Braenaloin road to Glengairn. I came down to Donside by way of Tomahaish, a most beautiful part of the country and certainly, over the years, a favourite of mine. There is a little Catholic church at Tomahaish, still used on special occasions, which I visited. The wholesale depopulation of these glens is apparent today and one is left to wonder at the failure of successive London governments to prevent such a haemorrhage of people.

The panorama at the summit of the Lecht was breathtaking on that clearest of mornings as I made my way on the last lap to Tomintoul village. On the outskirts of the sleepy little streets I met Edward Stuart on his way to cut peat, and I newsed with him for a while before booking in at the hotel. Time to don my kilt for the afternoon wedding service, and to partake of a good Glenlivet malt - for sustenance!

## Highland Wedding

That the wedding would be an entirely Gaelic affair was in no doubt. The groom was a good friend and I knew that the mother tongue would only suffice for such an occasion. Alan is one of the three MacDonald brothers of Glenuig in Moidart, all of them well known in piping circles throughout the world. Alan and his brother Doctor Angus are both winners of major awards for piobaireachd, while the youngest- bt~er Iain has played with several of ~fhe top folk bands in Scotland. Alan's bride to be, Angela MacEachan, comes from South Uist in the Outer Hebrides and is a nativespeaker well known to Gaelic television audiences.

My visit to the hotel bar made it obvious that I would not be alone in wearing the kilt. Not a pair of breeks was to be seen in the entire company which made its way along Main Street, nor was there much being spoken in the way of English. I entered the Catholic Church of St Michael - *Eaglais Moire Mha 'thair '5 Naomh Micheil* in the village of

*Tom an t-Sabhail.* I sat watching the priest Mgr Aonghas MacCuimhein, also from the Western Isles, as he prepared the altar. The service sheet stated that *Angela NicEachainn agus Aileen Domhnullach* were to be married that day.

I cannot recall one word of English being spoken or sung throughout the entire wedding service, and the solo singing of Gaelic hymns by the well known singer Mairi MacInnes was truly hauntingly beautiful. Tomintoul and the Church of St Michael warmed to the Gaelic that day.



Although not a Gaelic speaker myself, I knew that I was experiencing a quite remarkable historical flashback and was grateful to be present at such an occasion. After the simple, poignant service ended the groom's brother Iain piped the happy couple from church to the strains of the great 2/4 march 'Highland Wedding'. Later considerable celebrations took place in the hotel, with a feast of Gaelic song and music going on into the early hours of the morning.

The next morning saw me up in the Braes of Glenlivet for a brief visit before heading south. As I stood on the banks of the Crombie outside my grandfather James Stuart's farm at Achavaich, I delighted in splashing my face in its cool waters and thought on all the young students those long years ago who performed their ablutions further up the bum at Scalán. No doubt their heads were clearer than mine that morning.

I took my leave of the Braes, driving past the farms of Achnascraw, Belno, the Bochel, Clashnoir and Achnarrow, and thinking about Victor Gaffney's 'Place-names are all that remain of the "the Gaelic" in Strathavon.' Briefly, the mother tongue had returned to the land of my forebears - and I was there to hear it.

*Jimmie Stuart was also present at the Scalán Mass in July. After a wet and solitary trek over from the Lecht the editor had launched himself too hastily into the gathering piobaireachd 'An Daorach Beag' to greet Cardinal Win: ning (up on the track and well away from the hymn practice) when Jimmie appeared with raised eyebrows and a question on his lips: 'Drones?' He tuned them to perfection during the first playing of the ground.*

*Two comments on his story. The thravers' route south by the Lecht and Glen 'Fenyie' (as it's pronounced) recalls the whisky smugglers who left Glenlivet to sell their wares at Brechin see the June article about Scalán, Tombae and James Michie.*

*And Gaelic featured in a conversation with Jessie Robb who died this summer aged 93. Talking about her grandmother's Gaelic, Jessie came out with a phrase or two before pronouncing her last word on the subject: 'I never liked the Gaelic.' But then she added, 'I suppose it would be all right if you could understand it!'*

## Readers Write

Greetings to all friends in the Braes. Tell them we have geese, chickens and rabbits, and are hoping for goats. We have peach trees at the bottom of the garden and a burn at the bottom of the field in front of the house which is almost exactly the same size as the Crombie - but no distillery. You'll be glad to know that the Bretons take the bagpipes seriously.

Robert Hansford, Ferme du Riffray, Chanteloup, 35150, FRANCE.

*Robert lived in the Braes Chapelhouse before moving to France with his family in the summer of 1994. His village, as Robert would no doubt have been quick to spot, is an anagram of Chapelton.*

I'm writing in answer to the request for information on Mother Forbes, the creator of the Scottish Room at Craiglockhart which is

now at Kilgraston. Mother Forbes was my headmistress at the Sacred Heart Convent, Hove, which in the war years was evacuated to a lovely Elizabethan house on Wenlock Edge called Lutwyche Hall. Her full name was Rebecca Ogilvie-Forbes.

