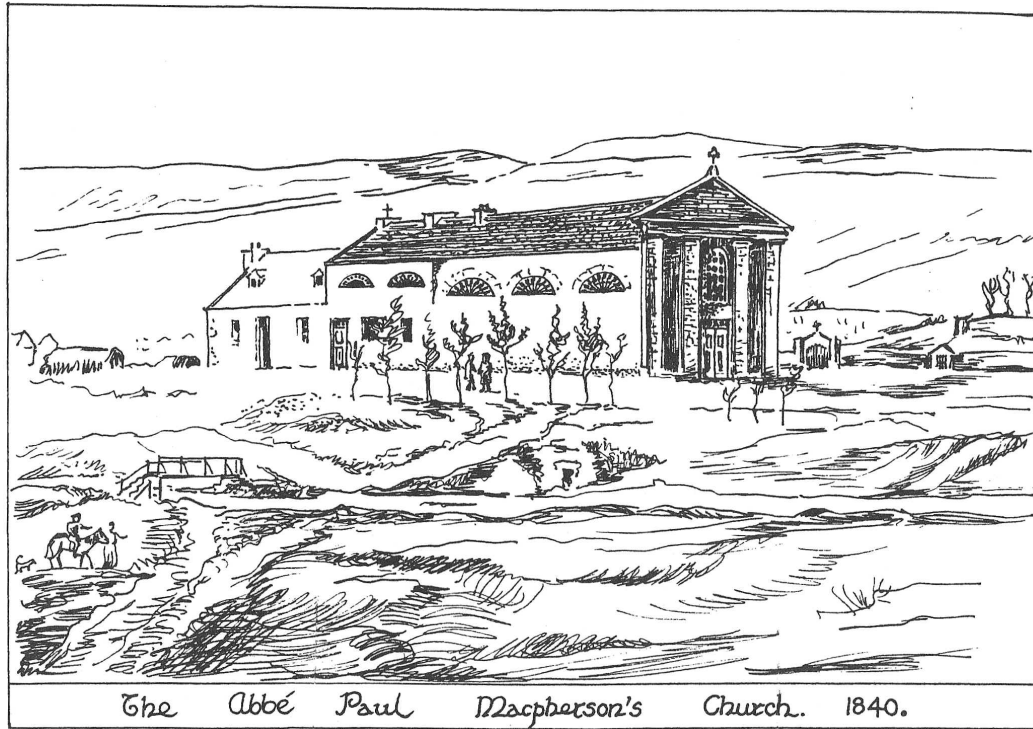


news

'The time by the goodness of God will come, when the Catholic religion will again flourish in Scotland; and then, when posterity shall enquire, with a laudable curiosity, by what means any sparks of the true faith were preserved in these dismal times of darkness and error, Scalan and the other colleges will be mentioned with veneration, and all that can be recorded concerning them will be recorded with care ...' (Rev. John Geddes, Rector of Scalan 1762-65)



The frontispiece opposite shows Abbe McPherson's original church at Chapeltown, destroyed by fire in 1893.

This issue of the newsletter contains a good helping of expert opinion, first from Marion Donald on behalf of the Castlegate Design Group, the Aberdeen firm of architects which has contracted to restore Scalán, and second from Ian Gow, the RCAHMS Curator of Architecture, who offers his very positive reaction to Scalán and his advice - more detailed than what appears in the summary we publish.

Basically the situation is that a great deal of interesting detail has been brought to light by Mike Tait's sensitive programme of restoration, but he has now handed on the stage of re-harling to some other builder (offers out to tender) and it will not be done until the winter snows disappear from Glenlivet. In November Castlegate Design put in their revised estimate of £24,000 to take account of the difficulty of getting work done in such a remote locality.

Part of the added expense arises from a recognition that the ruins of the former chapel (on the left as you approach the front door) are dangerous - to children in particular, who are tempted to climb the walls. At the last committee meeting in September our funds stood at £18,450. Since then we have received a grant of £2,000 from the Scottish Churches Architectural Trust, and applications for extra funding have been made to both the Chase Charity and the Columba Trust.

