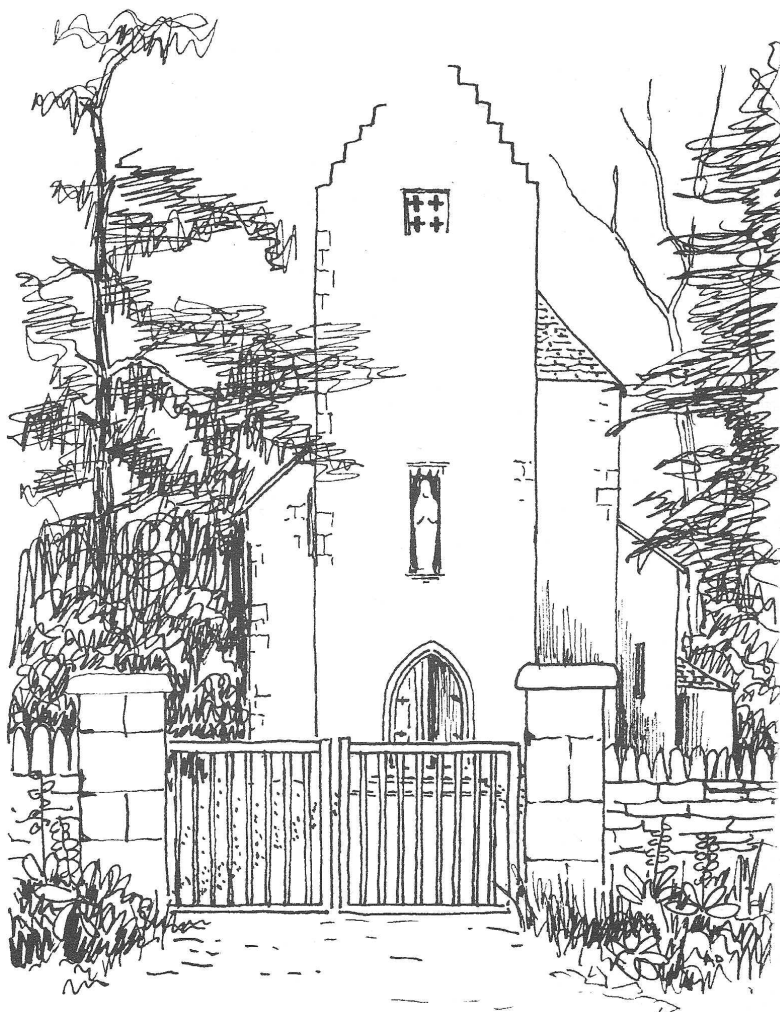


No. 14, June 1997

'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 dismal times of darkness and error, Scalan and the other colleges will be mentioned with veneration, and all that can be learned concerning them will be recorded with care ... ' (Rev. John Geddes, Rector of Scalan 1762-65)



Scalan was looking its best on Tuesday 3 June, when a couple of dozen members of the Association gathered there at noon prior to the AGM, with bright sunlight glittering on the Crombie out of a clear blue sky. Mass was again held in the Boys' Dormitory upstairs, which gave the congregation a view of sheep peacefully grazing on the Tom of Scalán behind the two pastors, Mgr John Copland and Fr Brian Halloran.

As on previous occasions, the three course dinner provided by local volunteers in the Braes Hall was a sumptuous affair. When Mgr Copland rose to give his annual report and described it as his favourite meal of the year, however, he was thinking more of the occasion than the food. The report of the 1996 AGM reached members in May, and they will receive formal notice of this year's meeting from the Secretary in due course, so these are only the editor's personal observations in the aftermath of a happy return to the Braes of Glenlivet.

The best joke of the afternoon was made by Dr John Watts, who is writing a book about Scalán to mark the bicentennial of its closure in 1799. To the suggestion (emanating from the Committee) that the Army might regard the repair of the road from Eskemulloch as a useful training exercise he responded that last year would have been a suitable time, marking 250 years since they destroyed the seminary!

Mgr Copland's report emphasised that work was well advanced on the toilets which last year's AGM had approved after 'very animated' discussion, and that they were expected to be in working order by the Annual Pilgrimage Mass on 6 July. He also proposed that three trees should be planted to commemorate the three priests who founded the Scalán Association, Mgr Alexander MacWilliam, Mgr David McRoberts and Canon Peter Bonnyman. Native trees (birch, rowan, gean) were agreed for this gesture which appeared more imaginative, in hindsight, than the plaque approved at last year's AGM. The trees will also screen the toilets from the view of approaching visitors.

The drawing opposite (and others) is by Ann Dean who again enlivens the pages of print with her art. Much of this issue is taken up with the centenary of the Braes church at Chapeltown, starting with a press report of the reopening which took place on 8 September 1897. We are fortunate to have Dr Deborah Mays writing on the church and its architect, and she is fortunate to have that expert

contribution linked with Isobel Grant's lively memories of a church filled with people. The rest of the newsletter is a tribute to the members who write in with follow-ups and make varied links with Scalán and the penal times.

The final message at the AGM came from Bill Grant, a member of the Committee from the start of the modern phase of the Scalán Association. Bill has cared for this beautiful church since he was an altar boy, acting as right hand man to thirteen priests. The Centennial Mass at Chapeltown will take place on Sunday 14 September 1997 at 4 p.m. and everybody is welcome - rain or shine!

Opening of Church at Chapeltown, Braes of Glenlivet

Banffshire Journal, 11 September 1897:

The opening ceremony took place at eleven o'clock on Wednesday, when there could be seen from out of almost every house in the district little groups of people hastening to the church. At the entrance to the short avenue leading to the church there was erected a massive arch of evergreens, red rowans and heather bloom. The arch was surmounted by a cross, and beneath was the word 'welcome' wrought with ivy leaves on a white background. Over the arch on either side there floated flags, and colours were also displayed from the tops of some of the little clump of trees that separate the church from the roadway.

The outside of the building is plain, with its arched doorway and small windows of miniature panes of glass, as if to retain as much as possible remembrance of the antiquity of the place. Above the doorway in a small recess in the wall is a representation of the Virgin Mary, 'Our Lady of Perpetual Succour', to whom the church is dedicated. The image is of white material and serves as a most beautiful and appropriate relief to the front gable of the building.

