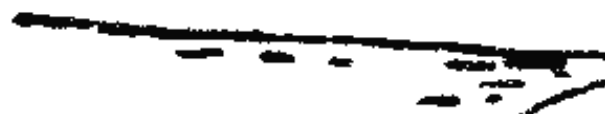
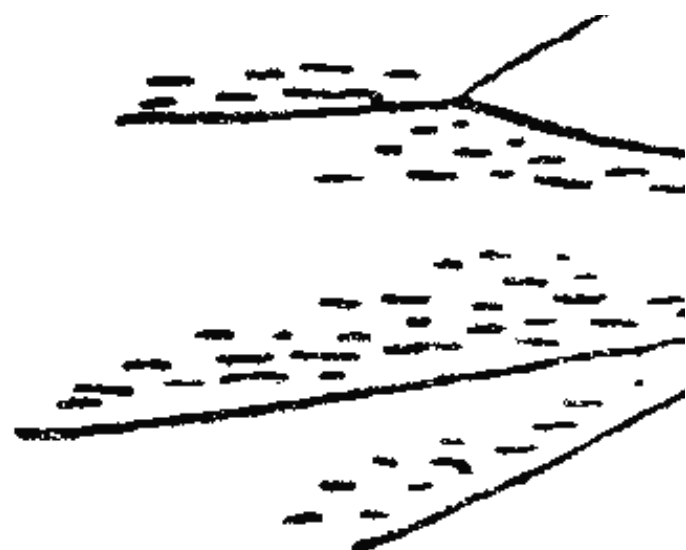




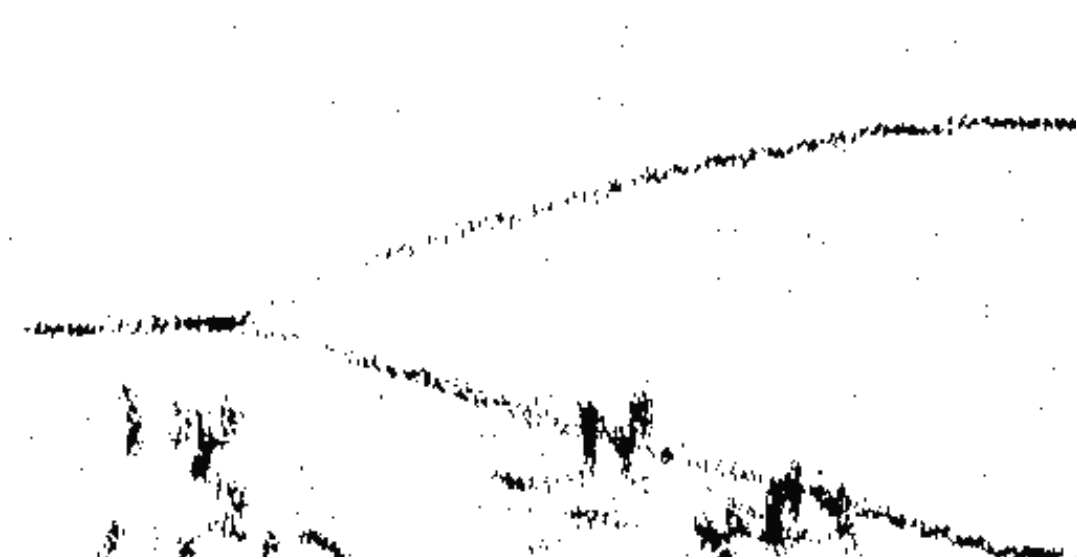
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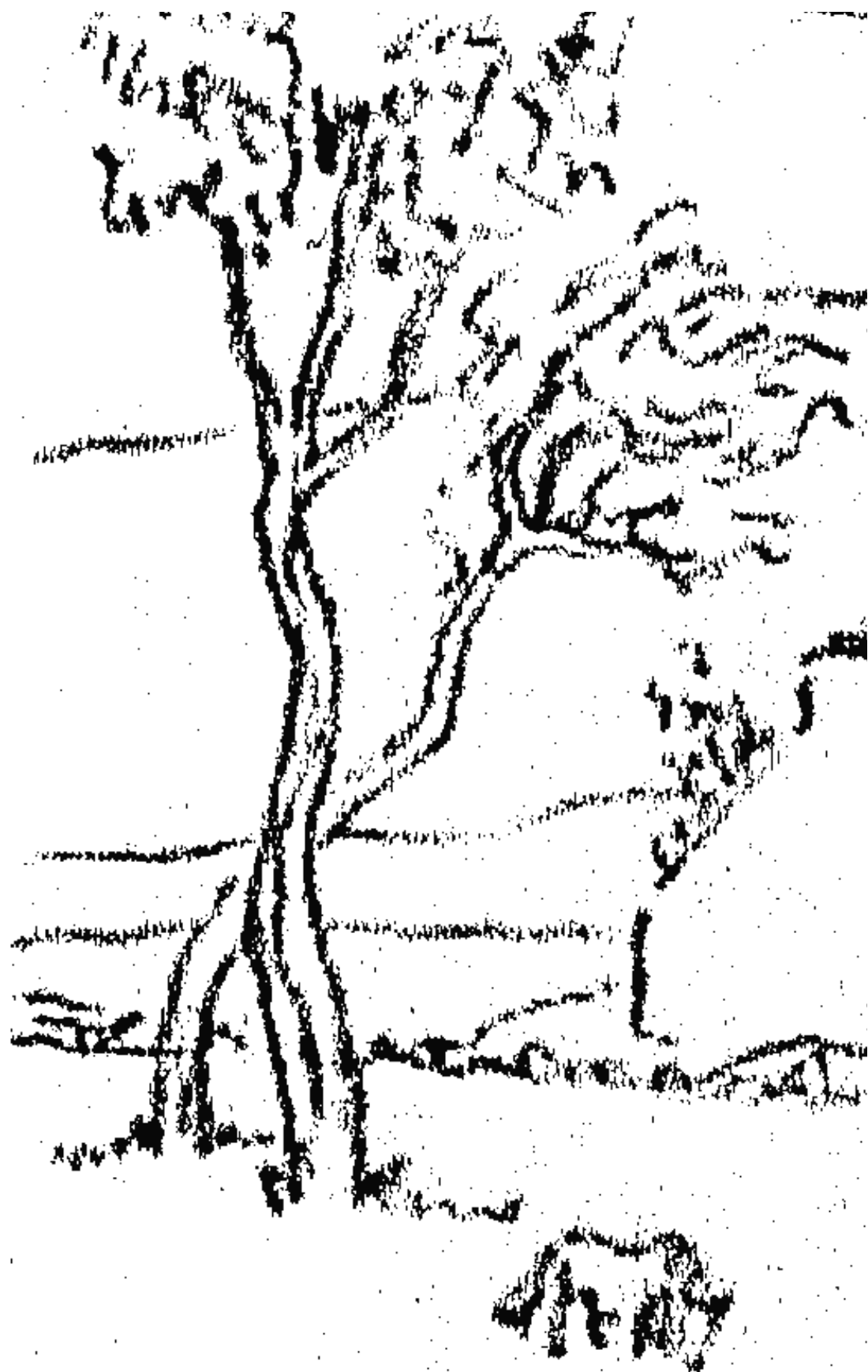


