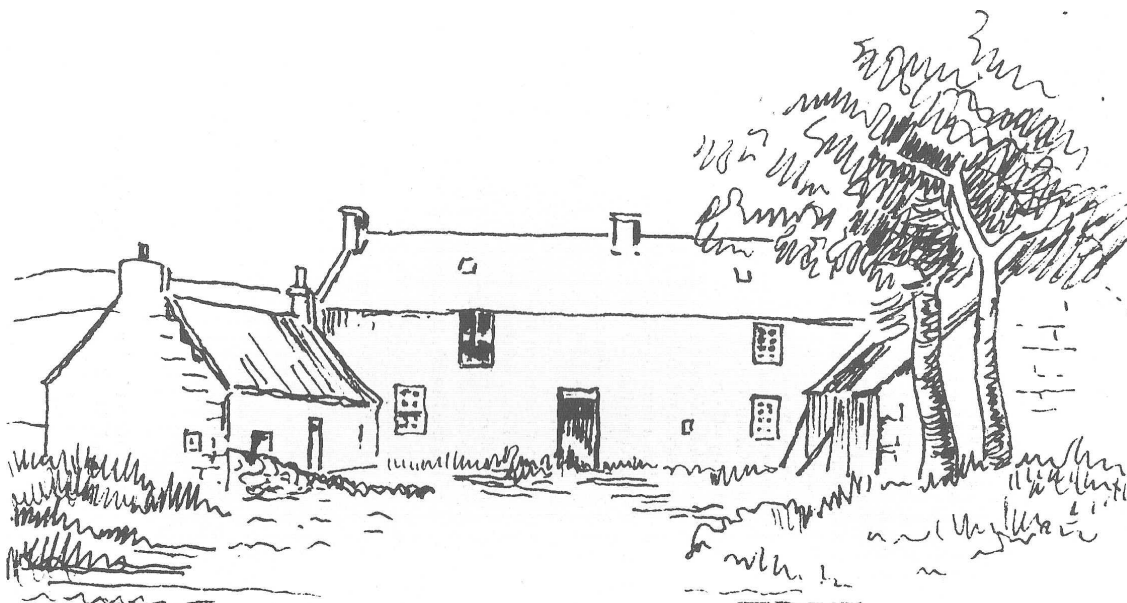




**news**

No. 18, June 1999

'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)



Ann Dean

At the AGM on Tuesday 8 June 25 members gathered in the Braes Hall after Mass at Scalan. After the usual excellent lunch, our President Mgr Copland reported on the state of play with regard to the interior work at Scalan. Mrs Marion Donald was there to answer questions on behalf of her firm of architects, The Castlegate Design Group. Two contractors have been approached for tenders, and it is likely that work will go ahead in August - as indicated by Mrs Donald's report overleaf. Also on the agenda was the appointment of a new Secretary, Fr Michael Briody, who has been the Association's Press Officer in recent years. Fr Joseph Toal was thanked for his work as Secretary during the post Blairs period of restoration activity.

The Annual Pilgrimage Mass will take place on Sunday 4 July at 4 p.m. It is a bicentennial occasion marking two hundred years since the last students left Scalan. The chief celebrant will be Archbishop Keith O'Brien, currently responsible not only for his own diocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh but also, as Apostolic Administrator, for Argyll and the Isles. He was one of the last rectors of Blairs College. The homily will be delivered by the Rev. Dr. Brian Halloran, parish priest and university chaplain at St Andrews, who is the author of a recent book on the Scots College Paris, one of the overseas destinations for Scalan students.

The first hundred years since the end of the Scalan era was marked in a humbler way by a native of the Braes of Glenlivet. Jock Sharp lived at Larryvarry and is remembered (in *Tales of the Braes of Glenlivet* - don't miss it!) as 'one of those book worms whom nature has dropped promiscuously in every land'. His verses as reproduced here may not be great poetry (try singing them to a sentimental air instead) but they provide a fairly accurate summary of Scalan, and one which is based on local tradition. The frontispiece (opposite) published with it in 1899 has been redrawn by Ann Dean and may touch on the question she raises on p. 14.

Other items - in reverse order include a discussion of box-beds by the same *Scalan News* artist (who mostly gives way to purloined pieces in this issue) and a celebration of her skill as an indexer; extracts from the indexed book in question to illustrate the move from Scalan to Aquhorties, which incidentally give an idea of how Bishop Hay must have influenced students and others in the Braes. Then there is an introduction by the author, Dr John Watts, to his very scholarly work on the old college of Scalan. A chance encounter with some-thing Mgr Cop land once wrote takes us back to his youth beside Tombae, with follow-up items dealing with Orton and Preshome. Stuart Mitchell, who drew the back-cover map, contributes a carefully written and curiously illustrated article on how the Braes of Glenlivet came to be settled. Marie Cooke gives a vivid account of how a party of young people came down from Inverness to repair the road 'to Scalan' - latest intelligence is that they will be back to finish the job on Sunday 13 June. And finally we have Mrs Donald's report, along with updated plans to guide you round on the fourth of July.

## The Scalan Internal Refurbishment

The Castlegate Design Group

Marion C. Donald

The Report submitted in June 1998 was approved and the Architects were instructed to approach a firm of Quantity Surveyors and subsequently the firm of McLeod & Aitken, Elgin were consulted.

Recommendations of Quantity Surveyor Mr MacKay visited The Scalan and advised on their fee scale for the services described. Discussions ensued, in the light of which, The Castlegate Design Group recommended that McLeod and Aitken be appointed to prepare an indicative cost for the works, based on a more detailed, report, and that thereafter Mrs Donald supervise the project with a recognised and reputable specialist conservation contractor.