This is an obvious opportunity to remind members that their subscriptions are very important since they guarantee a steady income of more than £1,000 a year on top of what we get from trusts. There is no intention to raise the subscription from £5, which often covers more than one member at the same address, although with an additional 20 or so members every six months we expect to see this subscription income rising steadily.

The Christmas-present-buying and charity-supporting month of December may not be the best time to remind you about the 'Scalán fiver', but it is the end of the year and the poor old building is cold without its familiar outer covering. The address, as ever, is:

Mrs Jane McEwan, Ogilvie Cottage, Gallowhill, GLENLIVET AB37 9DL

A nagging concern in the editor's mind is that Bishop Geddes's words on the front cover may seem rather narrowly Catholic for these ecumenical times. Membership of the Association is by no means confined to Catholics, of course, and Marion Donald's letter (as distinct from her progress report over the page) emphasises Scalán as a symbol of Christian unity.

Perhaps all that need be said is that Geddes, in the Edinburgh of the Enlightenment, was very effective in winning toleration and respect for Scotland's Catholics; also that his 'dismal times of darkness and error' refers to the

advance of religious indifference in the latter part of the 18th century. The next century saw a considerable revival in 'true faith', across all strands of Christianity, and we may hope for the same.

Progress Report

Marion C. Donald

Work continues slowly although the architect and the structural engineer, Bryan Wright of Deeside Structural Design, were hard pressed to keep up with the rate at which the contractor, Taitt Building, managed to 'find' and 'open up' hitherto unknown door and , window openings - in apparently in explicable positions.

The removal of the existing harling in June threw new light on these openings, and having referred to the research of Mgr. A. S. MacWilliam we have concluded that when works were carried out in the period 1786-90 the wallhead was raised by approximately one metre. This is most clearly evident on the gables about the former skew and chimney head.

On the south gable there is also evidence of a pair of earlier windows at first floor, one of which cannot be 'opened up' since in Victorian times a fireplace was built in front of it. Our brief is to make structurally safe and weathertight - hence, on a tight budget, it is not appropriate to take down more than is essential to that end. The Victorian fireplace will therefore remain, at least in the meantime, with the window behind it hidden. The second window should soon be fitted with a new frame having 'lying' or 'lang' panes.

Once the underpinning of the walls had been carried out and the front and back walls stabilised by the insertion of steel ties (with the former buttresses removed) the first floor was stiffened by the laying on top of two layers- of plywood glued together and screwed through packers to the existing joists. Since there was no ceiling in the Study (which also served as Dining Room) the original boards were cut and relaid on top of the joists and between the packers under the plywood. The resultant effect from below is unchanged, while the floor has been strengthened and the previous deflection in the joists reduced to within acceptable tolerances.

There has been 'time slippage' caused by the difficulty in obtaining acceptable estimates for the harling. Now that the season best suited to this work is over, it has been postponed until spring. The advantage of the slow rate of progress is that we have had time to consider carefully the best action to be taken at each stage, and to seek the best advice available in respect of appropriate methods and techniques. Had the works been carried out on a shorter timescale, and by contractors less conscious of the historical importance of the building, much evidence on Scalan might have been lost or at best, not found.

It is interesting for a modern architect to look back at the alterations carried out two hundred years ago. In a letter to Anne Baxter from the Keeper of the Scottish Catholic Archives it is stated that, at the time when Bishop Hay supervised 'extensive works', one account book mentions 'To lime and work for harling house £1 - 0 - 6'! I note also Mgr MacWilliam's comment that Bishop Hay 'must have heaved a great sigh of relief when the walls of the house were finally harled ...' and I look forward to the Spring.



The Scalan Mass

Alasdair Roberts

My wife Deirdre packed her sun tan lotion and we both agreed, driving out of Aberdeen, that it was going to be 'a scorcher' . Almost as we spoke the clouds began to pile up, moving fast overhead from the west. In the event this year's Scalan Mass was mainly memorable for weather: a hint of rain in the car park at the Well of the Lecht, lashing blizzard conditions as we crossed the watershed to look down on Scalan - which was meanwhile (briefly) bathed in sunshine.

