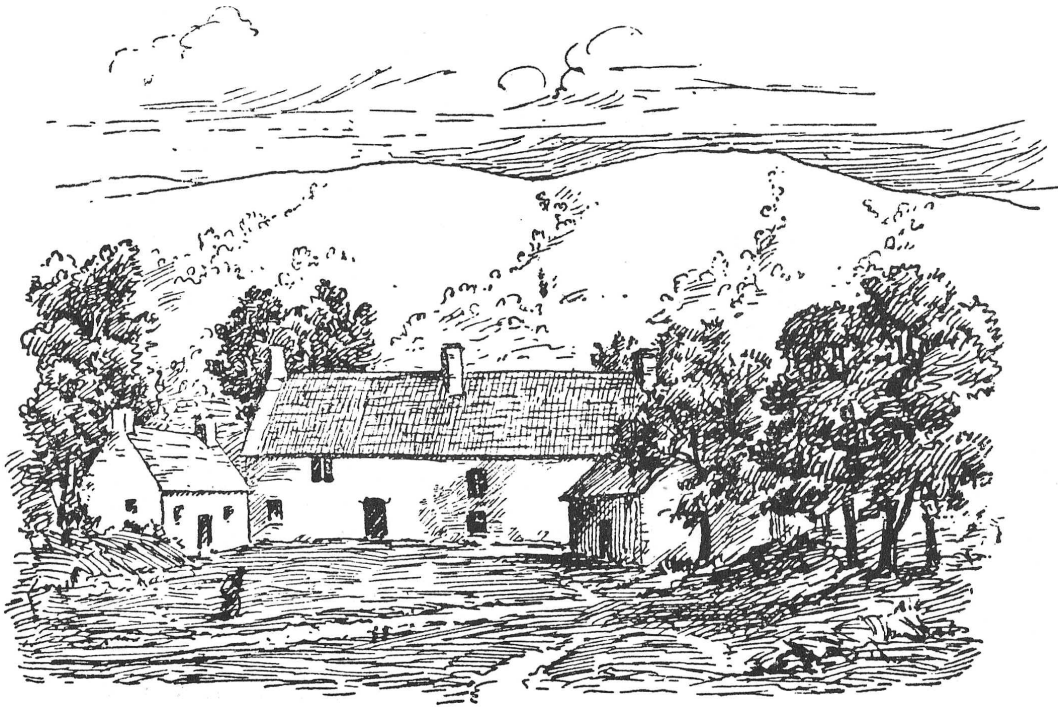


Scalan News

No. 8, June 1994

'I never was happier since I came to the Mission than I am at Scalan, and were it not for the other duties of my Charge, I would be content to be never without the limits of its enclosures ... I have got an excellent set of Servants, who go hand in hand for the good of the place and live in the most perfect harmony ... My boys are every day more tractable, content and happy.' (Bishop George Hay, Rector of Scalan 1788-93)



One of the difficulties about producing the summer issue of *Scalan News* is that it attempts (so far with success) to report on the business side of things, as represented by the AGM which is always held in Glenlivet on a Tuesday early in June, while reminding members of the Scalan Association about the time (no need for place) of the Annual Pilgrimage Mass. For anyone who falls asleep over newsletters after the first few lines but likes the event, it is at 4 p.m. on Sunday 3 July. Always the first Sunday of July, it is separated by only a few weeks from the AGM on Tuesday 7 June so this extra reminder (you received minutes, etc.) may come close to the day itself or well past it if you live in one of those far flung countries of the world where *Scalan News* is read.

The timing depends on all the contents except the AGM 'report' (brief, stop press) being ready before a phone call on the Tuesday evening (stern duty keeping the editor from the Braes that day); also on the printers who generally need a working week in Dundee. This year children from the top primary classes in two Aberdeen primary schools, St Peter's and St Joseph's are going to organise the

package-and-posting stage as a way of communicating their recent experience to a very wide audience. No need this time to share the job around 'volunteer' members of the Association. Many hands make light work.

The last newsletter contained some editorial introspection about Bishop Geddes's resounding call on behalf of Catholic heritage which has been used on the cover since the first issue. It can appear triumphalist and unecumenical and hardly suits the times we live in. There is, admittedly, something strange about making Scalán (which was several times destroyed by soldiers of an anti-popish persuasion) into a symbol of the faith which is shared by Christians, but let's try the new cover for a while to see how it feels.

Bishop Hay was writing at a time when toleration was about to be extended to Catholics (just a little, so that they could inherit property without fear of a Calvinist cousin) and his purpose, like that of Geddes, was always to make friends among the decision-makers in Scotland. Scalán was Hay's 'Patmos', that island of peace where St John the Evangelist wrote his thoroughly theological Gospel.

The picture opposite is not a very accurate picture of Scalán but it is in some ways the most interesting of the illustrations of the seminary which are being collected by Ann Dean, including old photos from Scots College Rome. She has been thinking about the building and sifting through all that has appeared in print on Scalán - plus hand-written archival material kept in Edinburgh. One published account of Scalán is in the first volume of Dom adó Blundell's *Catholic Highlands of Scotland* (1909) but it now seems, on the basis of this drawing from Blundell's *Ancient Catholic Houses of Scotland* (1907) that his sister Frances was first on the scene, sketching inaccurately, before she entered a Benedictine convent near Coventry in 1886. The wandering monk of Fort Augustus came from a prominent family of Lancashire Catholics, and detail on the Blundells is being sought down there: more to follow.

