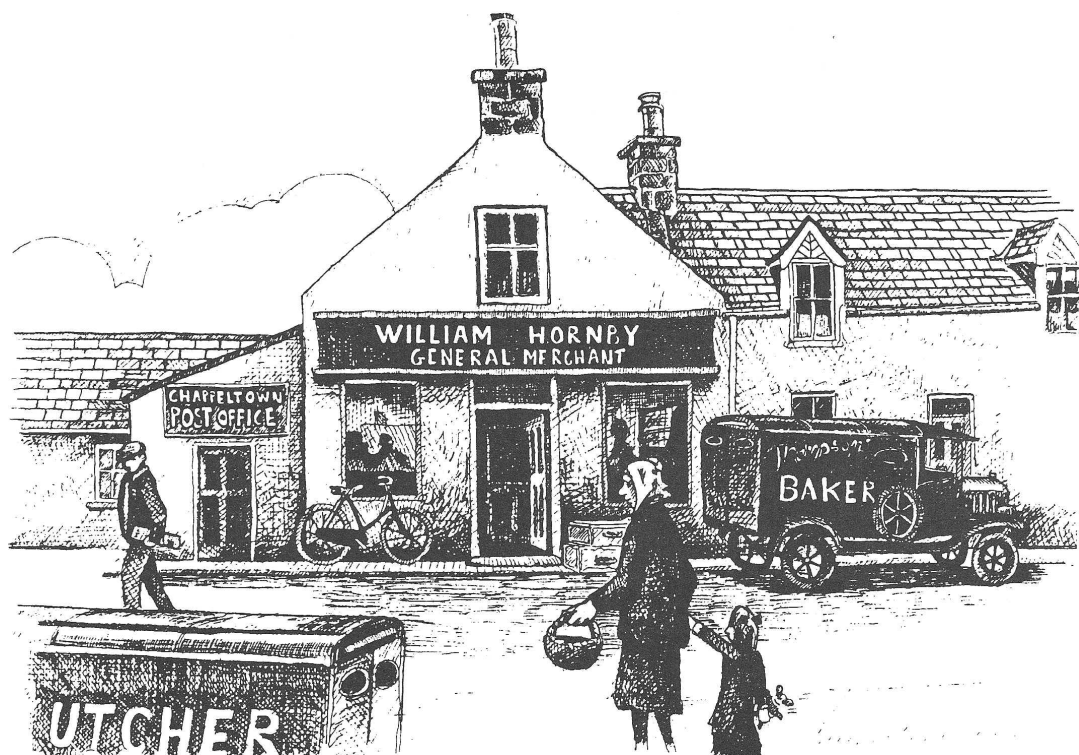




No. 13, December 1996

'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)



As we enter our seventh year of these newsletters it is pleasant to be able to welcome a record number of new readers since the last issue. The word about Scalan is really getting around, and membership of the Association is now close to six hundred. There have been no significant meetings or events since the June AGM, but the July Mass, held indoors at Chapeltown because of uncertain weather conditions, was a deeply moving - but different - kind of pilgrimage event for those who packed the pews. Some of the older worshippers were reminded of the days when these pews were so crowded that Braes families were restricted on numbers for the main Sunday Mass. The Bishop of Aberdeen, whose diocese contains the three seminaries of Scalan, Aquhorties and Blairs, was chief celebrant.

Many members went on up to the Scalan afterwards, where the sun was shining. One group, including your editor, had struggled over from the Well of the Lecht in storm conditions, bagpipes playing - uphill - from time to time to encourage everyone from the youngest, aged eleven, to the oldest who conceded seven decades to her. Although never 'lost', as one of the party muttered afterwards, we did wander about in an attempt to steer clear of the knee-high (sometimes waist-high) heather. It really needs the piles of stones which have been promised by the Glenlivet Estate, so that those who walk this way in years to come (or pony-trek, with whisky smugglers in mind) can tramp a usable path back into existence. This year's crossing was a splendid achievement by several walkers past middle age (one of whom, Mary Roche of Strathdon, has since done a first parachute jump!). Readers can imagine our feelings, coming down to Scalan after the storm, to find the place deserted. Energies returned on the flat, however, and we were there, some looking down from the gallery, in time for the Proper of the Mass.

Our President, Mgr Copland, has been in Rome sharing his Golden Jubilee as a priest with Pope John Paul II and many others of the post-war generation. He was one of those with a double reason for celebration, since it is fifty years since the Scots College was reopened on the same site (since abandoned) which welcomed students from Scalan. As a Glenlivet man and a historian, Mgr Copland had special reason to connect that reopening, after war and occupation, with Abbe McPherson's work of restoration after the Napoleonic Wars. The Monsignor's return from Rome was registered in the Secretary / Treasurer's house by what has become a regular request from Keith around Armistice Day - for Bill McEwan to play the Last Post on his cornet.

The drawing opposite by Alan Paterson is intended to illustrate the memories of Ann Lamb, now in Stonehaven, who grew up at Larryvary before the first world war. Ann Dean once again supplies most of the illustrations. In the pages which follow there are some very local items (18th century estate papers in use for the first time here) but also others. One links Scalan with the original west coast seminary in 'Glengarry's Morar'. Another shows how the faith which was kept alive in the country areas of northern Scotland produced heroic priests for towns like Falkirk.

## The Braes Chapel, 1897-1997

The centenary of the Braes chapel at Chapeltown will be on 8th September 1997 - more in the next issue. Regular readers will recall that the first proper chapel after Scalan was that of Abbe Paul McPherson, built in classical style by the rector (and rescuer) of the

Scots College Rome, who went there as a student from Scalan. A framed drawing of the chapel, kept in the sacristy, was reproduced in the December 1993 issue of this newsletter. There the editor stated in error that it was destroyed by fire in 1893 (I think he makes these things up!). Elizabeth Beaton then explained (*ScN* 8) how the first church was built in 1827-28, on a site preferred to Scalan and to the design of the Elgin architect William Robertson. Two extracts follow on the chapel which had to be replaced after seventy years - the first from the 1866 *Scottish Catholic Directory*:

'Various improvements have been made in this Church during the past year. An arch has been thrown over the Sanctuary, thus forming a neat and sufficiently large chancel, and leaving room for a passage on each side. One of these passages leads into the vestry. Up to the spring of the arch the whole is painted imitation Sienna marble, while the roof of the arch itself is painted marine blue with gilt stars. The chancel has also been refloored, and the side-walls of the Church have been repainted. A new Altar-rail of exquisite workmanship, executed by Messrs M'Hardy and Son, Aberdeen, has been erected. [*This was a firm of 'ironmongers, smiths and bellhangers' at 54 Nethergate, so the altar rail must have been of wrought iron.*] All these improvements, along with the elegant sanctuary-lamp, procured some years ago, add much to the beauty of the Church. It is only justice to state that, with the exception of the Altar-rail, the above improvements are only a few of those made by the Society of the Living Rosary.'