I say 'was' because just when all her sisters, friends and former pupils were looking forward to celebrating her one hundredth birthday on October 27th, she died on ~9th August 1995. She retained her old sense of humour but gave up reading shortly before the end. We were fortunate to have such a marvellous teacher and also to benefit from her practical wisdom.

She very much looked forward to the next world, and I am sure that it's a livelier place since she arrived! She will be long remembered by all of us. R.I.P.

Nancy Deeves, Gerards Cross.

*Such a well-loved sister deserves recognition here in place of a telegram from the Queen, but Mother Ogilvie-Forbes was not the creator of the Scottish Room. Margaret Munro's 'Mother Forbes of Craiglockhart' is about Alice Forbes who entered the Roman Catholic Church at Queen's Cross Convent, Aberdeen, in 1900 and then the Sacred Heart Order soon afterwards at Roehampton. She died in 1936 at the relatively early age of 67.*

I have been trying to find out more about Rebecca Ogilvie-Forbes, in particular why she was listed as a Scot in the English Archives of our Order. They state that her mother was Christian Vaughan and her father John Charles Matthias Ogilvie-Forbes.

The family home was at Boyndlie House outside Fraserburgh. Rebecca was presented as a baby at Queen's Cross, but her mother died when she was two and her father married again. The name is not on the Queen's Cross or Roehampton school rolls, but it is nevertheless possible that she was brought up by the Society of the Sacred Heart. I am still investigating, but it is difficult to find things while our house is being redecorated - or even get my wheelchair to ground level!

Elizabeth Howat, RCSJ, Dalkeith.

*From other sources it appears that the father of Mother Ogilvie-Forbes was Privy Chamberlain to Pope Leo XIII and his three successors. A half-brother, the Rev. David Ogilvie-Forbes OSB, was a monk of Ampleforth. An ancestor was out in 1745 with Pittligo's Horse, and received the family motto 'Toujours Fidele' from Prince Charles Edward Stuart. Sir George Ogilvie-Forbes of Boyndlie was our man in Havana at one stage of his diplomatic career and charge d'affaires to the Holy See at another. A bagpiping nationalist and leading light of the Saltire Society, he was obviously in tune with Mother Forbes of Craiglockhart and her Scottish Room.*

Because of all the publicity about flooding in north-east Scotland in September, I could not help noticing a mistake in the article about Scaln and Tombae, where Alasdair Roberts wrote about the 'Muckle spate o' Twenty-eight'. As the journalists who have rushed to their reference books make clear, the waters which washed away Catholic chapels and a great deal more flowed in 1829.

Frances Bruce, Aberdeen.

*Misled by euphony on this occasion, but got it right in the December 1994 issue on the washing away of Auchindoun's Cairn.*

Many thanks for No. 10 of Scaln News with the interesting, indeed enlightening, study of the Glenlivet Mission based on a *Liber Status Animarum*. It's rather astonishing that so much can be

learned from such a statistical pastoral record book, but this can only happen if .•. , a scholar with direct personal know- ledge of the area and historical equip- f ment fit for the task sets to work. j\_

What the article said about how seldom Glenlivet people at Sunday Mass went to Communion was relevant to the country parishes in Ireland when I was a boy. My uncles and aunts were farmers, and I used to spend part of my summer holidays at their homes. After reading the article it occurred to me that I could not remember them receiving Holy Communion at Mass on Sundays. But the Rosary was said in the evenings at home.

Rev. Michael Barrett, Birmingham

*Irish influence was only briefly felt in Glenlivet as Sister Howat shows on p. 16, but in an article on 'The Rosary in Scotland' Mgr David McRoberts wrote that Bishop Hay had several, bought as presents for his friends in Scotland, which were confiscated at Margate by customs officers when he returned from Rome in 1782. Some were surely meant for Scaln. Later, 'when Abbe Paul Macpherson returned home to settle in his native Glenlivet between 1826 and 1833, he was long remembered for propagating among the people of the glen the Rosary*

*devotion.'*

In answer to your editorial query about "field clubs", so called' [ScN 10], it seems that, with characteristic Northeast modesty, the Banff, Buchan and .... Deeside organisations conceal their long pedigrees, and much learned material, under the self-effacing term 'Field Club'. The Centre for Scottish Studies at Aberdeen University recently produced a list which includes *Deeside Field, Transactions of the Buchan Club* (no 'Field') and *Transactions of the Banffshire Field Club* in contrast, for example, to *Transactions of the Dumfries and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society*. It appears that the term is distinctly linked to the Aberdeen hinterland.

Ian B. O. Bryce, Aberdeen.

I am a descendant of the Gordons of Lettoch who farmed there from the early 1700s: there is a record of the family sending their sons to school at Scalán in 1726. I was born and brought up on Orumin and my brother Neil now farms at Tombreckachie. In all, the numerous generations of Gordons have had ten farms in Glenlivet, including Nevie, Orumin, Tombreckachie, Inverlochty and Lettoch. My grandfather on the Smith side was the dominie in the Braes for fourteen years, retiring in 1896 to farm at Salterhill near Elgin. There was a presentation book given to him and his wife containing the names of no less than 162 subscribers, all of the Braes. A copy is available at 'The Pole' for anyone who wishes to consult it. A great-uncle of mine, Peter Grant, was rector of Blairs in the last century.

