



news

No. 16, June 1998

'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, Scalán and the other colleges will be mentioned with veneration, and all that can be learned concerning them will be recorded with care ...' (Rev. John Geddes, Rector of Scalán 1762-65)



DR ANSON. 1946.

This year the AGM of the Scalán Association comes too close to the Annual Pilgrimage Mass on 7 July (Sunday 4 p.m. as usual) to give even the briefest account of it. By the time *Scalán News* reaches you a report by Castlegate Design will have been presented to members on 16 June, after Mass inside Scalán and lunch in the Braes Hall. Marion Donald, who heads this firm of Aberdeen architects, is a member of the Association who has written for the magazine, and we may presume that her proposals for the final interior stage of restoration will be appropriate.

Visitors to Scalán in recent weeks included Primary 7 children from Holy Family School in Aberdeen, who were staying in the St Michael Centre, Tomintoul. Their teacher Mrs Paterson tells me that it was so cold on the day in question that the other adults retreated to the car while she tried to inspire the class with stories of penal times and they tried to grip pencils and draw the building. One of those who took shelter may be excused. Fr Winston D'Souza comes from Bombay, where the climate is much hotter. Even his heroic Jesuit forebear St Francis Xavier, who went to India as a missionary in the 16th century, might have had difficulty with a cold Braes day in May. The Holy Family children will have been thinking of that day while packaging and posting what comes through your letterbox.

In June a group of 19 religious sisters who work in the Diocese of Dunkeld were at Scalán, and Bishop Logan said mass. Sr Aloysius and others from the Elgin community of Mercy nuns took responsibility for the safe passage and nourishment of the visitors. Local committee members were on hand, and our Treasurer Jane McEwan made a speech about the Association - result, 'a generous cheque'.

This issue offers the usual mixture of items on Scalán and related matters. Fr Briody's homily from last year's Scalán Mass is published as promised. In a postscript, reference is made to a former Bishop of Aberdeen leading 'the pilgrims along the track which stretches for more than a mile from Chapeltown,' which explains the particular Peter Anson drawing which appears on the facing page. Two readers have written about their interest in Anson, and there are other drawings by him in this issue of Aquhorties, Preshome and Tynet, Ann Dean has not only illustrated (twice) an extract from the forthcoming Isobel Grant book but also her own account of Bishop Hay on his travels, plus a remarkably interesting article by Alison Gray, a new member of the Association who writes from Orkney. Her account of the Enzie through Episcopalian eyes links in turn with a piece by the editor (AR - see inside back cover) which may stimulate thoughts on *the* building as well as building in general.

Last issue promised the rest of Jock Sharp's Scalán poem, and also something on Gibston, near Huntly, which became an alternative venue for clergy AGMs. There is no space for either, but Gibston not Mortlach explains 'the deliberate mistake' (Dom Odo Blundell's) in connection with the frontispiece.

The following item from a marvellous collection of press-cuttings made by Mairi Gordon, teacher at Chapeltown School when it closed in 1960, introduces the text of Fr Briody's homily from last year's Scalán Mass: 'Students from St Mary's College, Blairs, have been busy in their spare time over the last few weeks renovating a house at Scalán in the Braes of Clenlivet where George Hay was consecrated bishop in 1769. The students have been at work inside the stone-built two-storey building in preparation for ceremonies there tomorrow to mark the 200th anniversary of Bishop Hay's consecration.'

Scalán Homily, 1997

Rev. Michael Briody

The first time I came to Scalán was 28 years ago as a student at Blairs when we gathered here with Bishop Conti's predecessor, Bishop Michael Foylan, to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the consecration as Bishop of George Hay, whom most people would pinpoint as the greatest name in the history of the Catholic Church in Scotland in Penal Times. We gathered here because the ceremony took place here, in the faraway room, upstairs. It is good to visit that room and imagine the event, as it is to wander round the various rooms and imagine how they lived here. How did they manage? What was life like for them? What was their daily timetable? What did they eat? How did they dress? How did they cope with the weather? All these questions interest me and we know large parts of the answers, but one question is more important still: what kind of people were they?

It is nice to come here for history or nostalgia, but above all it has to be a place of faith, a sacred place. I have no hesitation in

advertising this annual event to my parishioners as a pilgrimage, because here we stand on holy ground. It is the sacred nature of this place which has grown on me over the years. For me it is a great privilege to be asked to preach here and it is a very happy coincidence that it should happen today, the twentieth anniversary of my ordination to the priesthood. I am very happy to spend it on pilgrimage to Scalán.

Power in Weakness

St Paul tells us in the second reading of a conversation he had in prayer with the Lord about some weakness that afflicted him. The Lord tells him 'My grace is enough for you: my power is at best in weakness.' St Paul mulls this over and reaches the conclusion not to deny his weaknesses, not to pretend they are not there, and not even to wish they would miraculously disappear, but to recognise them as the entry point for God's powerful grace. It is only when we recognise our need for God that he can come to live in us and work in us. We become strong with his strength. We are then able to do things we were not able to do before, and we are more than happy to give God the credit for it all. 'I am,' St Paul says, 'quite content with my weaknesses, and with insults, hardships, persecutions ... for it is when I am weak that I am strong.'

Scalán was built at a time when, to human eyes, the Catholic Church in Scotland was in a state of weakness. Scalán itself portrayed this weakness in several ways. Its remote location was called for out of a need for some security. It always operated on a very modest scale. Twelve students would be the maximum at anyone time, although normally it would be very much less than that. It had constant money problems. A small farm was attached, and the superior had to manage it with the help of the students, but it only provided for the community and never really generated the sort of profit which would have paid for other necessities. Help from elsewhere was erratic. In fact one criticism of Scalán was that the students spent too much time working the farm. Another distraction was that the priest in charge had to cater for the spiritual needs not just of the students but the surrounding Catholic population, which was considerable. Apart from all that, the chequered history of the place is a series of mishaps:

1726: Soldiers were stationed in the glen and the seminary was temporarily closed.

