



scalan

news

No. 15, December 1997

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



MORTLACH.

Meeting place of the Vicars Apostolic and Administrators.

There have been not just one, as usual, but three major events drawing people to the Braes of Glenlivet since the last *Scalan News* came out. Two were joyful occasions (the Annual Pilgrimage Mass and the Chapeltown Centenary Mass) but one - the burial of Fr Donald Grant O. Carm who wrote about Glenlivet priests in our last issue - was very sad. All three events are reported in the following pages.

At a recent meeting of the Seal an Committee in Keith it was agreed that, with the toilets now built and funds available to pay for them, it was time to move on to the final phase of restoring the interior of scalan. Using Marcus Dean's report (sent out to members with the last annual report) as a guide, a site inspection was held with Marion Donald whose firm of architects were responsible for the external work. Her report is not yet to hand, but the impression from the discussions at scalan was that the interior would be kept simple, going no further in the direction of 'reconstruction' than explanations of what the various rooms were used for in seminary times, with attention being drawn to such features as wallpaper and the old construction technique of wattle and daub.

This year's scalan Mass was held under overcast skies, but as usual many people made the pilgrimage - some from considerable distances, like Fr Eddie McGhee who finds the drive from saltcoats no problem. Bishop Conti took the lead, and on the altar with him were several regulars from nearby parishes: Mgr Copland (of course, as President of the scalan Association),

Canon McGregor from Banchory and Aboyne, Fr McQuade from A viemore and Fr Morrow from Braemar. Fr Michael Briody, now of Moodiesburn, mentioned that this was his twentieth year as a priest - and was capped (or mitred!) by the chief celebrant's two decades as a bishop. Fr Briody went on to deliver an excellent address on the meaning of scalan. The text is being held in reserve for summer to lure people back to the Braes in July 1998.

Since Scalan is above all a symbol of vocation to priesthood, one of the most moving moments came during the bidding prayers. Mgr John McIntyre was the last rector of Blairs College, which became the third seminary to prepare boys for the Scots colleges abroad after Seal an and Aquhorties. He has recently returned to parish work in the Glasgow area from the Scots College Rome, where he was also rector. Mgr McIntyre asked the congregation gathered at Seal an to pray for the last of the Blairs boys, ordained this summer.

The frontispiece is taken from Dom ado Blundell's *Catholic Highlands of Scotland*, the result of a visit with his fellow monk of Fort Augustus Lawrence Mann - a link with the Church History Weekend (see p. 20) which was advertised to members. Peter Anson copied it for *Underground Catholicism in Scotland*, but the original is better. It is also somewhat imaginative, with heather thatch added and lying-pane windows taken from Blundell's earlier visit to Scalan. It is linked to p. 13, and readers may like to test themselves by spotting 'the deliberate mistake'. Answers on a postcard - and in our next issue.

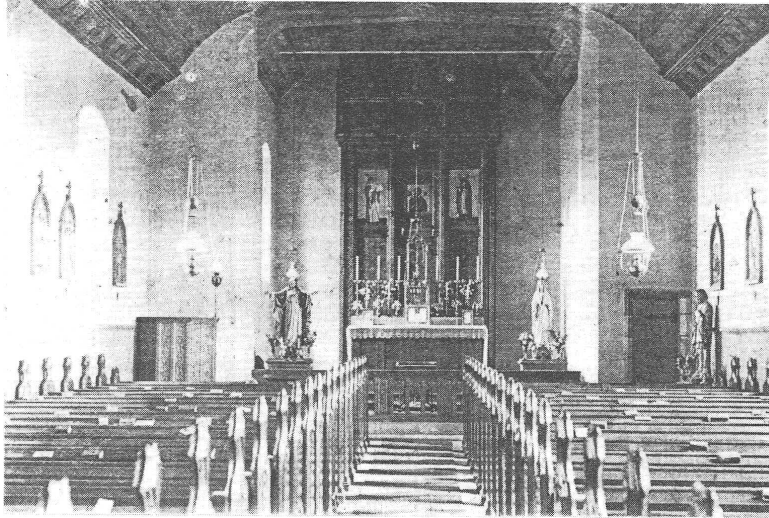
Chapeltown Centenary

As announced in our last issue (and after the ground had been fully prepared by a build-up of historical items) the centenary of the church which guards the way to Scalan was commemorated on 14 September 1997. It brought the same kind of crowd to the Braes of Glenlivet as for the Annual Pilgrimage Mass in July, and the church was absolutely packed. The altar was also crowded with concelebrating clergy (again the Bishop and Mgr Copland to the fore) and the homily was given by one of the younger priests of the Aberdeen Diocese, Andrew Mann, whose mother grew up at Upper Clashnoir as a sister to Bill Grant of the Scalan Committee.

There were echoes of the Seal an Summer School when the parish priest

Fr Colin Stewart provided a modern musical alternative, along with Netta Ewing, to the traditional hymns which were I also well to the fore. Most remarkable, however, to those who are familiar with Our Lady of Perpetual Succour as a cl)urch over the century that has passed{ was the carpet (almost paid for already by the contributions of worshippers on the day) and also the altered appearance of the altar.

Fr Colin Stewart is not only an inspirational youth leader at the St Michael Centre, Tomintoul, and a twice-yearly provoker of reflection on Grampian TV's evening religious slot, 'Reflections' - he is also a gifted artisan. So when the parish priest proposed that the original altar should be reunited with its 1897 backdrop (brought forward to serve the Vatican II liturgy, priest facing the people) and that he would make another for 1997 the Parish Council agreed after only a short period of amazement. It is very striking, with RESURREXIT clearly visible from the porch, and thoroughly in keeping with John Kinross's tasteful interior.



There is also something new to look at as you leave the church which should strike a memory chord with readers - a framed photograph of the clergy who were present on 8 September 1897. There is also another picture which was only glimpsed in the last issue, the entire congregation panoramically presented and piled high to the upper windows of the chapel house. Bill Grant saw to that, efficient as ever, and went down to Elgin with the prints to ensure that they were accurately described in the *Northern Scat*. He expressed the hope then that the 'grand occasion, attended by hundreds of people' would be matched in 1997. It was, with the improvement of the Braes Hall to retire to afterwards - where there wasn't room to swing a cat.

