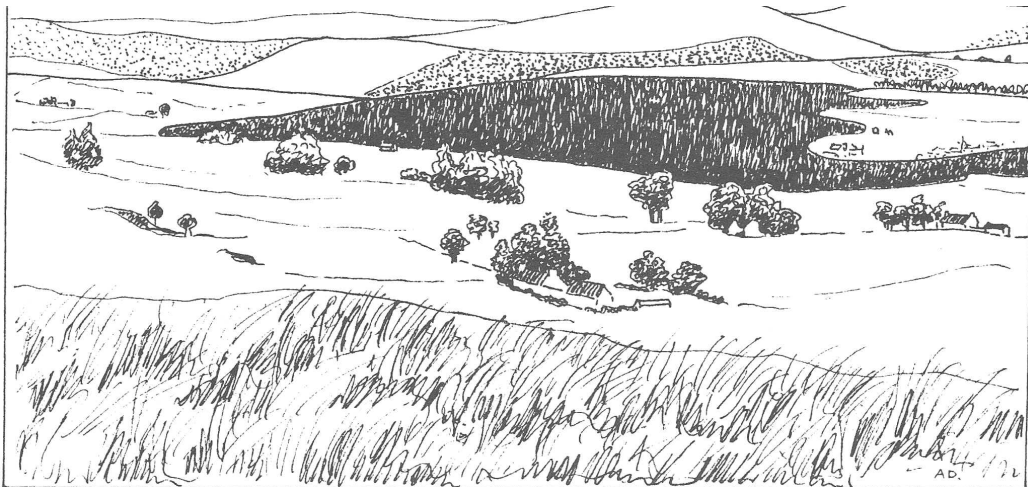


No. 12, June 1996

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



Ann Dean's drawing opposite shows Larryvarry from the top of Tom Trumper, the hill in front of Scalan. This is the house where our ninety-four-year old contributor Ann Lamb grew up, and it also shows the route to Tomintoul and Avonside by way of Lettoch and Inchnacape. There is a celebratory note to this issue of *Scalan News* connected with Mgr. Copland's Golden Jubilee and the feeling that Scalan is, for a variety of reasons, now fully on the map. Yet there is sadness too for the editor - me. The lease which my wife and I took on the Braes Chapelhouse is being given up, after twenty months, at the end of June.

Reasons for this include the fact that it has never been possible to achieve enough 'bed nights' to justify the rent, and now that I am taking early retirement from Northern College the budget becomes a matter for careful scrutiny. I shall continue to act as RE Adviser to the seven Catholic primary schools (no secondary) of the Aberdeen Diocese, which explains the new address on the inside back cover. I have been visiting the schools this term telling children about missionary priests from the penal days who would be local heroes if better known, and was struck by how often Scalan came naturally into the story. It is also interesting to have worked the same material for university professors and seven-year-olds.

The last editorial raised the question of cost in relation to the newsletter. I think those members of the Committee who gently made me think about it were partly voicing a concern that it had become too big in the last two issues. It is now back to the size of No. 9 (December 1994) regardless of all the material that lies to hand: 20 pages of text is enough for a newsletter even when it is delightfully illustrated. An appeal was made to theatrical-type 'angels' who might earmark money beyond their £5 to help bring news of Scalan to those who rarely get there. This is the place to thank those who sent in £130.

Jane McEwan writes on the next page of our 527 members whose numbers will surely be augmented, as in former years, at the Annual Pilgrimage Mass. It would only require each one of you to recruit a friend to achieve the target, set up some years ago, of a thousand members by the year 2000. Jane is pleased with the high proportion who have already paid this year, but the address goes in as always: *Ogilvie Cottage, Gallowhill, Glenlivet, Ballindalloch AB3 9DL*. The map on the back cover shows the cottage, but does not convey the marvellous view from Jane's 'office' which is the porch in summer. Ben Rinnes is in the distance, the Livet and the battle site are clearly visible, but it is hard to look beyond the bright and fertile garden (Jane flowers, Bill vegetables) where birds flock to a cornucopia of nuts.