1728: The college was twice visited by soldiers who did some damage, but the community managed to escape because of warnings.

1729: The second Duke of Gordon died. He was the local powerful Catholic landowner who had given the college a home at Scalán and protected it as best he could against government soldiers. His successor was an Episcopalian and there were fears that he would have the college closed. In 1739 it is recorded that he threatened to do so but was dissuaded.

10 May 1746: After Culloden, Scalán was destroyed by Cumberland's troops. Sufficient warning meant that everyone had left with what valuables could be carried.

1747: A new start was made but in 1748 troops were stationed at Corgarff, which was considered uncomfortably close, and plans to reopen the college were shelved.

1749: A new start was made, but until 1753 troops in the area were still a potential threat.

(I should say that the present house never saw any of this excitement, as it was only completed in 1767.)

1760: On a slightly different note, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland sent two ministers to enquire into the state of religion in Scotland. They visited Scalán, about which the General Assembly had often expressed its opposition. They were invited into the house, but the ministers stayed on their horses and the superior reported that they 'rode off expressing surprise that so great a noise should have been made about a place that made so poor an appearance to them and seemed of so little consequence.'

All of this portrays what to human eyes represents weakness and failure. Yet Scalán played an indispensable role in providing over one hundred priests for the Catholic church in Scotland at a crucial time. A picture of weakness, yes, but I cannot think of many houses of this size which have made a comparable contribution to the life of the Scottish Catholic Community. It gained a place of great affection in the hearts of those who knew what had been achieved here. As one priest and former student, John Farquharson, wrote when Scalán was about to close in 1799: 'Old Scalán's approaching dissolution affects me much for old lang syne; next summer I intend - God willing - to shed a few tears over it.' It is a place which still arouses emotions, because here men of Faith lived humbly, quietly got on with the work, endured poverty, and difficulties of many kinds, dismissed the temptation to despair, but persevered in the hope of building for the future and preparing better days which others, like us, would enjoy but which they might never live to see themselves. They lived by Faith. Like St Paul, they could hear the voice of the Lord saying: 'My grace is enough for you: my power is at its best in weakness.' Like St Paul, they could say 'I am quite content with my weaknesses, and with insults, hardships, persecutions ... for it is when I am weak that I am strong.'

The Church Today

When we look at the Church today we can see signs that to human eyes are proof of weakness: a lack of vocations to the Priesthood; a drop in Mass attendance; the humiliations of the last year; the opposition of our society to the teaching of Christ. ... In our own

private lives we will be aware of weaknesses in charity, in prayer, in honesty, in self control. .. There is a temptation to throw in the towel many times, but despair, hopelessness and pessimism are not Christian reactions to difficulties. Personally I find much of the talk and activity surrounding the promotion of vocations to be so pessimistic in tone that we can be sure that the Lord is not listening. If we pray thinking that the Lord is not going to answer our prayer, we can be sure he won't. A conscious effort needs to be made to avoid pessimism in our approach to our problems because it only demoralises people. Problems and weaknesses we do have. These should not be denied. They should be faced realistically. The Church will never gain from failing to face up to the truth, but it should all be done in a spirit of humility which sees these moments as opportunities to allow Christ to come flooding back into our lives again. 'Ye might not thank the Lord for the weaknesses, but we should thank him for the opportunities they provide. Our weaknesses are entry points for the Lord, to take up home in us again, to renew us, to make us grow again. Like St Paul we can hear the Lord saying: 'My grace is enough for you: my power is best in weakness.' Like St Paul we can say: 'I am quite content with my weaknesses, and with insults, hardships, persecutions ... for it is when I am weak that I am strong.' In the Gospel, Jesus could work no miracle in his home town because they would not accept him. If we flounder around trying to solve our problems by ourselves without returning to a spirit of humble prayer, close to Jesus, we are certain to fail, but if we allow the Lord in again he will work miracles beyond our wildest imagining.

Today's Gospel Acclamation proclaimed: 'The Word was made flesh and lived among us.' It should bring to mind the picture of Christ coming into the world in poverty and humility, and of his dying in agony, but also of him rising in glory and still living today, because despite everything his name is revered in every part of the globe, including here in Scotland. Here St Ninian and St Columba whom we specially venerate this year, as well as many others down through sixteen centuries, including the people here at Scalán, have laboured against all the odds to make the name of Jesus better known and loved. We in our time must do the same.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, knew what it was to wait for better days. She also knew how to wait - by prayerful, hopeful and joyful anticipation and sensible preparation, as she did in the years before the Lord's birth. She taught the Apostles to prepare joyfully for Pentecost. She still teaches the Church today to prepare for the Lord to come again whether at the end of time or to herald a new period of renewal and growth in the Church. Let us wait with Mary, praying in hope, in humility, in trust and with quiet Christian joy in our hearts.

Here is an end-piece on the event to which Fr Briody contributed while he was a student at Blairs: 'Almost 900 pilgrims joined Bishop Foylan of Aberdeen on Sunday when he offered Mass on the spot where two centuries ago George Hay was consecrated bishop at the little seminary of Scalán. The Bishop led the pilgrims along the track which stretches for more than a mile from Chapeltown, Banffshire, to the seminary site in the Braes of Glenlivet. In the congregation were priests of the Aberdeen Diocese, Sisters of Mercy, Sisters of Nazareth and members of the Sacred Heart Congregation, together with the Rector, staff and students from Blairs College. Preaching at the Mass, Canon A. S. MacWilliam, St Peter's, Aberdeen, recalled something of the story of Bishop Hay. Bishop Foylan expressed his delight at the large turnout and thanked the members of the Scalán Association who had arranged the pilgrimage.'

Bishop Hay and the Leslie's of Fetternear

Ann Dean

In 1783 Bishop George Hay was stationed at Aberdeen. He travelled to the various mission stations on foot or by horse, and on his journeys was dependent on the hospitality offered by local Catholic families. In Aberdeenshire and Banffshire the families with which he most frequently stayed were the Leslie's of Fetternear, two branches of the Menzies family (who eventually gave Blairs to the Church) at Pitfodels and Conraig, and the Inneses of Balnacraig. Without these vital links in the chain between Aberdeen, the Enzie, Strathisla, Strathbogie and Scalán the work of Bishop Hay, and to a lesser extent Bishop Geddes, would have been immeasurably more difficult.