I was talking to Hamish Henderson at a friend's recently about his taperecording in Glenlivet after the war and he said, 'When I met the folk of the Braes I thought to myself, "These are the real Scots!"' Quite a compliment.

He also told me I had a typical Glenlivet face: 'Open and honest - I'd recognize a Glenlivet face anywhere!'

Veronica Gordon Smith, Edinburgh.

*Veronica, who is also skilled with a tape-recorder, found her way to the Chapelhouse and spoke about her project of interviewing old people in Glenlivet and Strathavon. She is particularly interested in life stories and folklore.*

Nearly six months have passed since our family visited Chapelton but the memories have not faded. It was remarkable for us Swedes to be sleeping next door to a Catholic church in Scotland, and the children were amazed by the crows and the graveyard. But the best memory was of Scalán. As everyone knows the Vikings travelled from our country to the ends of the earth, so it was really interesting for us to help mark out the Whisky Road from Scalán. We hope the compass directions help other travellers in future. I raise a glass of Glenlivet whisky to the Scalán Association. *Skoll!*

Bosse Norming, Gothenburg.

*It was indeed a great day out with compass, old map (for the path which has been lost from the Clash of Scalán) and lengths of wood supplied by Sandy. The idea was do-it-ourselves way markers like those of Crown Estates for the many walks recently created around Glenlivet - not least the Scalán Walk which has been publicised by Priscilla Cordon-Duff (see below).*

*The Estate Ranger Andy Wells has been helpful On the one hand he is concerned that way-markers should not lead walkers into areas where they might get 'lost in the mist' (ScN 1); also that grouse might be disturbed in season. But Andy warmed to the project of recreating this old route of the 'sheltie' ponies, each labouring under four ankers of whisky. Using the map, he intends to investigate the possibility of defining the route more clearly by marking it with piles of stone some time before next summer.*

## Scalán Walk Open

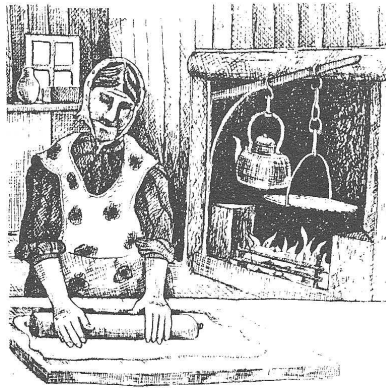
On 17 August the Scalán Walk was officially declared open. It is waymarked from Eskmulloch to the Clash of Scalán and back by Tom Trumper. Among those at Scalán on the day, along with representatives of Crown Estates, Chivas and Moray Enterprise, were Mgr Copland, Bill Grant, Sandy Matheson and Priscilla Gordon-Duff. Her booklet was launched with drams.

'Water of Life - and a Breath of Fresh Air' carries a drawing of Chivas's Braeval Distillery on the title page and an invitation to learn about the landscape through the memories of those who live there. The illustrations are by Alan Paterson of Duff town, and their fresh quality can be judged by the old hearth here and the side-on view of Scalán (really Sandy Matheson's house) which appears on the inside front cover.

The booklet is excellent value at 75p: a pound to cover postage should be sent to the Estate Ranger, Glenlivet Estate Office and Information Centre, Tomintoul. The author, who is of course a member of the Scalán Association, had this to say at the opening:

'I am very pleased that some of the people I talked with and who so readily shared their memories are here today:

Bill and Irene Grant, and Sandy Matheson. Mrs Grant's wonderful home baking shows that some traditions don't die, despite the end of cooking over peat fires! The booklet reflects their lives - I only wrote it down .



'More and more visitors are going to come to this special area to enjoy clean air, clear water, the glorious landscape and spiritual refreshment. The things these people spoke about should also help visitors to understand why the landscape looks as it does. In the past a local community was sustained by the Church and the Shop, meeting local needs. Today we are looking at different ways of meeting everyone's needs.

'In what I have gathered and written a sense of community comes through still, as the contributors reflect on what makes this area special. I am sad that Mrs Robb died before I could show her the finished booklet. She was always so interested and welcoming. People who discover the Braes should go away rejuvenated and refreshed. As Jessie Robb would have said, "Sit down a while and let your hurry go by!"'

### Miss Cameron Identified

In *Scalan News* 10 the leading member of the Scalan community after the Rev. James Sharp left for Aquhorties in 1807 was noted as Helen Cameron. Miss Cameron's name appeared regularly, heading the lists of those who confessed and communicated at Scalan when the Rev. James Gordon came from Lower Glenlivet. A question was raised: 'Could the chapel building have been home to "Miss" Cameron, whose title indicates higher social status?'

It was suggested that the answer to this and other questions might be found in letters in the Scottish Catholic Archive in Edinburgh, but part of the answer had already appeared in print under the name of the archivist, Dr Christine Johnson, in *Deeside Field* for 1987. The article, particularly interesting for its information on Aquhorties, is entitled 'Three Scottish Seminaries'. The relevant passage is simply this: 'By 1812 the chapel was in a bad state of repair, with hens roosting on the altar.

