

# Scalan News

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## THE BOOK OF DEER

This manuscript is one of Scotland’s most important. It is small, 6 x 4 ¼ inches, contains 86 folios (172 pages) and belongs to the category Irish Pocket Gospel Books, clearly not intended to be used in church. It is written on vellum using a stylus in black ink and downwards from the line. The Gospels texts, parts of Matthew, Luke and Mark and all of St. John, are scribed in miniscule Irish text, in a neat, disciplined and fluent way, but the grammar and spelling of the mixture of Old Latin and Vulgate can only be described as atrocious. Two hands can be identified in the texts. The style can be dated to the later part of the period 850 – 1000 A.D., and by the fact that the colophon at the end is, unusually, in a vernacular Gaelic. In translation it reads “Be it on the conscience of anyone who reads this splendid little book that they say a prayer for the soul of the wretch who wrote it.”

The text is embellished throughout by artistry and illuminations, including decorated initials, “doodles” and full page illustrations of the Evangelists. There is great debate about the quality of the artwork as to some eyes it may appear to be primitive and has been described as degenerative. Only two paints have been used in these illustrations - yellow and pinky brown. The illustration of St. Matthew shows a higher degree of artistry than the others, so it would appear that a third hand was involved in this part of the manuscript. The full page illustrations of the four Evangelists are framed and they carry book satchels round their neck. The framing comprises simple designs, mainly of two types of key pattern which can be traced to Pictish stones in North East Scotland, and the others of basic cross hatching, fish scales and four strand interlace.

All this points to the manuscript being produced within a community with limited human and material resources. The texts would normally have been copied from other manuscripts or read out for the scribe. The apparent primitive nature of the artwork is perhaps better explained by Dr. Isabel Henderson who believes that there is complex iconography concealed in the simplicity of the art work. By way of contrast, the so called “doodles” are cleverly done, and display a sense of humour. All are in the folios containing the Gospel of St. John, a particular favourite of the early church. The first is on folio 44 and consists of arabesques, a cross and two animal heads. It is in proximity of the passage “Thou art Simon, the son of Jona, thou shall be called Cephas, which is interpreted Peter.” Then on folio 54 there are simple drawings of a bird, usually taken to represent a raven, and a dog. These are apparently highlighting the passage “Amen, amen I say unto you: Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you.” There are a total of nineteen of these markers throughout the Gospel.

The question may be raised as to why the synoptic Gospels are not complete – are there folios missing? The construction of the manuscript in eight gatherings shows that there may be only one folio missing from the manuscript and this indicates that the incomplete Gospel texts is what the clerics intended. The Gospel of St. John is contained in four gatherings, the parts of the other Gospels halting abruptly but within a complete gathering as if they had been carefully spaced to fill the vellum available at the time of scribing.

Shortly after the completion of the gospels, there is an insertion containing the last part the rite for the Visitation to the Sick, added by a different scribe. It is not as neatly done as the Gospels, but shows a better understanding of the Latin. The overall structure of the Rite would be recognised by present day worshippers - an introduction, the Pater Noster which is followed by an instruction, again unusually, in vernacular Gaelic in a single line:

“Here you give the sacrament to him.”

This is followed by antiphons and responses from the psalms, for example, in translation:

“For he has satisfied the empty soul, and filled the hungry soul with good things.”

“And let them sacrifice the sacrifice of praise: and declare His works with joy.”

There is no mention of anointing in the Rite, perhaps because of oil being reserved for the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation.

A folio (No 28) has been added so that the entire Communion Rite appears across two facing pages at a single opening, requiring no turning of pages thus leaving the minister’s hands free. The manuscript is now best known for six insertions in Gaelic and one Latin charter of David 1, added at a later date in the spaces and margins around the Gospel text. These texts are the earliest known Gaelic literature from and because of their content, and the fact they were written in an area influenced by Pictish culture are of great importance to historians, place name scholars, linguists and social historians.

They were added at time of great changes in Scottish society which had started in the reign of Malcolm Canmore who married Margaret, later to become St. Margaret of Scotland, in 1069. Both had come under the influence of Anglian customs and Margaret had a wider experience of modern European ways. The Gaelic language and customs were being gradually marginalised, and Church practices were changing; and the introduction of monasteries of cloistered monks which did not follow the Celtic/Pictish tradition in which secular clerics had pastoral duties over a wide area. These new monasteries were well endowed with land which would have been recorded in charters written in Latin, as was the custom in Europe. David (1124 – 53) also planted Norman and others of his own choice as Earls in troublesome province of Moray. It was in this climate that the clerics in Old Deer made the insertions between the years 1130 and 1150. There are no previous recording of land holding in Pictland, indeed there is little or no literary evidence of their culture and history. The first Latin charter appeared in Scotland in 1094, but they did not become common until the reign of David.

The texts, in a form of Gaelic, attempted to establish the clerics’ ecclesiastic authority by invoking St. Columba and St. Drostan as founders and patrons of their monastery; and their rights to lands granted to them over the years by King, mormaer and toisech. These rights included freedom from taxes and other services that lay tenants would have had to carry out for the benefit of their overlords. They must have been done mostly from memory as two Kings mentioned, Coluim mac Cinaeda and Mael Coluim mac Mail Brigitte died in 1034 and 1029 respectively; but the third states the grant of land was made in the eighth year of the reign of David. Place names within the texts - some unidentified, but others – Altrie, Biffie, Ednie, Skillymarno, Pitfour and Auchmachar, all have a clear association with Deer.

Why did the clerics take this surprising step in putting things in writing? It appears that they had prepared a case to present in court at Banff because they were being subject to improper extortion. It can be easily imagined that their case would be entered and preserved in their sacred manuscript. They won their case, which may well have been presented to King David himself as he was known to be in the North East at the time of the foundation of Kinloss Abbey about 1150. The Latin Charter, copied into the manuscript reads:

David King of Scots, to all his good men, greetings. You are to know that the clergy of Deer are to be quit and immune from all lay service and improper exaction, as is written in their book, and as they proved by argument at Banff and swore at Aberdeen. Wherefore I strictly enjoin that no-one shall dare to do any harm to them or to their goods. Witness, Gregory bishop of Dunkeld. Witness, Andrew bishop of Caithness. Witness, Samson bishop of Brechin. Witness, Donnchad earl of Fife and Mal-Moire of Atholl and Gille-Brigte earl of Angus, and Gille-Coimded son of Aed, and Bróiccín, and Cormac of Turriff, and Adam son of Ferdomnach, and Gille-Aindrias son of Maitne; at Aberdeen.