On the Business Side

As a preliminary to the AGM, Marion Donald of Castlegate Design attended a meeting of the Management Committee on 9 May. She reported that although one window had blown in the interior of the building suffered no damage over the winter. The job of reharling, after being put out to tender, had been assigned to Alistair Urquhart Builder at a cost of £6,283 plus VAT, the work to be done later in summer. Following a site meeting the services of a dry stone dyker was acquired for the dangerously disintegrating former chapel.

The day of the AGM was cold but fine. Mgr Copland concelebrated mass in the School Room along with Canon Symon and Frs Halloran and Mackle. The Secretary Fr Toal was unable to make the journey from Benbecula, likewise Fr Briody (Publicity Officer) who is now in Easterhouse. The now traditional copious lunch was served in the public hall and paid for by generous donations from the 27 members in attendance. This was followed by an Annual General Meeting which was notable for smoothness and harmony with the business concluded in record time.

As President, Mgr Copland, paid tribute to the hard-working committee and in particular to Jane McEwan, the membership secretary and treasurer. He emphasised that this was a phase of consolidation, completing the outside work and making safe the chapel, before consideration was given to the interior, although slabs were now laid throughout much of the ground floor. Mrs McEwan reported an income of £2,825 from subscriptions in the past year from the nearly 400 homes to which minutes and newsletters were sent. With two members in many of these, effective membership was about 500. The financial situation was reported as sound, with approximately £21,000 in hand for future work. Business correspondence, as ever, to:

Mrs Jane McEwan, Ogilvie Cottage, Gallowhill, GLENLIVET AB3 9DL

Scalán Reconstructed

Ann Dean

When the walls of Scalán are once again covered with harling this summer the evidence of what it looked like in its early years will be hidden again, apart from what is deliberately to be kept uncovered.

The most startling discovery, from the recent careful dismantling carried out by Mike Tait, is the evidence that Scalán began as a one-and-a-half-storey building. The original height of the walls can be clearly seen, especially on the gable walls. They were heightened by about one metre, probably in the period 1786 to 1790, to give a full two floors and an attic.

Linked to that, and from documentary rather than architectural evidence, it is clear that Scalán continued to be roofed with heather thatching long after the seminary era. Despite the claim of Dean Clapperton of Buckie (doyen of local Catholic history, who should have known better) no slates were applied when the walls were 'strengthened' in 1788. James Stothert visited Scalán in 1845, having spent several weeks with Clapperton at Preshome copying out material for a projected Life of Bishop Hay, and he found it thatched. Clapperton's own first visit came later.

Before Scalan was heightened the windows downstairs were as now, but the then attic storey depended for light on widows in the two gables and on a series of windows at floor level along the front and back walls - the roof starting immediately above them. One of these windows, on the front of the building above the front door, is to be retained - at least in outline - so that we will always be reminded of where the roof once began. At the rear of the building the positions of three small windows can meanwhile in the absence of harling - be detected; one of these has been opened up and will be retained.

In the chapel at the north end upstairs a window was discovered in the gable wall. It became obvious, on opening it up, that this had once been part of a doorway. Thus Mike Tait has been able to show, physically to us now, what Stothert had to take on trust from local informants. Writing about the chapel he said, 'It is lighted by a small window, about a yard square, which was originally part of a door, admitting the small Congregation in the neighbourhood to the Chapel by a stone-staircase on the outside of the north end of the building: Stothert's account was taken over by the Rev. J F S. Gordon for his *Catholic Church in Scotland* (Aberdeen, 1874) - a massive, marvellous work if you can get hold of it.

The boys' dormitory (on the first floor upstairs) had two windows in the south gable. One has been opened up but not the other, as in front of it is a Victorian fireplace from the farmhouse period. There is a tantalising aperture, two feet by one, between Bishop Hay's room under the chapel and the ruinous north wing, now carrying a DANGER - KEEP OUT sign. It could have been a serving hatch from what was once the kitchen (later transferred to Sandy Matheson's side) but my stronger feeling, on all the evidence, is that it was an aumbry or Sacrament House, accessible from the Bishop's room.

At Michaelmas 1793, standing at the altar of this new chapel, Bishop Geddes had to explain to the assembled people of the Braes (not such a 'small Congregation') that, although vested and ready, he could not say mass due to a paralysing weakness in his limbs. They were sent several miles down Glenlivet to 'the public chapel' at Cannakyle. Geddes left Scalan soon after for a living purgatory in the Castlegate chapel-house of Aberdeen, which was ended by his death more than five years later. He is buried in the Snow Churchyard, close to King's College, along with other notable Catholics.

Restoration inside the building will be considered by Castlegate Design, the architectural firm headed by Marion Donald, once Scalan is wind and water proof as well as structurally sound. Whatever the future may hold, for a brief period in the 1990s Scalan has revealed a part of the story of its growth and development between 1767 and 1799.

More on Chapeltown

Elizabeth Beaton

A sketch of the Abbe Paul Macpherson's Church appeared in the December *Scalan News*. Dated 1840, it hangs in the vestry of its successor constructed in 1896-7. The sketch shows a rectangular building with pedimented classical facade. Built in 1827-8 and financed by Abbe Macpherson, the chapel was designed by the Elgin architect William Robertson (1786-1841) who was paid five guineas for his work. It was similar to that at Wick (also designed by Robertson) which was built in 1835.