Members may know that the Gaelic word 'sgalan' means a shelter. The second founder of Seal an, Bishop John Geddes, believed that the name came from woven wattle screens used for duck shooting at the head of Glenlivet. In Ireland, however, it came to mean the shelter above an outdoor altar: there is one at the Mass Rock near Oeirdre's family village of Cushendun in County Antrim. At SCilliln this y('ilf there was a flapping shelter framed on scaffolding above the altar, which turned out to be necessary as well as appropriate.

The congregation raised and lowered their own scalans (or umbrellas) in unison, though without an obvious liturgical purpose. Actually there was a sudden burst of sunshine at the Consecration, and later, such was the concern of those who had protection from the squally showers for those who had not (particularly old people and a surprisingly large number of children) that the Sign of Peace became 'Come in under my brolly'.

The clergy suffered more than most, bare-headed but unflinching, although the chief celebrants, Bishop Conti and Mgr Copland, were under the canopy of blue - blue PVC, that is (the heavens were forty shades of gray). They made room for Fr Skelley, formerly parish priest here and now at Fochabers, out of pity for his grey hairs, but the others were sheltered only by their vestments: Fr Moran from Blairs, Fr Philip Foster from South Africa (home in his native Strathdon, and straight from celebrating mass at Corgarff), Fr McGhee from Saltcoats on the Ayrshire coast, and Fr Briody from East Kilbride.

Once again the local priest Fr Colin Stewart led the music - this year with a haunting theme of Old Testament 'psalm tone'. But in the light (and dark) of all this weather some of the words of the liturgy made us smile. The First Reading began with 'Thus says the Lord: "Yes, as the rain and the snow come down from the heavens ... *Ill*, and the Responsorial Psalm explained that 'Your river in *Ill'iVell* brims OV(f•.. and thus you provide for the earth; you drench its furrows.' The Gospel (the Parable of the Sower) claimed attention to its message without meteorological distraction, but for the post-Communion hymn, with rain dripping down our necks, we sang:

O God ... for you my soul is thirsting.

My body pines for you

like a dry weary land without water.

And the opening verse of the final hymn took on a new level of reality as we huddled against the wall of Sandy Matheson's house and the old ruined chapel of Scalan:

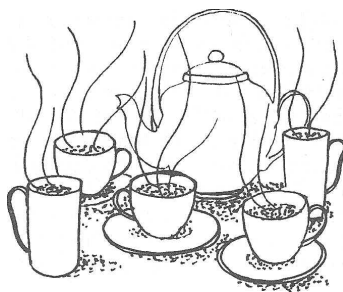
O God, our help in ages past, Our hope in years to come,

Our shelter from the - stormy blast And our eternal home.

Mgr Copland had prepared a talk on Bishop Geddes but the feeling from the clerical side of the altar was that we had suffered enough for our faith. Actually the rain stopped and people were in no hurry to leave. There was piping after as well as before (sorry about the delayed hymn practice, Colin!) with a group from East Kilbride recognising the 'Regina Coeli' and joining in the Alleluia. There is a bit of bagpiping on both sides of the talking book version of 'Scalan News' 5/6, a copy of which was handed over to Mrs Barbara King where she sat on the Green, well wrapped up in her wheelchair and delighted to have made it from Corgarff to Scalan. Also present were a teacher and pupil from Holy Family School in Aberdeen, who can both be heard on the tape. Now that it exists (in many voices) it is easy to copy for anyone who asks.

Once again it was a marvellous Mass. Bill McEwan estimated that as many as thirty locals had stayed away out of simple prudence, but other regulars were back, along with newcomers. Sister Mary MacPherson brought three of the Sacred Heart community from Queen's Cross, Aberdeen. She comes from the Braes and is related to Abbe MacPherson. Then there was Fr McGhee, who was making a round trip of several hundred miles with the head teacher of his local primary school.