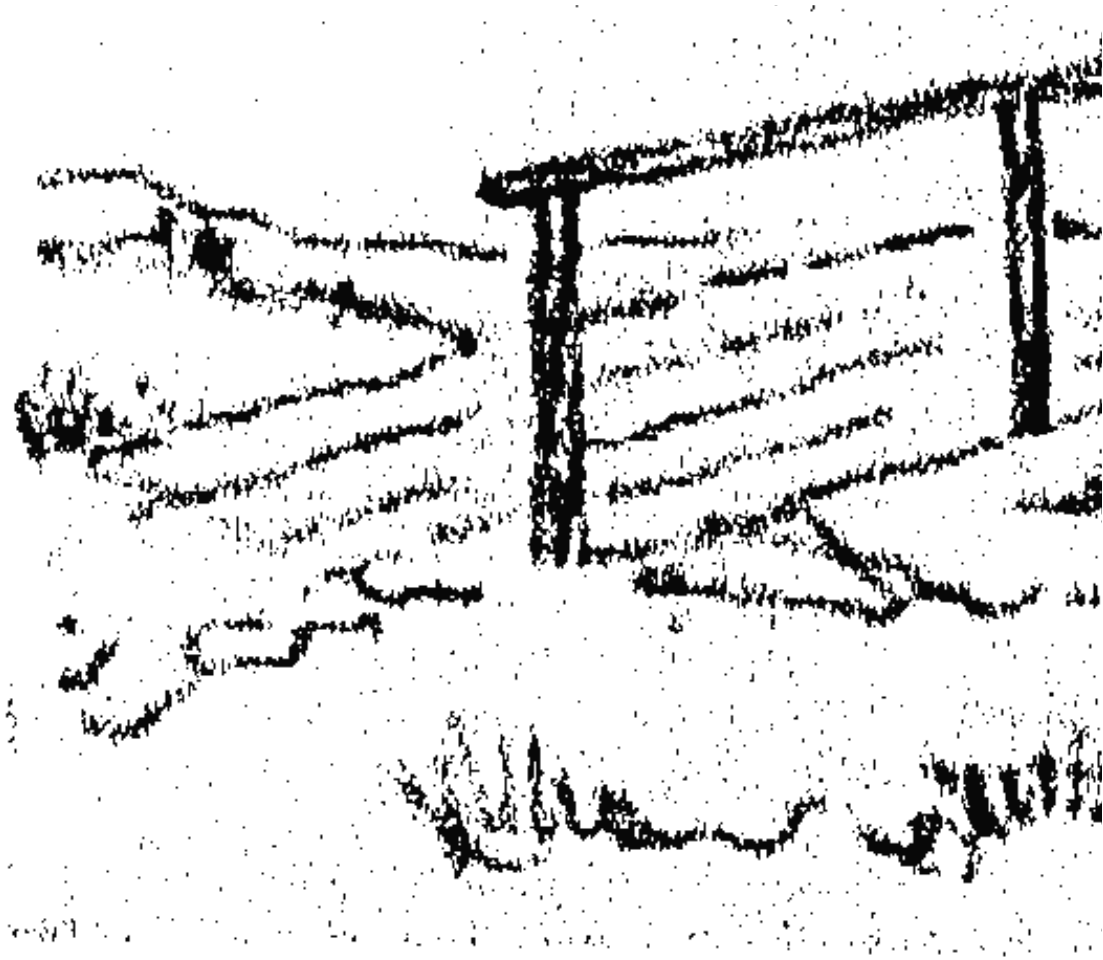


'The time by the g  
Catholic religion  
then, when poste

curiosity, by wha  
were preserved in  
error, Scalan and  
with veneration,  
ing them will be  
Geddes, Rector of







**The AGM of the Association** will be held on Tuesday 7 June. Our Secretary-Treasurer Jane McEwan was concerned that members should have three weeks' notice, such is the importance of this particular meeting. By the grace of God Printsmith in Fort William can do the collating, folding and stapling in a working day (Friday) allowing the children of Lady Lovat School in Morar to package and put stamps on before the post van leaves Mallaig at 3.30 p.m. on Monday. Maybe it will be a day under three weeks for most UK members, but if even one Scalán News drops through a letter box on Tuesday 17 May it will be a victory of some sort.

**Fr Briody's report** of last year's AGM draws attention to the fact that Sandy Matheson's cottage is now vacant. Crown Estates have offered to sell it to the Association along with seven acres including all farm buildings and two water-wheels. This comes just at the point where the

restoration carried out by George Beverly & Sons has reached a successful conclusion with all bills paid. Members are strongly encouraged to attend this year if at all possible. The arrangements are as usual, beginning with Mass at noon. A catered lunch costing £7 will then precede the formal meeting in the Braes Hall, when the Treasurer's Report will be available for inspection.

**The Annual Scalan Mass** takes place on Sunday 3 July at 4 p.m. A second enclosure draws attention to an innovative family history proposal by Maureen Gibb of Ottawa, whose article about her own return to the Braes in search of roots appeared in the last issue. There will be a bagpiping editor at the turn of the track down to Scalan, beside a receptacle for pilgrims with Glenlivet connections to return information about their parents and ancestors before. The internet is opening this old district up to the world; family history attracts the nicest kind of visitors – do all you can to encourage Maureen, who also has a letter under Readers Write.

**The picture facing** came by e-mail, something that Ann Dean our long-term illustrator does not use – a friend helped – such was the urgency of getting Scalan News out on time. That explains why it is slightly grey. It accompanies 'From Thatch to Slated Chapels' on p. 10 and supports the trouble Ann herself has gone to in showing that the attractive brown post-card of a slated Scalan comes from a painting by James Keenan of Aberdeen. He came to the Braes around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, long after slates had replaced thatch.