These were the main gentry families, but there were also lesser Gordons at Barrack in Buchan, and at Tullochallum near what is now the village of Duff town. On one tour Bishop Geddes said Sunday Mass at Barrack after sleeping at Auchintoul (by Aberchirder) and then proceeded to his next overnight stop at Fetternear.

Bishop on Horseback

Bishop Hay rode a large 'blue' horse (actually iron-grey) which was kept at Scalán. There is a description of him reaching Tullochallum ('a house of frequent resort' where he partly wrote such popular works as *The Sincere Christian*) along with John Cumming - who passed these stories on: 'The Bishop would arrive on horseback, attended by his servant mounted on another horse and having behind him, on the saddle, a large leather valise filled with necessaries for his journey, and often so full as to hang down as far as the rider's feet on both sides and to require a very wide stable door.'

Apart from vestments and mass-kit, the valise contained medicines, for George Hay had been recruited to care for the Jacobite wounded in 1745 while he was still a student (and Protestant) in Edinburgh. 'Notice was given to the Catholics of the vicinity that

Mass would be said next morning. The corn kiln was usually fitted up on these occasions as a temporary chapel. An altar, hastily arranged, was erected at one end of the barn, a blanket serving the purpose of a reredos, and another as a canopy over the altar.'



Favourite House of Call

John Leslie succeeded to the estate of Fetternear in 1777, reclaiming it from the control of a lawyer who had systematically felled and sold off the woods of the estate, but did not live there for another five years. Between 1783 and 1788 Bishop Hay baptised five children of John Leslie and Violet Dalzell in the domestic chapel. He also shared in the family's sorrows. When the children's Aunt Katie Dalzell came to Mass on the last Sunday of June 1788 she 'seemed more than ordinary serious on that occasion.' Later the same week Miss Dalzell was drowned while bathing in the River Ythan. The Bishop paid at least three visits to Fetternear each year - in one letter he described it as 'always a favourite house of call on my journeys.' During a period of despondency in 1785, when he felt he had 'no talent for governing others', Hay considered retiring - either to Concraig (newly purchased by David Menzies in the parish of Skene) or to Fetternear.

In 1788 the Bishop began a five year spell in charge of Scaln which included overseeing much of the reconstruction work there. The link with Fetternear grew stronger, as shown by an entry in the accounts: '12 Nov. 1791. To draught for Captⁿ Lesley's meal, £20.' The seminary was never self sufficient, despite the fact that its land was farmed very efficiently, and food had to be bought as well as books. This purchase of oatmeal from the Lowlands was easily the largest item under Corn, but barley and bere were also bought in, probably for use with hops in brewing ale. The single 'boll of flour from Elgin' may have been wheat for Communion hosts.

Scalan to Aquhorties

In May 1793 the Catholic Relief Act (Scotland) passed both Houses of Parliament, and plans were soon afoot to move the seminary from Scaln to somewhere more convenient. Oxhill in

the Enzie was the favoured site .. - Hay had begun his priesthood at nearby Preshome and his links with the area were close. Nevertheless it was the Bishop who gave closest attention to the financial implications of a move to Oxhill, and who overruled the wishes of senior clergy. In 1796, encouraged no doubt by ties of friendship and business, he negotiated with John Leslie for the lease of Aquhorties 'on which to build the new Scaln'.

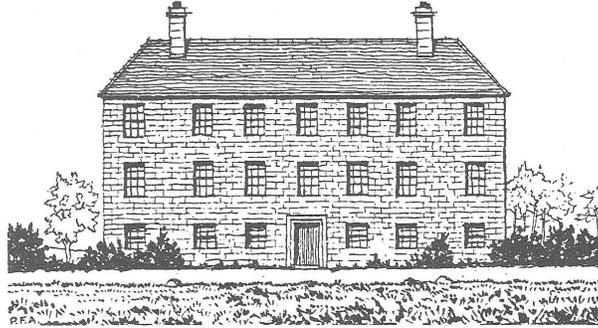
A bargain was negotiated early in the following year for the extensive farm of Aquhorties: '200 arable, 400 of moss and hill, two miles from Fetternear, a moderate rent and a 107 year lease.' Work on the new college building began in May 1797, and over the next two-year period Bishop Hay often visited Fetternear from Edinburgh to supervise practical matters, as he had previously done for Scaln. No doubt he stayed with the Leslie family on these occasions.

The Bishop moved the students and their superior, the Rev. Mr John Sharp, from Scaln to Aquhorties in the summer of 1799, and he himself came north to take up residence in the new threestorey building which had been designed by the architect James Byres of Tonley. Anne Baxter, who with her husband maintains the House of Aquhorties in very fine style, serves on the Committee of the Scaln Association with particular expertise in fund-raising. The Baxters have carefully preserved all that they have been able to learn about George Hay's last years in what is now their home. A plaque was erected there to honour Bishop Hay in 1993 (*ScN* 7).

The Leslies were close neighbours, and five sons (Charles, Anthony, Edward, Francis and Louis) received their education at Aquhorties between 1799 and 1809. The Bishop, who died two years later, had for some time been slowing down physically and becoming confused in his mind, but he continued to take an interest in the students and was still able to walk over to Fetternear for

dinner. George Hay's last journey took place on 22 October 1811, when he was buried in the Leslie vault under the ancient aisle of St Ninian's Chapel on the Fetternear estate. In the letter which Mr Sharp sent to Bishop Cameron in Edinburgh describing the funeral two references to clothing stand out:

'Our boys all dressed in mourning accompanied the hearse and made a very decent appearance ... I hope you will have no objection to my distributing Bishop Hay's old clothes among the servants and the poor. I believe his whole wardrobe though exposed would not fetch more than twenty shillings.'