Those who know the chapel will wonder if any of these early efforts survived (the sanctuary lamp, for example); also whether all the original plans came to pass in the following summer. Here the source is the *Banffshire Advertiser* for 24th June 1896:

'Yesterday the foundation stone was laid of a new Catholic chapel for the wide district known as the Braes of Glenlivet. It is a wild, romantic country far from railways and coaches, but there is a considerable population, and they mostly belong to the Roman Catholic faith. The erection of the new church is due to the energy of the present clergyman, Father Mackenzie, who, it may be mentioned, built two new churches in other parishes where he was located. [*One of the Rev. Colin Mackenzie's churches was at Slammanan, on the River Avon near Falkirk, and the other at North Berwick, when he was on loan to the Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh.*]

'Being close to the graveyard, and built on clayey soil, the old church, which has been pulled down, was considered very damp, and this was mainly responsible for Father Mackenzie's decision to replace it by a new structure. He worked hard and succeeded in raising sufficient money to warrant him proceeding with the work. The

## Scalan in the 18th Century

Stuart Mitchell

Ann Dean's 'Crofts of Scalan' (*ScN* 6) around Larryvarry were formerly pasture which was brought into cultivation at the start of the 19th century to meet the increasing demand for barley. This in turn was in demand for the manufacture of whisky. Until then, according to the 1774 *GeneraLI Plan of Glenlivet*, much of the Scalan area had been shealing grounds for summer pasture. Auchorochan shealed at 'Riegomach opposite the Scalin', while the Clashnoirs, Lettoch and Calier (on what is known locally as the Backside, with its own road and burn) took their cattle across to 'the Clash above Scalin'.

Scalan in 1761

As Ann Dean and Michael Taitt point out in 'Scalan Reconstructed' (*Innes Review*, Spring 1995) the seminary farm was held on a seventeen year lease from 1767 and then, after nine years of no formal agreement, a new lease was granted in 1793. Of course that does not mean there was no earlier cultivation around Scalan. Even though the area was mainly pastoral the little student community at the head of the glen had to feed itself. There were others sowing and reaping in the area. The 1761 *Summary of Glenlivet* lists all the Principal Tacksman (lease-holders) and main subtenants on the estate, making reference to some 200 acres of 'New Land that is lately taken into Corn land off the pastures ... to be let in separate tacks and crofts'.

By far the largest single piece of new arable was 45 acres 3 roods at 'Scalin'. It was leased to John Grant of Rotmays but worked in run-rig by his subtenants - James McIlly (actually a Stuart), Peter Stuart, Alex Grant, Robert Rattray and Paul McPherson almost certainly the father of Abbe Paul McPherson. The *Summary* has small maps for each area of the estate, and this new corn land resembles a broad penannular brooch surrounding an untilled central area which, in 1767, became the site of the present seminary building. This vignette gives no indication of the older seminary building on the Crombie's left or east bank, where three other small pieces of new arable are shown - one 'to Scalin', the others 'to Eskiemuloch'. A 1775 map by Thomas Milne, reproduced on the back cover, shows houses and other buildings spread out in front of the 'Roman College' on the other side of the burn.

### Earlier Evidence

There is also evidence from the Inver'an Old Parish Register (OPR) that at least some of these 'New Lands' were occupied and cultivated before 1761. OPR records the baptism on 12/2/1748 of Barbara, daughter to James Mdelea and Christian Mackenzie in 'Scalan', while a 1734 single baptism to John Stuart in 'Scula' must also relate to Scalan (with the 1761 Peter probably his son). Three more Stuart baptisms show that other new lands were taken in about the same early date: Badiglashan, 1738 (Peter Dow); Eskemulloch, 1748 (Peter Moir); Kim or Quirn, 1748 and 1751 (William Stuart). An OPR check of McPherson and Grant surnames (including the Grant aliases Roy, Bowie and Bane) might give similar pre-1761 dates for the remaining New Lands at Clash, Demickmore (covering Eskie Muchkach, Muir and Demick), the Bochel, Cordregnie (subdivided into Corrie Head, Clashbane,

Parkbeg and Drumakie) and Glack, Eskiemore and Eskiemulloch.

### Aliases or By-names

The meticulous records kept at Tombae by the Rev. James John Gordon and at Chapeltown by the Rev. William Dundas provide an insight into the widespread use of aliases in 18th and early 19th century Glenlivet. Unlike the outlawed McGregors, who had to take other names because their own was literally a death warrant, many family lines in Upper Banffshire were known by a secondary name (or patronymic) instead of their family name. This was particularly prevalent amongst the Stuart, Grant, McIntosh and McPherson families. Aliases such as McRobbie, McUllie, McAllister and McIlly are logical because they mean 'son or descendant of Robert, William, etc.'. Curiously though, many family lines were identified by names such as More (big), Dow (dark hair or complexion), Roy (red-haired), Bain (fair), Bowie (yellow) and Garrow (rough). In Gaelic-speaking areas these are typical personal by-names that were attached to individuals, not to whole branches of families. Perhaps unsurprisingly, in the early 1800s almost all Smith *alias* Gow males in the Braes and Drumin were blacksmiths and wrights, because the name Gow comes from the Gaelic *gobha* - a smith! There may be another article forthcoming on Glenlivet aliases.

### Registering Baptism

No other baptisms have been found for the Scalan families mentioned above. Despite appearing in the parish registers of the established kirk, the McIlea, Dow and Moir / More families were almost certainly Catholic, as were probably also the Stuarts of 'Scula' and Quirn. Although often missing from records which are notoriously incomplete, Catholic marriages in these pre-Emancipation days were usually formalised in Invera' an Kirk to safeguard the couple's civil rights.

Some of these single baptisms may be of the first child to a 'mixed' Catholic/Protestant marriage, but clearly it was also considered expedient by many Catholic parents that their firstborn had a Protestant record of baptism, presumably to appease the authoritarian and often hostile kirk session. It is unlikely that newborn children were taken all the way to Ballindalloch for kirk baptism in the 18th century, but from about 1770 a Protestant Itinerant Missioner for Glenlivet was based at Auchbreck. Despite this, few names from the Braes appear in the OPR from then on. Paradoxically, single baptisms were not confined to Catholics from the Braes, being equally common among the Protestant Stuarts of Ballindalloch.

The 18th century maps show the Duke of Gordon's Glenlivet estate divided into six daughs: Nevie, Deskie, Drumin, Auchorochan, Tamvooln and Taminlienian. The daugh or 'davoch' was an old Scots land measure which, relating as much to productivity as to area, was between 200 and 400 acres in extent. Five of the daughs were subdivided into four plows (or plowgates) of up to 100 acres each, a unit representing the arable area that an eight-ox plough could cultivate in a season. Subdivision of the sixth daugh, Auchorochan, was into 32 oxgates, the third of the old units of land measure. The ox gate or oxgang was one eighth of a plowgate. At eight to thirteen acres, it represented either the share of the cultivation pertaining to one ox in the team, or the area that a single ox could plough in a season.

