

Scalan News No. 35

Official Voice of the Scalan Association November 2007



St, Gregory's, Preshome today
Opened Whit Sunday 1790

Alexander Smith, Master Nov 1716-Jan 1718 to Bishop 1735-1768

Alexander Smith was born about 1683 at Fochabers in the Diocese of Moray. He entered the Scot's College Paris in 1698 returning to Preshome (situated between Fochabers and Buckie) in 1712 for his ordination. Bishop Gordon brought the young Priest from Aberdeen to fill the post of master at Scalan from November 1716 to January 1718

A quiet unassuming man, God loving and pious, a good model for the students to follow. His one failing was his ability to organise himself and others. In January 1718, he was called to the Scots College Paris to take up the post of Procurator, a post he held until 1730. He was appointed Bishop by Bishop Gordon in 1735 and served in this capacity until 1766. Like so many connected with the Scots College Paris he was drawn into the Jansenist controversy.

(Refer to Scalan News no 34 George Innes or to

Canon Halloran's The Scots College Paris 1603-1792 chapter 7)

As Bishop, he was much involved with Scalan and in Holy week, 1739 visited the newly built college where he must have seen a many changes. The original turf house built in 1716 was now a byre and adjacent to this a new college was built of stone and mortar at the instigation of Bishop Gordon in 1738 and completed the following year before the disastrous winter of 1739. It was destroyed on May 16th by the Hanovarian troops. Money had been left to Scalan by the late Lewis Innes of Balnacraig and the administrators had recommended re-

building Scalan, which was endorsed by Bishop Gordon. No trace remains today.

Bishop Smith died in August 1768 a year after the present day Scalan was started. It is doubtful if he saw the building but he would have known of the plans to build on the east side of the Crombie in the rectangular garden, which had been there since about 1720.

The Bishop ensured that the College was left in good hands; in September 1762, he appointed John Geddes as Master and it was he who pulled the Seminary up from near disaster to a well-run establishment enjoying a new stability.

James Leslie

Student summer 1720

James Leslie was born in the north east and spent the summer of 1720 at Scalan before travelling to Rome to study. He was Ordained in 1729. He returned to Scotland to take up a position in Catholic South Uist where he stayed until 1740.

James Leslie had to escape from Scotland after the battle of Prestonpans in 1745 and stayed in Paris. Previously he had brought young Glengarry (Alisdair Ruadh Macdonnell) to the Paris College in 1741 liaising with his father for pocket money and fees. He travelled to London doing business for Glengarry and in 1745, he carried a packet of papers not knowing that they were destined for the English government; unwittingly he became a messenger for the English. The Jacobites accused James Leslie of treason; he was completely cleared of the charge by The Scots College Paris. The Jacobites had complete faith in the College. Young Glengarry was identified as 'Pickle the Spy'; the only student who betrayed the Stuart cause.



Bear Gates Traquair House

When James Leslie returned to Scotland he took up a post at Traquair House near Peebles acting as a priest to the Stuarts and the surrounding area. The present family are descended from James Stuart the first. The family were loyal Jacobites; Mass had to be celebrated in secret. The house had a secret escape route for priests in case suspicious authorities searched the premises. The present Chapel dates from the mid 19th century when the Catholic Emancipation Act allowed free worship. Prince Charles Edward Stuart was a guest of the Earl of Traquair in late autumn of 1745. When he left the Earl closed the Bear gates and promised they would remain shut until the Stuarts were restored to the throne. To this day Nov 2007 the gates have stayed closed. In 1745 James Leslie left Traquair and travelled to Flanders where he died in 1780.

James Duffus

Student summer 1720

He was born in 1703 at Fochabers. He was ordained in Rome in 1730 returning to Scotland and taking up a post in Strathavon. His final station was on Deeside where he remained until his death in 1762.