Readers Write

Mr James Cameron Stuart reminds us that Scottish Catholic history is not taught in our Catholic schools. More's the pity. Some time ago now, when teaching Church History for fourteen years at Drygrange, I did devote some time to revealing to future priests the proud history of the 'Scottish Catholic Resistance' after 1560, with special reference to Scalán. Only a small sketch, but better than nothing.

Fr W. P. Crampton, Falkirk

Future deacons heard a good deal on that very theme, including Scalán, while attending their weekend courses at St. Mary's, Kinnoull last year, when I (AR) drew a parallel between the shortage of priests in penal times and their own vocation to the Permanent Diaconate.

Reference was made in *Scalan News 15* to the 'Marcus Dean Report'. Extracts appeared in the President's Report, June 1997, and in the Scalán Association Secretary's letter, May 1998.

For accuracy's sake, and in consideration of Marcus Dean's reputation as an architect, it should be pointed out that the so-called 'Marcus Dean Report' was written by his aunt, and was based on the information given to her by her nephew on an earlier visit which they made to Scalán. She takes full responsibility for the compiling and contents of this report.

Ann Dean, Inch

Sorry for the misreporting, Ann. Your own views on what should be done to complete the restoration, with or without family/professional advice, are valued by members who recall your 'Scalan: the Next Stage', ScN 10.

I was delighted to find out that the late Dr A. T. Macqueen and Pitkerro House, Broughty Ferry, had featured in *Scalan News*, because I have been commissioned to do stained-glass work there. The Annunciation window of two lights is to be removed, then adapted and transposed to a new location, and I have been asked to make new windows. While working at this fine Lorimer house, I hope to learn more about the religious community started by Dr Macqueen and his wife.

Martin Farrelly, St Margaret's, Aboyne

It's good to hear from that address. Mgr MacWilliam retired there after many years at St Peter's, in the Castlegate of Aberdeen. Before that he was at Chapelton helping to found the Scalán Association.

It is an American subscriber to *Scalan News* who writes. I enjoy your little magazine immensely, and hope to make it for the July 1998 Mass at Scalán. May I ask a favor? I am trying to locate a copy of an out-of-print book by Peter F. Anson, an author not so well known in this country. *Bishops at Large*, published in the 1960s, is practically unknown in the States but it represents superb scholarship, historical method, analysis and drama. I would gladly pay up to US\$50 for a copy.

Fr John Williams, Clinton, NC

Even my collection of Anson books, most of which originally belonged to 'Canon Sandy' MacWilliam, doesn't run to that one. Perhaps someone can help?

I am a mature student doing a Fine Arts course at Moray College and have decided to make 'Peter Anson: His Life and Work' the title of a research project. His name just keeps cropping up. Any discussion of local church buildings and he is mentioned. I decided to do a fishing boat/harbour scene for an environmental painting module - thought I'd see what others had done, and of course found Peter Anson's *Fishing Boats and Fishing Folk*. Went to a talk by Bro. Augustine at Pluscarden Abbey on the Caldey Conversion, and then heard of *The Benedictines of Caldey*, Anson's account of his Anglican community coming over to Rome. Fell in love with Pluscarden and decided to read up on its history - Anson again, with *A Monastery in Moray*. Decided to become a Benedictine oblate, and on reading *A Roving Recluse* discovered that he too had been an oblate after leaving Caldey Island - I could go on!

Did you know that Anson was on the Net, featuring the Anson Gallery in Buckie Library? Mostly fishing boats, though, not religious sites. Forres Museum holds much of his work. Since Anson is regularly mentioned in *Scalan News* (loved Mary Harding's description of lunch at Rothiemay along with Ann Dean's drawing) I wondered if you could supply me with information on his drawings of Scalari/Tynet or other old church buildings. I was delighted to discover a 1935 water colour of Scalán on Mgr Copland's sitting-room wall.

Kathy Moar, Mosstodloch

A very appropriate place for it, since young John Copland was at Blairs when Anson's caravan stopped there on the way to Glenlivet, when his publicity began the process of saving Scalán. This issue contains a number of Anson

drawings, partly in response to your enthusiasm.

Buidernach Cemetery

There was an item on 'The Buidernach' in the December 1994 issue, quoting the Rev. R. H. Calder's poem 'The Buidernach Bairn'. Further discussion of the recently restored ancient site followed in 'Graveyard Ramblings' (AR, *ScN 12*) but only recently has it become clear - to this editor at least - how much is owed to Tom Stuart. Tom proudly reports that for 89 years he has lived in the house where he was born, the Old Post Office, Glenlivet, BALLINDALLOCH AB37 9BT. The full postal address honours his former role in the community, and affords readers the chance to write and request the booklet he has compiled about his part in restoring a site .which looks over to Scalán from the same considerable height above sea level. The following extract is taken from *The Northern Scot*:

'Local historian Mr Tom Stuart, who started a campaign to rescue the Buidernach burial ground in 1993, has unearthed more facts about its past. Said Mr Stuart, "The oldest stone mentioned in the last report was 1794, but a friend and I went up with scrubbing brushes and discovered a flat stone with 'Here rests the mortal remains of John Gordon late farmer at Clashmore who died 8th May 1790 aged 83 years.' We also discovered my wife's greatgrandfather's stone - 'John McGregor died at Scalán 4th July 1880 aged 80 _ years.'"

'Until the present Forestry Commission track was made no roads led to the Buidernach, and coffins had to be carried across the fields either from Nether Clashnoir or, on the other side of the hill, from Knockandhu past Achnarrow farm. Four mourners, using what were called handspokes, carried the coffin. As 1936 saw a very warm dry period, the first motor hearse managed to reach the cemetery gates bearing the remains of James Irvine of Portsoy. A week later a hearse again reached the Buidernach with the coffin of William McGillivray, known locally as the "Aul' Sojer".'