The house was let to a succession of tenants before becoming the home of Bishop Cameron's sister,'



Alexander Cameron (whose portrait is reproduced on the grounds that it *may* give an idea of his sister's appearance) was born at Braemar in 1747, entered Scalan aged thirteen and then the Scots College Rome four years later. He was a priest in Strathavon from 1760-65 and then went out to Spain as rector of the Royal Scots College Valladolid. A year before Scalan closed its doors to students Alexander Cameron was consecrated as coadjutor bishop to Bishop Hay but did not return to Scotland until 1806. Thereafter he was based in the

Blackfriars Wynd chapelhouse in Edinburgh but took a close interest in Aquhorties and its farm. He died in February 1828 and was buried with what was then, for Edinburgh, astonishing Catholic ceremony in the church which became St Mary's Cathedral at the top of Leith Walk. It is not recorded whether his sister Helen made the journey from Scalan to be present.

## Irish Priests in Glenlivet

Sister Elizabeth Howat RCSJ When I was a student at Craiglockhart Mother Forbes inspired me with a love of history which I tried to convey to the children I taught. Then three years ago our Sacred Heart Provincial suggested I write a history of the communication between Ireland and the Highlands and Islands of Scotland which resulted in the Gaelic of these two regions being so similar. I soon realised that this was too big a subject, but a sentence in the article about Tombae and Scalan made me wonder what I could find out about something more manageable. Alasdair Roberts wrote there that 'Irish priests had been in Glenlivet much earlier to serve what was then a Gaelic-speaking population.' I knew about the Irish Franciscans who brought the Catholic faith back to the Hebrides from their base in Antrim in the early part of the 17th century, and I learned about the Vincentians who also operated in the West Highlands, thanks to the courteous service of Mary McVeigh at the Irish Studies Library in Armagh.

## The Gordons

But Glenlivet is far to the east, in the Grampians. The impression from *The Catholic Highlands of Scotland*, written many years ago by Fr Odo Blundell OSB, is that Strathavon and Glenlivet were closely linked to the Lowlands and the Gordons. The Duke of Gordon owned the land, Scalan was founded by

Bishop James Gordon who came from near his castle at Speymouth, and John Gordon of Cairnborrow (near Huntly) was priest in Glenlivet when the seminary was founded. Bishop Gordon had to take a Gaelic-speaker with him on visits to the west. However as the area began to produce its own bilingual priests (including two Grants) local men were usually appointed to Strathavon and Glenlivet, and this continued after the missions were separated in 1727.

## A Strange Country

Mass was in Latin, of course, but preaching, catechism and confession had to be in the language of the people. When another John Gordon (this time of Glencat) was sent to a school for the sons of gentlemen, before the opening of Scalan, he was 'in a strange country and a stranger to the language', so the gentry families of Glenlivet must have spoken English. Young Gordon describes the priest coming to them before Easter and the fact that all pupils received the same penance: 'five Paternosters and ten Ave Marias for the space of ten days'. This Mr Shaw was a secular priest of whom there is no other record. The name does not sound Irish.

There were probably only two Irish missionaries in the area during the early phase when they were needed. According to Blundell, 'The first priest stationed in Glenlivet after the Reformation seems to have been Rev. James Devoir, who came from Ireland in August 1681.' This man, who now would be Dwyer, was only briefly in the East Highlands probably until his return to France in 1685, because later references place him in Morar and Moidart.

## Mr Trayner

Later Blundell forgets about Devoir: 'For many years Strathavon and Glenlivet were under the charge of the same missionaries, of whom the first to be known by name is a Mr Trayner, who came to this mission from Ireland and who probably remained here until 1694.' When King James came to the throne as a Catholic monarch in 1685 he asked for priests from Europe, and soon there were nine Irishmen serving the Gaelicspeaking areas of Scotland. The Annual List in the Rev. J. F. S. Gordon's *The Catholic Church in Scotland* has Fr 'Trenor' registered for Glenlivet in 1688, just before the last of the Stuarts was driven into exile. During the next six years he was presumably one of the 'two Irish Churchmen' appearing in the list.

Further help came from Dr Christine Johnson of the Scottish Catholic Archive in Edinburgh. There Dean William Clapperton's *Memoirs of Missionary Priests* reveals that Fr Trayner also went under the alias of Bayers: 'There were 26 secular clergy in Scotland eleven were in the Highlands, Mr Trener in Glenlivet and Strathdown. Mr Trener entered the Mission 1687, chiefly in Braemar and Glengairn. He was present at both meetings in Gordon Castle in 1688. [These clergy meetings were for allocating territory and distributing funds.] During part of the

time he had the charge of Strathdown, whence he departed to Ireland 1699, leaving T. Innes with the work of 2 districts, Braemar and Glengairn, besides his own, Glenlivet and Strathdown.' Thomas Innes came from Drumgesk, near Aboyne on Deeside, and was no

Gaelic-speaker. He soon left Scotland to pursue his historical studies, taking charge of the Scots College Paris for many years along with his brother Lewis.