**The editor's resignation** was conveyed to the Committee after the last issue and is discussed on p. 2. Jane McEwan's address, necessary for the AGM, can be found at the foot of p. 21.

## The End of an Era

Alasdair Roberts

As the word has got round that this is to be the last Scalan News produced by me, various messages have been accompanied by the kind thought that I will be able to rest after fifteen years producing this little heritage magazine. In fact it is the pressure of other work which has prompted the decision. I won't bore you with the details, but more of the same in solidier forms would just about cover it. Producing two issues of Scalan News each year takes up about five weeks, and there is so much else to do.

Perhaps the return to a simpler newsletter will help to provide a sharper focus on Scalan. I will

certainly be continuing to pay my annual fiver (or tenner if the AGM so decides) and also my visits in summer. But I make no apology for the wide heritage scope which Scalan News has come to represent. The following item covers that in relation to the intentions of Fathers MacWilliam and McRoberts, with Peter Anson's views also on record.

Just after resigning, but with the promise of one more issue to come, I wrote to Archbishop Conti as convenor of the Scottish Catholic Heritage Commission to suggest that a successor heritage magazine might be devised with the agreement of the Scalan Association. This was discussed last month at the only meeting held since. The Archbishop was not able to be present, but something may yet come out of this body which meets twice a year. It is at least 'on the agenda'.

Part of the proposal was that a magazine of wide, non-specialist appeal might be produced in collaboration with the Scottish Catholic Historical Association. I wrote to the convenor of the SCHA Council Dr Raymond McCluskey, who has regularly organised conferences to widen the Association's appeal beyond the disciplines of academic history. As bad luck would have it, the suggestion of a new popular magazine reached him at a time when the SCHA had run into difficulties with publishing *The Innes Review*, its journal since 1950. There has been no journal since autumn 2003. Better times seem to be at hand, however, as the next issue is due this summer. It will include a long article, more generously illustrated than for many a long year, which should appeal to members of this little magazine. Co-authored by Br. Paschal Downs of Pluscarden and myself, it is entitled 'Dom Odo Blundell OSB (1868-1943): a different kind of historian'.

If the SCHA Council sees value in Blundell's active, story-telling approach it is possible that Catholic heritage will come be embraced along with popular history. Andrew Nicoll of the Scottish Catholic Archives is also thinking about ways to publicise the materials held there, so I will end this with something he sent in a while ago:

HC 2/4 Humorous Scraps, by Fr Butti

*Mgr Peter Louis Butti (1847-1832) was in charge of the Blairs College Library.*



## VIII 'The Secret for Jaundice'

'I have never discovered this to any body. I must however discover it to you. It is excellent and never fails if thee be not too far gone. It is then the following: Take a handful of Sheep's fresh dung, and steep it in a good half mutchken of ale or beer all night. The next morning pass it through a cloth; then warm the ale or beer and give it to the patient to drink. Do the same the day after, and the third day, and it will infallibly cure the patient. If the drink be somewhat too bitter, cast a little sugar in it.' Robert Gordon, priest at the date in Edinburgh 25 June 1736 to George Gordon, Scalan.



Postscript: I would add a prescription to this, equally infallible. Take a man in robust health TO GIVE HIM THE JAUNDICE – make him drink the above and then TELL HIM WHAT IT WAS: one application will suffice. William Clapperton 1888.

## Early Days in the Scalan Association (continued)

Revisiting 'Early Days in the Scalan Association' in ScN 17, your editor was surprised to discover that it finished with 'to be continued'. It never was, till now. That article resulted from time spent going through material held in the Scottish Catholic Archives, including 135 tear-off slips indicating a wish to join in 1946. When Canon Sandy MacWilliam was captured on video in his retirement at Aboyne, he said with a smile of wonderment that the seminary building (plus land) had been bought for 'just £50'. Money taken in at the start amounted to £746 15s 5d, so there was plenty left for mending cracks in the sagging walls, concrete buttresses to hold them up, and a fresh coat of harling.

That 1998 article is worth everyone's attention at this point in our affairs. There is not much more to be said by way of continuation, but something all the same. It took a while to settle on a constitution for the Scalan Association: various drafts held at SCA show what the founding fathers had in mind. The idea of spending the Association's funds to support foreign seminary education probably is unconstitutional, as claimed at last year's AGM. The emphasis during the early days of the Scalan Association was all on restoring the building as a pilgrimage centre. Of course the constitution could be changed at an AGM if a sufficient number of members wanted to do so, with appropriate notice.

But here's another thing. Your editor has long been aware that an early draft of the constitution in the handwriting of David McRoberts proposed a second aim: 'To promote and foster, as far as the resources of the Association permit, a knowledge and an interest in the College of Scalan and also the other monuments associated with Scottish Catholic life during the penal era.' This did not appear in the constitution which was finally typed up in February 1960 but it is, in more senses than one, of historical interest. Peter Anson, who helped Fr MacWilliam with an introductory leaflet, certainly thought so. He wrote from Harbourhead, Macduff, on 7 May 1746:

'I am most interested in the possibility of the Scalan Association developing into a Catholic Ancient Monuments Society. With a view to safeguarding the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century buildings you mention from destruction or neglect by the ecclesiastical authorities, Ian Lindsay has already added all of them to the list he is drawing up for the Scottish Department of Health. Thus they will be scheduled as "Minor National Monuments". He mentioned Scalan and Tynet in particular last time I was staying with him. There is something rather amusing in an

Episcopalian architect taking such an interest in Catholic monuments with little or no architectural features.'

No doubt the Scalan Association was right to draw back from further commitment to Tynet, with a 'list' of other near-ruins to follow. However it may well be thought that the aim of fostering knowledge of Scalan (beyond restoration) along with other places more interesting than 'monuments' has been achieved through the pages of Scalan News - and, as everyone involved now agrees, at no cost to Association funds but rather the reverse. That would have given Canon Sandy some-thing else to smile about, and maybe even laughter in Paradise!

## And Most of All – Yourselfes!

This was how the moustachioed host of an old-time music hall show on TV used to end his preliminary introduction of the acts. Here the words acknowledge how much the Scalan restoration project owes to all your subscriptions over the years. But it also seemed a good idea to provide feedback on 'yourselfes', the members, as this editor takes his final bow.

When Scalan News started fifteen years ago there were about 180 members of the Scalan Association, the majority of them priests who had come to know about the seminary at Blairs. Until the college closed the AGM was always held there on the same day as the Blairs Meeting of old boys. This May issue goes out to 630 addresses. Every envelope has a return-to-sender address, and sometimes as many as half a dozen come back because people have moved, or sometimes died. RIP. Recently we have slipped down from a peak of 650-plus addresses.