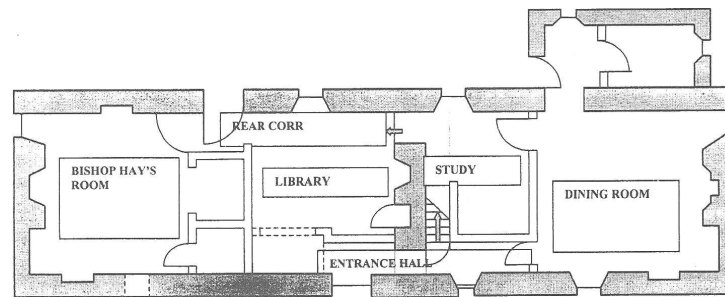
The works to be phased as and when finance is available.

### Revised report

Mrs Donald prepared a revised report, augmented with additional photographs and more information. This was issued in April 1999 and again received the approval of the committee. Mrs Donald was instructed to seek the indicative costing along with two contractor's estimates.

### Indicative costings

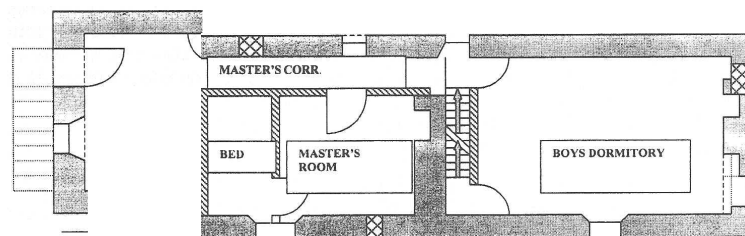
Messrs McLeod & Aitken have submitted their indicative cost report based on the Architect's revised report and prepared on a room by room basis. Two firms of contractors have been approached for an indicative cost with



rates etc. and it is hoped that these would come within the budget outline already submitted by McLeod & Aitken.

### Commencement of work

It is anticipated that the works will commence in August 1999 which is as soon as is practicable for the appointed contractor. It will be carried out in a phased manner appropriate to the financial resources of the Association. Mrs Donald will continue to liaise with Mrs McEwan on the latter and will carry out regular site inspections to ensure that the contractor has all necessary instructions and decisions to enable him to progress this work.



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

## Road Repair Squad

Marie Cooke

Diocesan Youth Co-ordinator

We were at Scalan on Saturday 22 May with the 'road repair squad' and have the aches and bruises to prove that a good deal of work was done! Seven young people from Inverness, four girls and three boys varying in age from first to sixth year secondary, gave up their Saturday morning long lie to travel down to Scalan. The day before had been like midwinter, with torrential rain, hailstones and snow, and this was evident when we saw the craters in the Scalan road which were like paddling pools. However the Lord was kind, and we had a bright and sunny day to work in. Andy Wells, the Ranger from the Glenlivet Estate, had left mounds of material at intervals all along the road, and we decided to begin at the end nearest Scalan where the potholes were most numerous. As this is the most open stretch of the road we were constantly buffeted by the almost gale force winds which swept across the fields.

*[They were gale force! By coincidence, and totally unaware of this Braes work party, I was crossing by motorbike from Aberdeen to Morar that day and was nearly blown off coming over the Lecht. Real bikers (in leathers) consulted in Tomintoul described the conditions as 'scary' - AR]* But nothing daunted the enthusiasm of these young people, who set to work with a vengeance.

We stopped for a quick lunch break and with what they had achieved. All our a visit to the Old College, then it was aches and pains that day were earned back to work further down the road. by good works, and I was very proud of Wielding heavy shovels and carrying the whole 'squad'. Credit is due to heavy buckets of rubble began to take its Claire, Joelle, Kirsty, Stephanie, Neit toll, and as backs began to ache and Brian and Jamie for their hours of 'hard hands began to chafe I called a halt. We labour'. The fact that they worked hadn't managed to finish the road, but constantly, with so much fun and laughthe unanimous decision was that we'd ter, made their efforts even more laudbe back to complete the job in June, able. Thanks are also due to Pete, our before the Annual Mass. faithful driver, who did so much of the heaviest work.

Coming home on the minibus everyone was quiet and tired, but happy I

## Ian G. Lindsay, ARSA

More information has emerged about this architect of Up hall, West Lothian, whose advice on the possible restoration of Sealan was preferred in 1949 to that of the builder Alexander Hall of Aberdeen. An article by Peter Anson on Catholic church building in Scotland was published in the Autumn 1954 issue of the *Innes Review*, where Lindsay's name appears twice in footnotes. One of these, in connection with St Ninian's Tynet, indicates that the 'long, low, harled building' had been restored and refurnished under the architect's direction in 1951. The other shows Mr Lindsay in process of restoring the 15th century Chapel of St Mahew at Kirktown of Kilmahew, Dumbartonshire.

## Settlement of the Braes

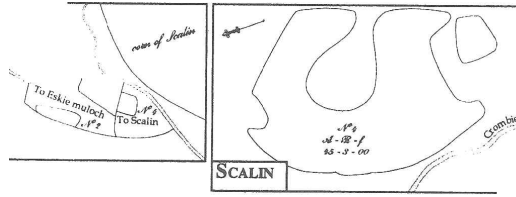
Stuart Mitchell

The 1761 William Anderson survey of Glenlivet provides the first definitive record of the farmsteads on the Duke of Gordon's estate. Many of them date from the 17th century but the oldest will have been established in very much earlier though unrecorded times. The survey also includes vignette plans of New Lands 'lately taken into corn land off the pasture', although it is now known that this happened soon after the 1715 Jacobite rising. That people have been in the Braes since prehistoric times, was confirmed early last century by the discovery of ancient artifacts at Thain, Achdregnie and Badevochel, and in the Vatieh and Carrachs Mosses. However, these finds would almost certainly have derived from temporary occupation for hunting trips and perhaps the pasturing of livestock during spring and summer. Seasonal use would have increased through the medieval period as the summer shealing system developed. But even during the final days of shealing in the late 18th century, the Braes still provided large areas of hill grazing.