The site at the centre of the clerics of Deer’s activities has yet to be located, but should not to be confused with the ruins of the nearby Cistercian Abbey of Deer founded in 1219, and a daughter abbey of Kinloss.

There is no record that this manuscript was ever in the possession of the Abbey of Deer, so it can be supposed that it was removed from the area sometime before the Reformation. Its journey to Cambridge University is obscure. It resurfaces in 1695 in the possession of a Dr. Gale and is described as” having belonged to a Monastery in the north of Scotland.” Gale did not have it long, perhaps only months, before it was in the Bishop of Ely’s library. When the Bishop died in 1714, his library was bought by George 1 who donated it to the University of Cambridge Library. There it lay until 1857 when it was “discovered” by the librarian Henry Bradshaw. It was farmed out for editing and study to the Spalding Club, and when the association with the North east of Scotland became clear, the manuscript was then described as the “Book of Deer.” At this point, Dr. John Stuart who edited the first volume of research described the condition of the manuscript as having been “greatly handled” during its lifetime. The manuscript was produced in the “Mar peerage case” in 1870, presumably because there is a reference to Ruaudri, mormaer of Mar in one of the land grants; and from November 1990 to April 1991 it was lent to Glasgow City Museums and Art galleries for an exhibition in the McLellan Galleries. The present binding dates from 1963 when the folios were also extensively and expertly repaired.

In 1997, The Book of Deer Project was formed to act as a catalyst for the continuing academic interest, research and community development in the North East of Scotland. The impetus for this initiative came from a project undertaken within the area around Old Deer in Buchan, Aberdeenshire in collaboration with Aberdeen University, Cambridge University Library and Aberdeenshire Council. Now, through the latest technology, the manuscript is available in digitised form via [www.bookofdeer.co.uk](http://www.bookofdeer.co.uk) and in public libraries, schools and colleges by way of [www.scran.ac.uk/](http://www.scran.ac.uk/) ,the website of Scottish Cultural Resources Access Network. There is a realisation by the Project that some light has been shed on the life and times of the clerics but whatever more is to be learned about the culture which produced this manuscript can only be achieved through archaeology and the reinterpretation of the imagery on its amazing sculptured stones. Testimony to this, is the discovery of the remains a Pictish monastery at Portmahomack in Eater Ross. There is evidence of their way of life including a mill, a vellum making operation and an ingenious water filtration system using charcoal. It dates from the 6th century to the 9th century.

Andrew Kelloch

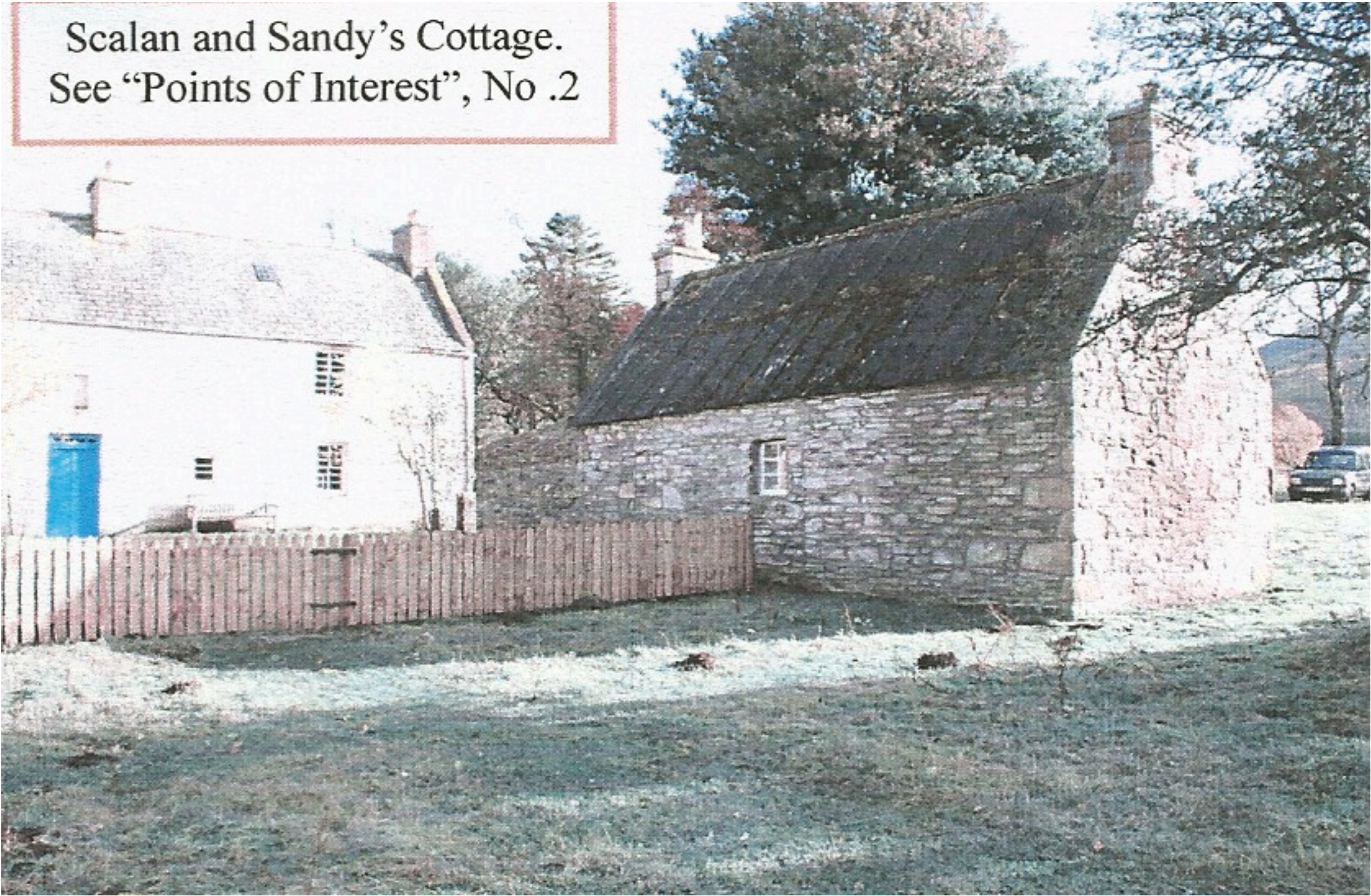
Points of Interest



1. The annual Mass at Scalan was well attended by Catholics and non Catholics. The rain held off for the service which meant the midges caused much flapping of paper and waving of arms. Father Colin Stewart arranged the music and our president, Jim Thomson, the speakers and amplifier. Included in the concelebrants were trainee priests from -----? The homily was by Fr Bell.