1 (Ed/ AR) asked Tom about a former Glenlivet postman who wrote for the *Banffshire Journal*, and also about who had been the Braes postie before the last war: I remember Mr J. A. Grant very well for his reporting on so many local events over a long number of years. The Braes postman who recalled thirty-two children coming down the Scalán road when he was a pupil at Chapeltown School was James Lamb of Tomnareave. As a joiner my father was instructed to renew the inside of his house. James would make a cup of tea every day for my father, the two masons and me, but when his postal duties made him late he brought each of us a bottle of beer from the Shop. One day when working with my father there, clearing out above an old wooden box bed, I found a very long gun and handed it to James. 'Well, well,' he said, 'I was born here over seventy years ago and lived here all my life but never knew it was there.' He merely threw it outside against a wall and I never knew what became of it. Later it was believed to have been taken back from the Battle of Culloden.

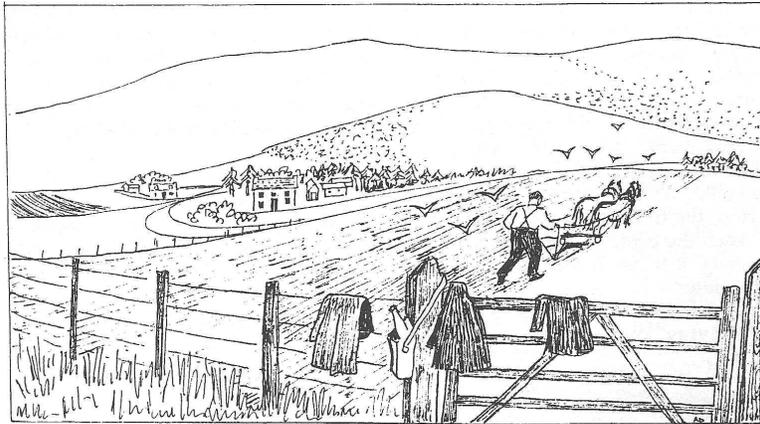
It is time we heard again from Isobel Grant now that Tales of the Braes of Glenlivet (mentioned a few times since 1994) is almost complete. The following extract from one of her thirteen chapters includes drawings by Ann Dean.

People of the Braes

Isobel Grant

A family of Mc;Kays packed up and were leaving for Canada, so my uncle let them stay in the Shoemaker's shop for a few weeks. There was another little room at the back for a bedroom. I expect their mother cooked on the fire. They had a baby, and also a nice little boy. One day he didn't come to school, and the next day he told the teacher, 'I was away getting my photo taken for my passport.'

They were relatives of the McKays Clashnoir. There was no water in the house at Nether Clashnoir then, and ten children grew up in it. Jamie McKay who farmed there put on three jackets when he started ploughing in the fields on a cold day. As the day got a little warmer he took one off and left it at the foot of the field. Then in the afternoon he threw another one off. The third was finally discarded and he ended up in his shirtsleeves. He got the nickname 'Jamie Jackets' from this.



Miss Nicol was a teacher who arrived in the Braes from Bathgate and lodged with us until her mother came to keep house for her. She was a very good teacher. After the six weeks that students did in these days, at the end of the Craiglockhart training and before their first post, she was awarded the prize. She once asked Sydney Gordon Lagual how he knew something: 'Who told you?' He was quite young. He said, 'I found it out myself.' Sydney was brilliant (the whole family were clever) but so shy. They led a very sheltered life at Lagual.

Miss Nicol had lovely auburn hair. After a while she married the postman, Charlie Stuart, and went to live at Edina next The Pole, so she became known as Mrs Stuart Edina. She had a wonderfully powerful voice which soared above the choir at Tombae and filled the Church. It's a pity her voice wasn't trained or she would have beaten Maria Callas. After they were married she came up every Sunday with Charlie Postie to visit his mother at Eskemulloch. When we were children and had a sunny day, during the summer holidays, we would walk down to her house for tea and then home again. Charlie's route took him up past Thain, and one time he found a hen's egg laid well away from the house. He just cracked it open and ate it raw. Some time after he told us that, I came upon one there myself, but it was in a pool covered with ice and I couldn't get it out - maddening!

My sister was asked to look after a young girl Jean Belnoe going to her first dance. Alisdair Ladderfoot, my sister and the girl walked together to Tombae. When it came to the end of the dance a man wanted to see her home but my sister wouldn't allow it. Alisdair was brought over. He took one arm and my sister took the other and they pulled her off home five miles away. What a laugh her mother had when she was told about it! Years later she married the man and they had several children. He was much older, but she said, 'Better to be an old man's darling than a young man's slave.'

Once I asked a girl who lived at Nether Clashnoir if she was coming to the dance on Friday. She said, 'No, you don't need to go to the dances when you've got your man.' How our mother laughed when I told her! One girl, Polly Rattray, thought she would get a permanent wave so she went all the way to Elgin. We were all anxious to see how she would look with her hair all curly. I was disappointed when I discovered that it wasn't really permanent, and that it would grow out. I thought one perm would last a lifetime.

Dances used to be in the Braes School. It was never quite the same after the Hall was built in 1930. Everyone loved the Chapeltown dances. Lux was sprinkled on the floor before the dance to make it slippery. What a scrubbing of the floor there was on a Saturday afterwards! Ian McGillivray's mother Nellie and John Belnoe's mother Bell at Auchnascraw helped our mother. The froth bubbled round them as they scrubbed on hands and knees. Mam got 10/- for doing it and she gave Nellie and Bell 2/6 each. It took all day. They had a big fire in the grate with pots and kettles on it to heat the water. They had tea and bread and jam now and again, and perhaps a plate of soup down at Comelybank when it was lunch time.

Tom Stuart who became postmaster at Glenlivet and still lives at the Old Post Office there used to go dancing with his wife Ida. She was dainty and slim, and in Church she usually wore a pill-box hat. The two of them were lovely dancers together.