Because centuries of cattle-grazing progressively improves land fertility, people eventually moved into the Braes to start raising crops. It is not known when these first permanent settlers arrived, but their cultivation of this new arable land was no doubt well established by 1500, if not very much earlier. Yet the first indication of a significant permanent community in the Braes did not come until the later 16th century, as personified by the Gordon cousins, Adam of Achnasra and James of Achdregnie. Although we do not have specific dates for these nephews of John Gordon of Guny (builder of Blairfindy Castle in 1586), they were sons of his natural half brothers, William of Delmore (killed by Clan Chattan on a raid into Invera'an in the 1580s) and George of Tombae.

The earliest local record of specific place-names in the Catholic Braes is to be found in the Invera' an Parish Register. This is less surprising than might be expected because from its start in 1630 until the 1770s there are many single baptismal entries for known Catholic families. Familiar Braes farmsteads mentioned Before 1650 include:

Achniskra Achdrignie Achinarrow Badivochel Clashenyor Corries Knockandow Lettoch Refriesh Tombey Tomnalinan Tomnavillan



Not now identifiable (and anyway possibly in lower Glenlivet) are 'The Callader' and 'The Verach'.

### Unrecorded Names

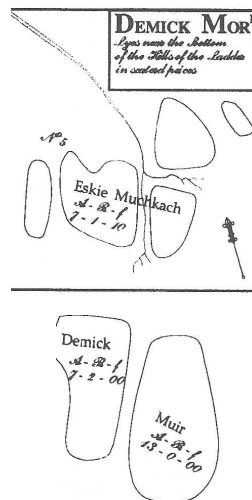
With Catholics obliged by law to marry in 'The Kirk', many in the Braes though by no means all - seemed to consider that also having their firstborn baptised there would confer 'additional assurance' of their civil rights. Consequently, although Achivaich, Croftbain and Tullich appear in a Cordon Castle rental of 1680, there is no early record of them in the Inver' an Register. Nor is there mention of others that were established before 1700, such as Thane, Lagual, Bolnaclash (all three subdivisions of Badevochel), Rindhu, Calier and Belachnochkan.

Of course, such omissions might have been because a hostile Session Clerk was negligent in recording details of Catholic baptisms, but he would anyway have recorded only the wellknown main farmsteads, not their subdivisions or individual crofts whose names would be unfamiliar to him.

Yet another unrecorded name - Belnoe, from *baile Nuadh*, 'new town' - shows that increasing population during the 17th century led to major expansion of the oldest settlements as well as the creation of completely new farmsteads. Thus, to different degrees Achnascraw and Tomnalanan underwent fragmentation similar to that at Badevochel.

### Runrig

By the time of the Anderson survey, most farms had been organised in 'class fields' that were each cultivated by an individual subtenant or crofter. However, on Tomnalanan and its Belnoe, Nether Achdregny, Castle ton of Blairfindyand, surprisingly, the 'lately taken in' Scalin, the subtenants were still jointly working the land under the old runrig system. In this, all the arable land on the holding (the 'infield') was subdivided into equal parallel strips or rigs defined by untilled intervening baulks. The rigs were allocated to the various subtenants in proportion to their rental, but never in adjoining groups. Even though an individual was assigned several rigs in a particular

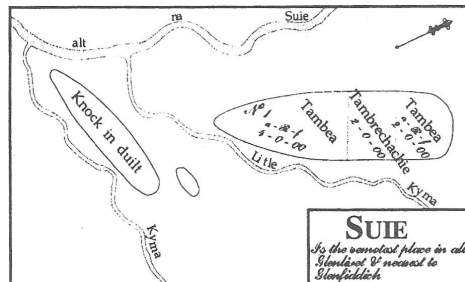


'field', these were always separated from each other by the rigs of others, and most subtenants had at least one rig in each 'field'. Despite this rather wasteful use of fertile ground, runrig ensured that everyone had a fair share of both the good land and the poor.

The next phase of expansion followed soon after the 1715 Jacobite uprising. Among the New Lands that had been brought in to cultivation by 1730 were Demickmore (in 1717 according to Bishop Geddes), Scalin, Clash (of Scalin), Badeglashan, Eskiemore, Eskiemulloch, Bochle, Glack, Cordregny, Suie and the Quirn. Fortunately, Anderson also identified the summer shealing areas associated with each major holding, because this traditional grazing system, already in decline, appears to have ended well before the next survey of Glenlivet that Thomas Milne carried out in 1774.

By then, new farmsteads had already been established on two of them: Wester Scalan and Fuerandearg (followed by Larryvarry, around 1800) on the Achorochoan shealing of 'Riegomach, opposite the Scalin' (the lower slopes of Tom Trumper), while Corry (of Demick) and Corunnich were on the former Tomnalianan shealing of 'Corenich'.

Other shealing areas around the Braes were 'Clash above the Scalin' (for Upper Clashnoir, Lettoch, Calier), 'Cornhimerich' (Nevie, Upper Drumin, Badevochel), and on the Upper Livet at 'Glasquoill' (Minmore), 'Knock in Duillt' (Nether Drumin) and the Suie (Tombae, Tombreckachie), with each of the last three already having an established one- to two-acre arable field.



Milne's survey confirmed the continuing outward expansion of agriculture, with other new crofts being taken in at Invernahowan (Demickmore), Laggansharrach (later Ladderfoot), Ellenried and Corninghatnach (to the west of the old road from Tomnavoulin to Tomintoul, near the Quirn). A fascinating feature of these plans is that they show the field names on all the Glenlivet farmsteads. While many of the names are Scots - 'fold' and 'croft' being the most common - the majority are of Gaelic origin, with 'bual' a predominant element. Although in standard Gaelic *bual* is a cattlefold, it appears that in Upper Banffshire it also applied to a somewhat larger enclosure, just as Scots 'fold' was also frequently applied to a field. Bolletin and Bolnadash are typical examples of farms that took the name of a field. However, Cordregny was one of a very few cases where the fields merely had numbers.