2. In the congregation were four monks from the Golgotha Monastery on the island of Papa Stronsay, a small island in Orkney lying north east of Stronsay. It is on the site of the most northerly early Christian monastery ever found.

The island is fertile and in the eighteenth century was an important centre for herring curing but was abandoned in the 1970s. In 1999 it was purchased from Ronald Smith by the monastic community of the Sons of the Most Holy Redeemer. The traditional Catholic religious congregation was formerly affiliated with the Society of St. Pius X. In 2008 the congregation, with the majority of its members, were received into full communion with the Holy See. The Golgotha monastery is the base for twenty five monks from novices to priests from far and wide. It now includes a working farm with sheep, Highland cows and productive fields. The aim is to restore the ancient monastic ruins, dating back to the 7th or 8th centuries, to their former glory once again. Papa Stronsay will be known as the Holy Island. I wish to thank the monks who attended the Scalan Mass who made me aware of their Monastery and their aims.



3. The cottage is now renovated and painted. Green skirting boards and doors except in the narrow passage where it was decided to use yellow to lighten the area. The ceiling and the walls are white or magnolia emulsion. The small room off the sitting room is still to finish. Everywhere looks cleaner and brighter. The fire bars in the sitting room have been repaired and the floor near the fire has been reconcreted. The fire has been laid and used twice now, “never expected to see smoke out of the lum again”, comment from a local. It eats wood but peat and coal are a no go at the moment. There are still odd jobs to do but we are on tract to provide refreshments at the annual Mass — tea, coffee, cakes, biscuits etc; sandwiches on request. All profits to go to Scalan Association. Groups, large or small can be catered for; we have two large tea services (a good start) but no teaspoons or knives.

4. We have had a very poor summer in the Braes with plenty of rain and little sun. The frost in June and again at the end of August did untold damage to potatoes etc, not to mention the elderberry bushes that haven’t fruited- less food for the birds. The rowans provided a good crop of berries which were blown of by the gales. An article in the Moray and Nairn Express dated 1892 records an interview with a Cathy Christie, living in Larryvarry, on her 100th birthday. Her recollections make interesting reading; she was a child when Scalan was functioning as a college and then a farmhouse.

“When smugglin was in vogue your men  
wore coats wi scarce a sleeve at:  
Your cornfields were marshes then,  
and swampy was Glenlivet.”

From all accounts the weather is slipping back to “the good old days”

5. Papers from Columbia House in Edinburgh documenting the dark days between the Scottish Reformation in 1560 which outlawed the Catholic religion and its hierarchy’s restoration in 1878 are to be returned to the north east. They will be housed in Aberdeen University’s new library along with letters from Mary Queen of Scots and about 27000 valuable books and pamphlets belonging to the former Blairs library. Archbishop Mario Conti, president of the Heritage Commission of the Bishop’s Conference of Scotland said the whole Catholic Community was indebted to the University.





Scenes from this year's Annual Pilgrimage Mass on Sunday 1st July. Above, Father Zanre reads the Gospel, assisted by Andrzej (left) and Emmet, two seminarians of Aberdeen Diocese. Below, the gathering congregation.



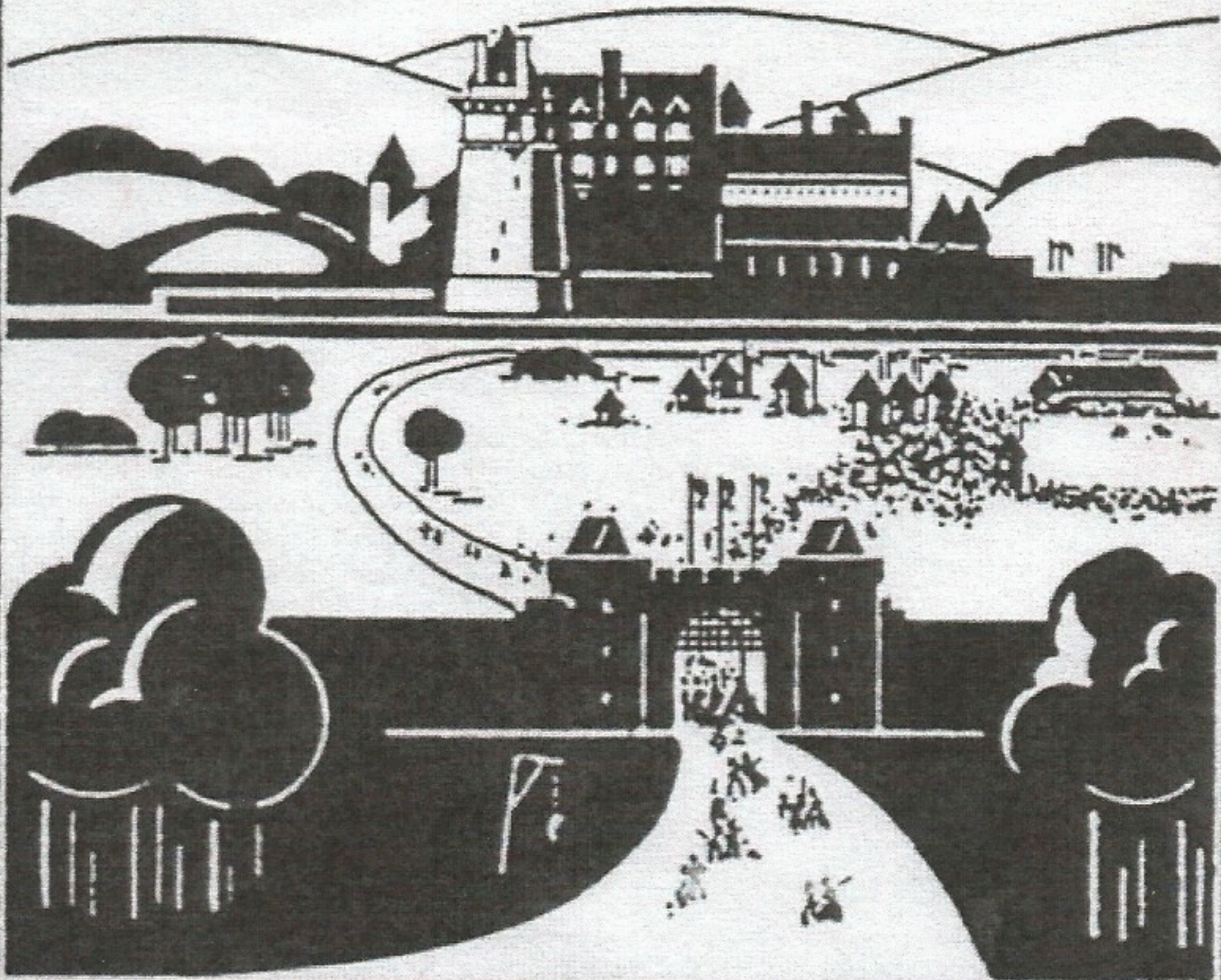
6. Scalan Seminary has seen a steep drop in casual visitors which means the donation box has suffered possibly due to the economic climate, fuel costs and cold wet weather. This has balanced out by more booked groups that request a talk about Scalan and the Braes church. Combining the two has proved financially beneficial to both. The Buchan Field Club came early in the year to see the old field systems and other historic sights. The Historic Wheels Club had an evening visit which will be remembered for the rain, wind and soggy ground; not a good venue for vintage cars and a number called off. 2013 will see a return visit in June. The Knights and Dames of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre had a cool day but the threatening rain held off. Scalan is a regular stopping off point for The Tomintoul Pony trekking Club; the horses do a good job of grass cutting. The Duke of Edinburgh award youngsters, like the Aberdeen Ramblers, often have a break at Scalan walking to or from the Well of Lecht. The ramblers stop for a talk and have visited three times this summer.