## Of Moles and Men

Alasdair Roberts

Stuart Mitchell's article stimulates a 19th century sequel. James Michie was in turn schoolmaster, farmer and whisky smuggler at Scalan. He ran a school at Achnascraw, and he appears as James Michie, 'Schoolmaster Clenbucket' in 1817 when standing as godfather to Mary Stuart More at Tomalienan. Perhaps this refers to the fact that his family home was still over the Ladder at Badenyon, but schools in country districts often moved round for the convenience of families and that may have been one of Michie's teaching 'stations'.

Whatever may have led to this schoolmaster's disappearance from the record of communicants (*ScN 10*) he appears regularly in the Chapeltown register from 1833 as a godparent at Scalan. A passage from Frado Blundell's *Catholic Highlands* conveys information from the people who were living at Scalan in the opening decade of the present century:

'Some years after the removal to Aquhorties Mr James Michie took the farm of Scalan from Mr [Rev. Alexander] Paterson. He had no children, but adopted the two orphan children of his sister, and brought them up most carefully. They married, and in their turn brought up their children with the greatest care. The late Mr McGregor, son of the elder sister, was well known for the veneration in which he held "The Scalan", and for the pleasure he took in preserving it; whilst his sister has carried on the family tradition to the present day.' This Rachel McGrigor, who died in 1910 aged 73, is commemorated on the most elaborate of the headstones in the

graveyard at Chapeltown. Seven other members of the family are buried there, including Sophia Clark or McGrigor.

#### Two Nieces

James Michie's orphan nieces were Sophia and Henrietta Clark. Government censuses reveal that the information given to Blundell (or misheard by him) was wrong in making Sophia McGrigor, as she became, the older sister. In 1851 Henrietta gave her age as 40 and Sophia as 39, and this gap was confirmed in later censuses. Surprisingly both sisters took Protestant husbands. Did they go to 'the Kirkie' at the foot of the Bochel (one Sunday in six, when Presbyterian services were held) perhaps leaving their wives and children at Chapeltown for Mass?

Henrietta Clark changed her name to Matheson on marriage, and both sisters had families over a twenty year period. A first son born to the McGrigors in November 1832 was followed four months later by a first daughter to the Mathesons. The youngest McGrigor was born in 1850 and the youngest Matheson in 1852.

Philip Matheson appears in the 1841 census as 'ag lab.': the commonest occupation for Glenlivet men (and for many women and children) was that of agricultural labourer. Henrietta's husband John McGrigor came from Gaulrig in the parish of Kirkmichael. Here, beside the River Avon above Delnabo, dwelt a regular 'tribe' bearing the outlawed name McGregor (and not bothering to change it, as happened elsewhere). No fewer than eight Grigor McGrigors, one of them grandfather to Henrietta's children, are registered for the Gaulrig area between 1740 and 1830.



#### Moles and Moleys

John McGregor appears in the first census as a Mole Catcher. According to *Chambers' Encyclopaedia* of 1891, 'Of all British mammals moles are the most constantly and determinedly persecuted: The 'moley' had an important job to do as the population of the Braes of Glenlivet approached its peak in the 1840s, with 17 baptisms in the average year. Ever more land was broken in to feed hungry mouths. Moles themselves have such a voracious appetite - for worms in particular - that their 'rage of hunger' has been noted. In the last century their burrows spoiled pasture land, so that moles were trapped underground by those who had the skill for it.

Isobel Grant remembers the last of these experts: 'A mole catcher was around the farms catching moles all the time. He lived in Tomintoul. He got the name "Moley" though his name was Grant. He married a Mary McHardy from Tomnarieve. Moley died years ago but his son who had the garage in Tomintoul still gets called "Young Moley". When boys caught moles they used to skin them and nail them to the barn door to stretch them, and then sold them for a shilling each. Moleskin coats were popular then.'

Nowadays molehills are a common sight in the Braes, not least on the chapel house lawn. At Scaln Sandy Matheson has no doubt that they are a menace, destroying the roots of turnips in their search for animal life. He finds that they make new runs around his traps (Sandy is no molecatcher) so he pours paraffin into their holes: 'They don't like oil about their feet!'



Last year he and the post-mistress, in for her fly cuppie, were amazed when a large lorry came over the bridge and then sank to the axles in ground which had been extensively tunnelled by moles. It took the bigger of Sandy's two tractors to get it back on the road to the water-bottling plant - that's the place between the distillery and Eskmulloch which has still to come 'on stream'.

#### Tomintoul Chapel

Fr Blundell makes reference to moles in connection with the Rev. Donald Carmichael, whose new chapel in Tomintoul (now rather old and frail) was opened in 1839: 'A "terrible nice man" was Mr Carmichael, who beside the chapel that he left as a monument to his energy is still remembered as a "particular fine farmer". When he was summoned to take the administration of the temporalities of Blairs, a neighbour expressed his regret at Mr Carmichael's departure, and wished to know what sort of man his successor might be. "I hae nae doubt," said the good priest, "but that Mr Cameron will let out the mole and let in the dockin."'

Fr Colin Stewart who is now the priest at Tomintoul (and priest of more surrounding churches than he can easily serve < at the weekend) has worked on the building with his own hands and should appreciate this account of Donald Carmichael as fundraiser:

'How great this labour was may be judged from the tradition, still existing in Strathavon, that it was sad to see the poor priest's hands, so worn and marked were they with carrying the bag of copper and of silver which he had gathered during the fifteen months he was absent collecting money for the building. This is doubtless in great part true, as communication was most difficult in those parts eighty years ago, and banking facilities were unheard of.'

The move to Blairs was a compliment to his skill in handling money, but on leaving Tomintoul in 1838 Mr Carmichael also took on the job of farm manager at Aquhorties, the former seminary. Is it still known locally that he said Mass in a room at Cults 'at the lower end of village - still [in 1909] called the priest's house' while the present chapel was being built? Probably not, any more than his last poignant words before taking the road are likely to be remembered by those who now gather before the altar: 'Yes indeed, I had a great work in building yon chapel, yet I never had the pleasure of saying Mass in it.'

### Farming Skills

Donald Carmichael learned his farming at Scalan, of course, having been there for four years before Aquhorties as one of the last students in the Braes. Games Michie was almost certainly a student with him at Scalan, although the register has not survived.) Carmichael's actual successor in Tomintoul (no Cameron fits) was William Mackintosh from Tongue. Recently ordained, he lacked that kind of background having been a scholar at St Sulpice, Paris, and St Edmund's, Ware. He soon moved down to Elgin. If the wrong name came to adoo Blundell (a genteel Englishman liable to misunderstand the Banffshire dialect) then perhaps 'dockin' is a mistake for bracken - or was docken another threat to agriculture? Local farmers may wish to comment.