There was a very large attendance at the opening ceremony, the church being completely packed. There were nineteen clergymen present, headed by the Most Rev. Angus Macdonald Archbishop of St Andrews and Edinburgh, who celebrated Pontifical High Mass, and his brother the Right Rev. Hugh Macdonald CSSR Bishop of Aberdeen, who preached the sermon. In addition to the Rev. Colin Mackenzie of Chapeltown the following priests from the Diocese of Aberdeen were present:

Canon Chisholm LLD., Rector of Blairs; Rev. Fr. M'Gregor, Cathedral, Aberdeen; Rev. Fr. M'Queen, Inverness; Rev. Fr. Macdonald, Huntly; Rev. Fr. Wiseman, Portsoy; Rev. Fr. M'Intosh, Buckie; Rev. Fr. Paul, Keith; Rev. Fr. Stuart, Tombae; Rev. Fr. Chisholm, Tomintoul; Rev. Fr. Nicol, Fraserburgh; Rev. Fr. Meany, Glengairn. It is of interest to mention that the Very Rev. Canon Chisholm, Rector of Blairs College, Aberdeen, is cousin of the two prelates, his mother being Margaret, second daughter of John Macdonald of Glenaladale.

John Kinross RSA and the Braes Church, Chapeltown

Deborah Mays

The foundation stone for the new Roman Catholic church in the Braes of Glenlivet (dedicated to St Mary, Our Lady of Perpetual Succour) was laid on 24th June 1896, and the event was colourfully recorded the next day in the *Banffshire Advertiser*. It was opened for worship on 8th September 1897. The commission was made possible by the efforts of the Rev. Fr. Colin Mackenzie, parish priest, and through the generosity of John Patrick, Third Marquess of Bute, an ardent convert to Catholicism.

The architect was John Kinross RSA, first favoured by the Marquess for the restoration of Falkland Palace (1890/1896), and then for the excavation and new work at the Carmelite Friary, South Queensferry. Simultaneous with the Chapeltown commission was the restoration of Greyfriars Church and Convent in Elgin, again sponsored by the Marquess who evidently took advantage of Kinross's presence in northeast Scotland in these years, asking him before his untimely death in 1900 to orchestrate the careful restoration of Pluscarden Abbey where, as well as carrying out consolidation and in-depth investigation, Kinross was responsible for the Lady Chapel (1897-1900).

Chapeltown

The extent of the Marquess's benefaction at Chapeltown was probably confined to seconding Kinross for the purpose and paying the resulting architectural fees: Bute was a romantic man, and Scalán's history as the strongest outpost of Catholicism in Scotland during the difficult years of the eighteenth century, together with its role as a seminary before the opening of Blairs College (which he urged the Hierarchy, in vain, to move to St Andrews), would have warmed him to the plight of the parish which was no doubt described to him by Fr Mackenzie.

John Kinross was an academician who exhibited almost annually at the Royal Scottish Academy, and the plans for Chapeltown were presented to the Edinburgh public in 1896. Presumably he chose examples of his work of which he was most proud, or which he felt were most valuable to be thus displayed in terms of education or to gain him further commissions. Along with fellow architects such as John James Stevenson and Sir Robert Rowand Anderson, Kinross was seeking to create a modern Scottish ecclesiastical style.

The design was described by contemporaries as plain and appropriately 'Norman' in inspiration, suiting the remote and harsh site and

in deference to the antiquity of the place. It was suggested that the simplicity was to echo the church of Abbe McPherson which it was replacing, illustrated in a sketch kept in the church [and reproduced in *Scalan News* 7, 1993]. The new church was built on almost the same site as the earlier one, just eight feet nearer to the Crombie stream, though clayladen soil and dampness 'injurious to health' had required the new building.

Style and Substance

The reporter in 1897 described it as 'in a style of architecture common in Brittany', probably because its simple character, with entrance tower tightly flanked by narrow stair tower and incorporating a statue (that of the Virgin Mary, Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, to whom the church was dedicated), providing tempting comparisons with the churches of northern France. However, Kinross was seeking in his ecclesiastical *oeuvres* to introduce a modern, yet traditional, Scottish style in church design and had previously succeeded in this 'Scoto-Norman' vein at St Peter's Episcopal church, Fraserburgh, of 1891. The tower, together with the tripartite chancel window, made particular reference to St Peter's.

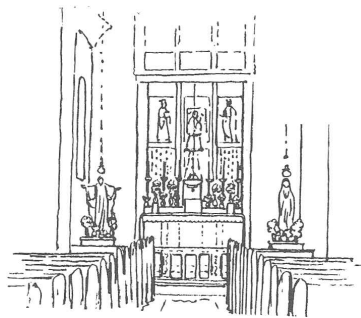
St Mary's Chapel town was designed to respect its setting and is built of materials hewn from the locality: red granite from the hill of Conven, north of Demick, and a blue-grey limestone taken from the Tom of Scalan for the dressings. Windows were given small leaded panes, the roof was steeply pitched and slated, and crowsteps dressed the gableheads. The steely grey harl added a cool severity to the composition, which was foreign to Kinross's usual intentions but no doubt seen as necessary for the damp climate.

Bejewelled Interior

Inside, the modest dignity of the exterior met its foil. Stencilled decoration, as revived in Britain by A. W. N. Pugin and William Butterfield, still adorns the simple space above the warmly coloured dado and distinguishes the parts. It illustrates that Kinross admired the work of the architect George Bodley whose similarly striking stencil work at St Salvador's Episcopal church in Dundee (1865-75) was evidently a direct source of inspiration. A carved wall head cornice of bold billeting and endlessly varied fleurons gives way to a deep coomb below a timber barrel-vault adorned with the Lord's Prayer in Latin, as well as a number of heraldic shields.

The chancel was given due primacy in the decorative scheme, its red and gold contrasting with the green and black and the crimson and black of the scheme towards the choir loft. The oak altar and canopied reredos (funded by Fr Mackenzie) were also partly gilded,

their filigreed vine and thistle detailing continued in the altar rails and pulpit. These were all almost certainly crafted by Scott Morton & Co., a leading firm of cabinetmakers based in Edinburgh which received numerous commissions from the architect, and were probably drawn by the leading draughtsman David Ramsay with whom Kinross formed a close working relationship. The pieces resemble later work by Kinross at St Cuthbert's, Straiton (1899/1900), for which Scott Morton's execution is recorded. Many other fittings were gifted by members of the Chapel town congregation, not least the fine gilded Stations of the Cross which were the work of studios in Belgium.