John Godsman

Student summer 1720

He was born in 1699 at Dallachy near Spey Bay and was admitted to Scalan in the summer of 1720 where he stayed for about 3 months before travelling to The Scots College Rome. He was ordained in Rome in 1729 returning to take up a post in Auchinhalrig near Fochabers Morayshire. In 1734 he was made responsible for the scattered Catholics in the Enzie. After the battle of Culloden he was hunted by the Hanoverian troops, captured and imprisoned. On his release he disguised himself as a farmer travelling from one safe house to another which enabled him to say Mass in houses, barns and hideouts.

In 1755 Father Godsman wrote to the Vicar Apostolic asking if he remembered being shown a small house between Auchinhalrig and Tulloch where a poor woman had lived for some time. He goes on to say that Tynet was proposing to build a sheep cote adjacent to the house. This has now been done and the sheep are now using it for shelter. After a suitable period of time we will be using the cote for celebrating Mass; a permanent centre for people to gather and worship. There will be no outward signs of a chapel; nothing to indicate that it is anything more than a sheep cote. The 'Little House' and the adjoining sheep cote became the nucleus of the present Church of St. Ninians Tynet. Today 2007 it still resembles an agricultural building but the bleating of the sheep has been replaced by the tinkle of the Sanctus bell. Saint Ninian is the oldest post Reformation Catholic Church in Scotland in unbroken use.

Father Godsman died in April 1769. His friend Bishop Geddes assisted at his bedside and later wrote 'that everyone regarded this missionary priest as a saint' He endured so much to keep the Catholic faith alive in the mid 18th century.

James Grant

Student 1724-1725 Bishop 1755-1778

James Grant was born in 1706 at Wester Boggs, Enzie This area known as The Enzie was a Catholic enclave.

He was the younger brother of John Alexander Grant who in 1725 was master at Scalan. James Grant entered the Seminary in 1724 and was deemed ready to leave for the Scots College Rome in September 1725. He travelled with a letter of recommendation addressed to William Stuart, the Scots Agent, as he could expect little support from the College staff. James completed his course and was ordained in 1733 returning to Scotland to take up posts in Lochaber, Catholic South Uist and Barra. Whilst in Barra he was captured by the Hanoverian soldiers

who were hunting out priests after their victory at Culloden in 1745. In August he found himself in prison at Fort William waiting to be transferred to Inverness Goal. He was one of thirteen priests imprisoned in inhuman conditions. In October all but he were transferred to the prison ships off Tilbury Fort on the Thames.

On his release he was in very poor health and had no wish to return to the Highland Vicariate. He wished to work in a less remote station in the lowlands. He was to find himself in Presholm near Gordon Castle at Fochabers.

In May 1755 he was finally persuaded to take up the post of Coadjutor Bishop for the lowlands. He was consecrated Bishop in Edinburgh in November.

It is interesting to note that thirty years previously his elder brother John Alexander was pressured to become a Bishop. He travelled to Rome, arrived and then disappeared.

Bishop Grant was appointed Lowland Vicar Apostolic in 1767 a post he held until his death in 1778.

Alan Macdonald

Student 1728-1730

He was born at Stoneybridge SouthUist. He was one of seven students enrolled by Bishop Gordon at Eilean Bán in 1714. In 1715 he and John Maclachlan were sent to Rome. Both were well advanced in their education and Alan was seventeen years old. These were the only two students sent aboard from this seminary.

Alan left the Scots College Rome in 1721 due to recurring bouts of ill health and worries about his choice of vocation. Six years later he reapplied to Rome but was not accepted. He entered Douai but was dismissed within a year.

On returning to Scotland on October 1728 he pleaded with Bishop Gordon to give him a trial at Scalan. He settled well at first but two years later he became involved in disputes between Highland and Lowland students. The situation was spiralling out of control and Bishop Gordon dismissed the four Highland students, Alan being one. His health was poor and it was decided to send him back to the West Highlands to teach in Catholic Schools. In the summer of 1742 he was ordained; a dream fulfilled. He eventually retired to Edinburgh where he died in 1781.