It would be hard to say how many members we have, because 85 households have two names on the address – usually husband and wife. No doubt others pay two subscriptions although only one name appears on the label. Not every-one who receives the magazine pays annually, but that's our fault for not sending out reminder slips. Members remember from time to time, and compensate by sending well over £5 per annum. People care about Scalan.

ScN 9 carried an article on where people came from on the evidence of the surviving Visitors Book. It may interest readers to know that almost as many members live in the north-eastern area which was Grampian Region as in 'the south' beyond Stonehaven. Only 41 homes in the Highlands receive Scalan News, despite the editor's blatant use of material relevant to his retirement home in Morar. There are 85 subscribers in England, but only three each in Ireland and Wales. Nine copies are sent at great expense to Europe (France, Italy, Spain, Malta) and the same number to North America – one of them a lady Anglican priest in the Yukon. Four go to Oz. Not a lot, when summarised like that, but exciting for the children of Lady Lovat School who stick the labels on.

Couples have been mentioned and indeed counted. Clergy, from cardinals to reverend fathers, subscribe in similar numbers. There is a small institutions group covering schools, monasteries and convents. This leaves the simplest question of all, and the answer is that women outnumber

men by 268 to 204 - but not if clergymen are weighed in the balance. Our membership includes a baron and two knights of the realm, plus the Slains Pursuivant of Arms. Some people live in charming places: Pope's Grove in Twickenham, Lawford Manningtree, Apple Hall Lane, Trout Row Cottage – England is exotic to the northern Scot! I expect the future lies with e-mail and the internet, but it's been nice to know your names and addresses.

## Fetternear Connections

*The following is taken from an account compiled by Ann Dean.*

Bishop George Hay was buried at St Ninian's from the nearby seminary of Aquhorties in 1811. The year 1848 saw momentous changes when James Michael Leslie 25<sup>th</sup> of Balquhain built a new St Ninian's next to the chancel of the old church. On the east wall of his creation are the initials IMI for Jesus, Mary and Joseph under the IHS (Jesus) monogram. This St Ninian's was intended for public worship, but the 25<sup>th</sup> Baron died before the building work was complete and his successor, Col. Charles Stephen Leslie, had quite different ideas. Col. Leslie strongly disliked the public going through his estate to visit the graveyard. He considered closing it, but was advised that there were public rights involved. No local person could be excluded, neither could it be shut up unless on health grounds.

However he took care to close the new church before a public service could be held there. At the opposite end of the estate, easily accessible from the Burnhervie Road, he built St John's Church with its own graveyard. Designed by the architect George Goldie (ScN 8) and begun in 1859, the church was opened ten years later.

In 1878 Col. Leslie began to enlarge St Ninian's into an impressive family mausoleum, the extension incorporating the Leslie vault in the medieval church. He is buried there with his ancestors.



St Ninian's Church and a small area of ground on the north side were purchased in 1941 by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Aberdeen, with the graveyard continuing as public burying ground. In 1955 the 'mausoleum' extension was dismantled by a work party of Aberdeen

Catholics led by Father Patrick Grady in order that the granite might be used for a new church at Kincorth. In the interests of safety the upper walls of the church which was completed by Col. Charles Leslie were demolished in the last years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by the owners of Fetternear.

*From 'The Leslies of Balquhain and the burial of Bishop Hay' by the editor and artist of this magazine: 'Charles S. Leslie, who died at Fetternear in 1916, called two lawyers to his bedside near the end, so that he could "follow Our Lord and die between two thieves."'*

*From a 2000 AR **Leopard** piece on 'Young Gentlemen in the Castlegate'. Mainly about sons of John MacDonald of Borrodale who boarded with Priest Gordon, it ends with a letter from a Leslie wife and mother: 'John was expected for his 14<sup>th</sup> birthday at the family home of Fetternear, and she wrote: "I do not doubt that he will behave well in the presence of ladies and show an improvement in those manners in which I often find him totally deficient. I would be so happy if you were to write me now a few words to say how my son behaves and how he is improving. He always writes a few words by carrier, but in the usual illegible hand." In a separate letter she passed on the Count's approval of "a particular favour to be allowed to learn at his leisure hours the lessons of exercise with the broadsword. He had asked a rifle gun and was of course refused."' The disappointing young John Leslie embarked on a military career but died in his twenties.*

## Readers Write

While trying to tidy up the books and magazines which seem to multiply wherever I lay them down, I came across an old copy of Leopard dated March 1992. I wondered why this one had been kept, then found the article 'Caravan Quest' about Peter Anson discovering Scalan. I enjoyed reading it all over again before I realised it was written by you. I am not the only one to keep piles of old magazines. The first time I went to meet Father John Copland at his home in Keith he showed me his old copies of the Banffshire Journal and Northern Scot Christmas numbers. I did not borrow any but took down the dates of those with articles by Jim Grant the Post at Tomnavoulin so as to look them up in the archives at Elgin Library. I am sorry to see in The Toulter and in Thistledown that you are to retire from writing the Scalan News.

Hetty Milne, New Elgin.

It has always been a matter of surprise to me that little, if any, mention has been made of the fact that the farming people





of Scalan themselves produced a bishop. Bishop John Matheson's father, also John, was one of the large family of Mathesons born on the Scalan croft. My maternal grandmother was a sister, as was Sandy's mother Lillie, and therefore the Bishop's aunt. I have personal memory of eight, and I believe there were sixteen or seventeen in the family. This Bishop of Aberdeen was not born at Scalan but Tomintoul.

I remember my father saying he gave a splendid oration at the consecration of Edward Douglas as first Bishop of Motherwell in 1948. Bishop Matheson's health was precarious and he died within three years. His grave can be seen in the churchyard of St Michael's Tomintoul. I enclose a photo from among the many given to me by Sandy. The priest ahead of him, outside of the Cathedral in Huntly Street, is Father Sandy MacWilliam. He had just moved to St Peter's after three years at Chapelton.

John S. Gallacher, Motherwell.

*Apparently the future bishop, who was priest at Dufftown, made it a condition that Father Sandy should go with him as Secretary. This contributed to delays in setting up the Scalan Association.*

The success of the 'Trees Project' depends on your completion of as much as is possible of the blank ancestor tree you find [enclosed](#) with this issue. Everywhere there are researchers going over the same avenues of research for their Glenlivet roots. It would be so rewarding for them and for future generations to have local family trees available both on line and locally.