Since we have found space for a very early photo, with missals giving the impression of a church already in use, it is worth pointing out that several features of what the reporter of the day described as a 'bejewelled interior' are nowhere to be seen. Deborah May, who wrote for us, was intrigued to be shown photographic evidence that the external walls were harled: 'Kinross hated harl. ... I suppose the problem of damp required him to add it.' She was also interested in missing aspects of the interior: 'You are probably right that the stencilling of the Paternoster etc. was applied later but still (since the press report mentions 'bright colours') before the official opening. Whenever, Kinross's admiration for Bodley and his reference to St Salvador's Episcopal Church in Dundee do indicate to me that the stencilling work was his.'

Dr May sent up a beautiful set of colour prints which do indeed show the affinity between Chapeltown and the High Episcopalian church in question.



It only remains to say that the church part of the day (before the Braes Hall) ended with a *Northern Scat* photographer trying to get an equally memorable image of the 1997 congregation from the top of his van. Incidentally, at Fort Augustus Maggie Ridout raised the question of identifying people of the Braes from the panoramic photograph of 1897. This has been tried in a small way without much success, but surely now that the photo is on public display, mass-goers at Chapeltown (including the occasional visitors who return in summer) will take their family albums along and make connections.

Fr Donald Grant RIP

Readers of his article on two Glenlivet priests in the last issue will be sad to learn that Fr Donald Grant died on 14 July 1997 aged 49. He had latterly been chaplain to Catholic students at Aberdeen University, bringing the Carmelites back to the city for the first time since the Reformation. Bishop Conti paid tribute: 'The death of a talented and comparatively young priest, who was one of the great hopes of his order, is a tragedy in human terms. However his life had been given to God, and the sacrifice of it was one he was prepared to make. His dignity in bearing his pain and disappointment will long be an inspiration to all who knew him.'

Donald Grant grew up in Perth, but always with a sense of his family roots in Glenlivet. He graduated at Edinburgh University in

chemical engineering and was on the point of going into the oil industry when a chance meeting with a Carmelite altered the course of his life. After ordination he became a much-loved teacher at White Friars, Cheltenham, where his Scottish accent and classroom vivacity earned him the nickname 'Brodie'. His funeral was at St John the Baptist's in Perth, where the international aspects of his work were emphasised when Dutch and Irish members of his Order played the leading parts. However at his own wish Fr Donald was buried at Chapeltown of Glenlivet, where his kinsman Bill Grant was on hand to see that everything was done properly. Isobel Grant was unable to be present, but compiled her own characteristic account with some help from Meg Grant who lives at Tomnavoulin.

It was so sad about Fr Donald. We will all miss him - he was so kind to everyone and had a lovely nature. He used to come and see me in London and ask questions for the family tree which he was putting on his computer. He grew up in Perth but always loved Glenlivet, and came to a house above Tomnavoulin whenever he could. His Aunt Teresa, the youngest of the thirteen Grant children, was named after St Teresa of Lisieux, and Donald was born on her feast day, 3rd October 1947. Of course he died in her centenary year. It's a mercy Teresa died first, a year past May, as she would have been so upset. I used to visit her in St Thomas's Hospital. Their mother was my grandmother's sister at Christivoan near Eskemulloch. They were all born at Auchnascraw before the move to Westerton. My grand aunt Isa Stuart, Westerton, was Fr Donald's grandmother.

I went to the funeral in Perth. It was just like the ordination nineteen years ago with twenty Carmelites on one side of the altar and other priests on the other in their vestments: Mgr Copland, Canon Anderson (from the Cathedral in Aberdeen who is Britain's Preacher of the Year), Fr Colin Stewart and others I didn't recognise. Bishop Logan was the chief celebrant. Fr Donald's chalice, which had been donated by all the relatives when he was ordained, was on top of the coffin. I got Val Kilbride to weave him an alb. There were twentytwo relatives in church at Perth including Johnnie Grant's widow Lily, aged' ninety. Johnnie was Fr Donald's uncle who died in May - she really misses him after being together for sixty-six years. My niece Elizabeth read a poem after Communion and then got a lift back to the Braes with Fr Colin Stewart.

Fr Donald had evidently asked to be buried in the Braes churchyard, otherwise it would have been at Aylesford Priory in Kent which is the main Carmelite house in this country. I went down on 16 August for the 'Month's Mind' Mass which they held for him. I was sorry I couldn't go on from Perth as I had a family wedding in ~ury the next day, but I wrote to Meg Gr'Int to get all news of the Braes funeral.

She was there at two o'clock for the Mass, which was said by Canon Robert McDonald who is now at Inverness. There were about a hundred there. The funeral cortege arrived at 3 p.m. and Meg went out with the others to meet the coffin and follow it into the graveyard. Billy Grant knew of a grave that wasn't used (Rattrays, who had moved away and gave their permission) on the left side near the top rear gate leading out to Broombank. The Carmelite Prior, up from Aylesford, was so upset that he broke down and everyone had to wait ten minutes until the service could begin. The Carmelites sang a hymn, and then Meg asked if she could sprinkle holy water on the coffin along with the others, so Mgr Copland stepped forward and held her arm.

On a more cheerful note, Tales of the Braes of Glenlivet by Isobel Grant and others (mainly Isobel, but the book will be filled with good things including a section all place-names by Stuart Mitchell) is almost ready to be handed over to the Edinburgh publisher Scottish Cultural Press. It should be available late next year. The last piece of the jigsaw is a 'Brief History of the Braes' by the editor (yes, of both) which became long and complicated but is now nearly ready to be boiled down for consumption.

The English Convent, Bruges



In 1994 I wrote about my forebear Andrew Oliver, the convert who went to Scalan for education, became a priest at Mill of Smithston near Rhynie, and then left for what is now Belgium where he was a much loved chaplain to the Augustinian Canonesses of the English Convent at Bruges. Fr Oliver's abilities were tested dramatically in 1794 when he was required to escort the sisters to safety across the Channel as the anticlerical forces of French Revolution moved in on Bruges.