Peter Grant

Student 1724-1725

He was born in 1708 at Blairfindy, Glenlivet and was a fluent Gaelic speaker. He entered Scalan in

1724 leaving in 1725 for Rome where he continued his studies. He was ordained in 1735 returning to Glen Garry, Scotland for two years. In 1737 he was appointed Scots agent in Rome succeeding William Stuart who was murdered that year. He was to see the College passing through turbulent years under the management or mismanagement of the Italian Superiors drawn from the secular clergy. He chose not to listen to complaints from the students about poor teaching, and lack of discipline which resulted in a lack of piety.

By 1777 he finally realised how bad the situation was and contacted the Scottish Bishops. In 1781 Bishop Hay travelled to Rome to assess the situation and try to get a National Superior appointed. Promises all promises, it took twenty years for a Scottish Superior to be appointed, in the meantime he did manage to get an assistant for the failing Abbé Grant. His choice was Mr John Thompson, a native of Aberdeenshire who once taught at Scalan.

Abbé Peter Grant remained the Scots Agent in Rome for 46 years dying in 1784.

Points of Interest

1. A.G.M. 2008 Tuesday 3rd June.
2. Annual Scalan pilgrimage and Mass Sunday 6th July at 4 pm.
3. The path leading from the gate to the front door has been cleared. The stones are uneven but visitors seem to like the overall effect
4. The church pews with their cushions were greatly appreciated by the pilgrims attending the annual Mass this year.
5. A teak park bench is now in place at Scalan as requested by the family of the late Mr. and Mrs. P Loftus. Their son made the arrangements and had it inscribed "In memory of Peter and Rita Loftus" A lovely idea and much appreciated by those wishing to rest awhile and enjoy the tranquillity.

6 On 15th and 16th of September geese were seen flying south for the winter; on the 18th the tops were sprinkled with snow. Is this the sign of an early winter? Last year there were an amazing amount of rowan berries. This year there are very few berries. I wonder what sort of winter we will have; nature can be a bit confusing. The lack of bees and butterflies was also very noticeable after the cold and wet summer. On the other hand large frogs were plentiful.

7 I would like to draw your attention to two books written by John Watts, both of which are a good read.

Scalan; The Forbidden College 1716-1799.

ISBN 186232 0373

Tuckwell Press £14.99

Hugh Macdonald

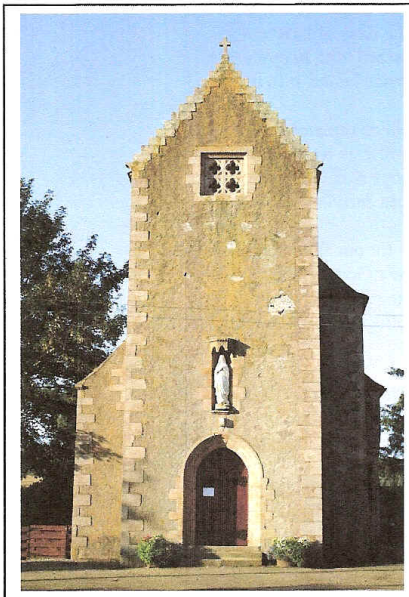
Highlander, Jacobite and Bishop.

ISBN 085976 5601

John Donald Publishers £14.99

**Our Lady of Perpetual Succour,
Chapeltown, Braes of Glenlivet**

The following is the description in an Elgin newspaper of the opening of the new chapel at Chapeltown, taken from the *Northern Scot*, Saturday, 11 September, 1897. This replaced the old building built and financed by Abbé Paul MacPherson 1829-30 which I wrote about in the last issue of *Scalan News*. This chapel was demolished in 1896, apparently because damp had weakened the structure. Over a century later, it is interesting to spot changes that have been made since the present church was opened in 1897. For instance there is no mention of fine stencil decoration on walls and ceiling that are so striking.



There are changes too in the chancel layout, for since the second Vatican Council (1957) the altar is well forward of the reredos in order that the celebrant may face the congregation. The readers will spot others....and hopefully will enjoy doing so. I will contribute my own comments in the next issue of *Scalan News*.

A new Roman Catholic Church was opened at Chapeltown, Glenlivet. Pontifical High Mass was sung by the Archbishop of St Andrews and Edinburgh. The sermon was preached by Bishop Macdonald of Aberdeen.