## Mgr Charles MacDonald

Mgr John Copland

*The following extract is taken from the 150th anniversary booklet of St Margaret's Huntly. Built in 1834, this was the first Roman Catholic chapel in Scotland for which advantage was taken of the act which had introduced Catholic Emancipation five years before to include a bell tower. Neighbours in Huntly complained when, in addition to Sundays and holy days it was rung on the Wednesdays and Fridays of Lent!*

*Introducing the booklet in 1984, Canon Lewis McWilliam paid tribute to the joint authorship of his brother Mgr Sandy MacWilliam (who changed the spelling of his surname on discovering Gaelic) and our President. Mgr Copland had very local knowledge of the place where Charles MacDonald grew up: the farm of Achdregnie, three miles up the right bank of the Livet from his own family home near Tombae. The extract (the authorship of which is soon obvious) opens with a reference to St Thomas' Church in Keith which has recently been restored to its former magnificence - thanks to fund-raising efforts led by Mgr Copland.*

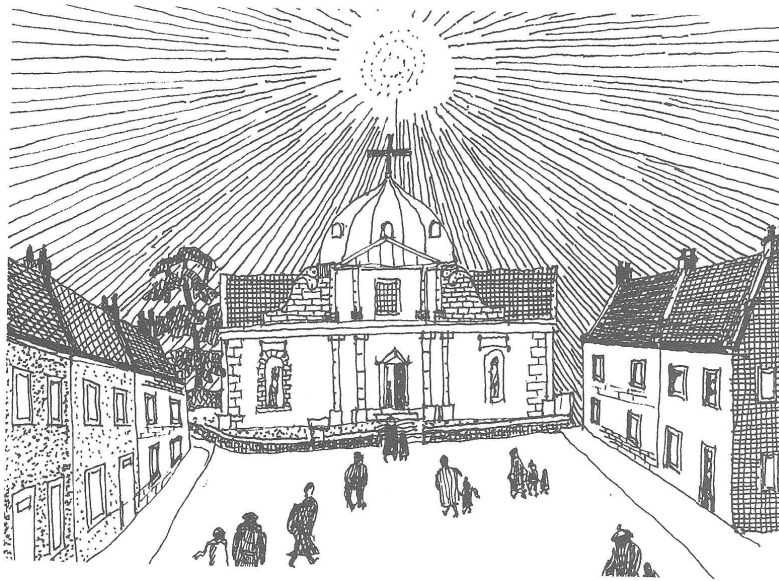
Fr MacDonald moved to Keith in 1907 and in the next twenty years he was indefatigable in his labours. His first task was the building of the present Convent. He then started on the hall, and in 1914-15 he enlarged and reorganised the Church, replacing the lantern tower with the present dome. That was indeed a daunting task! Putting a dome of such dimensions on a church already eighty years old took no small amount of courage.

What remained of the lantern tower was partly used in the summer house and partly used in the present garage: not many places can boast of the garage being a listed building. Both these structures were (unless I am very much mistaken) mostly his own handiwork. He was no mean craftsman in wood either.



Canon Charles was known as a strict disciplinarian. In the Catholic Directory there is the following passage: 'As a teacher of youth he made a marked impression and many an ear, no longer young, tingles today in retrospect.' As one subject of his early days remarked to the writer, 'It wisna safe to be coarse fan he was about.' In fairness it has to be said that he was also strict with himself. He never stinted himself, and his interests were widespread. *And here comes the section which suggested the recycling of this old material.*

He was Secretary of the Blairs Society for fifteen years and Treasurer of the Diocesan Friendly Society [*clergy stipends - Mgr MacWilliam also held this post*] for thirty years. he was the first to try to stir up interest in the preservation of Scalan, and revived the ancient custom of making a pilgrimage to the well of Our Lady of Grace at Orton. He was also strong in promoting the cause of John Ogilvie. I can remember as a boy his preaching a most eloquent sermon at Tombae on the occasion of John Ogilvie's beatification in 1929.

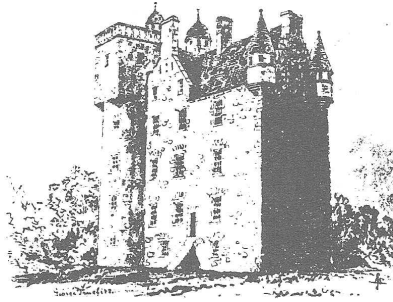


### St Mary's Well, Orton

This begins like a footnote. Orton is on the left bank of Spey three miles south of Fochabers. The first of several extracts, following on from Mgr Copland's reference, concerns the Jesuit Fr John Hay who returned to the family home of Delgaty near Turriff for his health's sake in 1579. Another reference to people visiting Orton from 'the distant Highlands' suggests that they came down from Glenlivet in search of cures for 'all the ills that flesh is heir to.'

'The people in the north of Scotland began this summer to pay their devotions at a distance from home on certain Sabbath days, in pursuance of an old and pious custom of their forefathers; and three hundred of them or more were frequently seen in the church at Turriff, clothed only in linen garments, and imploring the aid of God and the Saints, and especially of the Blessed Virgin. Not a few went on pilgrimage to the church of Our Lady of Grace, situated on the river Spey, and of all these expeditions common report pronounced me the leader, though in fact I was a long way off at the time. Rosaries were also offered for sale in the market of Turriff:

Second, an ancestor of Roma Hossack's husband in Elgin (she is a leading figure there and a member of the Scalan Association) was summoned before Elgin Burgh Court in 1627 for 'going superstitiously to a vell at Spey syde' with other women who 'kneillit about the Chappell and drank of the water praying to our Ladie:



*Aboyne Castle*

The third extract comes from the priest Gilbert Blackhall's account of how he became chaplain - at Aboyne Castle in 1638 - to the widowed Lady Sophia Hay. Her husband, a son of the Marquis of Huntly had died with the Te Deum on his lips while trapped in the flames of another tower-house, Frendraught, a few years before. The Bog of Gight was Gordon Castle.