The bejewelled interior caught the imagination of its congregation in 1897 just as it does today. As one reporter put it, 'When all the candles were burning, the scene as the light reflected on the reredos, the altar and the furnishings within the chancel was most brilliant, the rich carving and the bright colours making it a most beautiful spectacle, and one of rare architectural excellence and design.' Having explained to his readers why the form of the church was so appropriate to the high traditions of the Catholic Church in the neighbourhood of Scalan, he continued: 'Altogether the interior of the church combines comfort and beauty, and anything that is in any way intended to stimulate an interest in church life and church work.'

Church Life

Isobel Grant

The Church used to be so crowded on Sundays. Unless you were early for Mass you didn't get a seat, and the boys and young men stood around at the back. Before people had cars to get them there the bell was rung half-an-hour before 11 o'clock Mass to let people know to leave in time, either walking or on bicycles. Sad to say, only the funerals of old parishioners seem to fill it nowadays - except for the annual Scalán Mass in bad weather, of course.

Sunday 11 o'clock Mass always had the same opening hymn:

Come Holy Ghost send down those beams,
Which sweetly flow in silent streams from thy bright throne above.

Lovely words, but we got so tired of it. It was the same at Tombae, where every Sunday they sang 'Oh Jesus Christ remember, when thou shalt come

again'. At one time the sermon was at the end of Mass so that if mothers had to rush home to put on potatoes to boil they could leave. But some young people walked out too, so from then on sermons were always after the Gospel and they couldn't escape.

We enjoyed all the missions we had at Chapeltown with the Church packed on weekday evenings and great sermons. At one of them the men were asked to bring down the organ from the gallery with ropes because the priest who had come to give the mission wanted everyone to sing. He walked up and down the aisle, rousing the people, and the organ never went upstairs again. The choir loft hasn't been used for forty years or more.

Benediction on Sunday evening was also very well attended. The Church was specially beautiful by candlelight, and the priest and congregation knelt before the Blessed Sacrament which was displayed on the altar in a gold monstrance. There was this hymn we always sang at the end of Benediction. The opening lines were:

O Jesus God of Light, how, in the darkest night,
Bidest thou here alone, not one before Thy throne?

A stranger who came to Chapeltown one Sunday asked Mr Hornby for the words and music, but he refused as he wanted it kept for the Braes. I thought it rather mean. He was very proud of his choir and had a good bass voice himself. Sometimes we were so cold we could hardly sing - my feet were like ice.

It must have been painful to listen to. Another lovely hymn began:

O Virgin Mother, Lady of good counsel,
The sweetest picture artist ever drew

and ended:

When I am so perplexed and weary,
O Mother, tell me what am I to do!

Every family had their own seats and paid seat rents because there were not enough seats for all the houses. A little card was inserted at end of each seat in the brass holders. Some people only had half a seat. When we lived at Comelybank we shared with McGillivrays Tomnareave - that was before they moved into Achnascair.

There is a photo of the Church in the early days which shows the original hanging lamps before electric light. At Christmas 1939, in the first year of the war, parishioners were told that no Midnight Mass would be possible at Chapeltown because the windows in the Church were not blacked out. However Val Kilbride asked a few other men to get a tall ladder, as the windows are very high, and they got it done - every window blacked out. Word got round that they could have Midnight Mass after all - news travels fast in the Braes. The Church was packed. The other two churches in the district had not blacked out theirs, so people came from Tombae and Tomintoul.



Fr MacWilliam

At Christmas 1946 the new priest Fr Alexander MacWilliam wasn't expecting many for Midnight Mass. It was raining buckets and he thought no one would come out on such a night, but he didn't know us tough country people. It had been snowing, and then a thaw came with the rain. The brae down from our house at the Bochel was like a river but we put wellingtons and waterproofs on and set off. We went through the fields to escape the raging torrent, and then changed into dry stockings and shoes in the porch at Chapel town.

The Church was so packed that towards the end Fr MacWilliam ran out of communion bread and about ten people had to turn back. A Mr Gallacher from Glasgow was one of them. He was visiting his mother-in-law Mrs Slorach at Broombank - her husband had died and she was living alone. He had only one suit with him that he was wearing, so when he got home through the deluge he left it to dry all night by the living-room fire.

Fr MacWilliam went up to Broombank that Christmas morning to apologise for not being able to give Mr Gallacher communion. He chatted with Mrs Slorach for a long time but Mr Gallacher never appeared. Her memory was going and she didn't realise he was needing his trousers. Meanwhile he was waiting for her to bring them to the bedroom. In the end the priest went back to his Chapel house, and Mr Gallacher went down later to explain why he had not come through. They had to laugh about it!

The statue of Our Lady of Lourdes which used to be in the Church was put into the school in Fr MacWilliam's time, as we already had the same statue outside the front door. The one inside the Church now used to be on a wooden altar in a room outside the choir gallery, by the staircase. It was white. I think it was spoiled, whoever painted it bright blue. You can see from the old photograph that St Joseph was beside the confessional door. The Sacred Heart statue used to be where the choir is now, according to my mother. She said that there were hearts all over the wall there, but they were painted over.

Fr Shaw, who was the priest at Chapel town during most of my young days, persuaded every house in the Braes to buy a Sacred Heart picture - a family-size one, or else smaller for a single person. Families filled in the names and he had them all framed in gold and came to the houses and blessed them, along with some prayers. The modern fashion is for no holy pictures, but my sitting room in London is like a picture gallery. I have a nice one of the present Pope which I bought in Malta, and Our Lady Help of Christians was given away with The Universe a few weeks ago.

The Grounds

Fr Shaw was a great gardener and never had a weed in the avenue. There was a grand vegetable garden at the back, beside the graveyard, and he planted the lovely rhododendron bush in front of the Church that still blooms every year, pink and white. The trees round the graveyard have crows nesting in them nowadays - what a noise they make! In the old days the farmers if not the priest himself would have got rid of them.

The gates were put on in Fr McCabe's time. He was the last priest to live in the chapel house and left in 1961. Robbie Lamb Fuarendearg said the gates were like Barlinnie Prison, but they kept the sheep out. At that time there were resident priests at Tomintou!, Tombae and Chapel town, and when Fr McCabe was taken from the Braes by the Bishop Robbie said, 'It should have been the last light to be snuffed out, not the first: I suppose he meant that Chapel town was nearest to Scalan.