Correspondence between the Abbe and Bishop Paterson (based in Edinburgh) prior to construction reveals that the Bishop wished to have the chapel built at Scalan. Abbe Macpherson thought otherwise, arguing that the the location was too far for most people, 'the greater part of the Congregation, who in most stormy weather would have to travel two or three miles to reach Seal an and sit down in a cold Chapel, however wet or cold they might be; or else frightened by the length of the way and badness of the weather, remain at home without satisfying a most essential duty. Your Lordship will see that this will be neither exemplary nor apostolic like.' .

On the other hand, the priest could live at Scalan but shelter at Chapeltown if the weather were poor. Abbe Macpherson wrote: 'At the Chapel to be erected there will be convenient vestuary with a fireplace, and likewise a comfortable closet to sleep if necessary. If he arrives wet and cold there he can shift and warm himself and even sleep all night, if he finds it's more convenient.' The 'convenient vestuary' is the portion at the rear of the church (not the little cottage) with its own door flanked by windows, the two lunettes (half-round windows) smaller than the three that light the chapel, and there is a chimney stack clearly visible serving the warming hearth. The priests who went to Wick had the same basic style of quarters, for they served only in the herring season.

This contribution, surprising in its revelation that Scalan might have continued as the 'chapel (farm)town', recalls two other northern references featuring rain and priests. The first is in Gordon's Catholic Church in Scotland. In 1788 Bishop Geddes, the builder of 'our' Scalan - and dedicated walker - was making a missionary tour through Buchan, and 'in the Fair at Strichen his Umbrella was an object of general curiosity.'

The second concerns an 1865 appeal to Sir Charles Forbes of Newe (in Strathdon) for an extension at Tornahaish, Corgarff. Confession before communion was involved: 'Having no vestry the Priest has to use the Chapel to speak to his congregation each individual privately, and during the time he is thus occupied all the others has no shelter but round the Chapel walls ... It is a great inconvenience to him, Sir, when he walks over the Claschoil from Clengairn on a Sunday winter morning fasting to have to officiate in the Chapel with wet things

on, having no where to change, but in fact Sir Charles the hearers are generally worse off than the Priest, as they very often have to stand around the Chapel for an hour or two in any weather, till such time as they can all be admitted.'



Readers Write ...

Very many thanks for *Scalan News* 7 of December 1993. As with previous editions it is a mine of information and I was delighted to receive it. My congratulations to the Editor and all the contributors .. I enclose my 'Scalan fiver', along with a further small contribution to help with the expenses of the Scalan Association. With my kindest regards and renewed thanks, prayers and good wishes for your marvellous work.

+ Keith Patrick, Archbishop of St Andrews and Edinburgh

In a letter which has been misfiled Mario Conti, Bishop of Aberdeen (in whose diocese Scalan is situated, of course) also expressed his warm approval of the Scalan Association and made a very helpful financial contribution to the work in progress.

This seems to be an appropriate place to acknowledge the similarly generous gift of Dr A. T. Macqueen of Pitkerro, near Dundee (who has written memorably here of his late wife's Cheyne forebears) which came with the suggestion that the Catholic secondary schools in his area might be encouraged to join the Association by receiving complementary copies of the newsletter. Thanks also to Peter King for a generous farewell gift on the occasion of his move south.

J' ai lu avec interet la lettre signe Marion Donald. Je connais bien Le Chambon-sur-Lignon, dont elle parle, citadelle de protestantisme cevenol, ou le verbe 'resister' a toujours eu une resonance particulierement forte. Il y a au Chambon un college protestant repute dont le corps enseignant, pendant la guerre, s' est associe avec courage et efficacite a la mise a l'abri de nombreuses personnes promises la deportation, dont beaucoup de juifs.

J' ai aime, aussi, dans les Scalan News, le recit de cette messe copieusement arrosee, sauf, eclaircie miraculeuse, au moment de la Consecration; ce du etre, malgre un exces d'eau mistrale, une emouvante ceremonie.

Mamice Caillet, Paris

This time no translation is offered of M. Caillet's elegant French, on the assumption that readers can cope - or know a man who can.

Many thanks for the set of 'Scalan News' which will indeed be valuable library resource for students here in the Chaplaincy. My father was from Achnascraw and my family from the Braes way back to the 1690s (as far as I have traced) and so my roots are very much there in the Glen. Sr Mary McPherson and Fr Andrew Mann are both cousins (somewhat 'removed').

Donald Grant O.Carm., King's College, Aberdeen

... and Write

I am an Italian student at Pisa University. Knowing that I still had family in Scotland, my Professor thought that I might enjoy doing my final thesis on the Catholic presence there. After a visit to the Scottish Catholic Archive in Edinburgh, where I was astonished to discover how many letters there were, I have narrowed my research to letters concerning the Scalan seminary from 1750. First of all I intend to visit the Scots College in Rome to find out what connection there is between letters on Scalan held there and in Scotland. I am looking forward to seeing Scalan this summer.

Claudio Fontana, Lucca, Italy

I always read the Scalan News with great enthusiasm - it really is good. May I make some points on the No. 7 December issue? 'Aquahorthies' is not Anne's or my choice - we simply inherited it. I prefer 'Aquhorties', as 'Aqua' suggests water, while it is truly a derivation of the Gaelic for a field (of the standing stones at Aquhorties Stone Circle). Aquhorties was *never* designed as a farmhouse, it was designed and built as a *seminary*! This is the whole point of the plaque, and the architect's name. The farm house is by the farm. I do think you need to correct this impression. Moreover it remains today in its original seminary form and consequently is a Grade A listed building.