## Braemar

In Mary Hunter's *History of the Parish of the Parish of St Andrew's, Braemar* a man who must surely be Fr Trayner or Trener appears under another variant: 'The Jesuit Mission began in 1671. The first resident priest was Mr Henry Forsyth ... who dyed and was buried in this country. A little after him came Mr Trind, an Irish clergyman. After him came Mr Robert Seton.'

An article about Braemar and Glengaim was written for *The Innes Review* by Mgr. Alexander MacWilliam, cofounder of the Scalán Association. Fr Trayner is not mentioned, but one of Thomas Nicolson's early actions after becoming the first bishop in Scotland after the Reformation, was to send an Irish Franciscan called James O'Sheil to Braemar in 1699. There was friction when Fr Robert Seton turned up to reclaim the Aberdeenshire Highlands for the Society of Jesus. In his history of the Mission John Thomson (a rector at Scalán) was critical: 'The Jesuit did not know a word of the Erse, which was the only language used there at the time, and was consequently unfit for serving the country.'

All credit to the Jesuits and their famous education, learning Gaelic at once became a feature of clergy life in upper Deeside. Fr John Innes arrived in 1700 and two years later claimed to have mastered the language. Fr Hugh Strachan, writing from Braemar, went into detail: 'I took charge of this district in 1701 and was at that time entirely ignorant of my native language, which, however difficult it is to learn, Our Lord has enabled me to acquire so completely that now I am able to read, write, preach and catechise in the vernacular. I have composed a catechism of controversy in the Highland tongue, and frequently explain it.'

There are traces of this achievement in the parish register which was begun in 1703 - by far the earliest of these. John Forbes of Corrlach, 'at present in Auch ni chuymalin in the parish of Crathie', was registered as a father in 1728 but Gaelic names were not simple. The mother appears as 'Jean or Janet Laman alias Mc gillivi' (all firstborn girls were called Janet here) and 'hee's commonly called Doill Mc Ulliam she lives in Ard chi with her father. They are both Catholiks. And they both engaged to undergo publick penance and to pay a mulct to the poor.' When a 'bastard ch yId' arrived like this the priest made such a point of 'publick satisfaction for the publick sin' that it was years until the next one. The Minister of Crathie Kirk was not the only one who used the stool of repentance on Deeside.

## Strathavon

Clapperton's account has one other mention of the Irish priest who was in Glenlivet, in a letter from Morar by John Cahassey or Casey: 'Trenor has the names of those you sent and needs money. He carries my letters to Mr Dunbar [the Prefect]. He gives a good report of the mission and stresses the need for teachers as well as priests.' Teachers brings us back to young John Gordon and his 'popish school in the Highlands, kept by one Gregory Farquharson in Strathdown'. Gordon went on to the Scots College Paris, so it was in a real sense the Banffshire forerunner of Scalán - although George Innes, another brother of the historian, was in charge of the seminary at Loch Morar which closed after the 'Fifteen Rising. Theinain Farquharson residence was at Achriachan, across the Conglass from Tomintoul. This was probably the site of the school, since the chapel was close by at Balvair.

Having been brought up in Aberdeen, and at Barrack in Buchan, John Gordon was not impressed by religion in Glenlivet: 'As for the inhabitants of that place, they were as yet more bigotted than any I ever saw; for besides the rosaries, beads, &c. which were in use there, we had in every corner of the country consecrated places, or the remainders of old popish chapels, to which the people resorted, made stations at them, or saying such a set number of prayers by which they pretend to receive certain graces, as the cure of the head-ach, tooth-ach, &c.

'Every thing they made use of was previously brought to the priest to receive his blessing and to be sprinkled with holy water, of which there was abundance in that country; for every Sunday before Mass the priest made great quantities of it and after they were all sprinkled, then it was divided amongst the people, everyone having bottles or pitchers to receive it; and as soon as everyone got his portion then (tho it was pretty well seasoned with salt), they drank it, pretending that thereby they were cured of cholicks, vapours, &c.'

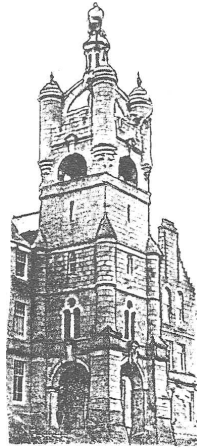
It has to be understood that Gordon had renounced his Catholic faith (later he returned to it) and was writing for a Whig Presbyterian audience. No accusation was too crude. His last word on holy water was that 'the only effect I saw it produce was a fit of belching, which immediately followed and at which they were no novices'. Still, his description ties in with the traditional Gaelic attachment to charms and cures, and to the holy wells which probably helped to fix a site for Scalán. As an Irishman Trayner may have been inclined to emphasise the priest's part in this. Scots Lowland priests (Alexander Geddes in particular) made a point of distancing themselves from what the Age of Reason dismissed as 'popish superstition'. John Gordon shows us the area, we may surmise, before the influence of Scalán began to be felt.