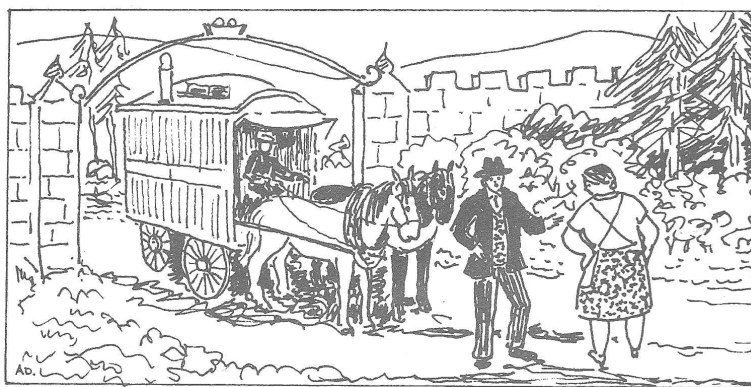
This year I went there and was welcomed with great kindness. The archivist, Sister Marie Alma, showed me F r Oliver's portrait and such material as she had about him, including an account of his death and burial in 1812. I had some letters she hadn't seen (later I sent her copies of his ordination certificates) so we swapped photocopies and I told her about Scalán. Bruges is a lovely city with an atmosphere all its own, but the sisters say it has become very materialistic and people are not as devout as they used to be. There are now scarcely any female vocations.

The sisters are delightful - an ageing community, but they seem to have the knack of keeping each other up and going. Five are over ninety but only one is room-bound. One, in her eighties, is a Scot - Sister Mary Bede, formerly Rose Mary Forbes of Rothiemay. She is a tall thin lady who walks with a stick, and I had many talks with her. She was the youngest of four sisters at Rothiemay and there were also two brothers. Both became Benedictines, one Ampleforth and the other Downside, so there was no heir to the property and it was sold.

There is another Scalán connection (beyond Andrew Oliver). In the summer of 1936 Peter Anson left his horsedrawn caravan at Tombae and, after Chapeltown, 'took a rough track through fields and then across rough moorland. My way led me still further into the heart of the Braes. Had I not been told, I should not have expected that I should come to a farm house, for it lay hidden behind a low ridge.' So unexpected was Anson's discovery of Scalán that he did not draw it (until ten years later - again and again) but readers of *The Universe* were told about the neglected state of the old college, I witness to the loyalty of Scottish Catholics during the worst times of persecution.'

The link with Bruges? A week or so before this high point of Anson's summer as *The Caravan Pilgrim* (weekly articles made into a book) he arrived at the family home of Rose Forbes, now Sister Mary Bede: 'I had received an invitation from Colonel Ian Forbes of Rothiemay Castle, but when the caravan passed under the battlemented archway leading into the drive (the chimney only just clearing) the lodgekeeper came rushing out in a state of wild excitement.

"You cannot go up there," she exclaimed in horrified tones. "The Colonel doesn't allow tinkers in his grounds." She looked completely mystified when I explained that the Colonel was expecting me to lunch and that it was already after one o'clock. We drove up the long avenue with rhododendrons on either side. Just as we got to the stables a martial looking figure in a kilt appeared round a corner and then started to unharness the horses in the manner of an expert. After luncheon the Colonel showed us round the Castle (including a chapel where mass is said from time to time) and we were taken to the recently excavated ruins of a chapel built by St Drostan, a disciple of St Calumba.' The Aberdeen archaeologist, Dr W. Douglas Simpson had taken the Banffshire Field Club to see his St Drostan dig the previous summer.



I brought back from Bruges a booklet about the English Convent which traces its history and (more important) its Flemish spirituality based on St Thomas à Kempis and *The Imitation of Christ*. It is on my shelves beside *A Link between Flemish Mystics and English Martyrs* (1926) and *Historic English Convents of Today* (1936). I would like to end by quoting from the second of these books (by Dom Basil Whelan OSB) because it gives an impression of the convent as a school not so very different from the seminary where Andrew Oliver learned the routines of religious life. Something must be allowed for 18th century attitudes to boys and the 'charmantes hirondelles venues de Grande Bretagne' - swallows flown abroad for a convent education:

'There were no outdoor games, but the children of these days were more accustomed to boredom (or rather, not so easily bored). Self-denial and fasting were made familiar matters, as also were recollection and mental prayer. They were not allowed to give each other unkind nicknames. In short the formation of character rather than the cramming of brains was the first aim of the nun-teachers. The children rose at 5.30 a.m., the tiny ones being helped to wash and dress. Mass at 6.30 involved kneeling on the ground the whole time without any support, and this was followed by breakfast and the beginning of classes. At 10 they all went for a walk. The discipline was strict, and yet all was done by a loving gentleness, so that the nuns ruled by affection rather than fear.' I am sure that

applied, albeit in a more masculine setting, as much to Scalán in the Braes of Glenlivet as the English Convent, Bruges.

The Duchess's Pension

William James Anderson

In the last issue it was shown that the Duchess of Gordon received a government pension in return for bringing up the heir as a Protestant after her husband died in 1728. The following item was written by the Rev. William James Anderson in the Autumn 1963 issue of the Innes Review, which devoted all of its 212 pages to Scalán and Aquhorties. Fr Cordon was in charge of the newly opened Scottish Catholic Archive in Edinburgh and had access to all sorts of curious information. The note covers the sad fate, on taking a wife, of a priest ordained at Scalán. She ended up with some of the Duchess's pension.

John Gordon was the son of a Birkenbush [Enzie] cousin of Bishop Gordon and the first whom he baptised. He was ordained priest at Scalán on 21st September 1734. Mr James Donaldson (a convert son of a minister and Aberdonian) who at his death 17th March 1740 had spent thirty years at Preshome out of fifty-two years of priesthood, was now very infirm and Mr Gordon was given to him as assistant. He became very active in finding recruits for Prince Charlie, being then sole clergyman at Preshome, and therefore, or from fear or laziness, remained in hiding during part of 1746 and 1747, leaving the burden of his mission to poor Mr Godsmán.

Sent to Buchan in 1748 he soon after, on some pretence, went up to London. Rumour began to speak of his falling into evil courses, and he put an end to rumour by returning with a woman whom he called his wife, residing with her on a farm in the very neighbourhood of Banff. One day Fr Alexander Duguid the Jesuit (J.tncle of Miss Irvine in Elgin, where he died) was riding past when he heard the voice of a woman passionately shouting: 'Come down ye damn Jesuit, come down!'