From *The Hills of Home* by Amy Stewart Fraser (about Glengaim)

## Life at Larryvarry

Ann Lamb

Father built the house himself with the help of two masons who lived in the Braes. One of them was George McPherson his father-in-law. They had to dig and quarry all the stones, and in the 1890s there was nothing but wheelbarrows for carrying them. A joiner who was also the Braes undertaker did all the woodwork in the parlour. He put in beautiful panelling which came from Delnabo Lodge near Tomintoul, as it was being renovated. The parlour had a lovely fireplace, all green bricks and a nice fender and fire irons. The bedrooms were so cold in winter, but we had plenty of blankets because we got some sheep later. The wool was taken to a man at Tomnavoulin, where the distillery is now, and he spun it for us. The roof of the house was corrugated iron and it was the same on the barn and the byre. There was a hen house at one end and a large stack of peats, as well as fir for kindling. All the drinking water had to be carried from a well, but there were rain barrels at both ends of the house to collect water for washing. There was a very nice garden, and a porch for shelter against the wind.

### Men's Work

Every bit of land was well fenced, with good gates, as Father was very handy with a hammer. He carried all the nails and screws in his jacket pocket. There were about five acres of land, so we had corn, potatoes and turnips. He used to cut all the corn with a scythe, then it had to be gathered and put in sheaves, then stooked and later, when dry, put in a rick. All this was done by hand with a barrow. There was also a small threshing mill, turned by hand. The straw was fed to the two cows and the corn was taken to the mill to be turned into oatmeal, which had to last you for oatcakes and porridge all year. Our first cow came from Grandfather McPherson who also built his own house at Burnside, over by Lagual. He worked as a mason in the Braes, and my mother was one of seven McPherson daughters. The cow got scared one day and tried to jump a fence. I think it had to be killed. At one time we owned a horse called Jess - I have her brasses still hanging on my wall.

Father worked at various things and was at the tree planting at Tamvoan and the Buiterbach. He loved trees and planted some at Larryvarry, but they were far too near the house. Then he was a water bailiff over at Grantown-on-Spey. Later he joined in a contract to provide peat for Inchroary Lodge, and did that for twenty years. The men stayed in bothies all summer, cutting, stacking, drying and carrying it home. Father also earned money at the deer stalking and the grouse-shooting, and he was a loader for the people who rented the estate. Some of the guests were very poor shots. The estate people were real kind to him and he was always well dressed with a new suit every year. Mother made his leggings, and he always wore good boots as heather was hard on the leather.

He used to walk home some weekends over the hills, but sometimes he came on a pony. I hated when he was away and it meant lots for us to do, especially when the boys left home and there was only Tess and me at school. We had to carry water from the well, wash up, learn to knit and sew. Mother was never fond of outdoor farm work (she was so small and never had any extra weight) but she

liked her hens and the two ducks that we kept. I remember her walking about eighteen miles with a cow to a sale at Duff town when Father was away.

#### **Women's Work**

My mother was a real good cook and we were never hungry, as she baked and made butter and cheese, and also plenty of jam, especially rhubarb. Mother baked nearly every day, usually scones or oatcakes. About twice a week she used to make skirly for our tea. It was real good with fried tatties left over from dinnertime. We had dumplings often, but sometimes not much fruit in them. We ate all the old hens during the winter as they made good soup. Mother made all our clothes. Empty flour sacks were used for lining trousers - not a scrap of material was lost. We had rag rugs on the floors when they were still flagstones and wood, but later we got linoleum. I remember an old couple near us had only an earthen floor.

How Mother brought seven of us up with no regular money coming in I'll never know. She was never idle, and did a lot of work on the sewing machine she bought with money she got from the eggs sold at the Shop. Paraffin lamps and candles was all we had for light, so everything was done in the half dark. She was very very thrifty and never in her life spent a penny stupidly, and she taught us the same. She had a hard life, and I never remember her having a holiday, hardly ever any new clothes. When anyone was ill or having a baby Mother went to see them with a jar of blackcurrant jelly. She did what she could for the old couple nearby, and I was sent on Saturdays to clean the fireplace and windows.

#### **Purchases**

We had nice curtains from J. D. Williams, Haberdashers, Manchester, price one and elevenpence ha'penny. There was a willow pattern tea set bought with coupons from a baker who came from Tomintoul, Charlie Spalding. I was the youngest and mostly got my clothes second hand - I hated that. I remember Father bringing Tess and me wool combinations from Tomintoul. They were thick and had red trimming round the neck and shoulders. They made us itch, and we were so glad when summer came and we could take them off. It was hard to get clothes dry in winter - on wooden chairs round the fire, and we had to keep turning them - the same with our boots. There were no shoes in these days. Charlie Stuart made our boots, all hand sewn but so stiff my heels were always sore with them.

In those days no presents were sent or received as nobody had money to spare. We never got pocket money, and only saved the odd penny when there were visitors. The boys spent their pennies at the Tomintoul Market but I never got to go. I was once at the Pole Market and got rock from a man who knew my father. Mother loved nice soap, and when I was older and working in Edinburgh I used to buy her Pears Soap and a bottle of lavender water. She used to love to wear a veil to church on Sunday, and I got her one from Jenner's in Princes Street.

#### **Free Time**

Father was fond of reading, and I used to send him The Bulletin every week. Neither of them ever read love stories, and the evenings were spent talking or arguing about money. There was some gossip with the neighbours, too, and card-playing as odd men came in and played for matches - not money. Mother didn't like rough talk or swearing men, and was a very good Catholic. I never heard of her being at a dance or social. She saw that we went to Confession and Communion often, and she was very fond of going to Benediction at night when she would wear her best clothes.

I was never far from home as a child. I had a rag doll, and I played with the cat a lot. Tess and I also made rag dolls and played hoosies with bits of broken china. There was a pet hen who had a broken leg, and she used to lay her egg in a corner of the porch if she got in. Sometimes I had to go to the Shop for messages. It was also a post office and had a fine counter covered with fancy things (postcards, brooches and so on) and sold materials for the women to sew their children's clothes.

We mostly ran barefoot in summer. We never went away anywhere nobody did. I remember going picnics to the quarry where the stones were dug out, complete with a bottle of milk and a pancake and jam. That was the picnic, never sweets or biscuits. We used to go all the way to the Clash to get cranberries. You went away in the morning and got home about teatime. Sometimes we had maybe 71b each, and then they all had to be cleaned and weighed and made into jam - so good on a scone. In summer Father would bring home hares, rabbits and sometimes venison from Inchrory. These all made good stew. Mother salted butter for winter. When the cows were dry we had to take cocoa with water and ale for our porridge.