## Glenlivet

Another Irish priest, Dominic Braggan, assisted William Guthrie between 1768

and 1772 when he was at Auchenraw before moving to Tomnavoulin. Fr Braggan's knowledge of Gaelic may have been useful. He was there before what is still a farm at the entry to the Braes lost its meaning by acquiring the sound *Auchnarrow*. It was still Achnara or 'field of the warnings' (against redcoats?) in 1836 - *auch nan rabhadh* in the old tongue.

This article raises questions about Gaelic which tie in with those of James Cameron Stuart - and also about one priest for whom we have little more than a surname. Fr Eddie Traynor of Buckie, Fochabers and Preshome has no special knowledge of the origins of his name in Ireland, but word may come from Fr David Trainer, now in Glasgow. He is still remembered by former Blairs boys abseiling down the lantern tower of the college which carried on the traditions of Scalan.



## Bishop's Mass at King's

*On 25 October Bishop Mario Conti was the leading celebrant at King's College Chapel in Aberdeen. This was part of the quinquennial celebrations of the University, established by the efforts of Bishop William Elphinstone in 1495, and was the first Bishop's Mass at King's since the Reformation. In his homily Bishop Conti linked a recent visit to Rome with the journey of his predecessor to obtain the bull of foundation:*

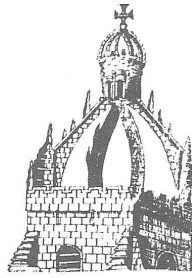
Two weeks ago I stood under the colonnade of Bernini looking towards the Apostolic Palace. Above a now wellconcealed gateway was a representation of the Arms of Pope Alexander VI with the date 1493. This may well have been the gateway through the Leonine Walls by which Elphinstone gained access to the Papal Court. It was only fifteen years since the Sistine Chapel had been built - indeed its first cycle of paintings had been completed twelve years before. Furthermore it was only twenty years since Pope Sixtus IV had founded the Vatican Library, although it had not yet found its present location in the magnificent Salone Sistino and the rooms created for it by Sixtus V.

If there is a Renaissance spaciousness to this late Gothic chapel where we are assembled, and a cultural breadth to the course of studies at the new university which Elphinstone conceived, it is surely not unconnected with his experience nor that of his chosen coadjutors. That they received this from within the Church itself should not go un-

stated, nor unsung, on this memorial day.

*The occasion was deeply moving for those present. If anyone asks what it has to do with the Scalan Association the answer is that King's College was founded to educate priests for northern Scotland. There is a direct line between the Salone Sistino and the library which Bishops Hay and Geddes assembled in the Braes of Glenlivet.*





## A Lost Preshome Library

*The National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh houses 27,000 books taken mainly from Blairs in a collection which was started at Scalán. Books and letters also went south from Preshome, where Bishop Kyle made his house near Buckie into a centre of scholarship while he was there from 1828 to 1869. Young priests used to live with the bishop for a year or so after ordination, learning the ropes of parish life and helping to catalogue mission correspondence dating back to the 17th century. Tim Duffy of Tranent recalls assisting in the removal of these Preshome Letters to Edinburgh in 1973. The divided wooden shelves in*

*which they were preserved can still be seen and Isobel McPherson, who lived with her husband (related to the Abbe Paul) at Preshome until recently, was always willing to show visitors round.*

*The extract below is relevant. Sent in by Malachi Mulligan of Aberdeen, it comes from 'The Lyon in Mourning', three volumes edited by the Episcopalian Bishop Robert Forbes who gathered up evidence about Jacobites who suffered after the 'Fortyfive.*

The Revd. Mr. Alexander Mitchel informed me that there was before, and in 1746, an excellent library at Presshome in the Enzie, a part of Banffshire; that the said library belonged to the Roman Catholicicks in the North of Scotland, Mr. John Gordon, a priest, being librarian and dwelling in the said house of Presshome, one room of which was compleatly fitted up all round with books, there being likewise books in some other rooms and a good many more books in chests for which proper places had not yet been fitted up; that there were among them good editions of the fathers of the Church, as also Protestant authors not a few; and that after the battle of Culloden a command of soldiers with an officer at their head came to Presshome, took down all the books of said library and put them in carts, dragging them to the burgh of Cullen of Boyn, at the cross of which they burnt them all to ashes in face of the sun and in presence of a crowded mob.

So careful and exact were they in bringing them along that when any of the books dropt out of the carts the country people in the procession durst not touch them, but the soldiers gleaned them up and replaced them in the carts. O sordid illiberal souls! Who would ever imagine that such low dirty animals knew so much as a single letter of the alphabet? An instance of barbarous, savage conduct more truly Hottentotlike than anything else! Mr. Mitchel told me that he had been frequently in the said library, and that the books were all in good condition.