Jesuits being scarce in Buchan, he naturally believed the amiable salute was directed at himself, and rode on with a meekness designed to disarm his foe by apparent submissiveness. But happening to look round, he perceived poor John Gordon on top of a haystack and recalled his hasty judgement of her hatred of Jesuits, seeing that it was simply a development of conjugal happiness.



The Duchess of Gordon had received a pension from government as recompense from a grateful country, having achieved the perversion of her son on the death of his Catholic father. Part of the pension she got settled on this woman, and in the enjoyment of it she lived to a great age and died in Banff. The unhappy pair left three children, the youngest a girl called Goody or Goderich. In 1809 Bishop Kyle met her in Banff: 'Mr Kyle, did ye ever see my mither?' Immediately Goody showed him into a room where sat a miserable old crone, shrivelled up into the corner of a chair. Miss Goody reckoned among her visitors th~ family of Richmond and Gordon, perhaps from a community of sentiment as to their noble origin. Fr *Anderson seems to be drawing attention to the shared benefits of that pension.*

Readers Write

.....and not least Jimmy Cameron Stuart, who in addition to producing two fine articles for this magazine has written a series of letters to The Herald and The Scotsman. In particular he set the record straight (in this year of Columba and Ninian) on the old chestnut that the Celtic Church was an early version of Protestantism, and chided the journalist John McLeod for dragging the 'sleepy Romanist hamlets' of Moidart and Moral' into a piece on the Skye Bridge. Recently a proposal to restore the 19th century Cordon chapel at Drimnin in Morven (north of Mull) provoked the following:

The request that the Roman Catholic hierarchy consider restoring St Calumba's Church, Argyll, will fall on deaf ears. The famous Scalan College in Glenlivet for training Scottish, predominantly Highland, clergy is largely disregarded - but for the Scalan Association. Scottish Catholic history is not taught in Catholic schools. Ask the majority of Catholics about their native church, or any aspect of Highland Catholicism, and you will be greeted with a blank expression.

James Cameron Stuart, Polmont.

Almost immediately a letter from London reached the Ogilvie Centre (how?) asking for suggested reading on Scottish and Highland Catholicism.

Further to Jock Sharp of Larryvarry, I have in my possession a poem written by him about Scalan which was published in 1899 by Moran & Co. of Crown Street, Aberdeen. It starts:

Through the Braes of Glenlivet,
there flows a clear stream,
With many a long winding,
the Crombie by name
In green Cairn Dhulac takes its rise,
I've heard say,
And falls into the Livet
at romantic Tombae.

The last verse shows that it was written to commemorate the centenary of the closing of the Old College of Scalan.

Frances Bruce, Aberdeen.

Space will be found in the next issue for all sixteen verses and the sketch (artist unknown) which shows a woman presumably Henrietta McHardy - in the doorway of the now-ruined building on the left. The firm of J. J. Moran moved from 6 Crown Street to 408 Union Street, now John Menzies Ltd., later that year. Bernadette Moran, who with her sister Mollie carried on the family business as a Catholic Repository opposite the Cathedral at 33 Huntly Street, now lives in Nazareth House.

As a new member of the Scalan Association I would like to send you the story of my family tree in the hope that others may help me to complete it. My Grant ancestors lived at Coruanich in the 1760s and I am a distant relative of Isobel Grant, who has written several articles for you.

James Grant, Nuneaton.

Mr Grant must be related to a great many others of the name, not least the late Fr Donald Grant whose family history investigations were so tragically cut short this year. Coruanach lies between Chapeltown and Ladderfoot, and the story of its old inhabitants will appear in due course.

I understand that the names of the clergymen photographed at the church door at Chapeltown in 1897 are known. My mother had an uncle who was a priest and his own uncle was also one. Both were named Charles MacDonald.

One was in charge of Tombae, where he had the reputation of being a good farmer. Was he in the photo? I remember either my mother or my aunt telling me that Uncle Charles went to America in a boat from Glasgow. One or other of these little girls was sat on granny's knee, at home, while she taught them "Bonnie Charlie's noo awa". Depending on whether it was my mother or my aunt, this must have been sometime between 1916 and 1924.

Esther Bruce, Elgin.

There were indeed two priests called Charles MacDonald as records show, but they do not show that one was uncle to the other - family history comes up trumps. The first arrived at Tombae from Beaulieu in 1861 (aged about 32) and stayed 22 years, winning prizes for his cattle before he moved on to Inverurie.

The younger Charles MacDonald appears in the 1897 group as the handsome priest in the middle of the door. He grew up at Achdregnie, Glenlivet, and went to school at Tombae while his namesake was in charge there. He was then at St Margaret's Huntly, where he included St Charles Borromeo in the wall medallions during redecoration. It is close to the gallery, and acquired a crown at the latest redecoration when Canon McWilliam was in charge. Mischievously he decided that if one priest could celebrate his patron saint in paint so could another: St Louis of France has replaced St Charles of Italy.

However (with all respect to family history) there is a mistake here, because 'Bonnie Charlie' did not go awa' to America or anywhere else. He was at Keith from 1908 to 1927 and then at Buckie, latterly as Mgr MacDonald. Another Aberdeen priest went to America after serving as a chaplain in the First World War, but he was not called Charles MacDonald.

Thank you so much for the copy of your lecture at the Fort Augustus weekend. I found what you had to say about the state of North-east Catholicism in the 17th century very interesting indeed. I have been giving Father Fergus Kerr (of the University chaplaincy here in Edinburgh) a little help in researching his Dominican predecessor Fr Patrick Primrose. We believe he was in residence at Kinnairdy Castle (now owned by my son) when Lady Frendraught's 'popish' activities attracted the notice of the Presbytery of Strathbogie. She was living there with her daughters and refused to go to kirk services, which supports your emphasis on women keeping the faith. We are still not sure exactly when Lady Kinnairdy died, but I believe that she was buried on the outskirts of the graveyard at Forgue because of her unwillingness to conform to the Church by law established.

Lady Innes of Edingight.

Local knowledge from the wife of the Lord Lyon King of Arms, who has estates in North-east Scotland, certainly carries conviction. Readers may remember Fr Kerr's account of the Dominican who suffered imprisonment in the Banff tolbooth and his invitation

(ScN 10) to visit the 'brunt kirk of Strathbogie' where Patrick Primrose was buried in 1672. It is illustrated in this issue at p. 13.