#### **Leaving Home**

We mostly left school at fourteen and of course we had to get work. My first job was as nursemaid for the Minister near Tomintoul. Two daughters were at home, and I had to bath them and look after them. I was also the housemaid, up at six o'clock as it was a large manse to look after. There was the cook and me, plus a man to cut firewood, look after the garden and the cow. The Minister was very cheery and didn't mind me being a Catholic.

I got to chapel in Tomintoul every second Sunday. I was paid £6 for six months' work, paid at the end so you didn't have much money in your purse. I got a day off every two weeks and cycled home. My first bike cost me 2/ 6, but before that I walked all the way about nine miles through the hills then back on Sunday. Mother used to walk to the hill of the Lettoch with me, and I had to get back before it was dark. Sometimes she would give me 2/- or so if her hens were laying well.



## Readers Write

*Unfortunately the photograph of the entirely clerical members of the Scalan Association, meeting at Blairs College in the early 1960s, was not very clear so it is hardly surprising that the only person able to name those present was there himself, and has a copy. A better reproduction shows Fr Sandy MacWilliam holding the lost Minute book. He is linked with his brother Lewis, who died recently as a very old working priest in Huntly, by the Rector of Blairs who was Later Bishop Thomson of Motherwell.*



-1.

I accept your invitation to identify the clergy in the photograph sent by Canon Danny Boyle of Kinross, since along with himself and Dan (now Mgr) Hart of St Helen's, Langside, I am 'still in the land of the living'! I also have a record of the parishes they were in at the time.

*Back row:* Dan Hart (Blairs), Joe Lamont (Keith), Charles McGregor (Kincorth, Aberdeen), Paddy Sullivan (St Mary's, Inverness), Tom McLaughlin (Aboyne), Aeneas Macrae (Ballater).

*Middle row:* Tony McLaughlin (Fochabers), Bob Mann (Peterhead),

Jim Robson (Cathedral, Aberdeen), Lewis McWilliam (Beaulieu), John Page (St Clement's, Dundee), Danny Boyle (Rosyth).

*Front row:* William McGoldrick (Our Holy Redeemer, Clydebank), Sandy MacWilliam (St Peter's, Aberdeen), Frank Thomson (Rector, Blairs), Francis Walsh (Bishop of Aberdeen), Michael Foylan (Cathedral, Dundee), George Phillips (Duff town).

Changed days - Keith now serves Huntly; Aboyne and Ballater are now served with Braemar; Dufftown is in a cluster with Tomintoul, Tombae, Chapelton and Aberlour; Fochabers with Buckie, Preshome and Tynet; Kincorth with Portlethen and Cove; Blairs with Banchory; Peterhead with Ellon; Beaulieu with Eskdale, Marydale and Fortrose; St Peter's with Sacred Heart, Torry - and the Cathedral in Aberdeen has only one priest!

I would dearly love to know where the Minute book is today. It seems unlikely that the Glenlivet priests of that period would have held it. Chapelton was served by Fr Sheridan of Tombae and Fr Caslin was in Tomintoul: neither had been ordained for the diocese and (having missed out on the Blairs experience) were never members of the Scalan Association. Hopefully there may be a reader who has knowledge of the situation in these days.

I took some photos of my own at this year's Scalan Mass at Chapelton, both indoors and out, where you can see the Bishop appreciating the piper. As always it was a moving experience and I felt very proud to be there on the altar.

Canon Charles McGregor, Banchory.

The reference to John Lamb's mother Ann Lamb and her descent from the Abbe Paul McPherson (*ScN* 12) re-minds me of a client who was married to a Paul McPherson in Inverurie. He was a plasterer and fireplace-maker there, and she told me that her husband



was of the Abbe's family. There are children and grandchildren - some of them still in Inverurie.

Malachi Mulligan, Aberdeen.

I was interested to read about the Glenlivet funeral custom of running from the graveside (*ScN* 12) because there was another one of running in the opposite direction. This was at Petty, near Nairn, where the Minister was glad to report it had died out by 1841: 'It was the custom of the people of Petty to run (not walk) at funerals. It appears it was given up owing to some of the bearers having tripped when carrying the body of an old reputed witch-woman to the churchyard. Her curse might fall upon them, it was feared.

'The origin of the custom is traceable to the weird superstition that the spirit of the last person interred had to keep watch and ward at the kirkyard gate until relieved by the subject of the next funeral! When two funerals took place on the one day, it was lucky to be first across the threshold - hence the haste at Petty funerals.'

Frances Bruce, Aberdeen.

We all know about covenanting donations to the Church, but a less well known scheme is Gift Aid. What is it and how does it work? It is a tax relief for single cash gifts made to any UK charity by a UK resident. Each gift must be at least £250 and there is no upper limit to the amount given in each tax year.

You make your payment to your chosen charity and give it a certificate so that it can claim tax back from the Inland Revenue. This certificate is form R190 (SD), available from our Secretary and Treasurer Mrs Jane McEwan, or from FICO (Scotland), Trinity Park House, South Trinity Road, Edinburgh EH5 3SD.

Detailed information about Gift Aid can be got from an Inland Revenue leaflet *Cift Aid: a guide for donors and charities* 1R1 13, at local Income Tax Offices. The Scalan Association is a registered charity. A few Gift Aid donations each year would help towards the goal of completing the interior of Scalan.

Ann Dean, Inch.

I called in at Scalan this summer after a friend and I went up Ben Rinnes. I've always wanted to come over the hills to the Annual Pilgrimage Mass from Dufftown by way of the Ladder, but so far there has always been a clash of dates.

If my Scalan article in *Scots Ma gazine* does some good, as you suggest, then I will be gratified. Once upon a time it was very difficult to get Catholic material into D. C. Thomson publications, and it was one of the areas I worked very hard to change when I was employed by the hierarchy in the Church media office. Much of the credit, in any case, should go to those who write for *Scalan News* and who have unearthed so much information over recent years for journalists like me to use.

Rennie McOwan, Stirling.

## The White Island

John Watts

*This is the title of a chapter in Iohn's recent book, A Cairn of Small Stones, which refers to the seminary island of 'Eilean Bem' on Loch Morar. Founded in 1712 by Bishop James Gordon, it closed after the failure of the 'Fifteen Rising and was re-opened by him at Scalan. The book's occasionally odd spelling represents an 18th century priest's record of Ian More McLellan's life story, including his time there as a student. A priest from Ireland, James Cahassy, had used the White Island as a base until his death in 1705.*

After Mr James died the house there was rarely lived in. But every Summer Bishop James called the priests of the West to meet with him in it, & they used to come even from the far islands, unless some years the storms did not allow it. Lately he had been looking for a way to open a School somewhere in the Highlands, to train boys to be priests, because there was no such school in all Scotland at that time, & he could see that the White Island might be the very place for it. It was safe from enemies, for no Minister ever came into our Country, & he thought that an island would be a good place for a Seminary - he used to say, 'That little stretch of water will keep away the thistles & cares of the world.'