'Imagine coming all that way to the Braes to get soaked!' may be the response of some local people. But as the occupants of four buses (a new party from Elgin this year) were saying later in the Chapel town hall the journey there and back is part of it. The Edinburgh group were up for a third consecutive year despite including old folk whose mobility is restricted. They used the hall before as well as after, and although they had brought their own supplies were highly impressed by Mrs MacGillivray who spent the day boiling kettles. It was she along with her husband Ian (and of course the omnipresent McEwans) who put the hall to rights after. Many thanks to both couples from all of us in the Scalan Association.



Two Proposals

The letter below comes from Dr John Watts, who was introduced to readers in the last newsletter. He has written a formal letter ('Dear Editor') making important points. Unlike most items in the Readers Write column this letter is reproduced in full.

I am writing as a new member to let you know how very much I enjoyed the Mass at Scalan and the AGM that followed it. I will never forget first setting foot inside the old seminary. It was especially encouraging to see the restoration work well on the way, and to hear of the Association's plans for the future.

The visit prompts me to make two points. Firstly, could the Association do more to encourage young members? For young people to see and 'feel' for themselves the struggles of our forebears to keep alive the Faith would surely help to deepen their own faith at a critical time of their lives. How better than by getting to know about Scalan - perhaps even helping (under supervision) in its maintenance and repair? They could be approached through the schools and parishes, and visiting groups could use the facilities at the St Michael Centre in Tomintoul which are ideal for young people. Schools could be encouraged to take out membership of the Association, as ours has recently done.

And that brings me to the second point. Our school has for some years had an active involvement in the West Highlands, studying the area around Morar. Each year we send parties there for fieldwork in a number of subjects, and especially religious education. Our pupils visit the various mass-sites, some in use and some derelict: the Rough Bounds (from Knoydart down to Moidart) was a Catholic stronghold, always with a seminary, at the time when Scalan flourished. But there is no 'Rough Bounds Association'! Could the Scalan Association not extend its interest to that area, or alternatively could not a similar Association be formed for the West? Our school would very much like to be involved in such a development, and I would personally be most willing to devote energy and commitment to it. [John Watts, Rector, St Kentigern's Academy, Blackburn, West Lothian]

First, the existing Scalan Association has built up such a strong membership and interest that it would surely be better to 'take in' the Western seminaries than start again. A heritage centre has just opened in Mallaig, however, and the people over there are becoming more conscious of a local history which is largely Catholic. The most obvious contact person is Paul Galbraith who lives at Bracora, North Morar, since he put together a booklet on 'Blessed Morar' in 1989.

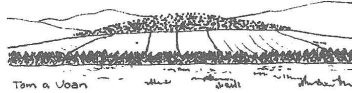
Second, schools are already becoming interested (and enrolled) in the Scalan Association, although St Kentigern's is the first secondary school. It would be good if secondary pupils could do what primary seven children have done for 'Scalan News': write down their thoughts about the Loch Morar seminary (or Guidal in Arisaig, Bllorblach in Morar, Samalaman in Moidart) and send them in. Readers of all ages would be interested in that and so would other schools.

The last AGM accepted that the Scalan Association exists partly to raise interest in sites like the western seminaries, and in 'Scalan News' 2-4 we had David McNamee's Chisholm Trail taking members to the last of these on Lismore. 'Scalan News' 5 carried a poem about the Eilean Ban seminary, and there is of course a gripping story to be told about the day the redcoats came to the island after carrying their ship's longboat up over the Falls of Morar.

A couple of historical points may further justify the proposal. Scalan in Glenlivet was more than a college - it was also the command centre for an embattled Scottish Church in the 18th century - west and east. Highland bishops made regular summer journeys to Scalan to meet with Lowland bishops (see 'The Hole of the Snorers' on p. 10) and west coast students came to Glenlivet at various times: the first Highland bishop, Hugh MacDonald, received

all his seminary education there and was ordained at Scalán.