The history of the Scalan, its mission of training the boys for the priesthood, and its place in the community are well recorded in *Scalan, The Forbidden College* by John Watts. Our ancestors would be very proud to see how well they are respected and their history preserved. Let us try to continue in this spirit and hand down an accessible archive recording our forebears as a fitting tribute to them and a legacy for our descendants. I know this will be a

success and I thank you all once more.

[enclosed](#) = to download the chart and letter

Maureen Gibb gibb@magma.ca

My husband John who died last year was interested in all things 'Highland', and on a number of occasions led groups both large and small to visit Scalan – a special, peaceful place to Catholics and non-Catholics alike. I vividly remember the nuns at Queen's Cross talking about the annual pilgrimage to Scalan when I taught at the Convent 1968-72 until the unhappy demise of a wonderful school. I enjoyed my days there both as a student and a teacher, and still retain friendships with former colleagues. John and I always welcomed the arrival of Scalan News. The article on Ardearg and Father Farquharson brought back memories, as we often walked down to the site on our holidays at Braemar.

Gillian Smith, Cults.

*Dr John Smith was the enthusiast at the heart of Aberdeen University's Centre for Scottish Studies. RIP.*

I enclose the Banffshire Advertiser's account of the death of Canon William Clapperton in 1905. I am interested in the Clapperton family. Recently I was browsing in an antiquarian bookshop and came across one who had been caught up in the 'Fortyfive. He was a ploughboy from Portsoy, in his early teens, who was put on trial in Carlisle. He escaped death on account of his youth but was sentenced to be transported to the Americas.

Malachi Mulligan, Aberdeen.

*Dean Clapperton wrote an account of missionary priests which is in the Scottish Catholic Archives. He was the first to take charge of St Peter's Buckie, moving from Preshome. As the press item makes clear, his brothers James and Robert were also canons at Fochabers and St Andrews. The obituarist did not pick up what Br. Paschal told readers in the last issue – that two sisters were Ursulines of St Margaret's Convent in Edinburgh, and Sister Margaret Teresa*



*was the first Scottish nun to enter a convent on home soil since the Reformation.*

Please find enclosed a cheque to pay for my neglected subscriptions of the past for Scalan News which we in the community enjoy very much. Mea Culpa! Mea Culpa! Keep up the good work. We're having Peter Anson's *Underground Catholicism* read in the refectory at present. Peter ended his life here and was buried in our cemetery.

Br. Patrick OCSO, Nunraw.

Regarding Neil Cameron's request from Melbourne (last issue) about Thomas Marr who was married by Dean Stopani, he was not the brother of Fr Marr of Tynet but his father. One of the other brothers was a Thomas, and their grand-father was yet another Thomas Marr who was an Artificial Flower Maker and Modeller – now that's pretty interesting! Christine Johnson has a small mistake in her *Secular Clergy* book in saying that Fr Marr died at Dufftown. He did end his working life there but died at Alloa.

Ian Matheson, Roybridge.

*The information was passed on, as always. Another electronic inquiry came from Daniel Shalloe in Vienna concerning relations of Bishop Murdoch in the Fochabers area. It was passed on to Isobel MacPherson in Fochabers and to Donna Alden-Bugden in Winnipeg whose 'Three Bishops' article in ScN 27 had reached Vienna via the internet.*

From Thatch to Slated Chapels

*Two documents from papers which Canon Sandy passed on in Aberdeen show thatch and slates in the same era. The first is a letter of 3 September 1850 from the Rev. Andrew Fleming, based at Blairs, to Bishop James Kyle at Preshome. The chapel was that of Glengairn, across the Dee from Balmoral, but the same method applied to Scaln at that time. Slates came later.*

I have now got the roof entirely re-thatched with heather, and made as far as practicable both wind and watertight. The quantity of materials has been considerable (owing to the old thatch being so entirely removed as to leave the turf covering the couples and cabers bare and smooth) namely 52 thraves of heather, besides about 300 divots for the finishing of the rigging. A thrave is 24 sheaves, so you may calculate the quantity required. The expense of pulling the material was ninepence per thrave, and then I had to pay the heatherer for his work, which occupied about four weeks. I got the congregation, at least a portion of them who are possessed of horse, to drive the heather home and by that means saved two or three pounds. I got besides from them in money the sum of thirty shillings in aid of these repairs, and with your Lordship's five pounds and a good number of kind words, drams and dinners have got everything settled for connected with these repairs. According to the most competent judges the work is sufficient to keep out the weather for the next 25 or 30 years.'



*The second letter concerns Tombea (so spelled) twenty-two years earlier, when the Rev. James John Gordon could hardly persuade the people of Lower Glenlivet to make their horses available. They were needed for the whisky industry. His letter dated 8 February 1828 was addressed to the newly-appointed Bishop Kyle, then still a priest in Glasgow.*

To fulfil your wishes and my own, I have with no small difficulty prevailed with the greater part of the people to send their horses and carts to Foudlan for slates. Seldom or never did I find them so backward. On the 20<sup>th</sup> January I requested a meeting to ascertain who would go, that I might be able to find lodgings for them in Huntly or Dufftown. Balnoe and Minmore attended with about twenty more. Some would pay 5/- or 10/-, and some undertook to convey a small number of slates. I pledged myself to convey 600. I divided the country into districts and appointed some of the more respectable to wait upon those having horses (i.e., to wait until they produced horses). A few offered trifles of money, and still a smaller number would go to Foudlan. I was never more desponding. The money offered would not pay the third part of the expenses. During the week I sent three horses and carts to convey what I promised, and took home upwards of 700 slates. Tulloch, Laggan and Croftbain joined the expedition and by travelling one night the carts arrived after 49 hours' absence.

Finding the application unavailing I addressed them on Sunday and thanks to God I in great measure succeeded. Fifty horses followed me to Huntly last week. Upwards of seventy horses have been at Foudlan, and these might have conveyed home all the slates had all been equally animated by the spirit of the undertaking. The season of the year, the length of the journey, the smallness and inability of the horses, and above all the men's unwillingness to proceed considering these obstacles, operated powerfully against the undertaking. Kind providence however favoured it by most favourable weather and my moving their hearts to make the reluctant attempt. Upwards of 14,000 slates out of 16,000 commissioned are deposited around the chapel. They cost £48 16/- and only 16/- discount.

## Scalan's Keys

Mike Morrison

Why were there so few

When he died?