Fr McCabe and Scalan

Fr John McCabe was not only the last resident priest at Chapeltown but also, according to one newspaper account, the originator of the Scalan Mass as an

open air celebration. There certainly was one on 2 July 1960 so that may be why we still gather on the first Sunday of July. Helen Fisher ended her Press and Journal account of the party for the closure of Chapeltown School with a reference to it, although her report bears all the marks of a presswoman in a hurry:

The historic weekend continued into Sunday. On that day the bishop of the diocese, the Right Rev. Francis Walsh, went to Chapeltown to give the sacrament of confirmation and to say mass. In this little hamlet [*Helen Fisher did not go the extra mile, apparently*] is a historic building called The Scalan, a seminary, fore-runner of Blairs College, dating back to 1712 [*nor check her story with someone who knew the 1719 date.*]

Until it closed at the end of the eighteenth century it sent out 100 priests, ordained here [*most ordinations took place in the Scots colleges abroad where Scalan students completed their education*], and two bishops were consecrated here. The building is still kept in order but has long been disused.

Why not bring The Scalan into the weekend's celebrations, thought Father McCabe. So, in beautiful weather, everybody gathered on the soft green turf around the building yesterday for an open-air mass at an altar set up outside The Scalan to attend the first confirmation service - six were confirmed - to take place on that ground in 150 years. [*Not sure about confirmations at Scalan, as the students would surely have been confirmed as Catholics before venturing to the Braes to try their vocation as priests, but was it the first public mass since the last priest, Mr Sharp, left Scalan in 1807? Did Fr Sandy MacWilliam, co-founder of the Scalan Association, say mass at Scalan before Bishop Walsh? Perhaps 1960 was the first outdoor altar .. Readers - if you know please oriter*]

Readers Write

The Chapel of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour replaced the former chapel of 1826 at Chapeltown, apparently demolished because of damp. This 1897 chapel was designed in Scottish Romanesque style by John Kinross (1855-1931), an Edinburgh architect who executed other commissions for his Catholic patron the Marquess of Bute. His works in northeast Scotland included the restoration of the Chapel and Convent of Mercy at Elgin (1896) and the Michaelkirk at Gordonstoun (1900-01) besides various estate buildings at Altyre, Forres (190002). Kinross's designs reflect a true understanding of and sympathy with Scottish architectural traditions, while his choice of materials coupled with quality and design of fittings is notable. The designs of the new Braes chapel were exhibited in Edinburgh prior to the completion of the building.

Elizabeth Beaton, Hopeman.

It was an enquiry to Mrs Beaton about the Edinburgh exhibition which led to Dr Deborah Mays of the Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland agreeing to produce an account of the church

created by John Kinross, the subject of her doctoral thesis. She is (writing a book about him which should bring Chapeltown, the Braes of Glenlivet and Scalan before a new audience.

I visited Miss Ann Lamb at Woodcot Hospital in Stonehaven today (4th December). She was so pleased at receiving the Scalan newsletter. I had to read it (which I enjoyed) and then read it out loud for her. Ann enjoyed that - I could see her going through every item in her mind's eye, and she made comments like 'You've been there.' I had a tour of the area with her about thirty years ago - I remember the whisky names! We had a very good hour discussing the merits of Larryvarry. Miss Lamb asked me to write to you and let you know she received the newsletter, as she herself is unable to do so. Thanks from me too for making a lady very happy.

Robert W. A. Mitchell, Laurencekirk.

An expanded version of Ann Lamb's Life at Larryvarry which appeared in the December newsletter is included as part of the projected book Tales of the Braes of Glenlivet by Isobel Grant and others'.

I read with special interest Ann Lamb's account of her childhood at Larryvarry special because, for all the years I have stravaiged the Braes of Glenlivet, my first close inspection of that little township took place last August. I had camped overnight at Clash of Scalan and got speaking to Edward Stuart after Mass at Tombae. He said he would be glad to come along with me on a walk to Larryvarry. It was a delight to hear his account of bygone days in that now sad little row of ruined houses and crofts.

I took many photographs, including such diverse items as fireplaces, bed recesses, staircases, chimneys, byres and what were once small gardens. Then Edward pointed to a strange-looking bit of apparatus and said, with some emphasis, 'Michty me, that's an auld

hand driven threshin machine!' More photos followed, so you can imagine my surprise and pleasure when Ann Lamb mentioned the mill in her memoirs.

I recall visiting Robbie Lamb in his croft at Fuarendearg, between Scalan and Larryvarry, and being regaled with stories of the Braes. Some of Robbie's tales were recorded by Hamish Henderson almost half a century ago and the tapes are lodged in the School of Scottish Studies in Edinburgh. I have known Hamish for many years via my interest in piping and traditional music. I was particularly pleased when, in conversation many years ago, he told me that the Braes were 'a microcosm of the real old Scotland'. He also said: 'The Braes of Glenlivet was the friendliest place I ever visited in my travels throughout Scotland.'

James Cameron Stuart, Falkirk.

The following letter arrived on 2 June, the day before the AGM and the day after Scotland's world cup football team struggled, away from home, to a 3-2 victory over Malta.

Here in the most densely populated country in Europe, the island of Malta, Scalan News is welcome reading, reminding me of the remote stillness of Scalan, the sense of peace and space in the surrounding countryside, and refreshing family holidays spent in the area. My own attachment to Glenlivet and the Braes stems from the midseventies when, for several years, I- accompanied the Nazareth House children on their summer break at Tombae. Years later I returned with my husband and children when Tombae was available for rent, and most recently to the Chapeltown presbytery courtesy of Deirdre and Alasdair Roberts. For our children Glenlivet remains one of their favourite places in the world.

At the Malta end, I have tried to find references to an adventurous Sco-tish priest of last century called Walter Lovi. **In** the age of church building which followed Catholic Emancipation he was responsible for Mgr Cop land' s recently restored church at Keith - I hear it's magnificent. While stationed there Fr Lovi built the Wick chapel in summer visits to the herring fishers and then went on to organise the erection of St Andrew's Braemar (1839).