'Shortly heirafter, in the octave of the Assumption of Our Lady, she did go to the Boggeof Gight to see her motherin-law, my Ladye Marqueis of Huntly, and to go from thence a pilgrimage, two milles, to Our Lady of Grace, in Murray land. It had been of old a very devote place, and many pilgrimages had bein made to it, from al the partes in the Northe of Scotland; but then there was nothing standing of it but some bracken walles, which the minister made throw down within the chappell, to hinder the people to pray there.

She used to make that pilgrimage every year so long as she had health to do it, a matter of threttie milles from her owne house, wherof she made two of them afoot, and barefooted, next to the chappell:

Orton features in the meeting at Preshome on 10 September 1749 of John Geddes, future rector and builder of Scalan (and coadjutor bishop to George Hay) and William Guthrie, the onelegged priest of Mortlach near Huntly (*ScN 15*).



Geddes was a day past his fifteenth birthday while Guthrie, who had just lost his job as a joiner's apprentice for preaching his new found Catholic faith in Ellon, was ten years older. They were to travel out together to become students in the Scots College Rome. Guthrie had walked from Mortlach (where much later he made an altar for his new chapel) to Preshome for Sunday Mass:

'Here I happily met with my comrade and fellow-traveller, upon sight of whom I was very well satisfied, but upon trial I was better [satisfied], as I found him so much inclined to devotion, which was the principal thing I was desirous he should be. And I must say I was surprised to see such a great sense of religion in one who was so very young, which made me feel he had a call from God to the office he was setting about.'

The pair returned to Scotland in 1759 along with George Hay - all three of them newly ordained priests. Amidst these many connections (Orton again in a moment!) it is perhaps worth pointing out for the sake of recent members that it was this John Geddes who spoke the words which regularly appear on the front of *Scalan News*. He did so 'in an academical meeting in the Scotch College at Valladolid [Spain] on the 18th of July 1777': as Mgr Copland has explained (*ScN9*) Geddes was rector of the Scots College in Spain, having rescued it and moved it from Madrid, and was about to return to Scotland as bishop.





The rest of this collection really is about Orton, ignoring the visit of Guthrie and Geddes to St Ninian's in the Braes of Enzie. The final excerpt comes from Gordon's *Catholic Church in Scotland*:

'Geddes and his new friend went that night to Auchenhalrig, a hamlet near Gordon Castle, where Mr John Godsman the missionary received them with the affection of a father and informed them that he had made a bargain for their passage to Leghorn with a worthy sea captain of the name of Abernethy. A few days afterwards they went down to the shore with Mr Godsman to look at the ship [*presumably, in Spey Bay*] and be introduced to the captain. After that they visited a ruined chapel and well dedicated to the Blessed Virgin at Orton on the Spey, a few miles above Fochabers, where "undeniable miracles" were still performed; such as cripples being carried to it on barrows and walking home cured; others limping on crutches and leaving them at the well after recovering the proper use of their limbs.

'This well was called the chapel well, and is still a place of great resort among the common people in the neighbourhood as a certain means of cure for sprains. The water is pure and limpid, and the bottom of the well is strewn with pins dropped into it by people as votive offerings. It was once a place of pilgrimage, celebrated far and near as the Chapel of Our Lady of Grace. The present proprietor of Orton, who has bestowed much pains and expense on this interesting spot, has erected a mausoleum for his family on the site of the ancient chapel. An elegant inscription over the entrance preserves the memory of the old dedication of the place.'

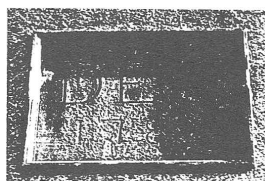
## The Preshome Book

Ian Bryce

*Since Preshome has been mentioned it is worth drawing readers' attention to an excellent long article which appeared in Aberdeen Leopard (the glossy magazine for north-east Scotland) in May 1999. As well as contributing a 'Toonser' column (complementing 'Teuchter') Ian Bryce has been writing about castles, his great love, since the magazine began. He has also collaborated with your editor on articles linking religious and architectural history in the Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. The extracts are taken from the opening part of the article.*

In *Toonser* of 1985 I told the story of how, when official documents such as Papal Bulls were being posted from Rome to bishops in Spain, Portugal, the Philippines and South America, copies had to be sent to 'Clochan, Banffshire, Scotland'. Puzzled Vatican dignitaries arriving in Aberdeen on apostolic visitations would ask: 'But where *is* Clochan? We cannot find it in any of our atlases.' Little wonder they were puzzled because it hardly exists even on local maps. It is west of Buckie, south of Portgordon, across the Cullen to Fochabers road, up a secondary road, left on to a still narrower road - and Clochan was the nearest post office to Preshome, the centre of Scottish Roman Catholicism from 1697 to 1868. Now this same *Toonser* returns with an astonishing sequel to that first wee story.....

When the editor sent me yet another 'auld bookie' - clearly dated 1803, handwritten throughout and complete with covers - it only needed the first couple of lines to convince me that it was a rare treasure from the past: 'Some Rules Laid Down by the Directors of the Chapel of Preshome'. Dr Christine Johnson confirmed from the Scottish Catholic Archives in Edinburgh that the book seems to have been the only one of its kind to survive. I think this was the personal copy of Mr John Reid, the priest at Preshome from 1770 who organised the building of the new chapel over two years from 1788.



Four copies were to have been made, according to a statement in the book, but this one has mistakes scored out and fresh thoughts added. Certainly Mr Reid's mind dictated its contents. He was due to retire to Aberdeen after 33 years as pastor, so seems to be setting out a clear plan and strategy for the benefit of his successors in office - and an assurance of continuity. Money was needed 'for keeping the house in good repair and also for the necessary expence attending divine worship', and for maintaining the priest as well: 'This Chapel is the property of the Roman Catholic congregation in the Parish of Rathven, and as there are no funds appointed for keeping it up, if it should be neglected by the Congregation, it must necessarily fall into ruin. This, we are certain, will never happen whilst a single spark of Religion shall remain alive in the breasts of the Roman Catholics of this Parish:

## Readers Write

I am grateful to Jimmie Cameron Stuart for giving us Robbie Lamb's list of 28 men from the Braes of Glenlivet who fought with the Jacobite army at Culloden (*ScN* 17). It is particularly fascinating that the names must have come from local family traditions that had survived well into this century, since the various *Lists of Rebels* identify only the Rev. John Tyrie and Donald Fleming as specifically present at Culloden.