How about a trip to Scalan with school children where they can hear about the important part the College played in history. Weather permitting a picnic outside by the burn or inside if it is too wet. Notify John or Sylvia 01807590295 or Email [johnsylvia-braes@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:johnsylvia-braes@hotmail.co.uk). If you would like refreshments and a talk or see inside the renovated cottage near by which houses artefacts from days gone by. I wish to thank all those who have visited Scalan for there generous donations and not leaving rubbish about and using the bins.



# TRIALS AND TRIUMPHS

*Anne L. Forbes*



THE GORDONS OF HUNTLY IN  
SIXTEENTH-CENTURY SCOTLAND

Trials And Triumphs, The Gordons of Huntly in Sixteenth Century Scotland

by Anne L Forbes  
Publisher Birlinn Ltd 2012  
£25.00  
Available

Orbs Bookshop Huntly  
The Castle Huntly

I believe this to be a very important book on the Scottish Reformation and Gordon Family History because it is written from the position of examining the role of 6 major Gordon Family players.



John Gordon  
George Gordon  
Adam Gordon  
Margaret Gordon  
Jean Gordon  
James Gordon

The writing, scholarship and detail is impressive. The Appendix, Who’s Who, Notes, Genealogy Tables and Bibliography make it a classic reference work on the Gordon Family I feel that is well worth the purchase....if you want a book on the Gordon Family then this is it.  
Anne takes a revised look at the Catholic motivation for the players set against the protestant and political revolution that took place in Scotland and notes that the monarchs were lenient on the Gordon family when further south they would have met the axe. I find this very objective in that she does not make the value judgements against Mary Queen of Scots, James, Lennox etc but explains the options before them and their decisions.  
Anne is also respectful and balanced in the influence of the great women of the period when it would be easy to reduce their role and I like this too.  
The Chapter on James Gordon- Jesuit Traitor ? is a classic in that it sets a question for the reader and shows how family loyalty became mixed with faith and politics. Anne does not easily equate Jesuit equal to loyalty to the Pope and treasonable but describes how James asked to argue the case in public but was ignored by reformers who presumably feared such a debate.  
The illustrations show portraits of many of the players and help understand the context of the period.  
The fact that the Gordon family protected the Catholic in their area had a lasting effect on the foundation and development of Scalán Seminary later and it was during this earlier period that North East Catholicism might have been quashed but for the Gordon family; this is a very important book !

Mike Morrison

St Peter’s, Drumdelgie, commonly known as ‘Peterkirk’