This Edinburgh priest with an Italian surname then spent some time as an army chaplain in Malta and was offered a Chair of English Literature. An even warmer welcome awaited him in Vienna, where he was promised a new Scots college for fifty seminarians. Fr Lovi actually received £500 from the Emperor which paid off the debt at Braemar. Unfortunately all relevant records were destroyed during the devastation of Valletta in the last war (when Malta became the George Cross island) and my knowledge of Fr Walter Lovi is limited to what Mgr MacWilliam gathered from the Scottish Catholic Archive in Edinburgh.

Yvonne Sciberras, Malta.

Last September I began a four-month stay in my home area of Glenlivet, the first occasion (as an adult) when I had that amount of time to spare and was able to find a suitable cottage. I loved it, even though the winter proved quite a challenge. Even the warmest of my city clothes were useless and I had to buy more suitable wear. The wood stove required refuelling every four hours, and at first I got up during the night to do it. Latterly I gave up and let the cottage get cold just to get a good night's rest.

Part of my reason for going was to continue recording the memories of old people in Glenlivet, a project which I began last year. Prior to going north I spent several weeks going through the recordings made by Hamish Henderson in Edinburgh. They contained references going back to Jacobite times, and in July I recorded Sister Mary McPherson, a former resident of Glenlivet, who also had stories of that age - the folk memory is a long one. Our Glenlivet history is in our heads and our memories, but especially of the older generation.

The University said they would give copies of these tapes to the nearest living relative of Hamish's informants, so I began a hunt to find them. I also let local people hear my copies of the tapes, so that word got round about them. People in my own generation had no idea that they existed and it's been a particular pleasure to see the interest growing among young and old. As I pointed out to a friend in her thirties whose grandfather had been recorded by Hamish, 'Your great-great-grandchildren will listen to these recordings and be able to say, "That's my greatgreat-great-great-grandfather!"' Technology can be a wonderful thing.

Veronica Cordon Smith, Edinburgh.

Thanks for the Seal an News which I always find very interesting. I'm sending you *Stella Maris* which is a magazine for the Catholics of Mull and Iona. Fr Donald Mackinnon who was the priest until recently is very interested in local history but he's just been moved to Arisaig. One of these days I'll find a way to get my Aunt Mairi Cordon's press cuttings book, which is too bulky to post, into the hands of someone interested in writing up the history of the Braes of Glenlivet. She was the last teacher at Chapeltown and her cuttings cover a fifty-year period.

Lindy Ogden, Oban.

I enjoyed reading the latest edition of Seal an News, received this morning. I was particularly interested by the article about the Braes Chapel, 1897-1997. For many years a framed photo, taken of the congregation at the front on the opening day, hung in my grandparents' house at Broombank just behind the Chapel. My grand-uncle Fred Matheson, who lived at the Scalan until his death in

1967, was clearly recognisable as a young boy in tackety boots sitting at the front. Sadly I don't know what became of the photo but there must be others in existence.

John S. Gallacher, Motherwell.



John's memory of Fred's tackety boots is exact. There turned out to be a copy of the photo in Bishop Conti's Aberdeen house. It is a marvellous panorama showing hundreds of parishioners, miraculously organised in tiers to the very eaves of the chapel house. Impossible to reproduce here, it will make an ideal centrefold for the proposed book. Blown up photocopies were sent to some of those who might have recognised old faces when younger, in 1897, and two replies came back.

That's a wonderful picture of the congregation at the church opening. My mother Elsie Stuart was born in 1886 so she would have been eleven years old. She must be one of the little girls. The only ones I recognise are my grandfather at the Shop and Charles Stuart Demick, who retired to Comelybank. He had a long beard.

Isobel Grant London.

This central section shows two bearded gentlemen, two bishops, and Meg Grant's father-in-law (see next letter).



Thanks for sending me the photograph of all the people at the side of the church when it was opened in 1897. The only one I recognise is my father-in-law John Grant, sitting in front with his arms folded. There was a copy of that photo at Broombank when Jock and Maggie Sharp lived there after they moved from Larryvarry.

Meg Grant, Tomnavoulin.

J.C. Phillips, in his Wanderings in the Highlands of Banffshire and Aberdeenshire (1881), writes of calling in to visit John Sharp. Remembered as 'Jock' by Ann Lamb, he had a two-acre croft at Larryvarry. Phillips, then a tailor living at Auchavaich but later in charge of the Elgin Museum and a poet of distinction, describes him as 'one of those book worms whom nature has dropped promiscuously in every land for the sole purpose, it would seem, of unlocking her secret wonders and presenting them to the gaze of mankind. He was, as usual, poring over a musty volume but laid it aside as we entered and looked up with a bright, welcoming smile.'

The existence of Scalan owes everything to the fact that the second Duke of Gordon, on whose Glenlivet estate it was set up in 1719, was a Catholic like the earls and marquises of Huntly who came before him. For a long time I had an idea that his widow received government money as an inducement to bring up his heir in the Protestant religion, and was delighted to come across some information about this in George Gordon's *The Last Dukes of Cordon and their Consorts, 1743-1864: a Revealing Study*.

The book was privately printed in Aberdeen seventeen years ago and is not as widely known as it deserves to be. It records on the opening page that Henrietta Mordaunt, daughter of the Earl of Peterborough and wife of the Duke of Cordon, took the children to the nearest Episcopal church on the first Sunday after the Duke's death in 1728 (only months after the first destruction of Scalán by the military, as it happens) and that in 1730 the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland sent a letter of thanks to her for so directing the children. The Assembly was Presbyterian rather than Episcopalian, of course, but perhaps the ministers gathered in Edinburgh recognised an English lady's right to be Anglican. In 1735 she received her first annual pension of £1,000, but it ceased in 1745 and was never renewed, despite her pleas.

Malachi Mulligan, Aberdeen.

To be fair to the Duchess she came from a Whig family and remained an enthusiastic Protestant even after taking up residence at Cordon Castle, Fochabers, where the atmosphere was very Catholic. The following additional information comes from Dom Odo Blundell's Ancient Catholic Homes of Scotland (1907): 'In 1728 the little Marquis of Huntly served Mass in St Ninian's church within the cemetery dedicated to that saint four miles from his home. What might have happened if Alexander, the second Duke, had lived to see his children grow up Catholics is hard to say. Unfortunately for them and for Catholic Scotland, he died when his heir was but eight years old.

'The Duke owed his fatal illness to a rapid journey to London, undertaken to protect the little chapel of St Ninian, Enzie, from desecration. Beside his death-bed the Rev. Robert Gordon, his chaplain, was actually preparing an altar for Mass, when congestion of his lungs took place - as described in a contemporary letter, "an impostume in his breast burst" - when the priest rushed to the bedside and had barely time to perform part of the last rites.'