Jimmie ended his article by expressing pride in the five men of his name who fought for the Stuarts. However, he will be glad to know that there were actually eight Stuarts in Robbie Lamb's list, four of them concealed by their patronymics: John Allanach - Clashnoir; Colin Moir - Badevochel; Thomas Cibenach - Scalan; William McLea Suie. And Robbie Lamb's Peter Stuart from Badevochel was in fact *alias* Dow.

Yet another seven Stuarts were among 13 additional Braes men identified in the *Lists of Rebels* as having 'carried arms': Allan McLea - Badeglashan; John More Sr and Jr - Eskemore; Peter More - Knockandhu; John Stuart - Achnascra; Donald Stuart *alias* Dow - Clack; Robert Stuart Badevochel. Also William McLea, a servant from Morinsh, was noted as later being 'in the Braes of Glenlivet'.

Stuart Mitchell, Turriff.

Many thanks for *Scalan News*, which the family much enjoys reading. It is now many years since we made our first pilgrimage to Scalan, then an empty shell and yet full of history. What courage these young men had, and their mentors Paul MacPherson and Bishop Hay! And how happy one is to see it within sight of restoration. The diocese and the Church throughout the country may well be proud of those priests like Canon Sandy MacWilliam who realised the significance of Scalan and instilled its message into the hearts of their parishioners. Canon Sandy was a true priest of the Enzie who saw small things grow to greatness. With my warmest wishes for the successful restoration of this most historic project.

Leslie Macfarlane, Aberdeen.

The evocative painting of Scalan, now available as a card, by the unknown J. K. is puzzling. J.K. produced equally lovely paintings of Aquhorties, dated 1829, and Blairs, dated 1859. The artist has signed all three paintings with his curiously designed initials, but dated none of them.

In all three we have to accept the dates added by someone else. In the case of the Scalan painting the date has been added on the back; with the others it has been added below the paintings.

It is the date 1793 which puzzles me. If you look carefully at the roof of Scalan it appears to be slated - something which didn't happen until after 1845 (see 'Box-beds', p. 20). The small building to the left of the main house, formerly the public Chapel, looks distinctly 'domestic' with smoke at the chimney - a change which didn't happen until long after College days. When Stothert visited in 1845 he reached the door of Scalan through a courtyard: where is it in the painting? It would be very satisfying if some Scalan enthusiast/ art historian could shed some light on J. K. - who he (or she) was and when the Scalan picture was really painted.

Ann Dean, Inch.

*This mystery adds interest to what remains an excellent way of drawing Scalan to the attention of your friends and still excellent value at £5 for six through lane McEwan at Ogilvie Cottage. Could J. K. possibly have been Bishop James Kyle? He was at Preshome until his death in 1869 - AR.*

I was very interested to hear of the trip up Loch Morar for the Tigh-Phobuill Mass last summer but can't help wondering if Romasaig was the right place for it. A passage in Wendy Wood's book *Moidart and Morar* suggests otherwise: 'On the way to the head of Loch Morar you are not long on the path, clear in winter but lost among waisthigh brackens in summer, when you come across more ruins. The first is the township of Romasaig (the place to which the Mhorag monster once chased a boat), and on a comparatively wide stretch beside the shore, at a place called Camus na Brachain, you come across the remains of many houses, haybarns, byres and fanks that still speak of busy times, and yet again to the ruin of a fair-sized church and priest's house combined, beside the shore.'

Wendy Wood was a great character of my youth, with her soap box speeches at the foot of the Mound in favour of Scottish independence. She had a croft in Genuig near the old Highland college of Samalaman. It means 'summer lands' in Gaelic, but she came up with the idea that 'it might be a code name at the time of the religious persecution. It was used as a seminary, and other places used for the same purpose had names containing the same letters such as Samadlam and Scalan.' I have been to Samadlan, as it

is usually spelt, on the coast of Knoydart looking over to Skye. The walls of this former chapel (never a seminary) are still standing and the dimensions are much the same as the combined chapel and priest's house at Inverbeg in Morar.

John MacDonald, Edinburgh.

Having been sent *Scalan News*, I thought your readers might be interested in *CHRISTIANITY: an Introduction to the Catholic Faith*. It is proving of great help in conversions and sold over 40,000 copies within ten weeks of being published in January. It has been warmly acclaimed by Bishop Conti, Cardinal Winning and Cardinal Hume.

Oenis Richer, Oxford.

*Written by Fr David Albert Jones, a young Dominican based at Blackfriars, Oxford, this pocket book costs £1.25 (discounts for orders of 12 or more) from Family Publications, 77 Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 6LF.*

## Out This Summer!

*Forbidden College: the Story of Scalan (1716-1799)* by John Watts (Tuckwell Press), 276 pages.

Published to mark the bicentenary of the closure of Scalan, this full-length book provides the most complete and detailed account of the seminary. Based on original documentary sources through. out, it traces the day-to-day life of Scalan and introduces a host of characters - masters, students, servants, neighbours, bishops, red-coats, friends and foes. It describes the College in detail, its buildings, curriculum, domestic arrangements and farm. It explains the reasons why it was set up in the first place in defiance of the Law, as well as the changed conditions that brought about its eventual closure, and assesses its importance for the recovery of the Catholic Church in Scotland. The text is illustrated with sixteen plates and nine maps, and includes a foreword by Bishop Conti, President of the Scottish Catholic Heritage Commission, of which the author is a member.