Catholics of the Enzie:

A Neighbour's View

Alison Gray

On a recent visit to Aberdeen University Library I came across two letters from the Rev. James Stuart to his fellow Episcopalian priest Rev. J. B. Craven in Orkney (where I now live). Mr Stuart, aged 60, had opened St Mary's Stromness in 1888 and was now, in 1917, back at Home in his native district of the Enzie, retired sick from parish work in Dundee. James Stuart's family home was close to Preshome. There on the skyline, and familiar since childhood, stood what had once been Britain's biggest Catholic church outside the embassy chapels of London. He wrote: 'The large country Chapel of St Gregory's, Preshome, is about half a mile from my home. The lands attached to the Chapel almost touch mine.'

The Rev. Craven in Orkney was so impressed with what this friend had written that he bound the letters into a booklet and entitled it *Reminiscences of Roman Catholic Chapels in the Enzie* (AUL MS2150/2). Let me share with you the impressions and memories of James Stuart, the Enzie lad who grew up to become a Protestant clergyman and put pen to paper in praise of his Catholic neighbours:

I never attend there when at home, as I would be rather conspicuous. When a boy I went once a year, Easter Sunday afternoon, the only afternoon service in the year. (Now the Curate has a Sunday School service about 4 p.m.) It struck me then as a boy that 'these people seem to feel in God's presence and worship Him,' [diary entry from the young James Stuart?] while the Kirk people in those now far off days did not seem to have any idea of worship. Canon Kyle, nephew of Bishop Kyle (who lived here with charge of the Aberdeen Diocese until his death in 1869) came as Priest about, or before, the time I was born. He is over 90, and only got a curate last year.

From My Window

There are four RC churches in sight from my bedroom window or at the top of the next field - St Gregory's, Preshome (1788) to which I will return; St Peter's, Buckie (1857), a large church, copy of Oldmachar Cathedral in Old Aberdeen but not so large, with Nave, Chancel, Side Aisles and the two Western Spires - very beautiful inside and all in good taste; St James', Letterfourie (1904), on the top of a high hill but convenient for the hill folk who are far from Buckie, joined to a small monastery and served by some of the Benedictine Fathers from Fort Augustus; and St Ninian's, Tynet (1772), which I will describe shortly. A fifth church, St Mary's, Fochabers (1828), is only a little over five miles away but not visible from this side as the large woods of Fochabers shut out the view.

St Ninian's and Auchenthalrig

Two miles off is St Ninian's Chapelyard. The RCs kept possession of it and the ancient church which stood in it, long since disappeared. They own the burying-ground still, but our family plot is also there. We purchased the ground at a nominal cost, being more convenient than Rathven and a very hallowed spot. Many of our relatives are laid there. The graveyard stands in the middle of a large field, and at one time a certain Duke was going to plough it up for the improvement of the farm - but that's another story!

Many of the Roman Catholic bishops and clergy in Scotland have always been drawn from the farmers and peasants of the district, and were brought back from places like Glasgow to rest in the Chapelyard. There is a large cross to their memory inscribed *Pastores Dormiunt Inter Grege*s - The Pastors Sleep Amid Their Flocks.

A new church was built there in 1687 to replace the ancient one, and the Presbytery of Fordyce tried hard to seize it but failed. Possibly this would have been burned in 1746, because Cumberland passed it on the way to Culloden, and three miles back he burned Arradoul (Episcopal) Church. I remember the old deserted chapel of Arradoul which replaced it, the roof ruinous, the doors

open to any to enter, the pulpit still standing and the red baize still covering the book boards. Every stone has now been removed. The population and the membership of all religious bodies has gone terribly down in the district since I remember.

Whether Cumberland's men visited Chapel yard or not, a new St Ninian's was opened in 1772 at Tynet a mile to the north, in the old accounts referred to as Auchenthalrig (Auchen-har-lic) which is a hamlet close by. It is a long low

building roofed with slates, and like a barn or farm threshing mill outwardly. In penal days an emissary of the Government, pointing to the building from some distance, asked a simple looking countryman, 'What building is that?' 'Oh,' said he, 'That's the sheepfold' and it was! So the building escaped and is still in use. The Priest who served it when I was a boy, a Buckie man called William Loggie, built an organ for it himself and reaped his own corn, etc. He wore a beard, as did all the local priests then and Canon Kyle still.

St Gregory's Preshome

To come back to Preshome, I do not know if there was any place of worship there before the present building, but Bishops and Clergy have long resided there. Bishop Nicolson of the House of Kennay, who were of the Nicolsons of Glenbervie, was appointed first Bishop after the Reformation in 1694 and died at Preshome. In 1765, with the connivance of the Parish Minister, the RCs repaired the Chapel of St Margaret of the Craigs in the Cairnfield woods half a mile from here. One Sunday the sentinel gave warning that the Redcoats were coming, but it was only Bennet the farmer of Barhill coming to the Service. The day being warm, he had taken off his coat and so exposed his new red waistcoat.

The present St Gregory's has the date stone on the front 1788 but opened the following year. A bold undertaking in penal days, it was said to be a model of St Peter's, Rome. There is an imposing West Front with centre door, and one on each side with dwarf towers.



Inside is an oblong Nave, but no Chancel as I remember it, and the Altar against the East Wall. Some years ago Provost Kyle, at his own expense, designed and added a large Apsidal Sanctuary with a fine marble altar and fine statues - I did not notice who they represented - on either side of the Sanctuary arch. There is a large, beautiful picture of St Gregory over the Altar, fresh and lifelike as if done yesterday. I forget the Old Master, but it is the original and that in the Louvre at Paris is a copy. A fine old garden runs along the south side of the Church with many apple trees and a high glass-topped wall, the same still as I remember it about 60 years ago.