In 1769 when the short-lived Glenfinnan college closed (yes, another one) there was talk of uniting 'the two Scalans' in Glenlivet: The decision went in favour of Buorblach, but its name and site (on a bay just north of Morar village) was so unfamiliar that people like Bishop Geddes referred to it as 'West Scalán'. It is thus a very natural development for the Scalán Association to associate itself with all the 'West Scalans'. Ed.



Readers Write

Being an elder of the Church of Scotland and presently involved with the works being carried out at Scalán, I was most interested to read the letter from M. Cailliet in the June 93 issue of 'Scalán News'. In response to his request for meditation on tolerance, I believe that the Ecumenical Spirit is very much alive amongst those working on Scalán.

Last spring while visiting an architect at Le Puy en Velay I was most interested to learn of the parallel persecution of the Protestants in France, and their retreat to remote areas comparable with Scalán. There remains to this day a small vestige of the old (Geneve) Reformers of Chambon-sur-Lignon and Le Mazet-SaintVoy. In 1630 and again in 1679 the Jesuits destroyed the Huguenot chapels (Temples) of Saint Voy and Chambo. During the Second World War this still very enclosed community was remarkably active in the Resistance. Such was their lack of involvement with the local community in normal times that the possibility of their offering safe haven to strangers was inconceivable and the occupying forces were never aware of their activities.

The thought that today colleagues of my devout Roman Catholic friend could be working to maintain the buildings of Protestants persecuted in the Central Massif of France, while I am working on Scalán in the Highlands of Scotland, gives me hope that, through a greater understanding of this aspect of our respective nations' histories, will be fostered a greater 'spirit of ecumenism'.

(Marion Donald, Aberdeen)

My son came to our home in Edinburgh from Surrey on business today and was most taken by the 'Scalán News', as we visited Scalán in 1991. [his wife Patricia is a McHardy, and we visited Chapelton graveyard, There every other stone seems to be a McHardy, so the links of the family with Scalán were of real interest.

Michael suggests that if you have any membership forms he will try to enlist some of his friends in the south who have Scottish connections. [NoForms: send a fiver to Jane McEwana and they will be placed on the address list. Ed.] For our Parish Pilgrimage from St Peter's Morningside this year we go to Pluscarden on July 5th, but very one has joyful memories of the trip to Scalán last year. In spite of the rain and the puddles not one of us caught a cold.

(Grace Ellis, Edinburgh)

I made my first visit to Scalán in early March this year when my brother was staying with me. We went to Mass at Pluscarden Abbey first, and were pleased to discover that we had chosen the feast of St John Ogilvie as he day to remember penal times in the church. Not a soul was in sight when we got to Scalán, but there was a wonderful atmosphere surrounding the place. As the house was locked and considerable renovations appeared to be in progress we just meditated a while on the past and then, noticing it was mid-day, we said the Angelus. The centuries-old prayer seemed apt in that holy spot.

Our visit was highlighted by the fact that the previous afternoon we had looked at the ruins of the fortified Palace of Spynie, where the Bishops of Elgin once lived in temporal splendour. It was a reminder that the Church will always survive. I no longer enjoy crowds or pilgrimages but it is good to have such a happy memory of Scalán.

(Mrs M. Davan Wetton, Nairn)

I was talking to Sister Mary McPherson of the Convent here in Aberdeen. In spite of the rain she was quite prepared to listen to Mgr Copland's sermon if you had given him an umbrella.

(Mgr Hendry, Nazareth House)

Anne McWilliam and I got to Scalán, to show it off to her cousin, after finding the ruined chapel at Clashenruich in Glengairn and doing some preliminary sketching at Corgarff. We took lots of photos all round the outside of Scalán - can you not find an enthusiastic architect or architectural student who could do drawings before the outside is all covered up again? Such a flush of new

windows! To me the inside does present a huge problem as I presume the idea is to get it back to what it was before being converted into two farm dwellings.

(Ann Dean, Insch)

As a member of the Vernacular Buildings Working Group I am aware that the woodwork at Scalan is excellent. The door furniture is also good, probably local, and the front door has a 'Norfolk latch' with a cross incorporated in the fretted design. Where there is wattle and daub a glass plate could be used to protect but reveal this. For the rest, I hope that the interior will be left plain and bare.