Well, that year he visited our Country again after Easter, & he brought three boys with him. He stay'd with them on the White Island untill the Summer, and that was how the School started. Then, when he had to leave to continue his own work, he called in a Mr George from the Low Country to be the Master, & when he arrived he had three more boys with him.

Donald was Brinacory's second son, & it had been his mother's wish when she was alive that he might become a priest. After she died, his father kept her hope alive, for love of her. So when he heard that the Seminary was started, all most beside his own door, he put the thought to Donald that he should make a try at it. He was just eleven at the time, & his father knew that the other boys there were older, so he asked my parents if they would be willing to let me go with him. He said he himself would pay for my Schooling,

and it would be schooling such as no boy unless a Gentleman's son could ever think to get. My parents were willing, and that is how we found ourselves stepping into the boat that Autumn morning.

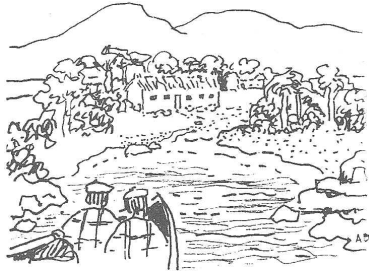
## The Island

I was not quite ten years old and I had never been so far down the loch before, nor ever set eyes on the White Island. There it lay before us, with a mistyness about its shores, & to me it seem'd like a great water creature lurking there, lying low with only its

back & shoulders & its nose above the surface, as if was peering up the loch.

I was wondering where we could land, and then we pulled round a low headland of rock & I saw a little sandy beach tucked away behind it the beach that - they say - gives the island its name. It was a perfect, shelter'd place and (as I found out later) hardly ever the day when the wind got into it.

We stepped out. Donald was gripping tightly to a blanket in which was tied whatever possessions we had brought with us. We looked about at our new home. Before us were two houses.



The further one was small and without a roof. The nearer one was bigger than my own house and byre together. It was built with alder & birch withies and sods, and it had a good row of stones along the bottom of the walls, built deeper on the side that faced the loch because the ground was low there. Near to them I saw where someone had made a start at building a wall of earth in the shape of a long square.

I glanced back & saw that the man who had brought us over was already half way back to the land, & a sudden loneliness came on me. I took a breath & hurried to catch up with Donald.

## The School

As we approached the house we could hear voices coming from inside. Donald pulled open the door and we stood, unsure, on the threshold.

... parvum, parvae, parvae, parvae, parvas, parvarum, parvis ...

There were six boys seated upon benches. I could see the backs of their heads, and past them to a man standing before them. He glanced up, & then continued marking time with a little pointed wand. Whether the boys heard us there I do not know, but none turned, nor moved, nor ceased from his chanting.

I looked about the room. To the left I could see an half dozen heather beds set against the end wall, & to the right a high fire place built with stones & clay, with a wattle wall behind it that reached to the roof. Beside it was a table with cups and dishes on it. They looked unlike any cups and dishes that I knew, for they were the first I had ever seen that were not made of wood.

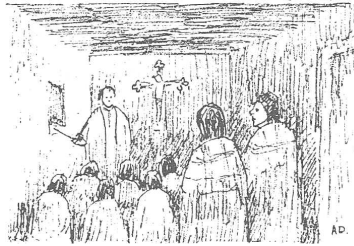
But it was what was on the wall at the Master's back that most caught my eye. Our own house had a Cross upon the wall, of course, made of rushes, like every other house in our Country, before which we prayed every morning and night. But this was a Cross made of wood, & carved with skill, with curls & scrolls on the arms of it, & part of it was coloured in gold

so that it shone in the light of the fir candles like a sunset. And fixed upon it was the figure of Christ, white & almost naked, with marks of blood upon His head & hands & feet, looking down at me with his head on one side and eyes of sorrow & pain. I thought it the most wonderful thing I had beheld in my life. I could not take my eyes off it. I do not know how long I was standing there as if in a dream, but when I came to myself again the boys were still at their chanting -

. . . parva, parva, parva, parvorum, parvis, parvis.

Then the Master twitched his hand, as a signal for them to stop, & looked towards the door. At this every boy's head turned, and

stared at Donald & myself where we stood in the doorway hesitating.



### Introductions

The Master smiled, and came forward & shook us by the hand gravely, as if we were men. Then he led us to the front & stood us there facing the boys, & speaking to them and at the same time patting our shoulders, & anyone could tell he was talking about us. I heard the words 'Donald' and 'Ian', but these were the only ones that I recognised. Then he set us on the second bench, & continued with the lesson.

I sat & looked about me, watching the scholars at their study. Sometimes the Master would speak, and a boy would stand & give an answer. Twice Donald whispered to me, but the second time the Master looked across at him & we both sat up the straighter. I looked down at my brogs - they were the first pair I had ever had on my feet. My father had made them for me to go there in, and did I not feel the man in them? I watched the fire candles burning shorter, and the sky in the window turning towards dusk, & the figure on the cross growing darker. At last the Master spoke, and laid aside his book, and the boys all stood. The lesson was ended, and I had not understood a single word of it.

### After School

Now the boys set about preparing a meal, & each one seemed to know his task. As they busied themselves two of them spoke to us in our own language, and a third smiled at us & said something in his language. Whenever the table was set ready we took our places beside it and stood waiting. All the time Donald & I were following whatever the others did. Now one boy said a Prayer, & at the end of it the rest all said 'Amen', & I said it just behind them - and this was the first word I had taken courage to utter since we left Glengarry's Morar. We sat down and began to eat, all save the Master: he stood & read to us from a book. No-one spoke through all the meal. Then he set aside the book and ate, while the rest of us sat silently until he was finished. Then, at his nod, we rose from our seats all as one, like birds rising from a tree.

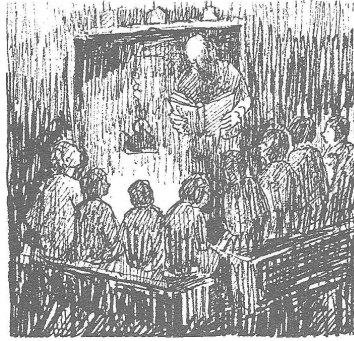
The same two boys who had spoken to us before now told us to go with them. They had gathered the dishes & cups, & we helped to carry them to the loch to wash. There was a flat rock placed by the water's edge for that purpose. The boys were asking us what were our families and how old were we, and were we there to train for priests or only to get schooling? The bigger of the two was Alan. He was sixteen & already taller than the Master. He was a Vist man, and his speech sounded strange to my ear. The other boy was Hugh. He too was a Clanranald, the son of Morar himself, and he was a year younger than Alan.