Provost Kyle RIP

I was at Provost Kyle's funeral on 4th September last. Canon John Taylor of Motherwell was Celebrant at the Solemn Requiem, and in the large gathering there was a considerable number of children from his day schools. Canon Taylor died suddenly at Motherwell a few weeks later. He was about my age, and his elder brother is Postmaster and Registrar of the Enzie and Chairman of the School Board. The Deacon was Father Peter Bonnyman, Glasgow. He and his younger brother James, a priest in the Aberdeen Diocese, were brought up in the congregation. The father and youngest brother keep the Post Office and general country shop at Clochan, while a sister and a young woman from a little farm close by here were teachers beside me in St Joseph's Schools, Dundee. *[Two years before his death in 1948, aged 65, Canon Peter Bonnyman became one of the three founding fathers of the Scaln Association.]*

There was, besides the general public, a large attendance of clergy from all over Scotland and of students from Blairs College. A choir of priests and students in the Choir and Organ raised enclosure at the West End sang the Plainsong service beautifully, including the

Dies Irae, without organ accompaniment.

Bishop Chisholm of Aberdeen gave the Orations and the Absolutions from Psalm 22 [23], vv. 8,9 - 'And Thy mercy will follow me all the days of my life. And that I may dwell in the House of the Lord unto the length of days.' The Bishop also took the Choral Service at the grave in St Ninian's Chapelyard. He is in his 82nd year, but was in Glenlivet next day taking a marriage in Tombae. Now I have written you a long screed in bed, but hope it may be interesting.



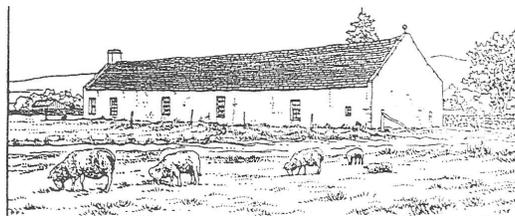
Harling and Auchenhalrig

Alasdair Roberts

Harling is a Scottish response to damp weather before the invention of damp courses, although restorers of old buildings still argue over whether it is better to expose the stone or give it a protective skin. When Scalan's harling was removed in 1994, a new coating of gravel and cement was soon applied by Alistair Urquhart - his departure from the site was described in *ScN* 9. It would be foolish to claim the technique of harling as an invention of Scottish Catholics, but consider the following curious connections.

In the parish of Bellie, which with Rathven forms the Enzie (pronounced Ingee - 'the papistical country' in the heyday of the Catholic Dukes of *Cordon*) priests lived close to Cordon Castle at Auchenhalrig. Consonants were often reversed in old Scots speech, however, so that the place appears as Auchenharlick' in clergy correspondence with Rome and the Scots colleges' abroad. This pronunciation is confirmed in Alison Gray's article on p. 15. The Rev. Alexander Geddes (author of the *Book of Zaknim* which described an upstairs bedroom at Seal an as 'The Hole of the Snorers', *ScN* 7) followed the saintly and very suitably named John Godsmann, who died there in 1769. While living at Auchenhalrig Geddes combined poetry, theology and his pastoral responsibilities with restoring the nearby chapel at Tynet.

Rescued again for worship by the Rev. Patrick Grady around 1950, this old chapel was described by Peter Anson as 'the Banffshire Bethlehem' because its low, unchurchlike appearance recalled the stable of the Christ child. Baptismal records show that tinker families and women displaced from the Highlands were welcomed there with their babies. One improvement worked by Alexander Geddes (before he fell out with Bishop Hay and left for London) was to replace the thatched roof with slates from the 1687 chapel in St Ninian's Chapelyard - the graveyard at Braes of Enzie farm. The walls at Tynet are certainly harled - perhaps originally, by the hands of the poet priest of Auchenhalrig.



Auchenhalrig Work

David Souter's *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Banff*, published in 1812, contains 'A Description of the Mud Buildings, generally known in the County of Banff as Auchenhalrig Work, from its being used at and near Auchenhalrig, in the Parish of Bellie.' This takes us back to the era of wattleand-daub, another old approach to the building of walls which can still be viewed inside Scalan. Souter may be imagined as describing how the Tynet chapel was erected: If the mud or clay is lumpy it must be reduced with a mallet, mixed with a sand, and made pretty thin with water. The straw is then equally strewed over it, trampled with the feet, and wrought from one side to the other until the whole is of a proper consistency for admixture with the stones. In building, any kind of stones will answer; even stones from the channel of a river, which are generally round, are preferred by some workmen to any other. They ought not to be larger than a workman can with ease put upon the wall; and though much smaller, they are perfectly sufficient: indeed, large stones are improper as they prevent the mud from consolidating and, by consequence, diminish the strength

and durability of the walls which are of much the same breadth of those built with stone and lime: twenty-two inches are sufficient for a wall of seven feet high ... Care should be taken never to build more than two or three feet of height in anyone part in the same day; if raised more, the wall is apt to swell, for which there is no remedy but to pull it down and rebuild.'

From this it is clear that 'Auchenhalrig work' was a technique for building walls rather than protecting surfaces. Indeed Souter goes on to mention harling as a secondary operation: 'In the course of two or three years after being built, the frost has generally such an effect upon the outside of the walls that it falls off, leaving the stones (which are covered with it when newly built) quite bare. Whenever the walls begin to appear in this state, they should be harled over with lime properly mixed with pure river or sea sand pretty rough.' Auchenhalrig walls were fully capable of rising to two storeys and supporting slate roofs, as could be seen across the Spey at Garmouth. They dated from the start of the 18th century, and the technique was obviously an old one in Souter's day.

Meanings and Origins

Perhaps it is merely fanciful to see a connection between harling and Auchenhalrig. An alternative derivation would prove that, but the *Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue* admits to 'uncertain etymology' - and no link with another 'had' meaning to haul, which it traces to Middle English. That doesn't help, because the name is clearly Gaelic on the basis of its first syllable alone. Going by James Macdonald's *Place Names in Strathbogie* it is possible to deduce that Auchenhalrig means 'field of the height of the sloping moor.' The 'hamlet' (should it be clachan with this Gaelic name?) is indeed at the top of a slope which descends, by way of Bogmoor, to the Spey as it winds through sand banks to the Moray Firth - easy access to 'pure sea or river sand pretty rough'.