Thanks for the current *Scalan News*, and very interesting it is. Yvonne Sciberras mentions Walter Lovi and Malta, so two things. Lovi was in Rome and Malta in 1840, as I described in a 1990 article in the *Review of Scottish Culture*, 'The building of the RC Chapel in Wick, 1832-39'. If she has any references to Lovi from Maltese sources they would be useful to us here. But perhaps the information is from his letters to Scotland, now in SCA and described in an unpublished typescript by Mgr MacWilliam - in which case (as the chapel-builder's own account of his further triumphs abroad) it has to be taken with a pinch of salt.

The Abbot, Fort Augustus.

Father Abbot, as he is known to the community, should know about Walter Lovi's letters because he was for a number of years in charge of the Scottish Catholic Archive at 16 Drummond Place in the nation's capital. Mrs Sciberras was unable to find confirmation of the Scottish evidence because the buildings which would have contained it were destroyed by German bombers in World War Two.

Many thanks for sending me your account of the early days of James Gordon Bennett, the founder of modern journalism and editor of the *New York Herald*, who grew up at Newmill near Keith. As I told you on the bus between Fort Augustus and Inverness, my mother's family have always believed that they were related, although my Scottish Catholicism came to me through a Peterkin, not the Bennetts whom we have always taken to be Protestant. It is now a lot clearer to me why 'Cordon Bennett' (of the humorous oath) abandoned the faith of his fathers after the death of his brother at Aquhorties.

Michael Olizar, Putney.

Thanks to you also for the genealogical detail and the information on his son's extraordinary yacht.

For a long time I have been fascinated by old Catholic churches and mass-sites. I can recollect poring over the half-inch

Bartholomew's maps (now sadly out of print) seeking out the elusive 'RC Chap'. Now my wife and I enjoy prowling round areas like Glengairn, where we noticed pointed Gothic windows in a byre at Candacraig and wondered if they were a remnant of the church there. The old chapel at Ballogie looks well-cherished as a house, but we have never been bold enough to ask to see it. Corgarff is always a delight, and we attended the annual mass there on 7th August this year. It was a beautiful summer evening, and the congregation was made very welcome afterwards by Jo Smith, the Bishop's tenant there.

Ian Willock, Dundee.

Ian is editor of Open House, 'Scotland's Independent Catholic Journal of Comment, Opinion & Reflection', and a long term member of the Scalan Association. Early next year there is to be an article by yours truly on 'Catholic heritage and history' which will take Scalan as prime example of the former. Candacraig became Glengairn's chapel after the population was cleared from the upper reaches of the glen to make sheep runs. The owners of the Ballogie estate, across the river from Aboyne, are Malcolm and Christina Dyce Nicol who would be happy (tenant permitting) to show visitors the chapel which was linked with the mission of Deecastle.

I am interested in the small enclave of Catholics who lived in the Strathbogie area round Huntly in the 18th century, and who were largely crofters and farmers on the lands of the Dukes of Gordon. My great-great-great-grandfather William Goodbrand (1761-1831) was born at a small croft called Hillend of Ruthven, just south of a farm called Haddoch, and baptised by the Rev. John Gordon under Roman Catholic auspices - probably at home, there being no official RC church in that vicinity at that date. It had probably been burned down, whether by accident or design is unknown.

The name Goodbrand is not common in the area, although I have traced it back to 1587 in the Enzie. I am chiefly interested in two Goodbrands from Strathbogie who were caught up in the 'Forty-five, captured at Carlisle in December 1745 and finally transported overseas. Both were called Alexander, one aged thirty and the other between fifteen and seventeen years of age. They were born too early to appear in Mr Gordon's baptismal register, and they are also missing from the published sources mentioned in Stuart Mitchell's recent article on the Jacobites of Strathavon and Glenlivet. I would nevertheless very much like to find out more about the two Alexander Goodbrands.

D. S. Goodbrand, Rossendale, Lancs.

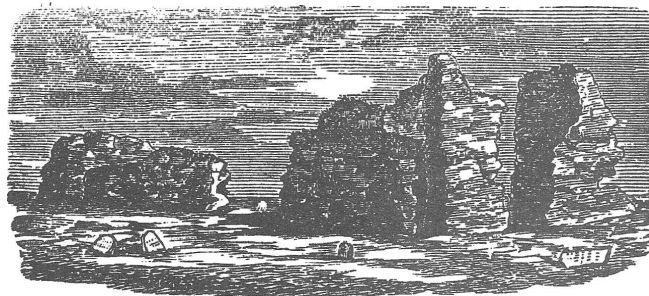
Jacobite connections aside, and without adding anything to Goodbrand family history, this led to ...

Mortlach, Robieston and Scalan

Alasdair Roberts

Mortlach and Robieston are two little known places near Huntly, but both are linked to Scalan. Mortlach is so little known that Peter Anson confused it with the ancient kirk of Mortlach outside Dufftown, but Dom Odo Blundell visited the site: 'Although the ruins prove that there must have been many houses there at that time, the township is now deserted. Indeed a sombre desolate spot can scarcely be imagined, the poor land offering very little inducement to the farmer whilst the exposed situation has nothing of the exclusion of Scalan, so far at least as weather conditions are concerned.'

There is an early Mortlach link in the person of John Gordon, who withdrew from Minmore to the Braes of Glenlivet after the 'Fifteen as 'the first Churchman who lived at Scalan'. Thus wrote Bishop Geddes, recording these penal times with care. Perhaps the Glenlivet winters were too severe for Mr Gordon, with the first seminary still unbuilt, because he came down to the old chapel site of Mortlach, at the foot of the Binn Hill in Cairnie [see back cover]. Gordon was only 48 when 'he preached on death on a Sunday and died on the following Tuesday.' He was buried in the ruins of Peterkirk, another ancient chapel near his family home at Cairnborrow.



ST. PETER'S CHURCH, D'RUIMDALGY OR DRUIDELGY, NOW IN CAIUEY PARISH.

Built before the 13th century; Burnt at the Reformation; and now taken In 1833, by Jas. Henry, Watchmaker, Kelth.

Mass-House at Robieston

That was in 1720. Four years later a report of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge drew attention to the '218 Roman Catholics in Huntly, with a chapel at Robieston, where Peter Reid and John Tyrie preach and say Mass.' Peter Reid was another priest who 'did not live long' (in the words of Abbe McPherson, who did) and he died at Mortlach in 1726. John Tyrie took over, saying mass at Robieston for another seven years.