At the other end of the Glenlivet Estate, so well supplied these days with visitor boards and way-markers, Andy Wells has not yet found time to drop piles of stone on the Whisky Road from the Clash of Scalan, but he promises to do so very soon. This is your last chance to get lost with the piper by leaving your car at the Well of the Lecht picnic site around one o'clock on Sunday 7th July.

Annual General Meeting

Jane McEwan

There were forty-four of us for Mass on Tuesday 4th June, so for the first time it was held upstairs in the Boys' Dormitory. Six priests concelebrated: Mgr. Copland, Mgr. John McIntyre (last rector of Blairs, and recent rector of the Scots College Rome), Canon John Symon, Fr. Brian Halloran, Fr. Christopher Taylor (Motherwell) and Fr. Michael Briody. Mgr. Copland mentioned that it was fifty years since the Scalan Association had been formed and asked us to pray for the founding members. Mgr. McIntyre invited us to remember that it was ten years since the closure of Blairs.

Forty-one sat down to a most enjoyable lunch in the Braes Hall. In his opening remarks to the meeting which followed our President suggested that next year mattresses should be provided as the lunch was always so good. He then made his report, which was well received. Apart from describing the A wards Ceremony in Edinburgh (see the next item) he spoke mainly about the Committee's deliberations during the last year on toilet accommodation at Scalan. Plans were circulated. It had originally been intended that this should be a free-standing building at the rear of the College, but those involved with planning at Moray District Council were not in favour and suggested that it should be attached to the building in a similar way to the present annexe (probably a milk-house added when the building was a farmhouse). A lively discussion ensued, and it was finally agreed to abide by the plan submitted, Mrs Elizabeth Beaton offered to speak to Mr Robertson of the Planning Department on behalf of the Association.

The President drew attention to the continuing rise in membership, now well over the 500 mark, adding: 'It is obvious that Scalan and its important place in the Catholic history of Scotland is becoming more known throughout our country, and we must ensure that this continues. There can be no doubt that the presence of the Cardinal at our last annual Mass did much to further the cause, and for that we are grateful. As the future maintenance of the building will very much depend on our own resources, viz. the membership fees, it is imperative that we keep on growing.'

I then gave a brief report as Secretary /Treasurer. Money has to be found to pay for the toilets but we are still solvent. Membership at 4th June was 527. Under Any Other Business, Mgr. Copland proposed putting up a plaque at Scalan to commemorate the three founding fathers, Mgr. McRoberts, Mgr. MacWilliam and Canon Bonnyman. This was seconded by Canon Symon and agreed by the meeting. Fr. Colin Stuart produced the video 'The Lantern's Light', made by his brother, which was received very enthusiastically. Mgr. McIntyre drew the meeting's attention to a booklet produced for Lothian Region by Dr John Watts called *The Story of*

Scalan for Young People. Finally, in light of the encouragingly high numbers present on the day, consideration was given to the purchase of chairs for the AGM and Annual Mass.

Architectural Award

Very Rev. Mgr. John F. Copland

On the surface, this last year appeared to be an anti-climax as far as construction was concerned. Nothing has been happening to the building itself, yet it will go down as a very significant year in terms of public recognition. In September Mrs McEwan was informed that the Association for the Preservation of Rural Scotland was holding its annual awards ceremony in Edinburgh on 21st November, to which she and the Scalan Association's President were invited.



As this was to be a long and tedious journey in a month that is not noted for its clemency we decided not to attend, particularly as we thought our role would be that of spectators. A week before the ceremony was due to take place, however, our architect Mrs Marion Donald made contact to say that Miss Elizabeth Garland, Manager of the Awards Committee, was most insistent that we attend. It was only on the day prior to the ceremony that we learned we were to receive an award.

Promptly at 7.30 on the morning of the 21st, Jane arrived from Glenlivet to collect me. We drove from Keith to Aberdeen, where we boarded Mrs Donald's car and set off for Edinburgh.

After lunch we made our way up the Bridges to the very imposing building of the Royal College of Surgeons. There we were confronted by a scarcely less impressive display of projects which had been entered for the awards, our perusal of the exhibits being assisted by a glass of wine.