The district of Drumdelgie is roughly two miles west of the town of Huntly, good farming land encircled by forested low hills with the River Deveron flowing through from its source in the Cabrach to its meeting with the River Bogie at Huntly. Before the Reformation, the parish of Drumdelgie in the Diocese of Moray was on both sides of the river. The parish church dedicated to St Peter and its graveyard were on the north bank. In 1597 the parish was annexed to Dunbennan and Botarie, the portion south of the river to Dunbennan (Huntly) and that north of the river to Botarie (Cairnie).  
Today after crossing the bridge over the Deveron from Huntly to Dufftown, all that remains of ‘Peterkirk’ and its graveyard can be seen on the right hand within a large cultivated field - a portion of a wall about nine feet high with the outline of the entire foundations and the graveyard surrounded by a stone dyke. The length of the building was about 55 feet and the width 24 feet, facing east and west. There have been interments within the ruined church and still standing in the small graveyard are many simple tombstones. The graveyard is not maintained, and a visit is to be avoided during the summer months when nettles, brambles, goose grass (sticky willy) and fallen tombstones are a hazard. The church was partially destroyed by fire in the late 1500s, reputedly by a jackdaw dropping a smouldering twig onto the thatched roof; the church was then known locally as ‘the brunt kirk of Strathbogie’. Although the church was abandoned the graveyard continued to be used occasionally by people of the locality. It became particularly associated with the area’s Catholics up to the end of the 1800s.  
Gilbert Blakhall, a priest serving a vast area of Dee and Don-side, Buchan and Strathbogie, secretly celebrated mass at ‘Peterkirk’ in 1640 and probably did so frequently when he stayed with the Gordons of Cairnborrow; Alexander Gordon, excommunicated by the local Presbytery, was buried within the ruined church in 1664. Once safely returned to France Blakhall wrote ‘Breiffe Narration’, an account of his mission in the North-east. James Conne at Knockiemilne [near Turriff] who had been banished from Scotland because of his Catholic religion, met him in Paris and told him: When I was taken prisonnier, and sent befor theis lords, they examined me whither or not I had heared messe in the realme. I avouched that I had, and being asked wher? I said in the brunt church of Strathboggie, And interroged, who said the messe? I answered, who, but Father Blakhall, for we had no other priest in the north these many yeares but he....  
Father Patrick Primrose, a Scottish Dominican, worked in the North-east from 1655. He was arrested in 1670 at Kinnairdy, Aberchirder after reports had reached the Privy Council that he had been celebrating mass there. He remained in prison at Banff from September to December of that year and was released in ill health on the condition that he left for the continent, never to return, on pain of death. As a very sick man he was allowed until the 5th February before he had to go. He never recovered his health; later that year he died and his body was carried to ‘Peterkirk’ where, after the burial a monument was erected on his grave. This did not remain for long and the sheriff of Aberdeen’s instructions were: wee authorise and require yow to cause demolish the same, in prosecution of which commands wee expect your ready obedience, and doe assure yow that the same shall be taken as good service done to his Majesty and a signall expression of your zeal for the preservation of the true protestant religion (Innes Review, 23, 1972).  
George Adamson, priest in Strathbogie from 1703, exhausted himself physically working on his own in the winter of 1706-7. He died in 1707 and was buried not far from the SE corner of the ruined church of Peterkirk on the banks of the Deveron, where is yet to be seen an inscription over his grave though it is now much effaced (Catholic Church in Scotland, 515).  
John Gordon, a member of the Cairnborrow family, studied for the priesthood at the Scots colleges of Paris and Rome and became a priest in 1708. At the time of the 1715 Rising he was priest of Glenlivet, staying near Minmore. As both priest and active Jacobite he was a hunted man, so to be safer he moved in 1716 to the head of the Braes of Glenlivet to Scalán reputedly finding shelter in a barn before being permitted by the local tacksman, Grant of Tomnavoulin to build a small dwelling beside the Crombie Burn. This is where he lived until the students from Eileen Ban on Loch Morar arrived to form the first community at Scalán. John Gordon left for Mortlach (Huntly), caring for the Catholic community there; when he died in 1720 aged 48, he was buried at ‘Peterkirk’.  
Another John Gordon related to the Mill of Smithston family, was priest in Strathbogie from 1742 until his death in 1761. He is often mentioned as the keeper of the earliest Register of Baptisms and Marriages to have survived (apart from the Jesuit Register for Braemar). A study of his Register indicates how hard working and dedicated a priest he was. He died at Mill of Smithston between Kennethmont and Rhynie, where he had been looked after by his Gordon relatives and was buried at ‘Peterkirk’.  
Within the ruined church of ‘Peterkirk’ there are two burials of the 1800s of people related to this John Gordon priest. They will be the introduction to another story ‘Balgowan or Blairs’.

Ann Dean

SCALÁN : Homily 1 July 2012

If I may paraphrase the poet TS Eliot, “If you came this way, taking any route, starting from anywhere, .. then.. you are here to kneel, where prayer has been valid, and prayer is more than an order of words, the conscious occupation of the praying mind”  
Yes, some of you have come a long way, by rail, by road, by foot and here we are beside a place where prayer has been valid, a place of devotion and self sacrifice, a place of learning and honest endeavour, a place too, of hardship, and occasional failure. You are here to pray, not perhaps given the nature of things to kneel, but anyway to adopt the inner posture of humble thanksgiving to God, in this place wherein the Mass was said, where men were ordained to the priesthood, and the episcopate. In its short life these stones were hallowed by the prayers, the studies, the reflections of those boys and men who lived here through difficult times, sharing profoundly in that mystery which is our Common Life in the Body of Christ. We breathe this same Highland air, and we have trodden on the turf, making our pilgrim way to this spot. We come not to “inform curiosity”, or carry away a report, we have come to find in this place a “timeless moment”, a sense of the presence of God, as we recall the past, yet living in our present, and, with an unwavering hope we reach out to the future.





The Church celebrates day by day the Divine Office, the cycle of prayer, of psalms, and songs, of scripture, of readings from the Fathers and Catholic writers. In a seminary the habit of prayer is established. Within these walls early instruction in the language of the Church would lead to the recitation of the Daily Office. Given the changes of language and culture, the same Tradition continues in our time, of obligation to the Divine Office for seminarians, deacons, priests and religious. Near the beginning of each day there are some words that mean much to me, from the writer of the Letter to the Hebrews. “Every day, as long as this ‘today’ lasts, keep encouraging one another”,

Encouraging each other, that is what we do when we pray together, for the Spirit is moving among us, and touching the deepest parts of our minds and souls. Encouraging one another we drive, and we trek and we gather and huddle, and in being here together we give thanks for all that has been, and say ‘yes’ to all that God is inviting us to do. In a sense that is why we are here, opening ourselves up to God in Christ as He reconciles the world to Himself.

Those habits of prayer which we learned from our mothers, perhaps also from our fathers, from parents who, truly, can be ‘the best of teachers’, these perhaps shaped what we have since become. As we make our way in life others teach us and share their experience in schools and seminaries, in universities and colleges, in the workplace and the home. As Christians we learn our prayers, the Lord’s Prayer, The Rosary Prayers, we say our Morning and Night Prayer, we read and we think, and yet we still realize that “prayer is more than an order of words, or even the conscious occupation of the praying mind”. While it is that, reflective recollection, being there with Jesus, we hang onto His words and open our hearts and our wills to His persuasive teaching. In the Gospel for today we find real encouragement day by day in the presence of Jesus. We all want His touch, to make us better, to heal our wounded memories, to make us better husbands or wives, we all want His touch to reach out to us to confirm us in our faith, to make us better Catholics.

We have come, not in large crowd as in the Gospel story, but in a sizeable enough gathering. Like Jairus we will want to plead earnestly for what is closest to our hearts. It may not be a daughter who is ill, it may be someone we know for whom we pray, but we may want to be here today simply sharing in this gathering of those who reach out to Jesus, praying for others, and no less for ourselves. Praying that our own infirmities, our own pains may be healed, whether they are in our minds, or in our bodies or in our circumstances of living. We reach out to touch whatever we can of Him. Being together as we hear His words and share in the Mystery of the Sacrament we know for sure that our Faith will be restored. The encouragement we need day by day, restoring faith, forgiving love, unwavering hope, these we find together and they become not only the means of our prayer, but we become the prayer itself. The Daily Office, the routine of prayer, these, like the trivial round and common tasks of our work will bring us daily nearer God.

This place of prayer, hallowed by the men of the eighteenth century, is a symbol for us of persevering faith: that gritty determination to ‘put the hand to the plough’, and to continue day by day in cultivating the earth in which we live. For some of us retirement may give us new opportunities of the prayer of slumber, of easy waiting on God, thankful for His mercies- yet, some folk in retirement are busier than ever, as the Lord finds them new pastures, new opportunities to do what they best can do, and to do it as well as they can.