Robieston is north-west of Huntly, less than a mile from the ruined castle of Strathbogie where mass had been celebrated very solemnly in the 1660s. From this farm the 14-year-old Charles Cruickshank went out to the Scots College Rome in 1728. Even in these days Huntly provided first class education, so his parents did not need to send their son to Scalan.

On returning to Scotland young Mr Cruickshank was sent to serve the Catholics of Glenrinnies and Morinish, his house and chapel at Tomnagylach being situated a mile or so from the modern distillery. There is every reason to think that Cruickshank became a Jacobite agent. He left his mission for France in 1744 with an 'indisposition', and was a close associate of John Tyrie who returned from a prolonged visit to Rome and became his neighbour in Glenlivet. As Stuart Mitchell has shown (*ScN* 14) Tyrie was wounded at Culloden and his 'Bochle Hall' (with its library) was destroyed after the battle.

In 1736 198 Roman Catholics were attending the 'mass-house at Robieston': dimensions 66 feet by 18 (SPCK

again, keeping a watchful eye on papists). The priest there, Alexander Paterson, had spent most of his time in the Highlands although from Tynet - first 'at a school in Morar, as master', teaching Latin (as George Innes had done on Eilean Ban) then Vist, where Paterson's lack of Gaelic meant that he could say mass but not hear confessions.

His twelve years with the Catholics of Huntly, living at Robieston, were more productive. The 'mass-house' there was burned in 1746 (by no means accidentally) along with Scalan and the Bochel. Alexander Paterson died within a year of this sad event. A later Robieston priest, William Duthie, considered himself fortunate in getting vestments and books out before he and his students saw Scalan burned to the ground.

Mortlach at Binfoot

Mortlach was spared in this orgy of chapel-burning, although the priest William Reid was taken a prisoner to Edinburgh. The following year, once more at liberty, Mr Reid wrote to Bishop Smith from 'Bin-foot'. Asked to take over Glenrinnies, his reply could have been that of any overworked modern priest with extra journeys to make:

'I'm sorry you should think it necessary to apologise for the' additional task you was forced to lay on me. It's true I took the liberty to remonstrate but I assure you, Sir, it was not so much with any view of my own ease as of a clear foresight that the people would be ill cared for; seeing I could not do things here and there too alone. Jo: at Robs: is indeed very helpful and goes as often as can be expected considering the other places he goes to. He is truly exerting himself as becomes his station, and is generally well liked and very popular. He comes frequently here, and I go as often as I can.'

'Jo: at Robs' was John Gordon at Robieston, who came from Mill of Smithston at the Rhynie end of the Strathbogie mission - we were there with Andrew Oliver (see p. 5). The phrase 'as becomes his station' seems to mean that Huntly, where the Duke of Gordon's forebears had lived until the move to Bog of Gight at Fochabers, required a clergyman who could get on with Protestants as well as his own people. Mortlach was more of a country mission.

Confident of being 'well liked', Mr Gordon moved into town although his mass continued to be at Robieston. John Gordon's health broke down in 1751 when he was only 33 (another victim of hard times) and during his final ten years of life could give no more help to Mr Reid in visiting country districts. One of his last baptisms, before retiring to Mill of Smithston to die, was of William Goodbrand who was born at Hillend of Ruthven - the great-(times four) grandfather of the man who started all this.

Rev William Guthrie (1724-95) Although he achieved the three score years and ten, William Guthrie also suffered from ill health - including the gangrene of a badly set broken leg which eventually had to be amputated. That was done in Edinburgh on the advice of Bishop George Hay, a former medical student. Hay, Guthrie and John Geddes, the builder of the second Scalan (and future bishop) came back together from Rome to Scotland in 1759 as new priests. Guthrie joked about his 'tree leg' in January 1785 when he was called to give his neighbour William Duthie the last rites. He arrived in time to anoint the former Scalan rector, having 'waltzed' across the Binn through a snowstorm to Boghead of Gibston.



William Guthrie was apprenticed to a carpenter in Ellon when he became a convert through the Rev. George Gordon at Aberdeen. This priest was distinguished from other Gordons by the name 'Scalanensis' because of receiving all his seminary education in the Braes and being ordained there - a distinction he shared with yet another bishop, Hugh MacDonald of Morar. Carpentry was not the only useful skill which Guthrie brought to his work as a priest (which began at Achinraw - John Geddes's spelling for Achnarrow in Glenlivet). Alexander Geddes caught Guthrie nicely in his 'Book of Zaknim' which satirized the 1775 Scalan meeting of bishops and senior clergy - readers may recall 'The Hole of the Snorers' (ScN7):

'William the son of John, of the tribe of Guthrie, a man cunning in all sorts of needle-work and in making ephods and girdles for the priests of the Lord and all other things that are for the service of the Temple. And he could do all manner of work of the carpenter, and of the engraver, and of the guildler, and of those that devise cunning work. And he knew the history of all the generations of the Tribes of Israel, and he was skilled in the rites and ceremonies of the Law of Moses; and they made him Recorder. And he too was a preacher, and he preached terrification; and his words were like thunder in the ears of the people. Howbeit he only had one leg:

Geddes was honoured with a doctorate by St Andrews University as an early modernist theologian (proposing a non-literal interpretation of the Bible) and most certainly did not preach 'terrification'. He probably looked down on Guthrie's Scripture knowledge. But Geddes also completed Scotland's oldest Catholic church at St Ninian's Tynet while living nearby at Auchenthalrig, and he respected the convert's manual skills. Alexander Geddes literally looked up to him from five foot five inches, for William Guthrie was a tall man.

To pursue the comparison, Geddes was later taken up by London society and had his portrait painted. All that remains of Guthrie to assist a pen portrait are a few of his letters, together with comments by contemporaries.



The history of the Scottish Mission as told through clergy letters often falls short of Scripture's exhortation 'See how they love one another: but it is hard to believe that the carpenter of Mortlach had an enemy. On New Year's Day 1783 he sat down to send the wishes of the season to Bishop Geddes at Edinburgh. Guthrie's friends had feared that he would die, but now he was recovering. The letter ends: 'When you have a moment of spare time from necessary business, I defy you to write to anyone on earth who has a warmer heart to you, or has had these thirtythree years, than I have.'