*'Burnt to ashes in face of the sun' comes close to poetry, prompting a thought that the Nazis preferred to light up the night with their book-burnings. The account continues with a remarkable tale of three officers which is better rendered, for us, in the words of the Bishop John Geddes who is commemorated in a room at Scalán. He grew up at Curriedoun in the Braes of Enzie, close enough to Cullen for accurate reports to have reached him from the 'country people' who were held at bayonet point. Geddes was a boy of ten when Culloden was fought and did not enter Scalán until four years later. 'Presshome' was not the magnificent house and church of 1788, of course, but*

*an earlier building concealed among rocks to the east and known as St Margaret of the Craggs. The following passage is from 'Memoirs of Scottish Catholics during the XVIIth and XVIIIth Centuries' by the Jesuit Father William Forbes Leith*

Immediately after the battle of Culloden, orders were given for demolishing all the Catholic chapels, and for apprehending the priests. In consequence of these orders, before the end of April a party of the army burned the chapel at Tulloch, near Tynet, in the Enzie [now a graveyard on Braes of Enzie farm], and also burned the altar, pulpit and seats of the chapel in the other parish sparing the building because, in burning it, there would have been danger of setting fire to the neighbouring houses. [St Margaret of the Craggs was not a free-standing chapel.] On this occasion some sacerdotal vestments and books were found, carried to Cullen, and there burned in the street. In doing this one Lieutenant Munro was very active. He put on the vestments in ridicule and tossed the books and vestments into the fire. That very afternoon a soldier [the Episcopalian account has him an officer called Campbell] who had been arrested for some misdemeanour by Lord Charles Gordon, commander of the party, got hold of a gun or pistol in the Tolbooth and fired with an intention to kill Lord Charles, but the ball passing through the cuff of his lordship's coat pierced Munro's belly and wounded him mortally. It was remarkable that his blood actually ran among the ashes of the

books and vestments. I was assured of this fact by credible eye-witnesses a few hours after it happened, and it was afterwards confirmed to me by Mr John Godsman, to whom the vestments had belonged.

*The well-named John Godsman had a brother Alexander, also a priest. John was imprisoned at Fochabers in 1746 but released, on account of his reputation for piety and pastoral concern, to serve at nearby Auchenhalrig until his death in 1769.*

*One more recollection brings this account back to a single book. Dean William Clapperton was born at Fochabers in 1821 and died at Buckie in 1905. During a sixty-year priesthood between these two places and Presbiter, he had access to much archival material and also local knowledge. Fr Forbes Leith had an alternative version of the story, where both fire and tolbooth were in Fochabers, but Clapperton was in no doubt.*

When the vestments, books, etc., were being burned in Cullen, a soldier stuck his bayonet in one of the books, dragged it from the fire, and pitched it over his head. It fell among the crowd, was picked up by one who gave it to my mother's grandfather, and it is at present in my possession. It is an old English prayer book or book of instructions. It was struck thrice by the bayonet, but the blows at the top and bottom lost their hold. The third hole is about an inch from the top, through about a hundred leaves.

## James Gordon's Mother

Alasdair Roberts

When the Rev. James John Gordon began his thirty-year mission to Clenlivet at Tombae in 1812 it appears that he purchased not one but four leatherbound volumes from J. Forsyth of Elgin. The *Status Animarum* was discussed in the last issue. Baptismal and Marriage registers were standard, but the fourth volume, *Obituary KC. Glenlivet*, is remarkable (by Mr Gordon's meticulous standards) for the fact that it was abandoned in 1820 after fourteen entries. Later priests also had difficulty in keeping track of deaths, and it is only in the present century that sequences appear. The book contains two items of interest, the first an obituary of Mr Gordon's successor, the Rev. Robert Stuart of Belnoe (Achnascraw) who died in 1860. The other is a moving account of the death of James Gordon's mother:

'At Tombae on the 3rd of October 1820 in the house of her son the Rev. James Gordon Missionarius Apostolicus Clenlivet, Elizabeth Creig Gordon, Widow to the late Mr James Gordon Merchant, Drumlithie Clenbervie Kincardineshire, born on the 13th November 1745 at Candie, daughter of Robert Creig and Ann Andrew formerly there, aged 75 years excepting weeks, after an illness of only twenty-four hours calmly resigned her soul into the hands of her God at 4 o'clock p.m. having on the 2nd received Extreme Unction from the undersigned and on the 3rd (reaching [retching]) having so far abated) she received the Holy Viaticum from her

Confessor the Reverend Donald Carmichael, Cults Tomintoul. Her mortal remains were interred in the burial ground within the Chapel Dounan beside the Reverends John Gordon, John Paterson, John Tyrie, Ranald McDonald M. Ap.'

Burials at Dounan

Although the Ordnance Survey map of the 1860s has Dounan (see back cover) the local pronunciation is 'Doonan'. The burial ground is four miles northwest of Tombae, shortly before the Livet joins the Avon near Drumin. It is on record that James Tyrie was buried inside the walls of the former chapel there, so presumably the other three priests were put there as well. James Gordon must have given thanks that the soon to be washed away graveyard at Kennykyle was rejected in favour of one which was clearly important to

Catholics in the 18th century. For Sir Edward Peck, in his *Avonside Explored*, 'the Dounan Churchyard is interesting, not least because the unmarked headstones commemorate some of those who fell at the Battle of Glenlivet in 1594. They include Lachlan MacLean of Duart [Mull], who asked to be buried where the Sassunach tongue would never be heard over his grave.'