Normile Baxter, Aquahorthies.

Correction gladly made. To describe Scalan's successor as a 'four-square farmhouse in granite' was misleading but derived - semi-consciously - from the fact that much of the correspondence between bishop and rector over Aquhorties concerned the successful battle to make it a profitable farm in 'the age of improvement'. This fitted the Scalan tradition of future priests learning to support themselves on a few acres while taking a break from their books.

I am trying to find a few titles that could tell me more about the old 'field seminaries' in Scotland during the penal times. What I read about them, years ago, attracted me in such a way that I see them as a possible model for seminaries in the US, where we have 'adopted' the huge secular institution and its structures and baptised them.

Rev. John Williams, Clinton, North Carolina

My origins are from a West Highland Catholic family and my great grandmother used to relate family fables from years past. One story relates to one of the family being a priest. From your records do you have any note of a MacDonald or MacDonell from the parish of Glenelg in Inverness-shire going to Scalan? The earliest family record I have is of Ewen MacDonell died about 1830) married to Mary :illes, b. 1772, d. 1851. After this the amily moved to Mallaig, then Glas;ow and London. Any information w,ill be greatly appreciated.

Charles Francis, Diss, Norfolk

'Francis or James MacDonald, 'a glengarry man' (so at least close to g;lengel) was ordained at Scalan in 1736. Alexander MacDonald was ram Scotos in Knoydart (certainly ig;lengel) but he went to Rome in 1743f:rom the 'West Scalan' of Guidal. 'another of the same name returned from Rome to the same base of Scotos n 1767, and went to Canada with 'Knoydart emigrants about twenty fears later. Information from a 1966azrticle in the Innes Review which dis:usses the difficulties associated with the name MacDonald.

I have been meaning to join the Scalan Association for some time ... When my husband was alive we used to go to Scalan from time to time but I have not been there for a while. I hope, D.V., to visit in the coming year.

(Mrs) Bernadette Kerr, 'Loreto', Elgin

Since the last visit to Seal an we have suffered a loss in the retiral of our parish priest Canon Boyle who has done so much to foster parochial interest in Scalan. What will happen this year is anybody's guess. As for me, now in my 84th year, I'm finding it difficult to get about, but when I could - I did!

Margaret Stew art, Rosyth

The final letter is included as an example of a fund-awarding, formal, communication which is also a personal expression of the interest which is becoming so widespread. The intention of the Management Committee is to acknowledge all grants in a permanent way at Scalan once the work is complete. Bill McEwan has already done some sign-writing on this while updating the Scalanometer.

Thank you for enclosing the copy receipts and interim certificate from Taitt Building. I have pleasure in sending you a cheque for £2,000, being the grant awarded by the Scottish Churches Architectural Heritage Trust in 1991. I am extremely interested in the progress of Scalan and wish that I could see it. Perhaps next year. I enclose an application form so that you may give us details of the next phase.

Shirley Richardson, Hon. Secretary

Old Days in the Braes

Isobel Grant

Isobel Grant grew up between the two wars at Comelybank, close to Chapeltown, before moving with her family a little further off to the Bochel. In a sequence of recent letters from London (to be serialised here as long as they keep coming) she shares her memories - along with those of her mother.

In my mother's time, the children all took a peat to school at Chapeltown. There was a bunker in each room, no coal provided in those days. All the children only got a quarter of oatcakes in their schoolbag for lunch. It must have been pretty broken to pieces by the time they arrived at school. A drink at the school pump was all they got to wash it down.

Henrietta McHardy lived in the house which was the chapel, on the left side. I remember when she lived there. McGregor Stuart lived at the college when he had the farm at Scalan. He was a bachelor, and had a housekeeper. I used to call for tea. He once went to Blairs College and announced himself as Rector of the Scalan - they were quite amused. He belonged to Ladderfoot. His mother Sophia, a great Catholic, brought up her family so well one son knelt down at his bedside every night to say his prayers in his late seventies. She always came to church half an hour before eleven o'clock mass to pray. In those days some went to church on Good Friday from 12 noon to 3 p.m.

When she got frail she came to stay at Crombie Cottage with the horse and cart, with straw for a softer seat. She was adored by her family. Three sons went to Canada and sadly never came back, but now their family come over to visit cousins. Lots went abroad in those days, married, and could not manage the fare home, but most did keep up correspondence at Christmas time and sent photos, and when they died family sent the cutting in their papers: 'Fortified by the Rites of Holy Church'.

There were over 100 pupils in the school in my mother's day, and in fact there was a notice in each room 'Accommodation for 60 children'. There was large families in every house: 16 children in Sandy's house at the Scalan, 16 at Belnoe and 16 at Cairnmore at the shop house. We thought there was 15, but in the family tree we found a baby died called Elspeth at a few months old.

Every child left school at 14 years, some very clever but no chance then of getting further education: such a waste of brains. Farmers wanted their oldest son to carry on the farms, as if they left they would never return. Girls left to be trained as teachers, but boys worked on farms around home.