## The Old College of Scalan, Glenlivet

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.  
On a wide spreading haugh near its source may be seen  
A long ancient building embowered in green,  
'Midst a park of rich land where the rowan trees grow  
That surround it, and shield it from all winds that blow.  
In the dark penal days of that dread bygone time,  
When our Catholic faith was condemned as a crime.  
The great Duke of Gordon, so generous and brave,  
To the Bishops, a site for a College he gave.  
And Scalan, remote in a wild Highland glen,  
Surrounded by mountains, morasses and fen,  
Was adjudged most secure, while possessing some charms,  
Where students might work and pray, safe from all harms.  
There esteemed Bishop Gordon the foundation stone laid,

And on west bank of Crombie he raised, it is said,  
A College that soon spread its fame far and wide,  
But in time 'twas transferred to the opposite side.  
At this College of Scalan a church was erected,  
And to every Braes Catholic a blessing effected;  
As the one being nearest stood some miles away  
At fair Caen-na-Choile 'mong the birks of Tombae.  
Many Priests and good Bishops their learning received  
At the College of Scalan, it may be believed,  
And one, Rev. George Gordon, that name being so rife,  
Was dubbed 'Scalanensis' the rest of his life.  
Here the great Bishop Hay, that famed saintly divine,  
Received Consecration in days of langsyne;  
In his much beloved Scalan passed long happy years,  
And on quitting his loved home he left it in tears.  
For almost a century the college remained  
As teacher of youth. Many priests were ordained  
Within its grey walls. Bishops also, we're told,  
Held Councils therein in the dark days of old.  
But the State soon refused - for our Faith had its foes  
To allow men to worship their God as they chose,  
And soldiers were sent in the silence of night  
And they burned down the College, put its inmates to flight.  
That kind, gentle Bishop, John Geddes by name,  
The College of Scalan esteemed as his 'hame';  
He rebuilt the old house as it stands to this day  
, But increasing afflictions soon pressed him away.  
The Abbe Macpherson, that prince of good men,  
And esteemed benefactor of his dear native glen,  
Near this famed seat of learning first opened his eyes  
, Studied under its roof for the Priesthood likewise.  
Here he built a fine church, gave a sweet sounding bell,  
Erected two schools, and endowed them as well;  
A graveyard enclosed, trenched a park of good ground,  
A clergyman's house built with everything found.

But at length the old College was found rather small  
 To accommodate students, professors and all-  
 So its Bishop Superior, and the students each one,  
 Removed to Aquhorties, near the banks of the Don.  
 And the College which nigh on a century was spared,  
 And men for the Priesthood in Scotland had reared,  
 Is abandoned at last to the snow and the rain,  
 And the fierce winds that blow in that upward domain.  
 Now a century of time in its course has run on,  
 And those Bishops, and Clergy, and students are gone.  
 Still as year follows year, many people come round  
 To view the old College, and its once hallowed ground.

**J. Sharp Millran & Co. Printers and Publishers,**

**Crown Street, Aberdeen.**

## Scalan to Aquhorties

From Rev. J. F. S. Gordon, *The Catholic Church in Scotland* (Aberdeen, 1874).

In July, Bishop Hay moved his students from Scalan to the new seminary at Aquhorties. He had always felt an attachment to Scalan, and he confesses that it cost him some regret to leave it, 'where we have been so long, and where so many worthy missionaries have had the rudiments of their education. I cannot help having a particular attachment to the poor people about it, who were always very obliging to me, and I earnestly wish to get them served by one who would be of real benefit to their souls.' (B. Hay to Mr James Sharp, Oct. 31 1799) It was arranged that Mr James Sharp should remain there in charge of the mission.

### **Bleak and desolate**

Scalan he had long loved in spite of its wilderness, perhaps on account of its solitude. But Scalan had a history. Aquhorties was a bleak and desolate morass, unlike the smiling farm it has since become. With the exception of the family at Fetternear there were few or no Catholics near it. The superintendence of a large establishment from which the carpenter and the plasterer have just retired, with everything to be found, prepared and organised for a community of boys and their masters, is not exactly the kind of work which most men at the age of seventy would court. Yet our Bishop settled down to his new employments with the same composure with which he would have returned to one of his best-loved haunts.

### **Teaching and prayer**

He taught the classes of Mental Philosophy and of Metaphysics. Perhaps as relaxation to his mind after these abstruser studies, we are told that he was very fond of teaching the rudiments of [Latin] grammar, and that the little boys engaged in this study formed a class under his management. The Bishop regularly took breakfast, dinner, and supper in the refectory with the community, and invariably attended evening prayers in chapel as well as visits to the Holy Sacrament after dinner and supper. He continued to spend several hours of the day in mental prayer and spiritual reading, sometimes in chapel, sometimes in his room and not unfrequently out of doors. Until his health gave way he said Mass every morning.

For these little personal details the author must acknowledge his debt to Mr Donald Carmichael, who began his studies at Scalan and resided eight years at Aquhorties.

*[This priest took up his first charge at Tomintoul in 1808 and, as described in ScN 13, was responsible for building the Catholic church there.]*

In the time of recreation the Bishop would frequently mix with the students in the playroom or in the grounds. Even when he was

very old Mr Carmichael has seen him, on a holiday afternoon, looking on at a well-played game of handball with all the interest and vivacity of one of the boys. If the boys could see the Bishop on one of his solitary walks in the grounds, when not occupied with his prayers, they would throw themselves in his way to hear him tell one of his charming stories. No one, says another of his students, could match the Bishop in his captivating way of telling a story. When he came among the boys at recreation and began one, every game was stopped and all the boys crowded about the old man to hear what he was going to say. His face gave a suitable expression to his descriptions, and the gestures of his hands also helped to impart a sense of reality to what he was saying.



It was in winter, during the Christmas holidays, that the boys most enjoyed the company of the Bishop. Combining the playfulness of a boy with the warm affection of a father, he would sit among them after tea while they were playing the Italian round game of Cuckoos. He gave them prizes to be played for, and when the prizes were all disposed (or if he saw their amusement flag) he would announce one prize more, and when the game was played out would excite a shout of merriment by producing, with great formality and a quiet smile, the coveted prize of a few almonds - or perhaps of one.