It is perhaps worth stressing that the chapel in question was on what is now the Braes of Enzie farm, not to be confused with St Ninian's Tynet which is Scotland's oldest Catholic church. Mass has been said there since Alexander Geddes (remember 'Hole of the Snorers' in the June 1992 issue?) took slates from the first St Ninian's and built this Banffshire Bethlehem - Peter Anson's phrase. St Ninian's cemetery is worth visiting because, although the only trace of the chapel is its 1685 date stone, the co-founder of the Scalán Association, Mgr Alexander MacWilliam, was laid to rest there in a mausoleum beside bishops, starting with Thomas Nicolson who died in 1718.

Two Priests from the Braes

Rev. Donald Grant O.Carm.

I read Jimmie Stuart's article about priests who came from the Braes of Glenlivet with interest (*Scalán News* 13) especially in connection with Fr John Stuart and Fr William Grant. Before commenting on it, I might just indicate that Jimmie and I are third cousins: his great-grandmother Janet Cameron and mine, Isabella Cameron, were sisters.

Canon John Stuart

The Rev. John Stuart (later Canon Stuart) was a first cousin of my grandmother: her father Charles and his mother Margaret were brother and sister. He was also a half brother of Isobel Grant's mother and an uncle of Lena Stuart, the well known Queen's Cross teacher who died last year in Aberdeen.

As Jimmie suggests, Canon John Stuart was indeed born at the Mill of Achnascraw on 16 March 1870. He was the eldest of eight children born to John Stuart, Merchant and Justice of the Peace, and his first wife Margaret Stuart of Eskemulloch. This first wife of 'the Merchant' (more impressive than the Shop, as he was known locally) died of tuberculosis on 28 March 1883. In 1886, in France, John Stuart married his wife's niece who had been helping to look after her aunt. This niece was also called Margaret Stuart, confusingly for subsequent family history researchers. They had seven children, most of whom emigrated to the USA.

In December I received from the Merchant's niece- May (MacDonald) Kenny, who has since died in London aged 94, an essay written by him in February 1892 for the Academical Society entitled 'A Day among the Students of the Scots College, Rome, by one of themselves'. It must have been sent at some stage to May's mother Margaret (Stuart) MacDonald, who was the Canon's younger sister by a year.

The Canon's next sister Mary Stuart married Charles McHardy of the Scalán about 1897 and they subsequently moved to Caldey Island in the Bristol Channel - Peter Anson was one of the Anglican monks there who came over to Rome as a community before the first world war. Their daughter Cecilia McHardy married Valentine Kilbride, a Bradford weaver, and they and their children joined the Ditchling Community founded by Eric Gill and Hilary Pepler. Their daughter Jenny Kilbride was still a weaver in the community when it was dissolved a few years ago.

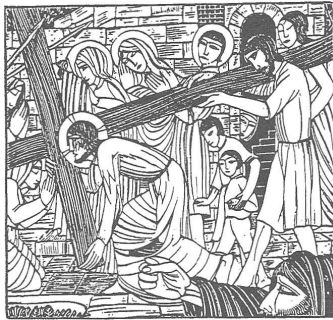
Incidentally this Charles McHardy was a brother of Jimmie Cameron Stuart's grandmother Sophia - in other words Canon John Stuart's sister Mary was married to Jimmie's great uncle Charles McHardy! Another younger sister of the Canon, Jeannie, was his house keeper when he was parish priest. He became Canon Stuart on moving to St Columba's Edinburgh in 1935 and died twelve years later soon after his retirement.

Fr William Grant

The identity of Fr William Grant, born 1821 in the Braes of Glenlivet, is not quite so well established. However in the Rev. John James Gordon's *Status Animarum* for 1822 the only William Grant listed is a one-year-old child living at Ladderfoot, the son of Alexander Grant and Mary (White) Grant. Now another of their children, according to the priest's register, was Elspet Grant aged twelve so born about 1810. In fact an Elspet Grant born about 1811 (she was 70 at her death in 1882 at Ladderfoot) was the mother of John Stuart the Shop by her second marriage to James Stuart the Miller at Milltown of Amnascraw. It is quite likely, then, that Fr William Grant is the brother of the Merchant's mother, which would make him the great uncle of Canon Stuart.

As if things weren't hard enough for the old family history researcher, not only was John Stuart the Shop (or the Merchant) married twice but so were his mother and his daughter, Isobel Grant's mother Elsie Stuart. A final clergy point in connection with Jimmie Stuart's article: there was a Paul M cLachlan aged nine at Timberfoord, near Clashnoir and Lettoch, in Mr Gordon's 1814 register. This is presumably the founder of Jimmie's St Francis Xavier church in Falkirk. He would have been 26 in 1831, which I take to be the foundation date.

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An example of Eric Gill's work

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keeper when he was parish priest. He became Canon Stuart on moving to St Columba's Edinburgh in 1935 and died twelve years later soon after his retirement.

'A recht eye for makin' drains'

Alice, Lady Lovat

The following extract from A Highland Bishop (1927) is prompted by a Glengairn illustration having been used for Ann Lamb's Life at Larryvarry and the fact that her father's field drains are now choked. Lady Lovat's book is about the Rev. Aeneas Chisholm who was present, as Rector of Blairs, at the 1897 church opening and went on to become Bishop of Aberdeen (1899-1918). In the clergy group below he is behind the two episcopal MacDonalds wearing a hat.

Schools, though of a somewhat elementary kind, there were in Glengairn; one, at Ardoch, was taught by John Michie, afterwards Brother Nathaniel OSB who died at the age of 96 a lay brother of the Abbey of Fort Augustus. Michie received a small pension for his services from Bishop Kyle. The school was kept open only in winter; in summer the scholars were required at home to help cut the winter's provision of peats or to work at the harvest. Michie, though the range of his knowledge was not extensive, wrote a good hand and was noted throughout the countryside for his skill in mathematics. There was no problem, it was said, that he could not solve. He was also able to impart a thorough knowledge of the catechism.

His predecessor was a man by the name of James Mackenzie who was one-armed. His qualifications as school master were summed up thus by one of Fr Chisholm's parishioners: 'Ou aye, Mackenzie was a clever man except that he wanted an arm. And he had a recht eye for makin' drains.'