Isobel sent a fine old sepia photo of Scalan, backed with thick card and part of a set, which is now with Ann Dean. It shows black cattle grazing in front of Scalan and two men in cloth caps - one of them presumably McGregor Stuart, 'Rector of the Scalan'! So at least the presumptuous editor surmised, but on checking the point with Bill Grant, farmer of Nether Clashnoir and member of the Management Committee, he said that Willie Stuart never liked being called McGregor Stuart. And Isobel Grant herself provided clear - visual - evidence that he was not in the photo:

The men in the picture of Scalan would have been Willie and Fred Matheson, as Willie McGregor Stuart always wore a Homburg felt hat, green with age, not a cloth cap. His brother James at Cromby Cottage also wore a felt hat.

A nephew of Willie and Fred's from Glasgow brought up a crystal set with earphones and wanted to fix it up in the living room, but Willie wouldn't have the noise of a wireless so he set it up in the 10ft above the Barn. It was the first wireless in Glenlivet, so crowds came to the Scalan to hear it. I remember Lily took me out to hear it, and I donned the earphones and heard a lady talking. It was wonderful. I often had tea in the Scalan when it was a farmhouse. Willie McGregor Stuart had a housekeeper. When he retired he lived at Rosebrae, and went to mass and communion every morning at 8.30.



'While on the subject of Chapeltown School, readers may like to know that the first in a line of male dominies to serve the Braes was James Michie of Strathdon. After teaching at Achlascraw, in the early years of last century, he became a tenant of the farm of Scalan, evidently believing that farming was more profitable than teaching'. (Wm. Barclay, Schools and Masters of Banffshire 1925). So it was during the whisky boom -

and ever since, come to think of it.

Readers may also be interested to learn that the latest Innes Review has an article entitled 'Catholic Teachers in Scotland: the Liverpool Connection'. It discusses the more than 300 teachers (mostly from Scottish homes) who trained in Liverpool at Mount Pleasant College before the Sisters of Notre Dame came to Scotland in 1894. Ellen Smith, Ann McKee, and Ann and Catherine Gordon were all connected with Glenlivet, boarding at Duff town Catholic school as apprentice - or 'pupil' - teachers before completing the qualification in Liverpool.

While on the subject of that journal (and not even trying to disguise the fact that the editor of *Scalan News* is also the post-Reformation editor of the Innes) another article in the same issue makes reference to the seminary, although its main focus is the land of the 'West Scalans'. In 'The Clan Ranald and Catholic Missionary Successes, 1715-45' a 1722 Report to the General Assembly is quoted which shows that the first Scalan was no hovel: 'There is lately built a fashionable House with suitable office houses, a large Garden and guest Park for grazing well fenced about, this place belongs to Duke Gordon and there are brought youths from diverse corners in Scotland to be educated and after some stay in this nursery Such of them as are Judged most promising are pickt out by the Priest and sent regularly every year to Germany, France and other places in great numbers to be farther taught ...'

Book-Hunting: a Postscript

T. C. Barry

I was particularly interested in 'The Lost Library' (*Scalan News* 7) with its reference to Father Anthony Ross's 'Book-Hunting in the Highlands' because it jogged my memory of an incident during the last War. A national appeal had been launched by the Ministry of Supply for unwanted books and magazines. These were to be delivered to certain designated factories and warehouses, of which my father's in Dundee was one.

I cannot now remember the date, but shortly after this a sackful of books arrived at the warehouse by horse and cart. There was a scribble where the sender's name should have been and a suggestion that the station of origin was Glenlivet. The consignment remained unopened for several days. Then the foreman told my father he had emptied the sack to reveal 'a hale lot o' auld books, and would he throw them in the boiler?' Father was off to London that night and, not having time to examine the sack, left me to do it for him.

They were all leather bound, with one or two of vellum, and all of them seemed to be written in French. At that time I knew nothing of old books and not too much French, but I did discern the name 'Scalan' on several of them - although I had never heard of the place.

I reported this to my father when he returned, mainly because one of the books - as I recognised from the familiar Latin phrases - was obviously a Daily Missal. He realised at once that the books were part of a clerical library and phoned Bishop McGuire, then Co-adjutor Bishop in the Dunkeld diocese, to invite him to look over the books. The Bishop duly arrived, removed his dog collar and pectoral cross, and got down to examining the consignment. Almost all the books had come from Scalan, and the Bishop set many of them aside as too valuable to be destroyed by pulping. I cannot now remember how many books he took home with him or what he did with them, but it seemed a goodly number.

Are they now lying hidden somewhere in the Episcopal residence, or tucked away in some clerical attic? All I know is that I took home one of the Latin/French missals which Bishop McGuire apparently didn't want. Another volume which intrigued me, and which the Bishop left, was entitled *The Knights of Sasine* and printed on vellum. When I moved house in 1977 I had to get rid of a number of books as we were going to have no room for them in our new abode. I sold these to the late Ian Grant for £50 and that was the last I heard of them. Let's hope they went to a good home.

The Innes Review for Spring 1994 contains an excellent article summarising two major papers which have recently been published on both sides of the Atlantic (in scholarly journals which tend to evade the average intelligent reader) entitled 'Bishop Hay, Bishop Geddes and the Scottish Catholic Enlightenment'. Written by Dr Mark Goldie, Vice Master of Churchill College Cambridge, it draws attention to the fact that Bishops Hay and Geddes were intellectually involved (and surprisingly influential) citizens of Edinburgh when that city was achieving world fame as 'the Athens of the North'.