The young, both in body and in mind, hold before us the visions of our Catholic ideals seen with the clarity of their conviction. The presence today of young people mixing with those who are not so young, and those whose youthfulness is a memory, is again an encouragement. Young people, we hope and pray that the flame of faith, seeking knowledge of God, that enlivening fire of ardent hope for a better world, will burn brightly in your lives.

For all of us, whatever our age, the better world we seek has pre-eminently to be one shaped by Catholic values, where the Common Good and the dignity of each person are sustained. This place, Scalan, knew persecution: closed, burned down by Red-coated troops, yet it stood as a focus for the people of the time for the enduring hope of seeing a revival of Catholic life and practice. Today the persecution is more insidious, coming in the honeyed tones of legal judgements and the silky manoeuvres of secular politicians. We still need the courageous perseverance of our forebears to maintain the right to life of the unborn, and the protection of those in terminal decline. Each generation has to make its particular stand and there is hardly a more direct threat to the dignity of the human person than the secular aggression which characterises our time.

Similarly the same secular intimidation is to be found working against our well established traditions in education. Scalan, was itself a target in the eighteenth century. Today the fundamental notion of the Church school is again under threat. In our turn, perhaps we need to be more persevering in our determination to see Catholic schools available in every district. Alas, here in the Highlands and Grampian we have no longer any Catholic secondary schools. The future may yet be different; it is for us to shape it, by our prayers, our actions our sacrifices.

At Scalan it was not of course all work and grand aspirations: there was play, and recreation, football and the enjoyment of meals, simple but wholesome fare, and a wee drop to drink, and clearly there was wine that needed care ( a Bishop has written about the safety of it). To some Scalan may have been a remote place, but it was surely homely. Men from here went on to other seminaries, some directly to the Mission, and others returned to family life, better instructed and educated Catholics. Such is seminary life in every age, and therein in their Common Life seminarians established ties and friendships that endure, in themselves daily encouragements in the life of prayer.

As a Catholic priest, I did not attend a seminary in the ordinary way. I say this at once with a touch of regret, yet I had a good formation in Anglican colleges, in the life of prayer, and reflection on scripture, establishing habits that would endure with which to under gird pastoral ministry.

When the then Bishop Mario received the go-ahead from Rome for me to begin my ‘recycling’. He placed me in a one man seminary in these lovely parts. It was my privilege and joy, the experience of a lifetime, for five years to attend weekly at the Huntly Presbytery, where my “Rector” was the late Bishop John Jukes, a Franciscan Conventual who had been my area bishop in Kent. This was for me a most stimulating experience, to be introduced to the mysteries of Catholic practice, to get a grounding in Canon Law, and above all to observe a generous and pastoral heart. These studies were of course further stimulated by a glass, and a wonderfully sustaining meal made by Mrs Pat Murphy, Bishop John’s devoted housekeeper. There is much to be said for a remote northern seminary however singular!

It was not a seminary in the ordinary way, but I hope, that I have served it as well as age and frailty permit. My apprenticeship with Monsignor Robert McDonald in Inverness, happily with us today, and the welcoming fraternity of my brother priests has made me aware of the very real strengths and bonds of fellowship that come from the collegiality of the priesthood. For some of you, dear fathers, that will go back over the years and you will understand the resonances of which I speak: the echo of



yesteryear, the sound of the plainchant, the camaraderie of the common room, the companionship of the mealtime, the silent hours, and then the laughter and the games, football and whatever, and, then of course, the time spent humbly waiting on God.

In this place today, we all come with our bundle of memories, our hopes and our aspirations. Gathered among the hills, by the woods and the farmsteads, close to the running waters \9 and the gentle drizzle) we absorb the special nature of this holy place, ‘where prayer has been valid’. We would do a disservice to the pioneers of Scalán if we did not seek to further and hand on, to be a part of a living tradition seeking, fostering and cherishing vocations to the priesthood. This is the task of the Church as the family, all of us sharing in our common priesthood by the Sacrament of Baptism, letting our Light so shine that others may see it, hearing the Gospel and proclaiming it. In all its costly simplicity this lies at the heart of what we do today; to commend the Gospel of Christ by the living example of our lives, to be open to the challenge of the Lord saying insistently, “Come, follow me”.... and in walking closely with Him, may we be touched by Him, graced to let our hearts burn within us as we share the scriptures, and discover Him day by day in the Breaking of the Bread.

In this Bread, taken, consecrated, broken and given out may we find ourselves true to ourselves as we become what we are, the Body of Christ, forever giving praise to the Father and serving Him in those we meet.

Fr. Bell

**Memoirs of the 1745 Jacobite Uprising** (written up in later life by Bishop John Geddes - he was ten years old in 1745), continued from the last Scalán News...

*"...as the Duke of Cumberland's army came North, the Missionaries either retired before it or skulked behind. When it came to Aberdeen, Mr George Gordon was advised to leave the town. When General Bland came with a body of troops to Huntly, in the month of March, Mr William Reid retired from his house at Mortlach, but was apprehended...carried to Edinburgh, and detained prisoner for several months.*

*"Mr. Colin Campbell was on the field of Culloden, and was not heard of afterwards; whence it is supposed he was killed. Mr John Tyrie was also there, and heard some confessions; but in the end he received two wounds of a horse-man's sword in the head, and got off with great difficulty.*

*"Immediately after the Battle of Culloden, orders were issued for demolishing all the Catholic Chapels, and for apprehending the priests. In consequence of these orders, before the end of April, a party of the army burned the Chapel at Tulloch, near Tynet, in the Enzie; and also burned the altar, pulpit, and seats, of the chapel in the other parish, sparing the building; because in burning it there would have been danger of setting fire to the neighbouring houses."*

It might be surprising that the troops of "Butcher Cumberland", with the reputation we have had handed down to us, would have been worried about setting fire to a few houses, but it is a constant feature of the Penal Times for Scots Catholics (and in history generally) that much could depend on the personalities of the people involved. Some were more merciful than others, some more civilised, some aware that if they were staying in the area for a long time it might pay to be on better relations with the local people than their superiors would understand or approve.