Bp. Macdonald, in the course of his sermon, said they had gathered together that day at the opening of the new church in this holy spot which had not been without a church for the last 200 years, perhaps not ever since the

faith was preached there by the disciples of St Columba. The Bishop went on to remind the congregation of one or two duties of the great and happy celebration of the day. The first duty was of thanksgiving...many of the features of the church were the gifts of kind benefactors, but he would remind them that there was still a debt of £500 and he asked them to do their best to completely finish what they had so nobly begun.

The new church is a very fine structure, but chaste in its outside proportions, the furnishing inside is still more so. There is no gaudy glitter, no sham adornment – every thing from the choir to the tabernacle is worthy of being, as far as man can make, a place for worship. On entering by the door, which is towards the north, there is a hall paved with tiles, and around, numerous pegs for overcoats, wraps etc. The most important object however which meets the eye is a marble slab taken from the old church, which was created to the memory of Abbé McPherson by a grateful people. It was he who built the church and schools, and endowed them. Entering the church, a passage runs between two rows of pews to the transept^[1], the eye steadily fixed upon the altar and the magnificent carving with which it is elaborated. This is truly a piece of the most exquisite work in oak which we have seen. Behind the altar the work is panelled with oak and between is maroon coloured silk, chastely adorned. The altar itself is of carved oak and so is the tabernacle. The latter has a beautiful brass engraved and bejewelled front edged with red. In the centre of this engraving is the figure of a lamb, the emblem of innocence. Crowning the tabernacle stands a handsome cross of black ebony and brass; with the figure of our Lord crucified overhanging the altar is a beautiful piece of fresco in oak, the carving of which is particularly rich. This noble altar, we understand, is the gift of Father Mackenzie, the pastor of this congregation. The lamp, which hangs from the roof in front of the altar, is a beautifully worked lamp in brass and crystal, which is seen whenever one enters the church. Within the transept^[1], on the left hand side, is a bishop's throne of carved black oak with velvet curtains on a raised dais. This throne was occupied on Wednesday for the first time in the new church by the most Rev. Angus Macdonald, Archbishop of St Andrews and Edinburgh

Immediately outside the transept¹ on the left hand side is the pulpit which is also of carved oak. It rests upon a foundation of Elgin white sandstone two feet high, with a single cross on one of the stones. Leading up to this pulpit are three sandstone steps. On the right hand side of the transept¹ is the vestry. Turning our back to the altar we command a view of the choir² the front of which is also carved oak. On either hand the rows of seats run back to the number of twenty-one, each seat fitted for eight. These seats are of pitch pine while the floor is of redwood. The roof is also of redwood, and the carved cornice. Around the walls are the Stations of the Cross. From the roof hang brass lamps on brass chains to light the church at the evening hour when Benediction service or evening prayers are being said, while the walls are pierced by eleven windows, apart from two on the east side of the altar, to let in the sunlight during mass.'

1 This should be referred to as the chancel

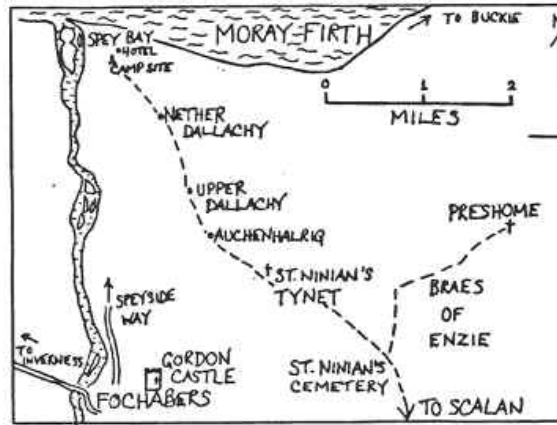
2 The gallery above the main entrance

By Elizabeth Beaton

The Old College of Scalán, Glenlivet

Founded 1716

Discontinued 1799



Through the Braes of Glenlivet, there flows a clear stream,
 With many a long winding, the Crombie by name-
 In green Cairn Dhulac takes its rise I've heard say,
 And falls into the Livet at romantic Tombae.