Dr Goldie devotes more space to George Hay, on account of his unpublished 200,000-word manuscript 'The Elements of Metaphysics', dated 1792 when he was, as for several years previously, spending the major part of his time in Glenlivet. The particular interest for members of the Association (which Dr Goldie has recently joined) lies in the fact that this summary of Hay's

very extensive reading and thinking was intended, among other things, to be a handbook for the education of seminarians at Scalan'. The item below, like so many which find their way into this newsletter, will seem relevant - in a round about way - to enlightened readers.

George Goldie, Architect

Mark Goldie

The very remoteness of Scalan is testimony to the precariousness of Catholicism in 18th-century Scotland. It needed to hide itself and not to provoke its Protestant governors. And few things were more provocative to the Presbyterian mind than a popish seminary. In the anti-popish riots of 1779 Bishop Hay's chapel and library in Edinburgh were burned down.

In that atmosphere, conversions to Catholicism were exceptionally rare. Yet in 1790, Bishop Hay, together with his lifelong friend and suffragan, Bishop Geddes, received into the Church the widow of an Edinburgh banker, Sophia Goldie. Her daughter's account of the conversion has survived in the family, as have a number of letters between Sophia and the bishops, preserved in the Scottish Catholic Archives. It is a story full of incident. In fear that her son and daughter would be seized from her by their Presbyterian guardians, Sophia fled with them to France. It was not a prudent move - more a case of jumping from the frying pan into the fire for France was in the grip of the Revolution. Sophia, together with eleven year-old Harriet and eight-year-old George, found themselves under house arrest with their hosts, the nuns of the Poor Clares convent at Rouen, in deadly fear of the Terror and amid daily news of the Guillotine's latest victims.

That, however, is a story that takes us too far from Scotland and Scalan. What brings us back to Scotland is the fact that Sophia's grandson, and George's son, another George Goldie (1828-87), became an architect, and was responsible for over a hundred Catholic churches and schools built in the British Isles during the great Victorian expansion of Catholicism. Among his sixteen works in Scotland, there is one chapel which is not so very far from Scalan: the charming church of St John the Evangelist at Fetternear, which lies just a couple of miles from Aquhorthies where the Scalan seminary was removed in 1799. In the chapel are memorial windows to Bishops Hay and Geddes. Thus it was that the bishops not only built their seminary and community of scholars at Scalan, but unwittingly laid a foundation for Scottish Catholic church building in the following century.

Castle Douglas: Church of St John, 1867.

Dalkeith: Lady Chapel of the Church of St David, 1864 (church 1854).

Dumfries: Extension (transepts, longer nave) to the Church of St Andrew, 1871.

Edinburgh: Lady Chapel of St Margaret's Convent, Whitehouse Loan, 1877.

Fetternear: Church of Our Lady of the Garioch and St John, 1859.

Galashiels: Completion of, and additions to, the Church of Our Lady and St Andrews, 1864 and 1873 (church begun 1858).

Girvan: Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, 1860 (rebuilt 1959).

Glasgow: Chapel of the Convent of the Good Shepherd, Dalbeith, 1856 (demolished).

Glasgow: Passionist Church of St Mungo, Parsons Street, Loanhead, 1866-69.

Glasgow: Enlargements (including Lady Chapel etc.) to the Church of St Joseph, North Woodside Road, 1872 (church built 1851).

Greenock: Church of St Mary, Patrick Street, 1861-62.

Lanark: Church of St Mary, 1856-59 (burnt 1907 and rebuilt).

Loanhead: Church of St Margaret, Clerk Street, 1878.

Selkirk: Church of St Joseph, 1866. West Calder: Church of Our Lady and St Bridget, 1877.

Wishaw: Church of St Ignatius, 1865 (enlarged 1883).



Fetternear: Church of Our Lady of the Garioch and St John

The British Isles during the great Victorian expansion of Catholicism. Among his sixteen works in Scotland, there is one chapel which is not so very far from Scalán: the charming church of St John the Evangelist at Fetternear, which lies just a couple of miles from Aquhorthies where the Scalán seminary was removed in 1799. In the chapel are memorial windows to Bishops Hay and Geddes. Thus it was that the bishops not only built their seminary and community of scholars at Scalán, but unwittingly laid a foundation for Scottish Catholic church building in the following century.

Not much is known about George Goldie's architectural and personal life, beyond a catalogue of his works. His Scottish buildings are listed below. If any reader has any information about the history surrounding any of those churches and parishes, or knows of any booklets about them, or old photographs or plans of them, I would be very interested to hear about it.

Two Schools at Scalán

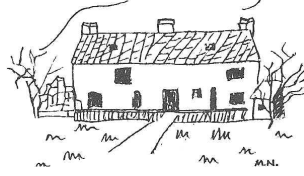
On a recent visit to the seminary, heading for the battlefield of Glenlivet (see p. 17) the editor found the Visitor's Book full of cheerful greetings from the pupils of two Aberdeen primary schools. St Peter's were there on Monday 9th May and St Joseph's on the 11th. The children probably do not know each other, although there is to be a first ever three schools picnic (including Holy Family) at Blairs on Sunday 19th June. In the combined account which follows St Peter's are first. For them Scalán came well on in a very full day.