(Elizabeth Beaton, Hopeman)

A Curator's View

This very helpful contribution is from Ian Gow (not Neil, as he appeared in 'Scalan News' 6: Neil Gow was a fiddler) who came north in August and gave specialist advice as Curator of Architecture to the Royal Commission for Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland.

I knew I was in for an interesting time but was completely bowled over by the beauty of it all. Scalan is a fascinating building. It is very moving to see, as a result of the temporary unharled state, the way in which the low rather vernacular structure was given greater architectural presence in such a very organic way by raising the walls and re-ordering the windows.

My most immediate reaction, however, concerns the quantity of very high quality architectural joinery. I wonder if we have not too easily fallen for a myth of extreme hardship, one which would be all too true of the '45 but not necessarily still the case by the 1790s. It was certainly good enough for a Bishop's residence.

There are also very superior wallpapers, the most important of which is the Raphaelesque rinc;eau one in the Library. The granite paper on the stair, although notoriously difficult to date and possibly from the later farmhouse era), is also fine, and I particularly like the way its shadow remains on the wall. I think you should try to preserve all existing paper and paint. The various doors I saw could be merely rubbed up with linseed oil to preserve them: at least on the inside of the cupboard door in the left hand ground floor apartment you might be looking at what Bishop Hay saw.

The plan is quite bewildering due to Scalan's change of use to a farmhouse, with lots of box beds, but the exciting discovery of one bed partition with plaster on wattle and daub shows it to be from the earlier period. It does seem important to me to try now to see if it is possible to work out how the left hand end room on the ground floor worked, and how all these doors fit into the jigsaw. Are there any survey plans or even snapshots?

It seems to me you are on the right lines with an almost 'shrine' like room with its visitors' book and explanatory panels: I do not think these need to be 'designed', or to drip with logos. You obviously have the services of a most distinguished sign-writer already. I should like to see photographs of anything known to have been there in seminary days, like a book, a crucifix or an altarpiece.

I should be careful about showing too much in the way of early windows later blocked up because this kind of thing, although tempting, tends to leave you with something more akin to a Swiss cheese than a piece of architecture. I hope that no one caught a chill during my lengthy and enthusiastic examination. Do let me know if there is anything else I can do to help.

The Hole of the Snorers

The reference to box beds brings snoring to mind. The extract which follows is taken from a satirical piece by Alexander Geddes, the priest-poet and biblical scholar who knew the Authorised Version by heart before he left home at Pathhead near Preshome and enrolled at Sealan. He it was who wrote to a fellow-student who was visiting his parents by the shores of the Moray Firth: 'Pray be so kind as to make inquiries after the health of the sun.' Much later Geddes was back in Glenlivet as part of the priests' council which gathered round the bishops in summer, and unwittingly gave us information on the original layout of rooms in the seminary. His Old Testament pastiche is entitled 'The Book of Zaknim'.

Chap. I

1. And it came to pass in the days of George the King, who reigned over all Great Britain, from the Landsend to John-o-groats; in the eighteenth year of his reign, *James* and *John* being High Priests.

2. That certain elders of the children of Israel that were dispersed in that part of the Kingdom called Scotland were gathered together at *Scalan*.