On a wide spreading haugh near its source may be seen,
 A long ancient building embowered in green;
 'Midst a park of rich land where the rowan tree grow
 That surrounds it, and shields it from all winds that blow.

In the dark penal days of that dread by-gone times,
 When our Catholic faith was condemned as a crime.
 The great Duke of Gordon, so generous and brave,-
 To the Bishops, a site for a college he gave.

And Scalan, remote in a wild highland glen,
 Surrounded by mountains, morasses, and fen
 Was adjudged most secure, whilst possessing some charms,
 Where students might pray, safe from all harm.

There esteemed Bishop Gordon the foundation stone laid,

And on the west bank of Crombie he raised it is said,
A college that soon spread its fame far and wide,
But in time 'twas transferred to the opposite side.

At this college of Scalan a church was erected;
And to every Braes Catholic a blessing effected;
As the one being nearest stood some miles away,
At fait Caen-na-Choile 'mong the birks of Tombae.

Many Priests and good Bishops their learning received,
At the college of Scalan it may be believed
And one, Rev. George Gordon, that name being so rife,
Was dubbed "Scalanensus" the rest of his life.

Here the great Bishop Hay, that famed saintly divine,
Received Consecration in the days of langsyne;
In his much loved Scalan passed long happy years,
And on quitting his loved home he left it in tears.

For almost a century the college remained
As teachers of youth, many Priests were ordained
Within the grey walls, Bishops also we're told
Held councils therein in those dark days of old.

But the State soon refused - for our faith had its foes-
To allow men to worship their God as they chose,
And soldiers were sent in the silence of night
And they burnt down the college; put its inmates to flight.

That kind, gentle Bishop, John Geddes by name-
The College of Scalán he esteemed as his “hame”,
He rebuilt the old house as it stands to this day,
But increasing afflictions soon pressed him away.

The Abbé MacPherson, that prince of good men
And esteemed benefactor of his dear native glen,
Near this famed seat of learning first opened his eyes,
Studied under its roof for the Priesthood likewise.

Here he built a fine church, gave a sweet sounding bell,
Erected two schools, and endowed them as well;
A graveyard enclosed, trenched a park of good ground,
A clergyman’s house built with everything found.

But at length the old college was found rather small
To accommodate students, professors, and all-
So its Bishop Superior, and the students each one
Removed to Aquhorties, near the banks of the Don.

And the college which nigh a century was spared,
And men for the priesthood in Scotland had reared,
Is abandoned at last to the snow and the rain,
And the fierce winds that blow in that upland domain.

Now its century of time in its course has run on,
And those Bishops and Clergy, and students are gone.
Still as years follow years, many people come round
To view the old college and its once hallowed ground.

*Words missing.

Association Author J. Sharp Original held by Scalan
Submitted by J. S. Gallacher

President's Report 2007

Mass was celebrated in the outdoor chapel before our last A.G.M. which was attended by twenty two members. Later that month on the 20 June 2006 Mass was celebrated inside the college by an Australian priest who was accompanied by fellow Australian pilgrims. The annual Mass in July was attended by over 200 people, and there were ten celebrating priests. The sermon was given by Monsignor McIntyre who illustrated his message of hope from the life and times of Bishop Hay. The Knights of the Holy Sepulchre visited Scalan on the 5th May this year and left a donation of £100. As usual the visitor's book shows that there has been a steady flow of other visitors throughout the year.

Information notices have been installed in the house by David Taylor of the Blairs Museum. A dry-stane dyker has been engaged to mend the chapel wall, and we are hopeful this will be done before the annual Mass in July. Eight church pews have been donated from Tynet.

After the last A.G.M., the committee sought an estimate of the value of the land and buildings from the firm of D.M. Hall. This was sent to us on the 8th November 2006. D.M. Hall valued the land and buildings at £55,000 compared to the Crown's asking price of £135,000. We then requested a meeting with the firm of Smith Gore, agents for the Crown Estates, to discuss the purchase. Eventually we managed to get a meeting in Focabers on 22nd February 2007, but could not get the agents to say what figure would be acceptable. Following this meeting, the committee met again, and then wrote to the Crown on 26th February asking if they would consider an offer of £32,000 for Sand's old dwelling (D.H. Hall's estimate for this was £25,000) Last Friday the president received a letter from Smith Gore stating that the Crown would not accept this offer at this time.