Just, no one knew him

As the cock cried;

And he was despised  
Fitted up on a wooden effigy.

Why his death and life  
Controls hearts and minds?  
A sad discerning tale  
Fixed in print  
Following an early road  
In life and death the issue lies.

He died for us  
A monumental sacrifice  
Judaic tradition merged a new route  
To eternal salvation.  
A Christian heritage;  
Why are there so many  
Yet, so few?

*In addition to providing this deeply felt poem Mike has shown his devotion to Scalan by putting recent photos on the Scalan website [www.scalan.co.uk](http://www.scalan.co.uk)*

*In a sense that is the successor to Scalan News for as long as he continues to tend and develop it. Who needs paper?*

Pilgrimage to Hungary

Christopher Gordon Bennett

Last year six of us went to Hungary with Father Gábor Czakó, Inverurie's new young priest. Our destination was Mecseknádasd, the birthplace of Saint Margaret, where her father Edward fled as an exiled Saxon prince. He returned to England but died just before the Norman Conquest, so his widow set out for Hungary with Margaret and two other children. Storms drove them north, and the royal party came ashore in the Firth of Forth near Dunfermline. Later, as every schoolchild knows, Margaret became King Malcolm Canmore's saintly queen.

Our first night was spent in the Budapest seminary where Father Gábor began his journey to priesthood. This former monastery contained many striking features of religious devotion, art and architecture. Bishop László Biro, treated us to his views on the common spirit and heritage of the Scottish and Hungarian peoples, along with a glass of Hungarian *pálinka* (brandy) and a toast to 'us'.

We had already met Anikó Nemes, Fr Gábor's godmother, whose home he shared before leaving to further his religious studies which led to ordination in Scotland. She picked us up from the airport and joined us for dinner. As we tucked into enormous portions of blue cabbage, blue fish and fried lung at the Restaurant Fatál, Anikó sat quietly at the end of the table.

Next day Father Gábor wanted to stop by at the home of Anikó Nemes and drop off a few gifts from Scotland. We accepted the delay as she lived on the outskirts of the city. What we witnessed on arrival was to make us quiet for hours to come. Anikó has devoted her life to providing refuge for those abandoned by society. Each room was divided into two or three, creating tiny spaces where not one person but whole families are staying. Some children sitting at small desks studied for schooling and other rooms housed the elderly and aged.

Anikó had no more than a cell to herself. The lean-to garden shed had been beautifully crafted into a chapel and like the rest of the place it was immaculately kept by all. despite the cramped and difficult conditions, everyone was so proud to show you where they lived. Through the media we see so much about the needs of places like Ethiopia, but to see such poverty being alleviated in Europe was (strangely, perhaps) more of a shock. Father Gábor dropped off his suitcase full of goodies and we pilgrims left quietly, in private reflection on our western values.

Leaving Budapest we saw evidence of Soviet times in the shape of chemical and processing plants with tall smoking chimneys and quirky pylons. There were former military camps and high rise concrete blocks for the civil population. We traveled in our small van along busy roads filled among rugged trucks and motorcars seemingly made of cardboard pouring out copious plumes of oily smoke. However it was a pleasure to drive through the country-side towards the Mecsek hills as we made our way to the object of our pilgrimage. Mecseknádasd is a village on the Hungarian-Croatian border, and it was there we came face to face with the

beautiful painting in deep blue of Saint Margaret at St George's Church, and the pale blue saltire of her fellow patron saint.

But it was the journey which mattered, being with Father Gábor and seeing Hungary through his eyes with a focus on Saint Margaret of Scotland. I feel a better person for taking time with myself and my fellow pilgrims. It was a wonderful and thought-provoking experience, not at all what I expected. Many thanks to Father Gábor Czako and his network of family and friends.

tenneb@aol.com

*There are at least three Scalan connections with St Margaret. The last rector of Blairs, Mgr John McIntyre, recently wrote a learned article on her connections with the Scots College Rome; Bishop John Geddes's last active contribution before paralysis seized hold of him was a Life of St Margaret; and Mgr David McRoberts wrote a Catholic Truth Society pamphlet on the same subject.*

## Founders' Farewell

*In the edited letter which follows Mgr David McRoberts, writing from the Scottish Catholic Archives in Edinburgh, addresses his old friend Mgr Sandy MacWilliam who was retiring from St Peter's in Aberdeen. Mgr McRoberts, who was editor of **The Innes Review**, died fourteen months later. Canon Sandy still had ten years of helping your editor to learn more about Scalan and Scottish Catholic history.*

13<sup>th</sup> September 1977

Dear Sandy,

I am more than sorry to learn that you are finally committed to retiring on the 28<sup>th</sup>. How much pleasanter it would have been if the diocese had been in a position to give St Peter's a curate to do all the work and leave you to stay quietly among your friends. . . At any rate life should be more tranquil in Aboyne and it would be wonderful if you could manage a little more writing, but I should imagine you won't want to embark on further labour of that kind. What you have written will be of per-manent value. Just this morning I looked out all your articles on West Highland seminaries in the St Peter's College Magazine for an American student from Kansas. . . I look forward to seeing the final version of the work on the home seminaries: it

will be invaluable to students doing research here long after we have all gone.

I imagine that your mind will travel back over all the changes you have seen in Aberdeen diocese in the past decades. The world has suddenly become overcrowded and all the familiar faces and landmarks have all but disappeared. I often think that our generation have had the best of it. Apart from the horror of the two world wars, life was pleasanter than ever before or since. We had the amenity of easy transport without over-crowded roads, and the last years of tranquillity before radio, television, pop music and other frightful things arrived and thugs and criminals were still kept in check. Looking back, the days of Bishop George Bennett seems a golden era!

I hope you take some notebooks with you to Aboyne and, without setting yourself any planned work for that would be too fatiguing, simply set down as the mood takes you some random reminiscences of people and places from the Thirties to the Fifties. It is a whole way of life that has vanished almost completely, and your memories would be worth having – the lively vignettes of personalities and occasions that you did so frequently in the obituaries of north-east clergy. I do hope that you have many years of health and happiness at Aboyne: in many ways it will remind you of your vintage years in Glenlivet. . .

I am delighted to get the package of papers that you sent me. . . I have still to sort out a lot of miscellaneous papers which were in cupboards to which I could not get access this past eighteen months because, piled up against them were the books of Archbishop Scanlan's library. . . Last week I finally got these books moved to the National Library where they have been added to the Blairs Collection.