Mortlach's Excellent Chapel

During the winter of 1771, the worst in thirty years, Mr Guthrie received £5 to help him keep body and soul together at Mortlach in exchange for making a suit of vestments for Scalan. He wrote of working in front of a 'wet fire' made with peats that 'would neither sing nor' say.' Along with his neighbours at Robieston, Shenval and Glenlivet, the Mortlach priest was sent a barrel of flour by Bishop Hay to help him survive the famine of 1782 - known as the 'pease-meal year' because hardly any corn was harvested. The clergyman who lived at Gibston with responsibility for the Catholics of Huntly, still saying mass at Robieston, was Charles

Maxwell. In contrast to William Guthrie's Protestant boyhood among the lower orders in Buchan, Maxwell grew up in the aristocratic house of Terregles near Dumfries and was educated by Jesuits (including his uncle the rector) at Dinant in Flanders.

The two reached Strathbogie by very different routes (and Guthrie was fourteen years older than Maxwell) but found common ground in their vocation to priesthood. It was while walking together on a Sunday afternoon in June 1784 that Guthrie tripped his wooden leg on a clod of earth and 'both disjointed and sprained the ankle of my only leg, so that not having now a leg at all I must be carried from the chair to my bed and from my bed to the chair like a child in my lad's arms. I hope it is replaced again into the joint as I heard it give a sharp knap when I got it.'

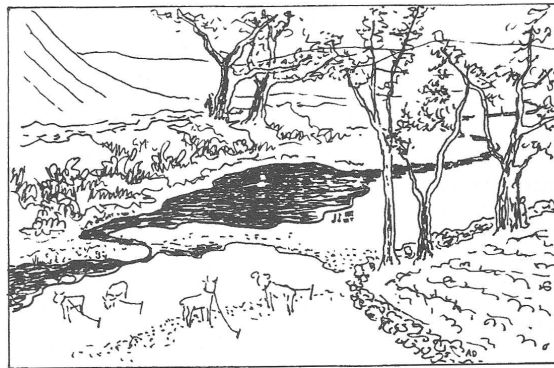
This time Guthrie recovered the use of his leg and responded by building 'an excellent chapel' at Mortlach - presumably with help from the young male servant who had been carrying him about. There was probably a housekeeper as well, but chapel-building was men's work - like embroidery. 'It is now almost finished,' he wrote in the following November, 'and is truly to my mind. Everybody that sees it seems to be truly charmed with it. I am busy and much fatigued, making a beautiful altar with my own hands.' That's another thing that Fr Colin Stewart, who says mass at Chapelton of Glenlivet (and sundry other places between Aberlour and the other Mortlach at Duff town) have in common - see p. 3.

Guthrie wanted to take his liturgical progress a step further by introducing Christmas Midnight Mass in 1785 (Catholic 'services' were very quiet affairs under the penal laws) but there was no way that Bishop Hay would risk stirring up trouble: even in the remotest country chapels he steadily refused to allow hymn-singing, although priests and people were beginning to request it.

Further Scalan Connections

There are still more connections between Mortlach, Robieston and Scalan. In July 1788 Bishop Hay went up to the Braes with several objects in mind. One was to bathe in the Crombie where it was dammed for the purpose below the 'cornhill' on the Tom of Scalan: he was sure this had restored him to health nine years before after falling down stairs at Aberlour. Hay was to take charge of Scalan as rector in place of young Andrew Dawson who was dying of consumption (the second superior to fall victim to this scourge in five years) at his parents' home at Haddoch, north of Robieston.

In their article 'Scalan Reconstructed' (*Innes Review*, 1994) Ann Dean and Mike Taitt suggested that Bishop Hay's building work which was being completed that summer may have been partly carried out for health reasons. Others have claimed that the new stone and lime houses 'breathed' less well than the turf black houses they replaced, especially when there was genteel wallpaper as at Scalan. However that may be, the final link is Mr Guthrie. Bishop Hay had brought his old college friend up after meeting with Bishop Geddes and the administrators at the new, experimental venue of Gibston (more on this in the next issue). Hay then returned to Aberdeen to make his final arrangements to leave the Castlegate during two weeks of September 1788. Meanwhile who better to supervise the 'heatherers and wrights' who were raising the roof at Scalan than Guthrie, the carpenter from Buchan.



On 19 April 1791 Mr William Guthrie, designated as son of the deceased Thomas Guthrie of Blackhouse, parish of Peterhead, executed a holograph will and testament at Mortlach leaving all his effects to Bishops Hay and Geddes. Four years later it became obvious that he was no longer fit for duty, and arrangements were made for him to leave Mortlach and retire with a servant (perhaps the 'lad' who had helped him through the second leg injury) to live in the attic of the chapel house at Aberdeen. John Geddes was already there, paralysed and in constant pain after taking a final leave of Scalan, and was to linger on for several years. The plan was never put into effect - William Guthrie was too weak to travel. His death was entered with precision in the records of the Scots College Rome: 'Mortuus in Mortlach anno 1795 [1 Maii].'

Sharp Exit

The one-legged William Guthrie has quite properly - taken over this story, but there is a postscript. Two brothers, James and John Sharp, were closely associated with Scalan during the final years before the move to Aquhorthies, and they came from Mortlach. J

James Sharp, the older by four years, was born there in 1768 and went to Rome after Scalán, whereas John spent his ten senior seminary years at Valladolid. Both were at Scalán only briefly (six months in John's case) confirming the idea that a solid grounding in classical education was available at Huntly.

James Sharp was ordained in 1793 and went straight back to Scalán where, as 'an agreeable and sweet-tempered lad' (Bishop Hay's words) he was to take some of the pressure off Andrew Carruthers. This future bishop, still to be ordained, had managed to upset almost everyone at Scalán after returning to Scotland when Douai fell into the hands of French Republicans. Both the farm manager and the housekeeper, Annie Gerard, were ready to quit, Bishop Geddes being virtually bedridden and unable to sort things out.

Soon after the sweet-tempered lad arrived all this changed. Both John Geddes and the high-handed Carruthers left for the Castlegate of Aberdeen, the one to endure a five-year purgatory of immobility and pain, the other to finish his studies. Then John Sharp came back from Spain in 1795, and it was under these two young priests that the last boys were educated at Scalán. James was superior of the seminary and John the only other 'professor' - a title which made more sense when he held it at Aquhorties. Both brothers ended their lives at Blairs, and so are connected with all three seminaries.