At the end of February this year the Scalan Association received £35,000 from the estate of the late Canon Daniel J. Boyle.

Two issues of the Scalan News have been circulated since the last A.G.M., and they have received wide approval. We are most grateful to the editing team.

Thanks must be to all who have helped; to the Buckie choir for their contribution to the annual Mass, to Mr. and Mrs. McEwan for the use of their cottage for committee meeting and their hospitality on these occasions, to Mr. and Mrs. Toovey for their regular checks on the building, their emptying of the collecting box, doing small repairs. Thanks also to (those who worked on the ground after the cows had churned up the grass area, thanks to the committee for their time and dedication.

Cannon Brian Halloran President.

Annual Pilgrimage to Scalan

Sunday 1st July Mass 4 o'clock

The weather in the preceding week was very wet, and the forecast for the Sunday was not at all promising. Would we have to retreat to the Church of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour at Chapeltown of Glenlivet for the first time in years? It certainly looked like it on the day itself, but we persevered down the road to Scalan and were rewarded with a lovely occasion, devoid of rain to bother us, and blessed with a celebration of Mass which renewed our love for this holy place which speaks so powerfully of the love of God in young men preparing themselves to give over their entire lives to the task of bringing the Mass and the Sacrament to the people of Scotland



Mass was celebrated by His Grace, Archbishop Conti of Glasgow. He was joined by Canon Brian Halloran, parish priest of St. Andrew's and President of the Scalan Association, Monsignor John McIntyre (Baillieston), past president, as well as Mgr. Robert McDonald (Fochabers), Canon Donald MacKay (Oban), Fathers John Kelly (Coatbridge), James Morrow (Aberdeen), James Bell (Tain), Mark Impson, (Keith), Gerald Livingstone (Buckie) James Thomson (Stepps) and Michael Briody, (Moodiesburn) secretary of the Association

The homily was provided by Rt. Rev. John Jukes OFM Conv., emeritus auxiliary Bishop of Southwark, parish priest of Huntly and Banff, who wore his Franciscan habit and provided us with a few thoughts, Franciscan in their simplicity yet profound, and delivered with a touch of humour. He alerted us to the danger that communities might decline or die if they did not have the dedicated leadership of a priest, and so we must redouble our prayer and work for vocations to the Priesthood. Parents and others had to open the eyes of our children and young people to the deceits of our society and the way in which indifference to religion and not outright persecution was the nature of things today. Lastly, he left us the challenge that if we have shown that we can rebuild Scalan, can we rebuild the Church in our day?

Music at the Mass was provided by the music ministry of St. Peter's, Buckie and we thank them for their support again this year. Music of a different kind was provided as we arrived at Scalan by piper Jimmy Stewart. It is one of those nice touches which individual members of the Association have the initiative to supply for this occasion and a special word of thanks must be given to the local committee and their helpers for the practical arrangements for setting things up for the Mass and, with the help of some of the pilgrims present, tidying up after Mass was over.



Celebrants at the Mass

One aspect of the event, which is worth mentioning from time to time, is the practice of car drivers picking up pilgrims who find the last mile to Scalan difficult walking, and transporting them back after Mass. This is something which is greatly appreciated, and helps to strengthen the sense that we are a Family of Faith as we gather to celebrate the Annual Scalan Mass.

Thank you Father Michael Briody

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Scalan

They are happy, who dwell in your house,
for ever singing your praise.

They are happy, whose strength is in you,
In whose hearts are the roads to Sion.

As they go through the Bitter valley

They make it a place of springs,
The autumn rain covers it with blessings.
They walk with ever growing strength,
They will see the God of gods in Sion.

Taken from Psalm 83

Copies of photos used may be obtained from the editor with a donation to The Scalan Association.
Please state size (up to A4)