This week and next week I have several people in: the American student who is interested in Clan Donald; Professor Neveu of the Sorbonne, who is very interested in Will Lesly's letters from Propaganda to Paris; Dr Eveline Cruikshank of the London Institute of Historical Research, who is engaged on a history of the British Parliament and is very interested in our five-volume manuscript of the life of King James VII and II; and Christine Johnston who is making Aquhorties the central theme of a doctorate for Edinburgh University. At least things are more accessible than they were in the old Muniment Room at Blairs and the work of all these people, Catholic and non-Catholic alike, can do nothing but good for the Church.

Sincerely

DMcR

## Visiting Scanlan in 1958

Paul Kinnear



I was a student at Edinburgh University and had heard about Scalán from a friend I knew in the Rover Scouts who had visited there the year before with some other Rovers. This friend was Pat Fallon who, after National Service and an office job in the AA, decided to become a priest in the Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh. He died prematurely a few years ago.

One of my fellow students had an interest in rural bus companies (after graduation he went into bus management) and suggested we went on a tour of Northern Scotland in my old van. This was so that he could visit garages and I could see parts of the country which were new to me. On the way north I said I wanted to visit the Braes of Glenlivet for the sake of this old seminary I'd heard about. Though he was not a Catholic he readily agreed.

We arrived at the Church of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour at Chapeltown on a Saturday afternoon and asked directions for getting to Scalán. The priest there, Father John McCabe, told us: 'Go up the track, keep right at the farm and keep going until you can go no further. It's the small building across the stream.' The building was closed up but its site was awe-inspiring. One could understand why it had been adopted as a seminary because it was so far out of the way. Blairs College used to have a reputation for remoteness, but it was nothing compared with what their predecessors had to tolerate at Scalán.

On the way back we stopped again at the presbytery to ask whether we could put up our tent somewhere for the night. Father McCabe took a look at the weather (it had started to pour) and then said if we would help to unload a coal lorry which had just arrived we could sleep in the presbytery. Apparently once a year Father's relatives drove a small lorry full of coal up from Lanarkshire (where he had been a miner before studying for the priesthood) for his fuel supplies and this was the day it had arrived. With so many hands around, the task of filling the coalhouse was soon completed, though we were very grimy afterwards. We were about to disappear to our van to heat up a packet of soup when we were invited to stay and have dinner.

That dinner was superb and we had a wonderful evening together. His relatives had brought a large joint of beef with them. It was slowly roasted in a range oven (Aga cooker style) which brought out the flavour of the meat and did not dry it up. We were shown an attic where we could put sleeping-bags on the floor. The attic was full of old books about the medieval church and the centuries of persecution which followed. I looked through many of them before bedding down for the night. These books were later moved to Blairs College, then to the Scottish Catholic Archives which were established in Edinburgh. More recently they were moved to the National Library of Scotland, and currently there are negotiations to transfer all the Edinburgh material to a projected new Special Collections building in the University of Aberdeen, thus making the Chapeltown books come back to the diocese of their origin.

The next morning I served Father McCabe's Sunday Mass. We then drove away to continue our tour. It had been a wonderful weekend for me to see how challenging it must have been for young men aspiring to the priesthood, and for their professors, in those years of persecution. Father McCabe was later transferred to Sacred Heart Torry, in Aberdeen, but I never met him again. If any of his family read this, and remember two students dropping in on their annual visit to Chapeltown, then once again thanks for a wonderful evening in the

presbytery in 1958.

*Paul Kinnear is now retired from being a psychology lecturer at Aberdeen University. He has been involved in training altar servers at St Peter's, where Canon Sandy MacWilliam went after Chapeltown. His evocative story speaks for itself, but the annals of **Scalan News** (December 1993 and June 1994) show that Father Anthony Ross, known to Paul as the Catholic chaplain of Edinburgh University, reached the Chapeltown attic nine years before him; also that T. C. Barry (a member of the Scalan Association educated at the Abbey School, Fort Augustus) saved Scalan library books from destruction during the second world war with the help of Bishop James Maguire (1882-1944) of the Dunkeld diocese. Mr Barry asked: 'Are they now lying hidden somewhere in the Episcopal residence?' Librarian Denis Doughty wrote up his own discovery of Scalan books upstairs at Chapeltown in the 1987 issue of **Deeside Field**, and some of the books are on display in the Bishop's House, Queen's Cross, Aberdeen, having never left 'the diocese of their origin'.*

*It appears from the Scalan Association historical material discussed earlier that although many people had visited the old college before, in a pilgrim spirit, the first Annual Pilgrimage Mass took place a year before Fr McCabe left Chapeltown in 1961. He was 'well liked,' according to Sandy Matheson, and the last resident priest. Fr McCabe said on his departure: 'This should have been the last light to be extinguished in Glenlivet, not the first.' Once, on a car journey by way of the Cabrach from a meeting in Elgin, he drew attention to the Ladder Hills and spoke with feeling of what lay beyond them. His final years provoke thoughts of miner's dust absorbed in youth: 'Sacred Heart, Aberdeen, 1961-72; Bulawayo for his health 1972-76. Returned to Scotland but was too ill to work. Became chaplain to the Little Sisters of the Poor, Jersey. Died Jersey 8 Jan 1979.'*

## Lines Autobiographical

*Jock Sharp was born at Larryvarry. Ann Lamb, the nurse, remembered him on a two-acre croft with his sister Mary: 'He was a bit of a poet and wrote for the Banffshire Journal.' Here are three of the nine verses which appeared under the above title.*

I was a wild and wayward child,

Fearless, frank and free,

In a quaint old glen, 'mang moor and fen  
Away in the north countrie,  
Where laughing rills glide down the hills  
'Tween bracken, stane, and tree.  
In that valley my forefathers, long, long ago,  
Were reared amid sufferings and hardships, I know;  
And I, their descendant, a pride aye will take  
And revere the old spot for my forefathers' sake.  
That my schooling was scanty I oft-times regret -  
And these lines may this fact to the reader relate-  
To syntax and prose my mind aye was averse;  
My one great delight was to dabble in verse.

Braes of Glenlivet J.S.

## Country Mass Stations, and Some Priests Called Shaw

Alasdair Roberts

'In 1807 the priest in charge of the Glengairn mission wrote: "I am in the most pitiable situation imaginable in Corgarff, for want of a place for divine worship. 'Tis in the wretched dark kiln I officiate there at present. I am resolved if possible to build a Chapel in that Country." The Ordnance Survey map of 1869 shows five limekilns within half a mile of St Mary's, Tornahaish, which was built soon after, apparently confirm-ing that one or other of these provided a temporary altar. However a second example from near Dufftown in the 1780s suggests otherwise:

'Mass was said at intervals at the farm of Tullochallum. . . No room in the modest house was large enough for the few Catholics, so that mass was celebrated in the "kiln". A complete set of hangings to cover the temporary altar were kept at Tullochallum; and one of the sons . . . had

the honour of carrying the altar stone and chalice, with other requisites, from Shenval.'