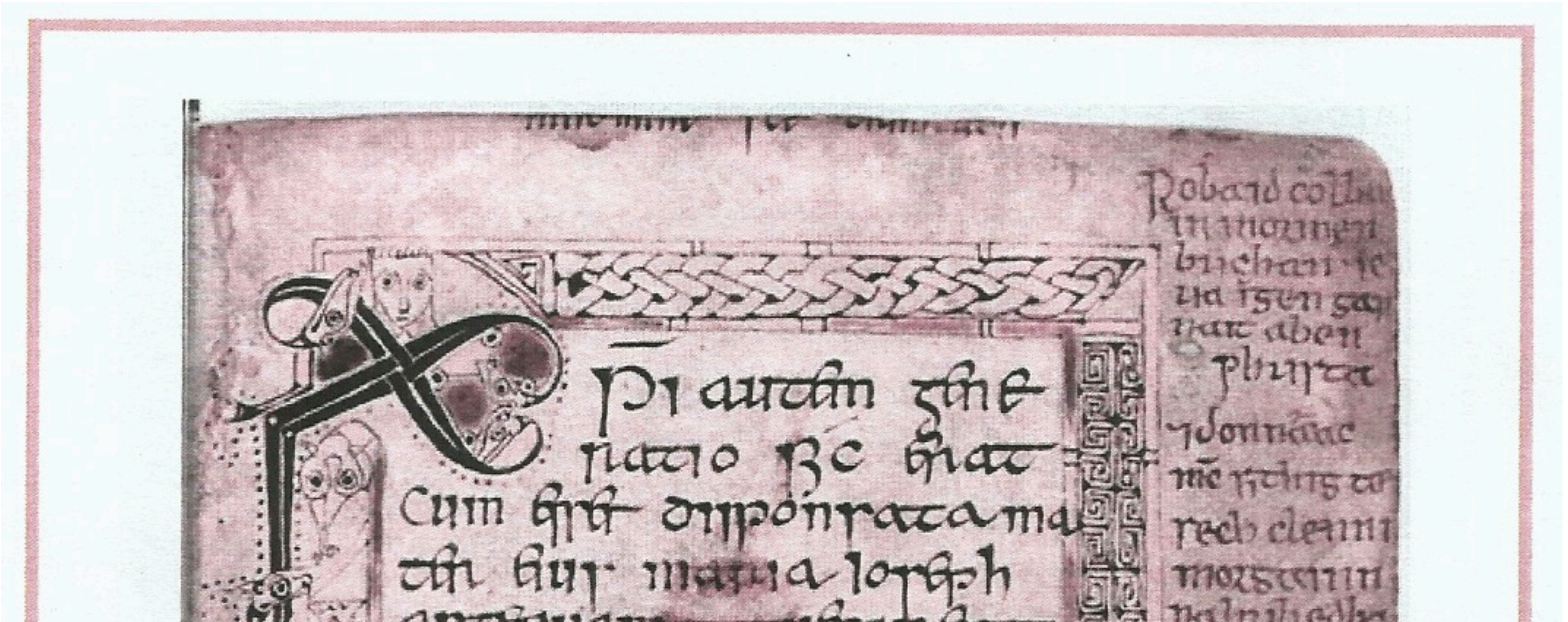
The Enzie, mentioned above, was the area around Buckie, in the present-day District of Moray. It was one of the enclaves which had held onto the "Old Faith" throughout the Penal Times. It also meant that it became an object of particular attention after the '45 because its Catholic status was well known by then, and Catholicism was heavily identified with the Jacobite cause. Bishop Hugh Macdonald's reluctance to support Bonnie Prince Charlie would have been partly explained by his fear that a failed Jacobite Uprising would bring great retribution to the Highlands and the Church in particular, which proved to be the case.

*"...some sacerdotal vestments and books were found, carried to Cullen, and there burned in the street. In doing this, one Lieutenant Munro was very active. He put on the vestments in ridicule, and tossed books and vestments into the fire. That very afternoon, a soldier who had been arrested for some misdemeanour by Lord Charles Gordon, commander of the party, got hold of a gun or a pistol in the Tolbooth, and fired with an intention to kill Lord Charles; but, the ball passing through the cuff of His Lordship's coat, pierced Munro's belly and wounded him mortally, - it was remarkable that his blood actually ran among the ashes of the books and vestments. I was assured of this fact by creditable witnesses a few hours after it happened, and it was afterwards confirmed to me by Mr John Godsmann, (local priest) to whom the vestments had belonged.*

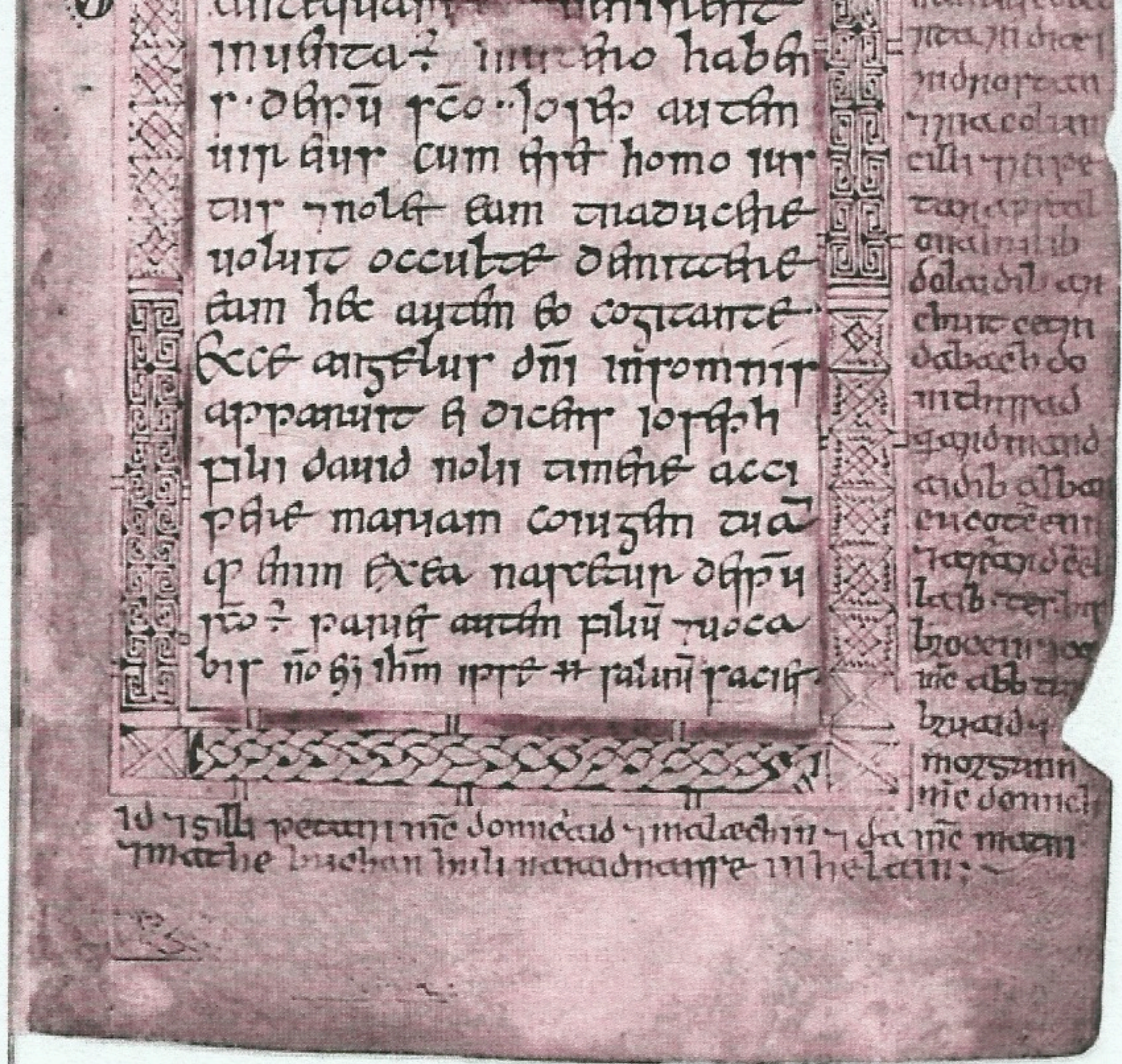
One can imagine the speed with which this story would have circulated among the Catholic community, harassed and dejected by the aftermath of the '45. John Geddes was the kindest of men but you can't help thinking he joined in the general approval that, in this instance, due punishment had been meted out from on High. However, there was very little relief, from the general picture of unremitting state-sponsored terrorism:

*"About the middle of May a party of troops was sent to Glenlivet, where they burned a pretty good house at Scalán, which had been built about seven years before. Mr William Duthie, who then had the care of that place, had previously removed the books and vestments..."*

John Geddes, the author of these observations, was Rector of Scalán from 3 September, 1762 until 15 December, 1767. He oversaw the building of the house at Scalán which we can visit today. In other memoirs he notes that it was ready for use "about St. Andrew's Day", 1767.







From the Book of Deer (cf. article, p. 2): Within the decorated framework of the Chi-Rho page is Matthew's genealogy of Christ. There is a variety of patterns in the framework. This page also contains the fifth, and last, Gaelic land-grant, down the right-hand margin and underneath the gospel text. The page has also been trimmed at some point because there is illegible writing in the top margin. Through the latest technology, the manuscript is available in digitised form via [www.bookofdeer.co.uk](http://www.bookofdeer.co.uk) and in public libraries, schools and colleges by way of [www.scran.ac.uk/](http://www.scran.ac.uk/), the website of Scottish Cultural Resources Access Network.

Caption for Book of Deer pictures

1  
Within the decorated framework of the Chi-Rho page is Matthew's genealogy of Christ. There is a variety of patterns in the framework. This page also contains the fifth, and last, Gaelic land-grant down the right-hand margin and underneath the gospel text. The page has also been trimmed at some point because there is illegible writing in the top margin.

2  
This page precedes the beginning of John's gospel and should represent the Evangelist, but it has been argued that this portrait instead represents Christ in glory as seen by John, and described in the Book of Revelation. Underneath the main portrait a scribe has added two drawings. The first is of an animal, possibly a dog, and the second comprises arabesques topped by an animals head.

ACCOUNTS OF THE SCALAN ASSOCIATION,  
YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2012



## Current Account:

**Opening Balance** at 1 April 2011: 5615.56

## Deposits:

26 Apr 2011	49.00	CAF Donation
10 June 2011	1500.00	Subs and Donations
22 June 2011	24.50	CAF Donation
23 June 2011	20.00	CAF Donation
8 July 2011	2027.50	Scalan Mass Collection (863.42), Subs and Donations
15 Aug 2011	102.21	Scalan Donation Box
12 Sept 2011	0.82	Interest
7 Oct 2011	430.00	Subs and Donations
14 Oct 2011	60.00	Donation.
17 Oct 2011	24.50	CAF Donation
9 Dec 2011	85.00	Subs and Donations
21 Dec 2011	100.00	Subs and Donations
28 Dec 2011	24.50	CAF Donation
31 Jan 2012	75.72	Scalan Donation Box.
16 Mar 2012	150.00	Subs and Donations.
27 Mar 2012	24.50	CAF Donation.

**TOTAL DEPOSITS, 2011-2012:** 4,698.25

**TOTAL INCOME, 2011-2012:** 10,313.81

## Expenditure:

8 Apr 2011	907.17	Architect, Sandy's Cottage.
4 July 2011	500.00	Donald Corr, Sandy's Cottage
22 July 2011	502.14	Speaker System
24 Aug 2011	500.00	Donald Corr, Sandy's Cottage
18 Sept 2011	1000.00	John Toovey, Sandy's Cottage
24 Sept 2011	1580.00	John Toovey, Sandy's Cottage
11 Dec 2011	974.36	John Toovey, Sandy's cottage
15 Dec 2011	533.88	Insurance
29 Mar 2012	100.00	Crown Estates Rental.

**TOTAL EXPENDITURE 2011-2012:** 6597.55

**CLOSING BALANCE, 31 March 2012:**

## Deposit Account

**Opening Balance:** (1 April 2011) 47,726.87.

**Donations:** 35.00 (15.00 + 20.00)

**Interest:** 59.97

**Closing Balance:** (31 March 2012) 47,821.84

## Petty Cash:

**Opening Balance** (1 April 2011):  
274.79

### Income:

**11 Oct:** 337.4  
(Subs, Scalan Donations Box)

### Expenditure:

**4 May:** 109.39  
(Stamps and Envelopes)  
**7 May:** 5.95  
(Stamps for beyond UK)  
**19 Oct:** 40.00  
(Wreath for Bill McEwan's Funeral)  
**15 Dec:** 65.28  
(Stamps and envelopes)  
**31 March:** 100.00  
(Printing and paper, 2 newsletters)

Total income: 612.19

Total expenditure: 220.62

**Balance, 31 March 2012:** 291.57

3,716.26