References to harling appear more than two centuries before Souter particularly recommended Auchenhalrig work for threshing mills ('when the machine is at work the whole fabric shakes together') but the wall-building technique was doubtless even older. The place which gave a name to it is close to Gordon Castle at Bog O' Gight, and a majority of 16th and 17th references to harling come from within the Gordon sphere of influence - notably Aberdeen's St Nicholas Kirk, which has Gordons buried in the vault of Our Lady of Pity, and King's College which was rescued from Angus 'Reformers' by the Earl of Huntly's intervention. The earliest 18th century mention of harling, in the *Scottish National Dictionary*, is at Llanbryde on the other side of Spey.

A Novel Suggestion

The last place that experts on vernacular building would expect to find a novel suggestion on something so basic as the origins of harling is *Scalan News*, but once an idea is in print it takes concrete form(!) Elizabeth Beaton is just such an expert and may wish to respond - she has been in correspondence over a forthcoming book on church buildings. For the record I am proposing that the use of clay and small stones is connected, through 'Auchenharlick', with the use of lime, sand and smaller stones for harling - two processes linked by a name, and access to materials.

'What does all this have to do with Scalan?' I hear some readers saying. There may have been a link with the way in which the first stone-and-lime 'white' house was finished - if not in 1767 then certainly at the time of the roof-raising improvements achieved by Bishop Hay. It was Marion Donald herself (ScN 7, quoting a letter to Anne Baxter from the Scottish Catholic Archives in Edinburgh) who drew attention to an item in the Bishop's accounts: 'To lime and work for harling house, £1 - 0 6.' Cold winters and wet summers made protection for Mike Tait's 'two feet of stone wall with soft patches' (ScN 6) very necessary.

A final comment by David Souter, although not strictly relevant to the building in question, may encourage the Association to insist on high quality interior work during the last stage of restoration. In order 'that the inside walls of barns and grain lofts may be sufficiently close and smooth, it is strongly recommended to do them over with a thin coat of plaster lime which adheres firmly to the mud. Thus finished, the Auchenhalrig houses are, outside and inside, as ornamental as those built entirely of stone and mortar.'

Publicity

Rennie McOwan, who recently wrote about Scalan in The Scots Magazine (massive world-wide publicity) sent in a copy of the magazine Africa which is produced by the Kiltegan Fathers to spread word of the work of St Patrick's Missions. The p. 1 'cold Braes day in

May' (and Fr O'Souza from Bombay) comes to mind on seeing Rennie's photo of the Old College for his article on Catholicism in Scotland.

Stuart Mitchell has just written about aliases used by 'Hidden Families' - title of his two-part article in the Journal of the Aberdeen and North East Scotland Family History Society. He makes particular mention of the Glenlivet Status Animarum 'previously unknown outwith the RC Church' - but first discussed here in June 1995.

James Joseph Moran

Bernadette Moran

Mention was made in December (in connection with John Sharp's poem about Scalan) of the firm of J. J. Moran which published it, and also the bookshop run by my late sister Molly and myself across from the Cathedral - two reasons for telling readers more about oUI' father who was a leading figure in Aberdeen's Catholic community ..

James Joseph Moran was born at Collooney, County Sligo, in 1872 and died here in 1949. His father had been President of the Irish Land League. As a young man my father wrote stories of Irish life and was dubbed the 'Barrie of Ireland'. He was spotted by Charles Diamond of the *Catholic Herald* and invited to Scotland as a pioneer of Catholic journalism. He came to Aberdeen in 1894 by way of Glasgow and Dundee, and took up residence with his first wife and child at 71 Duthie Terrace. The *Aberdeen Catholic Herald* was a one-man production, but he found time to run the publishing business of Moran & Co. while writing several books and many articles.

Father also took a very active part in the life of the Cathedral parish, much of it centred on the Halls in North Silver Street which are now Milne's Auction Rooms. He founded the Cathedral Dramatic Club and produced several plays such as 'Colleen Bawn'. Father had a lovely speaking voice and never lost his Irish brogue. He was recognised as a brilliant elocutionist, winning a contest in the Music Hall open to the whole of Scotland, and broadcasting from the BBC's Beechgrove studio in the early days of wireless. He was impressive on stage, standing fully five foot ten with a Roman profile and expressive brown eyes.

Father's first wife had always been delicate and she died suddenly in 1916. He returned for comfort to the boarding house where he had first stayed on arriving in Aberdeen, and where he had met my mother as an eleven-year-old child. Josephine Milne's mother was a Bennett from the Enzie and her grandmother was a Geddes. Her aunt was a Franciscan nun in the Convent at 16 Huntly Street. Her cousin Fr George Shaw was a priest of the Diocese. It was he who married my parents in the Cathedral in April 1917. Mother was the perfect wife for him, despite the twenty-year gap in ages. She was so down to earth and considerate, and she knew when his sensitive soul needed solitude - time in his den where he would read and write to his heart's content.

Before I was born Fr Keenan of the Sacred Heart Church in Torry asked Mother to call me Bernadette, and I must have been one of the first in Aberdeen to receive that name in baptism. My faith has always been the inspiration and mainstay of my life. I owe so much to the inspiration of two wonderful parents and to the teaching of dear old Canon Andrew Grant of St Peter's. We were brought up to appreciate our Catholic heritage but to have great respect for the beliefs of others. My parents were the most tolerant of people and had friends of all denominations. In public life Father did all he could to break down the barriers of religious bigotry and numbered many non-Catholic clergymen among his friends. Had he been alive today he would have been in the forefront of the ecumenical movement.

*James Moran seems to express the spirit of the Scalan Association in city life. Bernadette Moran has a full account of her remarkable father in typescript at Nazareth House in Claremont Street. Sister Bernadette, as consecrated by Bishop Conti in 1985, was handicapped at birth and speaks with difficulty. Her own story, *The Lark Still Sings*, is well worth its £4 plus postage.*

Correspondence to:

Alasdair Roberts, Ogilvie Centre,

St Mary's Cathedral, 16 Huntly Street, ABERDEEN AB10 1SH.