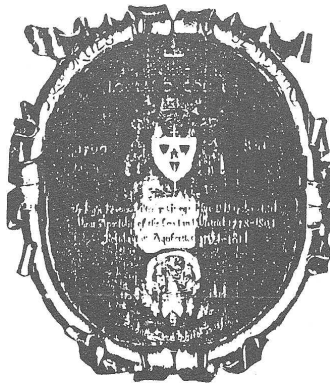
3. To take counsel among themselves concerning those things that pertained to the Brethren; and to appoint men of honest report to be over the treasury of the house of the Lord.
4. Now the names of the Elders were: First, Alexander the son of Angus, of the tribe of McDonald; a man of goodly stature and comely countenance.
5. And he wore on his head a Wig, the hair of which was taken from a pony's tail and the latchets of his shoes were latchets of Silver.
6. And he was a godly man and kept all the new moons and Sabbaths and fasted three days in the week, nevertheless his *Belly* was like the belly of one that eats and drinks and is merry; and the compass thereof was three cubits and a span ..
7. Moreover he was a mighty Snorer; so that it passed into a proverb among the People: "Like Alexander a mighty Snorer" .
8. And the second was Alexander the son of Ronald of the tribe of McDonald; a short man and of black complexion; his face like the face of a bull of Sharon, and his legs like the legs of *Oboliah* the son of *Adiah* who could bear on his back a homer of Barley without staggering.
9. And he was skilled in the art of rowing a Boat and he knew all the changes of the moon, and the tides of the Sea, for he lived among the islands of the West.
10. And he prayed much, and he wore sackcloth about his loins, and every one that saw him said: "This is surely a prophet and a man of God."
11. And he also was of the race of *Snorers* and his snorings were as the snorings of a Muscovy Rat.
12. And it seemed good unto the whole Assembly that these two should sleep in one chamber. '
13. Now there was a little chamber in the house of Scalan, that looked towards the setting of the sun, and it was set apart for them and they slept therein, Lo! is it not called the *Hole of the Snorers* to this day? .

There could hardly be a more vivid explanation of why Bishop Hay found it necessary to raise the roof and build an extra storey. If you would like to read the rest of 'The Book of Zaknim', along with notes on the MacDonalds etc. by Fr William James Anderson, former Keeper of the Scottish Catholic Archives, you can, easily do so by joining the Scottish Catholic Historical Association. Membership entitles you to two copies of The Innes Review (in May and November) and costs an annual £14 payable to the Treasurer, SCHA, 196 Clyde Street, Glasgow. You then have access to back numbers at £3.50, especially Vol. 14 (1964) in which 113 pages are devoted to 'The College for the Lowland District of Scotland at Scalan and Aquahorthies. Registers and Documents'.

Ceremony at Aquahorthies

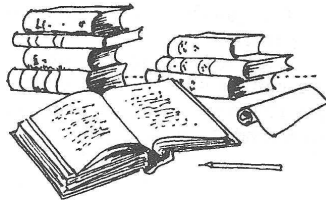
Normile and Anne Baxter own the House of Aquahorthies (their choice of spelling out of several) near Kemnay and Anne is a tower of fund-raising strength on the Scalan Committee. Members of that group were there in August when the Bishop of Aberdeen unveiled a plaque in the presence of the Minister of Chapel of Garioch. Also there were Anne and Jimmie Davidson, who devised it, and the two succeeding generations of Baxters who were home on a visit from Hong Kong.

Among the details recorded on this high relief memorial (almost a metre from top to bottom in dark blue plaster, with gold writing and a hint of red) pride of place is given to Bishop Hay, who died here in 1811 and is buried on the Fetternear estate close by; also the architect who designed the striking four-square farmhouse in granite, James Byers of Tonley.



After a sumptuous tea the visitors were taken on a tour of the house and grounds. Earlier this summer the Baxters offered similar

hospitality to the Aberdeen Newman Circle, and members of the Scalán Association would be welcome provided they phone and ask. Aquahorthies is still very much a working farm, as it was in seminary days. There are two chapters on this, the successor college to Scalán, in Christine Johnson's *Developments in the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland, 1789-1829* and one each on Scalán and the Highland seminaries. Dr Johnson is currently Keeper of the Archives at 16 Drummond Place in Edinburgh.



Chisholm Trail T-Shirt

Readers who recall David McNamee-'s three-part Chisholm Trail from Speybay to Lismore by way of Scalán will be interested to learn that he has devised a T-Shirt in red, green or grey showing the route. The price is £10 'plus a contribution to the Scalán Association'. Write to Dr D. McNamee, 53 Academy Street, Elgin.