'I have often looked across to your farm, for I was raised over in Mewball,' he said, 'not like this man who has journeyed to us from afar out of the Western Sea!'

We picked up the cups & dishes, and it was then that I learned that a dish made of baked clay breaks if you drop it. I thought of the Master, & I believe if I had had a boat I would have row'd home there and then. Now all the boys had their tasks finished and were coming out for Recreation. They gathered round us, while Hugh & Alan were telling them about us. Then they shew'd us the earth wall that they were making to enclose a garden. They took us to the small house, which was to be the Chapell whenever the Master would get a roof tree & roof beams to finish it. They shew'd us the best fishing place, over the rocks facing Glengarry's Country, and it was there that a bell suddenly sounded out at our backs so that Donald & I almost leapt into the water, but the boys said this was just the signal that Recreation was ended.

### Nightfall

We returned to the house then, brought the benches over against the fire, for it was the time for reading. Hugh whispered that the book was the Life of St Francis Xavier. Mr George began to read.

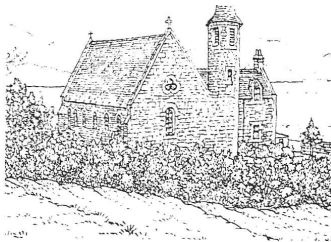


Twice he stopt and called one of the older boys forward to take a turn, which they did but haltingly. At last he laid it aside, & everyone gathered round the Crucifix for Night Prayers. Each gave a quick nod of his head towards it, & then knelt down and closed his eyes to begin. I knelt down beside them, dropping down on my right knee with my arms resting across my left one, the way I was brought up to. But when I opened one eye in the midst of the Prayers I saw that the rest were kneeling with their two knees upon the floor, & quickly I changed to that way whiles all their eyes were still shut. And that is how I have done it ever since - I think that I am about the only man in Glengarry's Mordr who kneels that way.

It was dark when we went to our rest. They had brought in more heathers for Donald & me, and I was given a place with him on one side of me & Hugh on the other. There were large stones set upon the heathers, close to our heads, to mark our spaces. I lay down. The fire was smother'd; the fir candles were put out. Soon I could hear the breathing of the other boys as one by one they fell asleep. I knew Donald was not sleeping by the way he turned now & then, & once he reached across and touched my shoulder. I guessed that his mind was full of thoughts, like my own. It was only the second night of my life that I had slept out of my own house. I lay in the blackness, & I began to think of that other night, forced to sleep out at the head of the loch, when the wolf (or *was* it the ghost dog?) came close. But at once I said to myself, 'You are quite safe here. Mr George is close by, in the small room behind the wattle fence. There have allways been priests here in this house. The whole island is a place of prayer & holiness. No evil thing woud dare to set foot upon its shore, nor fly above it.' And so I fell asleep.

*We leave young Ian to his dreams. The rest of his time on the seminary island gives still more insight into a daily routine which was to be repeated at Scalán. The author has done a fine job of making a story out of the history of the West Highlands. Like all good historical novelists he has researched the period with care, and the characters are often real people. Mr George Innes 'the Master' came from 'a notable family of priests' on Deeside. Hugh MacDonald became the Highland bishop who in 1745 tried to persuade Bonnie Prince Charlie to go home again, but blessed the Stuart standard at Glenfinnan. He was ordained at Scalán, having never studied abroad. This link between the two seminaries justifies a postscript. We are now in the year 1715, with Ian's education ended.*

It was just at this time that the Highlandmen had risen to fight against the English King & bring back our own King James. I well recall my mother's brother James and my father's brother Malcolm each taking his sword and targe down off the wall, & joining the rest on the road to Sherrieff Muir, with Brinacory leading them. I recall all so how after the batle there our enemies were hunting down the priests. Old Bishop Thomas (Nicolson) was captured & thrown into prison, & Bishop James & most of the priests were in hiding.



St Cumin's Morar (1889) by Peter Anson

#### A New Seminary

My father said it was certain that the Seminary woud be closed allso, but M r George stay'd there with the boys all thorow the Winter and into the next year. He judged that they were in the safest place, sett between the snow upon the mountains to the East & the storms upon the sea to the West. But as soon as the snow melted & the Spring storms were past he knew it was too dangerous to stay. And so, as soon as they had celebrated the Efeast of Easter he closed the school & sent the boys home. I believe Hugh and a couple of the others went to live on Trigh farm, and Mr George kept in touch with them & with the rest, in the hope that they might

yet start again.

Well, a full year went by, untill he returned. And then it was not to bring them back to the White Island - he said that the place was too dangerous now, being so close to the sea. But there was a house, far away in the East beyond our mountains, in a vallie high among hills in the Country of the Gordons, where they woud be protected from enemies, and it was there that he meant to start the School again.

He asked my father if I might go with them on the first journey. We were twelve days journeying, upon hill sides, thorow glens, & beside lochs great & small. At last we enter'd a wide, flat countrey, with great walls of heathery hills to the East & South, and came to a halt at the house of Scalan farm. It was made out of turves, & stood upon a narrow shelf of ground. Beside it was a little river flowing North, not like the mountain streams I knew for it seemed to run along the top of a flat meadow like a silver ribbon laid there.

## From the Braes to the Braes

James Cameron Stuart

The Braes of Glenlivet in Banffshire are somewhat removed from the Braes outside the town of Falkirk in Stirling shire, . but it was to the Braes area of Falkirk that my grandfather James Stuart of Achavaich (Easterton) moved with my grandmother Sophia McHardy of the Scalan in the late 1800s. The village of Laurieston, where my father was born, is at 'the fit 0' the Braes' and also, strangely enough, about three miles from a hamlet near Linlithgow called Inveravon. A further web of associations between the two Braes areas occurred to me when reading a booklet celebrating the foundation in 1843 of St Francis Xavier's Church in Falkirk. Its author Ian Scott was at St Francis' School with me.

My father's cousin Charles McHardy also lived in Falkirk, and as a boy I loved his tales of trips to Braemar, Inverey and the Braes of Glenlivet. His father was James McHardy of the Scalan, 50phia's brother. The two Jameses, Stuart and McHardy, moved from the Braes to the Braes about the same time. There is also a family of Sims in Falkirk who originate from the Tomintoul area, and a Jessie McHardy from Tomintoul who was for many years housekeeper to a Falkirk priest Fr Crampton. He is now retired, and two years ago I attended the Requiem Mass he celebrated at her funeral.