We left school at about 9 o'clock on the Monday. We finally got out of the bus at St Ninian's, Tynet, to find what looked like a sheepcote but was actually a church, because it was an offence to practice religious beliefs at that time. Mrs Lyden got the key from a lady. She said, 'Remember this is a holy place', and we went in and said a little prayer. Straight ahead of us was a beautiful altar with two old chairs, a golden crucifix and a golden dove hanging from the ceiling. St Ninian's also had a lovely little window with some flowers on and Mary - I think that was my favourite part. We then went back outside and sat with our packed lunches on the grass and daisies in the sunshine. Well the boys sat in the shade under a tree but we (all the girls) wanted to attempt trying to get a tan. *[The Moray coast has been called the Riviera of Scotland, but only compared to Aberdeen - Ed.]*

After lunch and a wrong turning we arrived at St Gregory's Preshome. It was nearly the opposite on the outside, and advertised the fact that it was a church: DEO 1788. We went in, and it was decorated all over. There were lots of things made of marble and lots of old relics on display - very fancy and flamboyant. The lovely old organ was the biggest I'd ever seen. Kathy tried to play but it just droned away. Then we went back on to the bus for another two hours!

After a very bumpy ride we got to Pluscarden, parked the bus (well the driver did) and then had a long walk up to the Abbey. It was very quiet in church and the stained glass was incredible, but even more incredible was the amount of money we managed to spend in the gift shop. Then back to the bus.

I was shaken awake by Rachel who told me we were at Scalán, but there was a walk there and back: she didn't look too pleased because she was wearing her two-and-a-half inch platform shoes. Then we saw a sign, 'Scalán 3/4 mile'. Everyone complained (apart from the teachers, who are very fit and have had years of exercise) that their feet were sore and they couldn't walk any further - but we all did. I came across two squashed rabbits, as well as sheep droppings and cow pats, all of which had to be avoided. We ran (or in Rachel's case slid and tripped) the last bit to the Crombie Burn. I could visualise boys in black and blue tartan washing.



As we passed through a squeaky green gate I was aware that the place was sad. I can't see things like that but I can feel them, as if it had been deserted in the middle of nowhere and had seen better days, which of course it had. When we got in it was full of spiders and slaters and very cold, old and dilapidated. The workbook at school had said Scalan was a ruin. From the outside I thought the workbook was wrong, but once inside I realised it was correct. Inside that old building we saw pieces of wood on the floor. We went through a dusty corridor into a dusty room. In the dusty room there was a dusty box beneath a dusty window and in the dusty box there was a perfectly good visitors book. Everyone crowded round to sign it, and we found the people from 1992 and 1993.

While everybody was upstairs We took photos but unfortunately they didn't come out. Because everybody was walking around upstairs it sounded as if the ceiling was going to fall in! I suddenly thought of a poem and wandered into a doorpost. I stood at the top of the stairs dreaming, then Rachel brought me out of my trance by asking what my favourite skirt was in the 'Shout' magazine.

We went outside again and I took with me a bit of Scalan and some pottery. After having photos taken outside we were jumping across the burn like the children of long ago would have done.

When the St Peter's children finally reached the St Michael Centre in Tamintaul they were invited to join Fr CoUn Stewart and his famous dog Ced on a four mile (some said six mile) hike, proving themselves Superpersons, before retiring to bed tired but happy - and still talking. St Joseph's were two days behind them at Scalan.

It was a blustery, chilly day. We could not see the building even when we were nearly there. It was wonderfully secluded and protected against enemies. We saw two very interesting pieces of architecture: an old ruin which was the original building (it looked as if it had been burnt down) and another old building, this time standing and even habitable. Finally the teachers arrived and sorted us into groups.

I was in the first group which entered through the low front door. The exterior was stone, but inside the floors and ceiling were of wood. It is good that they are making sure it does not fall down. Now when you go in you can see that they are "fixing the place up. It was authentic, with lots of atmosphere which started to seep into everybody:

Down in the Braes of Glenlivet, Scalan kept the faith alive In the days of Christian killing.

It was as if the boys were still there, a kind of presence looking down on us. We went through all the rooms: the dormitories where they slept, the chapel where they prayed, the dining room where they ate. After the second group had seen over the building we went back in and everybody sang a hymn. It was as if we had taken the boys' places when we sang as they would have.

When we got back to the bus we felt relief because of the warmth, but we also felt sad that we couldn't stay longer at Scalan. It was an experience everyone should have:

We sang a song of love and praise, We had a lovely holy day.

The Battle of Glenlivet, 1594

Bill McEwan

Many visitors to Scalan will be unaware that there took place, on 3rd October 1594, the Battle of Glenlivet on a site not very far from Scalan. The battle (sometimes named after the burn *AU t a' Chailleachain*, pronounced hullachan) was fought between the Campbell forces under the Protestant Earl of Argyll and the Gordons, led by the Catholic Earls of Gordon and Errol.

A booklet has been published to mark the four hundredth anniversary, dealing exhaustively with the battle and with its causes and aftermath. It is written by Sir Edward Peck, author of much material about Glenlivet and district, and indeed about the North East in general. Sir Edward has been for many years a leading spirit in the Avonside Conservation Group, of which I am a humble member.

One interesting feature of the battle is that the Campbells, during their panic-stricken retreat, are said to have thrown their weapons into a small lochan which became known as 'The Loch of the Swords'. Why they did this I'll never know, unless they then just

walked down the hill, whistling innocently and pretending they'd never been near the battle.