The Lovat family owned the Morar estate and paid for St Cumin's church which was erected in 1889 (and illustrated in the last newsletter). Lord Lovat's Jacobite ancestor was captured further up Loch Morar after the redcoats came to Eilean Ban (see p. 19)

and later executed at Tyburn.

Interconnections do not end there. The one-armed teacher is one of many colourful characters in Fr John Meany's 'Notes of a Stormbound Missionary' which he was compiling from the memories of old Glengaim people at the time of the Chapeltown opening: Fr Meany is seen looking over the shoulder of Fr Mackenzie, cassocked on Archbishop MacDonald's right. Fr Meany was made Cathedral Administrator on moving from Glengaim two years later, and died in 1940 as Vicar General of the diocese - the post which our President Mgr Copland holds today.

Fr Meany's early essay in oral history was read with particular interest at Fort Augustus, where James Michie had gone from Glengairn to become Brother Nathalan. A faithful copy of the Notes was made by Fr Michael Barrett OSB whose Sidelights on Scottish History (1918) includes a chapter on Scalan. His fellow Benedictine Fr Ado Blundell used the material in his Catholic Highlands of Scotland vol. 1 (1909). Finally on the Fort Augustus front, the present Abbot the Right Rev. Dr. Mark Dilworth edited Ft Barren's copy (explaining words and phrases) for his first scholarly publication in the 1956 Innes Review. It turned out that Mgr Meany's original account was with Fr (later Mgr) Sandy MacWilliam, then in Aberdeen after having moved from Chapeltown. One final connection: a 'photostat' of the material was made by the School of Scottish studies about the time that Hamish Henderson was discovering Glenlivet.

Lady Lovat was mistaken in placing Mackenzie's school at Ardoch, a township which one of Fr Meany's inform-

ants described as the 'metropoleon' of Glengairn. The school was in a remote area of settlement called Morven (now the site of a ruined shooting lodge) and he walked there each day to teach his seventy pupils. The abiding impression of this handicapped scholar is that of a left-handed man of violence:

He was tall, well-looking and fresh, and though he had lost his right arm could be very severe, I insure ye. One day Alex. Cattanach went up wi' a coont and Mackenzie, enraged at a mistake i' the coont, broke the slate over Sandy's neck and left the frame like a horse's collar round the laddie's heid ... Mackenzie, in punishing the children, made them lay their hands on the table. Children brought a peat each day - they always tried to find a hard one and on the road to school had a battle. There was a stool behind the door on which gey naps [Dilworth: big lads] were often laid for punishment. Mackenzie was a clever man, if it weren a he wanted an arm.

Scalan in the 18th Century:

A Postscript - The 'Fortyfive

Stuart Mitchell

Any assumption that the Braes beyond Achavaich, Achnascrew and Badevochel remained shealing lands until the end of the 18th century was dispelled (ScN 13) by the 1761 *Summary of Glenlivet* from the Gordon Castle Papers. This identified some 200 acres of New Lands there - including 45 acres at Scalan - that had been 'lately' brought under the plough. However, this was a rather looser timescale than it implied, as baptismal entries in the Invera'an Old Parish Register (OPR) showed that by 1761 Scalan, Badiglashan (beside Wester Auchavaich) and Eskemulloch had been settled for up to 25 years.

Lists of Rebels

Confirmation of the early settlement of Scalan (aside from the seminary) and some of the other 'New' Lands comes from an unexpected source - the Lists of Rebels compiled for the Government after Culloden (and published by Alistair and Henrietta Tayler in their *Jacobites of Aberdeenshire and Banffshire in the Forty-five*, 1928). Here we not only find three more Badiglashan residents, in addition to Peter Dow of the 1738 OPR entry, but also two from the Glen of Suie and one each at Demickmore and the Bochel, plus a father and son from Cordregny and two men from the lands of Scalan.

The Scalan pair were John Ross, 'servant', perhaps at the seminary, and Thomas Gibenach - identified as a Stuart by name through an entry in the 1814 Catholic census of Glenlivet. The

Badiglashan men were Allan McLea (a Stuart), Robert Cruickshank (listed as a subtenant in the 1761 *Summary*), and Peter Roy Grant (Peter Roy in 1761). William McLea and James Bowie (a Grant) were both from the Suie, while John Roy Grant, Demickmore, appears as John Grant alias Roy, a subtenant of Demick in 1761. From Cordregny came John Gordon and his son Patrick, the latter serving as a major in Glenbucket's Regiment. It says something for the men of the Braes that John McLaughlan of Badivoche, described as a 'labouring man, aged 69', was pardoned in exchange for enlisting in the Hanoverian army.

In all, the Taylers list some 90 men from Glenlivet, 130 from Stratha'an and ten from Glenrinnies. These names were drawn primarily from Lord Rosebery's *List of Rebels* for Banff (much of it compiled by John Stuart, Supervisor of Excise at Banff) and from a list of over 300 men from 'the highlands of Banff' submitted by the Supervisor of Excise in Elgin. Despite his forceful recruiting methods, it is generally reckoned that Old Glenbucket (the 72-yearold Major General John Gordon) ultimately 'persuaded' only about 500 men

from Glenlivet and the Kirkmichael parish to join Prince Charlie's army although 1500 men from the area were , out' in the 'Fifteen.

Missing Names

The fact that only about half of them appear in the Tayler list testifies to the elusiveness of the men of Glenlivet and Stratha' an - no doubt well practised through cattle-raiding and illicit whisky trade. Unfortunately Livingstone, Aikman and Hart's *Muster Roll of Prince Charles Edward Stuart's Army (1984)* virtually ignores the Upper Banffshire men who formed the bulk of Glenbucket's Regiment. It only identifies officers, NCOs and a couple of other ranks from Glenbucket's and from John Roy Stuart's Edinburgh Regiment about twenty from Glenlivet, fifteen from Stratha' an and two from Glenrinnies.

Amazingly the Tayler list notes only a single death in the Glenlivet contingent - William McRobie (a Grant) from Morinsh - although the *Muster Roll* adds Lieut. Alexander Grant, 'brother of Nevie'. No one from Glenlivet was executed or transported, but Hanoverian troops burnt the houses of Donald Fleming, Mill of Auchdregnie (who was wounded at Culloden), Ensign John Gordon, Clashnore, and the 'house at the Bochel, books and furniture' of the Rev. John Tyrie, Glenlivet's priest.