### Early Priests at Falkirk

It transpires from the history of St Francis Xavier's that the founder was a 26-year-old priest from Glenlivet called Paul MacLachlan who served the Falkirk mission until 1856. Brass plates commemorating the MacLachlan family of Bellochnockan, near Clashnoir, can be seen under Stations of the Cross in the Braes church at Chapeltown. His successor also came from upper Banffshire: Fr John MacDonald was born at Auchindoun in 1813 and served at Falkirk from 1857 to 1864. Two years later, after a move into the slums of Edinburgh's Canongate, John MacDonald died of typhoid fever. He was followed at Falkirk by Robert Clapperton who had been born in Fochabers in 1831. After leaving St Francis Xavier's in 1870 Fr Clapperton spent the rest of his life in Dundee, and became one of the city's most eminent clergymen. Three priests and two nuns came from this Fochabers family.

So much for Falkirk parish priests from north-east Scotland. A curate, Fr Robert Cameron, was sent to the Falkirk mission in. 1847 to help with the growing number of Irish families who formed one congregation with Highland Catholics moving south to find work. This young man went from the farm of Eskmore, below the Bochel, to the Benedictine monastery of Ratisbon or Regensburg (now twinned with Aberdeen) before returning to Blairs where he was ordained. Sadly this new priest, who had returned from Bavaria due to ill health, died of fever within a year of his arrival.

### Later Braes Links

The next assistant priest does not appear in the St Francis records until 1885-6, but again there is a Glenlivet connection. Although he was a Turriff man, Fr Colin Mackenzie's portrait hangs in the sacristy at Chapeltown as the second founder of the Braes chapel, when Abbe McPherson's building had to be replaced in 1897.

The year of my father's birth in Falkirk, 1897, saw the Rev. John Stuart appointed as curate to St Francis Xavier's. Christine Johnson's book on the careers of Scottish clergy has him born Glenlivet in 1870. There are a number of Stuart families in the 1891 census (besides my own forebears at East Achavaich). The likeliest home for this priest seems to be Mill of Achnacraw, where there were six children in residence, including a daughter of 23 and a son of 20. John, who was 21 and presumably the oldest son, was not at home when the census officer called, but a thousand miles away as a . student of the Scots College Rome.

My grandfather was a police sergeant in Falkirk when Fr Stuart arrived (after a brief period at Lennoxton) and would have known his family well. This young priest also experienced ill health at St Francis', becoming too ill for the priestly ministry after Falkirk. But

he recovered after seven years, and later went from his next post at Haddington to serve as a chaplain in Flanders.

### **Beyond Falkirk**

Other connections between the Braes of Glenlivet and this part of Central Scotland became evident to me on retirement from the prison service in 1993, when I bought a house at Inveravon - the hamlet, not the Banffshire parish. One morning at Mass in St Michael's Linlithgow I noticed a plaque on the wall commemorating Fr Donald Easson, a former parish priest there (1889-97) who conducted a fundraising campaign in Scotland on being put in charge of the Royal Scots College Valladolid, but died of diphtheria four months after arriving at the house where he had spent his own student days. A parish priest at 25 (the pride and joy, no doubt, of his mother and father in Tomintoul), ten years later Donald Easson was in a Spanish grave. The parents are buried in the St Michael's churchyard and his name is carved with theirs on the tombstone.

Secondly I have discovered, since retiring and looking around with history in mind, the Rev. William Grant, born 1821 in the Braes of Glenlivet. He was at Blairs for two years before going out to Valladolid, where he studied for eight years before being ordained in 1846. Back in Scotland he spent a year with the railway workers near Fushiebridge, which the *Ordnance Gazetteer* places '1 mile S by E of Gorebridge on the Waverley route: of the North British'. After two years in Dumfries William Grant came to Stirling aged 28 in January 1849, when worship was conducted in settings as basic as a navvies' barracks, and died of cholera on 6th February. Perhaps he was a Grant of the Bochel. Fr Donald Grant, the Glenlivet Carmelite based at the Aberdeen University chaplaincy, will surely know from his family history research.

### **Neglect of History**

Although their tasks were arduous, their labours excessive, and their time on the mission sometimes tragically short, I am sure these Banffshire priests managed to meet and talk about their 'Granny's Hielan' Hame' in a part of the Highlands which was still well populated in the late 19th century. That the migrant Highlanders and immigrant Irish were excellently served by their priests is history, bordering on legend; that most of today's Scottish Catholics know nothing about them speaks volumes on the neglect of Scottish Catholic history even in Catholic schools!

Maybe John Watts' recent booklet on Scaln for schools will begin to alter that. Perhaps the fact that Bishop Conti of Aberdeen (with Scaln in his diocese) chairs the Scottish Catholic Heritage Commission will influence his fellow bishops and, through them, the teachers. The fact that Scotland's Cardinal has recently said Mass in the Braes of Glenlivet must surely do something to touch the imaginations of busy people with 'no time for history'. More enlightened attitudes towards traditional culture, music, language and folklore are spreading throughout Scottish society. We in the Scaln Association have something remarkable to offer our fellow citizens, not least those for whom Christian faith has been literally handed 'down' from the Braes.

### **Requiescant in Pace**

We have lost four valued members in the last few months, two of them Catholic priests. Fr Tom Leverage was an exception to the rule, having developed an interest in Scaln without being a 'Blairentian'. His work was in the Diocese of Galloway, and it ended near his Kilmamock beginnings at St Paul's in the village of Hurlford. Fr Gerry Mackle did go to Blairs, from Blantyre, and (although not in the photograph sent in and explained by Canons Boyle and McGregor) was a regular attendee of recent AGMs in the Braes Hall. St Luke's Motherwell was his last charge, and at the Requiem Cardinal Winning paid tribute to this scholarly character'.

The word applies equally to Dr A. T. Macqueen, whose 1992 contribution to this newsletter gave the flavour of his personality. It ended on a note of affection for his departed wife, who joined him as a scientist at Dundee University after their youngest child was born. The large family grew into a small religious community at Pitkerro, near Broughty Ferry. Dr Macqueen was found dead in his chair when friends arrived for Compline.

Finally Sister Pauline Sheridan died in November. When a brain tumour was diagnosed in Aberdeen she and her visiting Sisters of Mercy seemed almost joyful. She spoke about prayer for a patient death or a miracle. Later when down from Elgin for treatment, and staying in Nazareth House, she recovered the power to peel an apple. In October she received the Papal Cross 'Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice' at Greyfriars Convent, her last public appearance, with people there at Mass from 'her' school next door. Sister Pauline is beautifully caught holding a small St Sylvester's pupil in the 1997 Aberdeen Diocesan Calendar.

### **Two Addresses**

Some new members seem to have been recruited "without being told about the £5 annual subscription. Payments to 'The Scaln Association' may be sent to *Mrs Jane McEwan, Ogilvie Cottage, Gallowhill, Glenlivet, Ballindalloch AB3 9DL*. Editorial correspondence to *Alasdair Roberts, Ogilvie Centre, 16 Huntly Street, Aberdeen AB10 1SH*.