Sir Edward is a retired diplomat. One day he asked me - diplomatically - to locate the loch and see what state it was in. Not that I know much about lochs, but the wily Sir Edward was aware that I stayed quite near to this particular one. I had been in the area many times but had never seen the loch, the area being very densely afforested.

There is a saying up here that November always borrows a few days from June, and it was on one of these November days that I set off up through the forest. As I've said before I'd prowled about the area many times, but this was official! As I tramped onwards and upwards I was sure that there would be many souvenirs of the battle lying around: swords, targes, and possibly a pistol or two. I made a mental note of all the antique dealers I knew - or should I be honest? Take my treasures in a large sack to Edinburgh or Glasgow, march in and empty it on top of a startled Curator's desk?

I began to feel a little tired: did I mention that I had put on my heaviest steel-capped boots in case I stubbed my toes on any old cannon balls that were still lying around? My excitement mounted as I drew near the battle site and caught the glint of metal in the shafts of sunlight filtering through the tall trees. With trembling hands I picked up a faded red cylindrical object and, brushing away four hundred years of leaf mould and dirt, I deciphered the name 'McEwan'.

The McEwans had been here - I always knew it! I proceeded with martial tread and head held high: this for me was now hallowed ground. A little further on I found two more of these objects and then a great many more. Naive though I was, I began to have doubts about these artefacts when I found that the Clan Whitbread had been there, and my illusions were completely shattered when I found that the Clan Budweiser was also represented. Sadly the only McEwan blood shed on this site was when I tore my pants on some rusty barbed wire.

Eventually I found the elusive loch, or pond, tucked away two hundred yards off the main track. It was full of tyres and assorted rubbish, with a vintage ancient Highland Morris Mini sitting in state in the middle. Does anyone know the Gaelic for 'Little Loch in the Woods where you can dump your old Tractor Tyres'?

The Forestry Commission has promised to clear up the loch for the four hundredth anniversary of the battle, so if you've time a visit to the site would be most rewarding. For collectors of useless information, it was the last time the harp was carried into battle.



, Ah'm telling ye Donald, this is the last time I'm carryin' the harp into battle!'

Why not buy Sir Edward's booklet and read all about it? Available at £3.60 in all the obvious outlets in the Glenlivet area, or by writing to Sir Edward Peck, 'Torrans', Tomintoul - in which case add 19p for the stamp. Most of the illustrations are by Bill McEwan. It is also a readable account, based on good and impartial scholarship. Sir Edward, no Catholic himself (though a member of the Association) concludes that there was an element of 'frame up' in the politics which caused James VI to send Argyll's army north. He either missed or chose not to use one very partial account. It is the report to HQ of Fr Alexander McQuhirrie, S.J., translated from the Latin by another Jesuit, Fr William Forbes Leith, in his Narratives of the Scottish Reformation (1885).

Huntly and Errol thought it would be more for their honour, in so just a cause, to die sword in hand than to be murdered in their own houses. They collected fifteen hundred horsemen from among their friends and retainers, with a few foot-soldiers, and invoked the Divine assistance by confession and communion. Father Gordon, with two or three other Jesuit Fathers, heard the confessions of the whole army and gave them communion.

They asked to have their weapons sprinkled with holy water, and marked with a white cross upon their arms and coats, to let the enemy see that they were fighting in defence of the cross of Christ. Gordon of Auchindoun, Father Gordon's brother, being desired to fasten the cross upon his armour, answered that he would show how truly he held it in his heart, but was so occupied in arranging his troop that he had not a moment to spare. On their engaging in battle at Glenlivet, Auchindoun was killed but victory remained with the Catholics. The heretics were routed with loss; of the Catholics a few slain and many wounded but it observed that none of those who the cross lost their lives. The Earl of received two wounds and his ! no less than eight. They ated their victory to the prayers of

'Fathers of the Society, who continued on their knees all the time of the engagement.

The ruined castle of Auchindoun, from which the army set out up Glen Rinnes after receiving the sacraments, can be seen near Duff town. Sir Pat Gordon's head was hacked off by Argyll's men before he was solemnly interred after, in the cairn which features on the back cover. The way to approach it is by a minor road half way between Tonavoulin and Duff town, but two thirds of the stones were washed away in the 'Muckle Spate' of Twenty (1829) and the precise location is no longer very clear - at least on the basis of two hurried visits by the Editor.

Anyone wishing to follow in Bill Mc Ewan's footsteps may do so starting at the Morinish Woods car park. After two miles on a forest track good enough for cars (if the gate is open) you come to a bridge which is the boundary between two forestry estates. At that point you have just passed a rather picturesque path on the left which leads uphill to the Loch of the Swords. It proved too steep for the editorial motor bike, but in any case on that day in May fallen trees were blocking the way. The main forest path is already signposted by red squirrel emblems. Since the Avonside Conservation Group is very active these days, publicising many local points of interest, we can reasonably hope for clear directions - and access - to the central site of the Battle of Allt a' Choileachain.



Finally ...

The last issue of *Scalan News* ended with an invitation to meet at the Well of the Lecht picnic site on Sunday 7 July, before one o'clock, and 'tramp it through the heather' across to Scalan. Once Mark Hansford's term is over he intends to place markers on the former path south of the Clash of Scalan, but feet are required to re-establish it. R.S.V.P. does not apply, but for correspondence on this or any other editorial matter the address is:

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