Church Militant

Mr Tyrie was of the Dunnideer family, near Inch, and had charge of the Scalan college for a short time. Apparently 'he was very active in raising men to go into the Rebellion.' At the start of the Rising he cast lots with the Rev. William Grant SJ, Missionary in Stratha'an, as to which of them should have the honour of acting as chaplain to 'the mainly Catholic Glenlivet and Strathavon contingent of Glenbucket's Regiment. Although twice wounded in the head from a horseman's sword at Culloden, he returned to Glenlivet and eventually died in 1755 at Shenval in the Cabrach.

Event at Eilean Ban

Rev. Michael Hutson

A remarkable event took place at Eilean Ban, the White Island of Loch Morar, on Saturday 8th June 1996. 250 years after soldiers of the Hanoverian government were ordered to destroy the building which housed Scotland's first seminary, on 8th June 1746 seven weeks after Culloden, Mass was celebrated there once again - possibly for the first time since these desperate days. The three priests who concelebrated were Fr James MacNeil, now lecturing in Catholic Theology at Glasgow University and a former priest of Morar and Mallaig, Mgr Roddy MacDonald, Vicar General of Argyll and the Isles, and myself as current priest at Morar.

Highland Catholics looked upon the exiled King James VII and II, followed by his sons the Old and Young Pretenders (or claimants to the ancient throne of the Stuarts), as guardians of the faith. These Gaels were persecuted by state laws because they were Catholics and Jacobites - Jacobus is the Latin for James. Pockets of faith remained here and there throughout Scotland, particularly in the north-west Highlands.

Priests had to be trained abroad since no property (church or otherwise) could legally be held by Catholics in their own country. Seminaries were established in Rome, Madrid, Paris and Douai. Scotsmen were also educated for priesthood in the Benedictine monasteries of south Germany. Parents were reluctant to send their sons so far from the Gaelic west, however, and some of those who did make the thousand mile journey to Rome - or elsewhere - failed to return. They dropped out of the course, captivated by the glamour of a foreign city, or in some cases died as a result of unfamiliar diseases.

In 1694 Thomas Nicolson was consecrated as the first vicar apostolic since the Reformation, and because of his summer journeys from Banffshire to the west coast he became known as the Highland bishop. Along with his coadjutor and successor Bishop James Cordon, a decision was made to raise home-grown priests. A small seminary was opened on Eilean Ban in 1714 under the charge of Mr George Innes, a priest from Deeside whose brother was rector of the Scots College Paris. Among the boys who came forward for this novel experience of book learning was Hugh MacDonald, son of the laird of Morar, who was to complete his education at Scalan. He became the first vicar apostolic for the Highland District when it was created in 1731.

The school day on the island in Loch Morar (Europe's deepest lake, linked to the sea by Scotland's shortest river) started and finished with Morning and Evening Prayers - basically a communal reciting of the Psalms. The boys studied Latin, English (as a foreign language), Church Law and Theology. Daily Mass, always in Latin in these days, of course, was the central event, with Plainchant sung on Sundays and Feast days. Perhaps the boys were allowed to go fishing in Loch Morar as local lads do today. They would certainly have spent time in the seminary garden. The outline of its walls is all that remains of the religious community which came to this island, like the barely discernible cells of St Columba's monks on Iona.

When James VIII the Old Pretender returned to France, and the 'Fifteen collapsed, Mr Innes closed the little college. After a short interval Bishop Cordon opened a new one at Scalan in the Braes of Glenlivet. The Highland seminary was revived in the 1730s - first on Eilean Ban and then, because of the expense of maintaining an island site, at other places including Cuidal in Arisaig and Buorblach, out in the bay beyond Morar village. When the soldiers brought fire and destruction to Eilean Ban the house had become the home and headquarters of Bishop Hugh MacDonald, one of the original seven students. Paul Galbraith of Bracara, on the north

shore, has written an excellent account of all this in his *Blessed Morar*, available at Morar church and the Mallaig Heritage Centre.



On the day in question last June more than seventy people made their way out to the island in a flotilla of small boats. As chief celebrant, Mgr Roddy donned the blue vestments which were worn by Bonnie Prince Charlie's chaplain, normally kept safe behind glass at St Cumin's Morar. An old chalice dated 1658, believed to have come from Eilean Ban, was also used in the liturgy. The music included some of the Plainsong which the first students might well have sung: 'Salve Regina, Mater Misericordiae.' The ceremony included a prayerful appreciation of all those priests, remembered by name and thirty-two in number, who served the community of Morar through the centuries. After the Mass was over a dram was offered to everyone in true West Highland style, and we enjoyed the beauty of the place until driven back to shore by the midges!

Fr Hutson contributes musical expertise to the Scalán Summer School of Liturgical Arts (Tomintoul, Tombae, Chapelton) on 21 and 22 July.

Television in Glenlivet

Journalists have rejoiced over the last six months in the coming of television to Glenlivet - a full service, that is, made possible by a new transmitter at Deskie. Apart from obvious jokes about rustles being corrupted by programmes like Eurotrash, and *Scotland on Sunday's* failure to locate the Pole or the Croft Inn, describing the Poacher's Retreat as Glenlivet's only pub, the clearest benefit has been registered by Deskie's Jim Innes who no longer has to change the transmitter's batteries.

Leaving aside the pioneering use of crystal radio at Seal an (*ScN* 8) which proved a spark to Sandy Matheson's skill, over the years, in surfing the air waves to America, it is a relief that the journalists have gone back to their wine bars without hearing about Sandy's Crombie-powered television (*S c N* 9) - a nine-inch Amstrad colour set operated by batteries - charged without difficulty by the Scalán water-wheel. Over a period of 25 years, Sandy has the evidence of his eyes (and the word of the man who fitted his aerial) that Scalán has 'the best TV reception in Glenlivet' .•

Back Cover Map

This map of the 1770s inspired 'Lost in the Mist' in the first issue. It shows that when Tomintoul was only a kirk and a cross-roads the main road into Scalán was from the south. The idea of tramping the 'Whisky Roadie' back into place has been a recurrent theme, and Glenlivet Estates are giving active consideration to marking it this summer, but until the waist high heather is burned no further bagpipe-led crossings will be attempted from the Well of the Lecht to attend the Scalán Mass.