#### **Jacobite memories**

Throughout the winter season the Bishop usually joined the boys after supper in the playroom, where they often made a semi-circle with the benches in front of the stove. The Bishop would then take his seat in the middle so that everyone might see him, and the fascination of his stories began. He told them so graphically and to the life. The hour for evening prayers often seemed to come too soon, interrupting his flow of anecdote. On one of those evenings spent round the stove, the Bishop gave the boys a narrative of his father's apprehension in 1715 for his attachment to the Stuarts, and of his escape. The tears were running down the Bishop's face as he related the story.

#### **Bishop and doctor**

When the boys were sick, the Bishop not only prescribed for them but administered his medicines with his own hands. If they were confined to bed he would often stay in the room with them, saying his prayers and helping them by turns with the tenderness of a nurse. Mr Carmichael was once threatened at Aquhorties with inflammatory fever. The Bishop gave him some medicine, and for three or four hours never left the bedside of the sick boy until he saw that the worst symptoms were abated. He then gave him his blessing, wished him a quiet night's rest, and assured him that he would be better next day. When the boy awoke in the morning he found himself well enough to rise and go on with his studies. His rapid recovery he used to always attribute to the Bishop's prayers more than to his medicines.

## **Index in Edinburgh**

Alasdair Roberts

As may be judged from the above, Gordon's *Catholic Church in Scotland* is a rich source of material. Copies are available in good libraries and some are in private hands, but until very recently it was difficult to find one's way around its 645 pages in two-column format type face about half that of *Scalan News*, cramming in 700 words per page. In the Scottish Catholic Archives, Columba House, 16 Drummond Place, Edinburgh, there is an index compiled by the Rev. William James Anderson, the first Keeper who was appointed in 1958. He presided over a vast collection of hand-written material going back to the start of the *Scalan* era and beyond (it is the basis of Or Watts' book) which was moved to the capital from Blairs and Preshome.

Fr Anderson made a start. His hand-written index of 'Gordon' (the book was mostly the work of another clergyman) runs to some 580 entries and 1,250 page references. He knew very well it was incomplete: beside common names like Gordon and MacDonald he wrote 'to be sorted out' but never got round to it. Now Ann Dean, with the hearty encouragement of your editor, has produced a much more comprehensive index. It has at least 2,250 entries, with page references multiplying in proportion. It is typed and available in Edinburgh. In future anyone who visits Columba House wishing to consult clergy letters for the period of Bishop Hay's life as a priest (1759-1811) will be directed by the present Keeper Or Johnson to Gordon and the index. And it is on computer disc (Ann and I have our copies on different systems) which not only makes looking up someone's name a bit quicker but also facilitates the adding of items which still lurk unindexed in the old 450,000-word volume. Visitors to Calumba House will be encouraged to note any items they come across. The index shows Bishop Hay laying aside his brown wig in 1788, but I have just found a reference to it in

connection with indoor games at Aquhorties.

The easiest kinds of index to compile are those which deal only with names of people and places. Ann's index is much more ambitious. To take the obvious example, 'Scalari' crossreferences appear under clergy, students and meetings as well as the main entry. This has some 50 page references apart from the six-page 'history of and description'. Scalani topics are indicated in a way which goes well beyond the computer's ability (*if* the 450,000 words were on disc) to index key words. Every aspect of Scalani is there, from 'altarpiece' to 'weather' (on six pages). How John Watts would have loved this index when writing his *Forbidden College*!

## Box-beds at Scalani

Ann Dean

When the Rev. James Sharp left Scalani in 1807 it was abandoned, apart from occasional visits from an estate underkeeper who used one or two rooms there. The Rev. James Stothert visited Scalani in 1845 and left us a detailed description of what he found; he was fortunate to meet people who remembered the seminary days. He approached the house through a courtyard which was then still intact. Inside the entrance door (the only door) a narrow passage ran from Bishop Hay's room on the left, through to the boys' room on the right. Upstairs the chapel where the Blessed Sacrament was reserved (after the conversion of the kitchen in the north wing into a public Chapel) was quite empty, but still with marks where the altar had been. Stothert made no reference to any furnishings, only that the schoolroom was used to store potatoes. He clearly stated that Scalani was thatched with turf. (Gordon, *Catholic Church in Scotland*, 275-8)

Some time after Stothert's visit the house was converted into two dwellings. At this time of major alterations the roof would have been slated, though the Chapel, which became a house, retained its thatch to the bitter end. A door had to be knocked through the back wall to serve as the entrance for one of the dwellings. This was the time when box-beds were introduced. It is still obvious today that one was installed to block off the passage way to Bishop Hay's room - this box-bed served the room known in seminary days as the library, or Bishop Geddes's room. One may have been built in to the study between the library and the boys' room. Bishop Hay's room had one installed in the alcove where his bed would no doubt have been. Upstairs in the chapel a box-bed was built along the west wall, and there may have been others in the other rooms upstairs.

Only one reference has been found to Bishop Hay's bed. Bishop Alexander Cameron wrote in *Bishop Hay's Life* (Valladolid, 1808) 'His bed consisted of a small mattress and a couple of blankets without sheets. The bedstead was so narrow that it resembled a coffin, and could scarcely contain a human body.' One does not know whether Cameron is referring to Bishop Hay's bed at Scalani or Aquhorties, but knowing his thriftiness one can assume it was probably the same bed.

L F. Grant, in *Highland Folk Ways*, makes the point that box-beds were becoming common in the eighteenth century for servants' quarters in larger houses, in inns, and gradually in smaller houses. Installed even in kitchens, they could, with either curtains or timber doors, become mini-bedrooms. She states that box-beds were very much associated with small farmhouses and often formed the partition between the living room and the next room. One wonders about the beds in the boys' dormitory - chaff-filled mattresses on narrow wooden tressle beds? Life in the seminary was probably quite spartan, and the box-beds of the later farmhouse period would have been considered a luxury.