Saunter up to Scalán

After the Scalán Mass Fr McGhee spoke of his strong memories of an outing from Blairs College to Scalán in 1964, when a Bicentennial Mass was held to honour the building erected by Bishop Geddes. Here is part of what appeared in his *Scottish Catholic Observer* column, 'Saunter through the Gospels':

On Sunday I drove a 475 mile round trip to celebrate Mass at Scalán in the Braes of Glenlivet. It was a beautiful day for a drive so that it was no real hardship, and a sudden heavy shower of rain could not dampen the prayerful enthusiasm of the 250 or so hardy souls who had made the pilgrimage from all over Britain ...

This is part of our history that may not be too familiar and that is just one of the reasons that the Scalán Association are working hard to restore the building as a worthy monument to those whose vision and enthusiasm helped to keep the Faith alive.

Although the influx of Irish immigrants in the 19th century and Italians at the beginning of the 20th century and many displaced people from Eastern Europe, chiefly Polish and Ukrainian, after the Second World War, have had a significant influence on the development of the Catholic Church in Scotland, it is important to remember that the Faith was not lost in our country in spite of persecution.

Scalán is a reminder of where we have come from. It is a reminder that even in the seemingly impossible situation there is always cause for hope.

It is a reminder that we have a future which may have grown out of humble origins but which has been firmly rooted and will continue to grow and flourish.

The Gospel reminds us that the way to the Father is not complex but essentially simple and that honest labour on behalf of the Gospel does not go unrewarded.

Read Matthew Chapter 11, verses 25-30, especially verse 28: 'Come to me all you who are burdened and heavy laden and I will give you rest.'

Father Anthony Ross died this summer .. As a young Dominican (who had become a convert while at Edinburgh University) he came up to Chapeltown in 1949. There he discovered the residue of the Scalán Library in the attic of the presbytery. The parish priest was Father Sandy MacWilliam, who (apparently as a result of this visit) became interested in history and helped to form the Scalán Association. For his part Anthony Ross got the Scottish Catholic Historical Association going in the following year. The extract is from an article called 'Book-Hunting in the Highlands'.

Hearing of the books which had gone to pulp during the war suggested the advisability of going to the Highlands to see if anything could still be found. It was an exciting week, made additionally pleasant by the warmth of Highland hospitality. The Aberdeen clergy must be unsurpassed in kindness. One and all were helpful, and so interesting to listen to that the mind wandered to speculation about taking a dictaphone up on another occasion! There proved to be books in the Highlands, but in many cases we had come a few years too late.

In one place a former parish priest had sold a number of old books to an Aberdeen bookseller. There was no note of the books he had sold, but from the quality of those which remained it was clear that they must have been good. In another place there was a description, by one of the people directly concerned, of 'a great heap of old books' which had been used to supplement the fuel in a central heating removed, a conglomeration of old paper, straw, bits of plaster, magazines and books. Several dirty, dusty hours of work produced two copies of the *Rituale* which was printed in Rome in 1783 for the use of priests on the Scottish Mission, several of the controversial pamphlets of Father Paul Macfarlane, now very difficult to find anywhere, the manuscript copy of a course of cosmology at one of the old Highland seminaries - probably Scalán - some papers from Aquhorties, and a miscellaneous collection of old papers and books.

That dusty afternoon was followed by one less trying to throat and lungs, and in some ways the best in the whole week. In a loft in a certain presbytery there was a stack of about two hundred books. Almost the first to be picked up had Bishop Geddes's signature on it, and the motto which he wrote on the titlepage of many of his books: 'Ambula coram Deo et esto perfectus' .

As Mgr Copland would no doubt have told the congregation at Scalán this summer (given his bishop's approval and a brolly) John Geddes's motto 'Walk in the presence of God and be perfect' guided his activities all too literally, at least in terms of walking. (As to being perfect, his rough hewn northern clergy thought that the silk stockings Bishop Geddes wore to the salons of Edinburgh would earn him a long spell in purgatory!) His last perambulation among the Catholics of Scotland in 1790 took him as far as Orkney, and you can read about it in The Innes Review for 1956.