James Sharp remained at Scalán for another eight years as priest for the Braes of Glenlivet. Mass continued to be said in the chapel which has recently been saved from further ruin until a more convenient site was found at Lettoch. Mr Sharp's early education in the town of Huntly, close to Mortlach, may explain why he was known as one of the first Catholic priests to make a point of speaking King's English in preference to 'the auld Scots tongue'. Dean and Taitt have suggested that he introduced the wallpaper.

Scalán Summer School

This account comes from three sources: an article by Maeve McGlynn in Open House (see p. 12) where Anson's drawing of 18th century Scalán appears to give our efforts additional publicity; Fr Colin Stewart's recent newsletter advertising the St Michael Centre Tomintoul; and Netta Ewing who, with Mgr Gerry Fitzpatrick, organised this pioneering course. Netta is the chief tenant in the chapel house at Chapelton and Mgr Fitzpatrick (who is Music Director of the Glasgow Archdiocese) pays rent for Tombae.

The course was divided into two blocks with a free day in the middle, so it was possible to come for one three-day block or the other, but many came for the whole week and used the free day in the middle to explore the surrounding countryside. Visits were organised to Pluscarden Abbey and the ruins of Elgin Cathedral, where there were opportunities to pray in both words and song. The workshops at Tomintoul, Tombae and Chapelton covered everyday topics like voice production for cantors; organ and keyboard tuition; choral singing and its repertoire; and also the more esoteric areas of playing the harp, and colour schemes for churches. Much of the emphasis was restoring prayers and canticles of the early Church to community worship.

The participants silk-painted, embroidered, designed and musicked their way through the week. Bizarre goings-on included an impromptu concert in the Chapter House of Elgin Cathedral (it is, frankly, surprising that no one was arrested) and a barbecue in failing light at Tombae which is, to the best of my knowledge, still in progress. It was a splendid week in which amateurs were encouraged to come to the fore, albeit with the help of some highly skilled friends. There were two sung Masses which were very, very, very uplifting. The organisers have taken out a provisional booking for a repeat performance next year. I hope it works out.

The Summer School went very well indeed! We had around thirty students and an attendant fifteen staff. It was exhausting, but exhilarating and inspiring too. It was a very happy and moving experience with many very special moments - lunch on the chapelhouse lawn with an unsmiling grasscutter from Moray Council mowing carefully all round us; Ecumenical Passover at Tombae in the evening by candlelight; Evening Prayer in the Upper Room at Scalán to the sound of violin and harp. Then were the evening barbecues and ceilidhs - we all watched in total disbelief the legginess of Fr Colin doing 'Strip the Willow'. We even managed to sell £50 worth of posters for the Scalán Association. NE

It is worth adding that Bishop Mario Conti led a Sung High Mass wearing one of the mitres designed by this remarkable Glasgow art lecturer (and part-time lady of the Braes) Netta Ewing.

Church History Weekend

Dom Stephen Geddes, Retreat Master

As part of the ongoing programme of 'out of tourist season' events, the Fort Augustus Pastoral and Retreat Centre held its first Church History Weekend in November. This was in the nature of an experiment. The Right Reverend Abbot, Dr Mark Dilworth, had given his series of talks on more than one occasion and most recently in Spain at the Scots College, Salamanca.

On 18th June 1777 John Geddes, having restored the Scots College in Spain" (originally Madrid) by persuading the King to have it reopened at Valladolid, gave 'A Brief Historical Account of the Seminary of Scalán' to staff and students which included the stirring words on the front cover. Of course Bishop Geddes was the man who, as Scalán superior in 1767, erected the building which is,

through your efforts, in process of being restored.

Your editor was, easily persuaded to assist the Abbot in offering the talks as a weekend conference. The weather was particularly kind. Between the talks, and with the opportunity to join the Benedictine community at Mass, Vespers and Compline, the thirty-eight participants (who had come from as far away as London) were able to walk in the grounds and village and take in our views of Loch Ness and the mountains.

A number of those present commented on the very reasonable price for excellent food and acceptable accommodation: we make ourselves available to the People of God on these weekends and are not seeking to profit from them. The Abbey Shop and Heritage Centre do have a commercial aspect, of course, although once again they represent a spiritual reaching out to the motorised host of visitors to the Highlands who pass this way in summer.

Due to higher than expected numbers for this first venture into Church history, the conducted tour of the monastic library on Saturday afternoon had to be divided into two groups. The four lectures, which dealt with the Scottish Catholic Church from the 1560s to the present day, were well received and the atmosphere at the concluding session on Sunday morning was enthusiastic even though the planned workshop on Highland Catholicism left a feeling of unfinished business. The evaluation sheets which were completed there and then confirmed the positive reaction of those who came to Fort Augustus, with a recommendation that further conferences on Church history should be held focusing on particular aspects.

'Too much to take in all at once' summed up this aspect of the feedback. With that in mind, we are hoping to offer a weekend (pencil in 17-19 April 1998) on Father Abbot's special subject, Scottish monasticism. Although Dr Dilworth was too modest to emphasise it, many of those present in November tracked down his *Scottish Monasteries in the Late Middle Ages* (Edinburgh University Press, 1995). This 102-page paperback can be obtained at less than half price (£5.50 including package and posting) by writing to the Abbey Shop, 51 Benedict's Abbey, Fort Augustus, PH324DB.

Two Addresses

A recent communication from the Secretary and Treasurer to the Editor stressed the importance of keeping costs down for *Sealan News*: 'Times are hard.' Anybody who feels that they can afford more than 10p a week (plus second class stamp) to support the restoration project *and* this magazine should send their 'Scalan fiver' (or even more) to:

Mrs Jane McEwan,

Ogilvie Cottage,

Gallowhill,

Glenlivet, BALLINDALLOCH AB3 9DL.

The editorial response has been to reduce the print run (very few spares for new members) and to make the columns slightly wider. About 600 members receive this issue at a cost of well under £500 including package and posting - value for money? - For those readers who (in increasing numbers) also have something to write about, the address for editorial correspondence is:

Mr Alasdair Roberts, Ogilvie Centre,

St Mary's Cathedral, 16 Huntly Street, ABERDEEN AB10 1SH.