Who were the four priests beside whom Mr Cordon laid his mother's body? Bishop Ceddes described John Cordon of Cairnborrow in the following terms: 'In the year 1715 he was partly in Stathbogy and partly in Glenlivet. In the year 1716 he removed from the lower to the higher part of Glenlivet, as the safest in those troublesome times, and was the first Churchman who lived at Scalán.' A convert in his youth, John Gordon died at Mortlach in 1720. There was no road up Glenrinnies for wheeled transport, so his coffin must have been carried twelve miles to Dounan on the shoulders of relays of four bearers.

There was a priest James Tyrie but he ended up as a minister in the West Highlands. The Rev. James John Gordon confused him with John Tyrie his brother, who came to Glenlivet in 1740 and is commemorated by Abbe McPherson: 'He joined Prince Charles Stuart so soon as he heard of his landing in Scotland, followed him into England, and left him only after the Battle of Culloden, where he received two wounds on the head from a horseman's sword and got off with great difficulty. He was fortunate enough not to have been apprehended, by lying concealed during many months [in the Garioch area]. His house and books etc., at Buochle in Glenlivet, were burnt by a party of soldiers.' John Tyrie died at Coul of Morange in 1755, quite close to Dounan.

#### Scalan Rector

Ranald McDonald is a mystery to be solved. There were two priests of that name in the final decades of the 18th century, one of them sixty years in Morar (where he died) and the other in South Uist until he became Bishop of the Highland District in 1820.

But perhaps the most helpful point to be taken from this Glenlivet Obituary is that it shows that the Rev. John Paterson was buried at Dounan. This was the rector of Scalán who died of 'consumption' (or tuberculosis) in 1783. It was suggested (*ScN* 9) that he might have been buried in the Buaternach cemetery which was consecrated, according to Victor Gaffney, by a Scalán bishop.

Born at Coffurich in the Enzie, John Paterson was sent to the Scots Benedictine monastery of Wirzburg in Bavaria and returned to complete his education at Scalán between 1764 and 1770. He was ordained there and took over as rector. Paterson remained in that post until his untimely death, surrounded by all three of Scotland's bishops, in the first floor room which Alexander Geddes called The Hole of the Snorers (*ScN* 7). It has been suggested by Ann Dean and Michael Taitt in 'Scalán Reconstructed' (*Innes Review*, Spring 1995) that the health hazards of overcrowding (especially after the loss of a second rector, Andrew Dawson, five years later) lay behind the decision to raise the roof and create the building we know today. John Paterson's coffin was lowered from the upstairs window (through which he must have taken a last look at Tom Trumper) and, as we now know, carried for burial at Dounan by Bishops Hay, Geddes and MacDonald.

Returning to James Gordon's mother, in the margin beside her obituary the priest added further information: 'She was received into the Holy Catholic Church on - August 1803 by the Revd. John Sharp M. Ap. Deecastle and confirmed by the Revd. Dr A. Paterson Coadjutor to R. R. Dr A. Cameron at Kennykyle on the 15th Novr. 1818. Buried on the 6th Octr.'

#### Deecastle

There are several points of interest here. While the Rev. James Sharp was enjoying a relatively tranquil life at Scalán, after the seminary closed, his brother John was in what another priest complained of as the poorest mission in the Lowland District: 'Of all the priests none is more indigent than the one at Deecastle.' This chapel on the right bank of the Dee between Ballater and Aboyne was opened by Andrew Scott, who later became Bishop of the Western District and built St Andrew's Cathedral overlooking the Clyde. Beside it is a new building, the headquarters of Cardinal Thomas Winning Archbishop of Glasgow. From Clyde Street to Deecastle is some leap back through history.

Anyone with an interest in country chapels can expect a friendly welcome there from Mrs Mucha, the owner of this two-storey building created out of the walls of a ruined Gordon hunting lodge. Priests went from Deecastle to Catholics as far south as Brechin and Montrose, making occasional converts. The reception of Mrs Gordon in 1803 is associated with the fact that her son James John Gordon became a Catholic (which came first?) entering Aquhorties that year and eventually becoming a very energetic priest in Glenlivet - his memorial the Church of the Annunciation Tombae.

#### Confirmation

Although Mrs Gordon does not appear as a resident in the chapelhouse in her son's first census, completed between 1812 and 1814, we may assume that she was living with him at the time of her death, not simply visiting, because the priest from neighbouring Tomintoul is described as her confessor or spiritual director. And we can now add to the triumphalist account in the last issue of Bishop Alexander Paterson's return to Glenlivet - with 'High Mass (probably for the first time in this country since the pretended Reformation)' - a human detail. James

Gordon's mother was confirmed in her adopted faith that day, a distinguished old lady in the young crowd of 29 males and 65 females.

### The Map

The map on the back cover shows that Downan still had the recognisable ruins of a chapel in the 1860s. There is no trace of one now in the neat graveyard maintained by Moray District Council, and nothing to show the graves of four priests and one mother of a priest.

Just off the map, overlooking the Distillery and ready for late subscriptions or early 1996 ones, is the home of our Treasurer. Scalan fivers etc. (cheques to 'The Scalan Association') to:

Mrs Jane McEwan, Ogilvie Cottage, Gallowhill, Glenlivet, Ballindalloch AB3 9DL.