So began my 1990 Innes Review note 'Mass in the Kiln'. The passage quoted in the second paragraph is from the Rev. J. F. S. Gordon's *The Catholic Church in Scotland* (Aberdeen, 1874), a vast compilation recently indexed for the Scottish Catholic Archives by Ann Dean. Tullochallum and neighbouring Keith-more were owned by Dr Alexander Gordon of the Glasterim family, in the Enzie district close to Fochabers. Bishop James Gordon, founder of the original Scalan, grew up as the brother of Alex-ander at Glasterim. Bishop George Hay usually stayed at Tullochallum on his rides between Scalan and the Enzie, where he had been a priest before being consecrated as bishop in the upstairs chapel. Hay worked on his spiritual books at Tullochallum as well as Scalan.





TULLOCHALLUM

The J. F. S. Gordon passage also shows that the 'kiln' was the larger and cleaner of two barns, at one end of which corn was dried – not so harsh as a limekiln, then, but humble enough to recall the stable at Bethlehem.

The picture shows Tullochallum as drawn by Peter Anson in 1925. It comes from a book of the following year entitled *An Old Story of a Highland Parish* by George P. Shaw. There is a preface by the distinguished Catholic writer Hilaire Belloc (*Europe and the Faith*). The author George Shaw (1876-1939) was a priest of the Aberdeen diocese and the nephew of another, Fr John Shaw (1833-1900).

The father of this latter priest was a Protestant. John Shaw, Mill of Buckie, married Mary Green at Rathven kirk and at Preshome chapel. Later the couple moved to the Mill of Towie outside Cullen, where five girls and five boys grew up. John was sent at age eleven to the Benedictine monastery of St James, Ratisbon, in Bavaria. Thirteen years later when John was almost ready for ordination, Alexander (who came after him in the family) died in a tragic accident near Alford.

It took place on a hot Sunday in August 1857, his body being retrieved after an hour and a half under water at Den Mill, Tough. The father was now an innkeeper at Moss Street, Keith. A week after the young man's death the Rev. Charles Tocchetti wrote in the Keith chapel records, 'Drowned whilst bathing on the Sunday forenoon during mass, Alexander Shaw aged 20'. No condemnation was implied: Alexander's line of work had taken him beyond walking distance from Keith and other country chapels.

Fr John Shaw ministered at Tillenteach, a chapel in Birse on Deeside which he abandoned after building St Margaret's in the growing village of Aboyne. Much later Canon Sandy MacWilliam retired there with his sister Annie.

Canon George Paul Shaw was the fourth and youngest child of William Shaw, a tailor in Aberdeen. He and his wife Eliza Bennett lived first at 7 Nelson Street but the future priest-author first saw day at 10 Cumon Place (surely Crimon Place, behind the Cathedral). George went from Blairs to the Scots College Valladolid. After ordination he was lent to the Glasgow archdiocese and worked for a year at Shieldmuir. During his next period of assisting at the Aberdeen Cathedral there were five other curates senior and junior to him, such was the supply

of priests in these days.

After six years Father Shaw was sent to a country parish of his own. At Dufftown, during twenty-five years from 1905, he developed an interest in the history of Celtic Mortlach, which is said to have been home to bishops. More than half the *Highland Parish* book is about these remote times, but the rest inspired Peter Anson's drawings of mass stations during difficult times in upper Banffshire.

Shenval in the Cabrach was not a favourite posting for 18<sup>th</sup>-century priests, who called it the 'Siberia of Scotland'. That was partly to do with the deep snow of winter, but also because the Czars of Russia, like the Soviet regime, exiled their people to Siberia. The Rev. Alexander 'Sawney' Farquharson was sent over the Ladder Hills for spending too much Scaln money. Earlier the young John Geddes had been 'missioner at Shenval' for his first three years in Scotland, before crossing in the other direction to erect the Scaln building of today.

Tomnagylach in Glenrinnas was opened in 1731 as a base for James Placid Hamilton OSB (d. 1786) from Ratisbon. The priest Thomas Brockie's connection with the monastery in south Germany has already been noted here. He moved between Aberlour and Glenrinnas in the troubled years after Culloden, and ScN 25 has a drawing of his grave in the Walla Kirk beside Beldorney Castle. Another Ratisbon Benedictine Fr Alexander Menzies (uncle to the man who gave Blairs to the Church) ministered to scattered Catholics from Keithmore. The last mass station before the 1825 move into Dufftown (Canon Shaw's book marked the centenary) was Keithock, near the ruined Gordon castle of Auchindoun, where sins had been forgiven just before the 1594 battle of Glenlivet. Lesmore, which is also highlighted on the back-cover map, became renowned for the beauty of its Jesuit-led worship.

Canon George Shaw moved on to Tomintoul, then Inverness. He did great work there but the coffin was returned to the highest village in the Highlands at his own request. Canon Shaw overlapped with two other priests of the name – indeed both were called William Shaw. One, born at Aberdeen in 1858, spent the last twenty-seven years of his life in charge of the church at Fochabers, where he died in 1937. The other Fr William Shaw was born on the Blairs farm in 1887. His father Charles came there from Knockandhu as a young man who had served mass at Tombae. Bishop Peter Moran must know his connection with Miss 'Tattie' Shaw of St Peter's (ScN 27).

This Fr Shaw was the priest who advised Isobel Grant to seek work in London during his thirteen years at Chapeltown. He died in 1939 aged 52, a



## KEITHO

year after leaving for Braemar. He was mourned by those he had left, although his arrival was marked by a misunderstanding: 'When visitors called in the Braes houses they always went to the back door, because the wife was usually in the kitchen and wouldn't hear a knock at the front. When the new priest Father Shaw called for the first time he went to the front door at Easterton. The wee boy of the family Alistair Stuart, when he was only four, saw him. No-one heard the knock, so he called up at him, 'Go round to the back door, you bugger!' After that, when Alistair was at school, the Priest would point at him in his seat and the poor boy would

blush.'

*No space for Isobel Grant's 90<sup>th</sup>, but there are hopes of putting that in a new edition of **Tales of the Braes of Glenlivet.***

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