At 2.15 we were asked to gather in the Assembly Hall, and at 2.30 the prestigious procession of office bearers and guests entered the chamber. The Chairman Robert Salveson introduced the dignitaries, in particular Lady Jane Grosvenor who was to present the awards. Following an address by Lord Younger, the panel of judges took turns in describing the various projects assisted by visual display. These seemed to be endless, and I was beginning to wonder when Scalan was to be mentioned. Then it transpired that these earlier projects were merely being given commendations. The awards followed.

The judge in our case was Mrs Marguerite Ogilvie of Forfar. To say that she waxed lyrical is almost an understatement. Certainly Scalan received the most enthusiastic appraisal of all the items under review, and Mr Roland Wedgewood (who had introduced the panel of judges) made our joy complete when he finished his address by saying 'You must all visit Scalan!' The presentation of awards followed, and I received a bronze oak leaf plaque on behalf of the Association. Scrolls were presented to Mrs Donald the architect and to Mr Taitt and Mr Urquhart the builders. The journey home was euphoric; it had been a long day but well worthwhile.

Golden Jubilee

Our President Mgr. Copland achieved fifty years as a priest on 26th June 1996, with celebrations in Keith that day and the next involving everyone from Scotland's Cardinal to the smallest pupil in St Thomas's School. John Copland was born in 1920 in a cottage above Tombae, but the family moved across the Livet to Tomnavoulin. There his fellow student Tom Winning was a welcome visitor. In a 1983 historical article the Monsignor recalled himself as a young man heading for the priesthood while commenting on depopulation in Glenlivet:

'From being one of the biggest parishes in the diocese Tombae shrank to one of the smallest and the school, which when I left in 1933 had seventy on the roll, was closed. Depopulation dealt no less harshly with the Braes, and the Second World War hastened the trend. I was one of sixty-four young people who climbed the Bochel on Sunday 27th August 1939; there were eighty of us at Benediction and ninety at tea at the Bochel. Never again has there been such a gathering. A fortnight later we scattered to the winds, and many never returned to their native glen.'

Elsewhere Mgr. Copland spoke of Glenlivet priests named Stuart, in particular one who developed a reputation as sheep breeder while at Tombae, observing: 'It is a great pity more of this was not encouraged amongst our clergy.' At one of the last public occasions he was to grace in Huntly the late Canon Lewis McWilliam spoke memorably about the contribution made by northern country parishes in supplying Scotland with priests. Both of these clergymen were in effect paying tribute to the Scalan tradition, whereby seminarians learned about farming as well as Latin and 'Feed my sheep' had a double meaning.

At the last meeting of the committee, held as always in the Keith chapelhouse at 5 o'clock on a Monday, the President was presented with two glasses engraved with Bill McEwan's drawing of Scalan, along with a bottle of Tarnnavoulin. At one level this was a simple thank you from half a dozen people for his excellent ham sandwiches, but it may also be taken as a gesture on behalf of the ever-widening membership of the Scalan Association. As the Latin-speaking priests of the original Association would have said, 'Ad

multos annos!'



The illustration was discovered in *Claves Regni*, the magazine of St Peter's College Bearsden, and comes from a larger picture with the caption 'New Priests of 1946'.

Graveyard Ramblings

Alasdair Roberts

A number of things have turned up in connection with the December article 'James Gordon's Mother'. The priest who built Tombae to serve the lower end of Glenlivet buried his mother at Dounan in 1820. She was interred beside four 18th century priests, including a rector of Scalán, inside what was then a ruined chapel. It was still visible in the late-19th century map reproduced on the back cover (and indeed in a later one at the turn of the century) but disappeared when the graveyard was extended in 1923. Neither Mrs Gordon nor the four priests are named in the careful record of inscriptions held in Elgin Public Library: the question arises whether her remains are still at Dounan.

There is no headstone for Mr Gordon's mother at Tombae, although the priest-founder himself is buried within its walls. According to the Elgin records on Dounan, one stone 'marked with a cross on both sides is thought to mark the place of the old place of worship'. The same vagueness applies to the frequently repeated entry: 'The illegible stones are believed to mark the graves of soldiers who died in the battle of Glenlivet or Altchonnachlan [Alltachoileachain to the better-informed readers of this newsletter] on October 3rd 1594 including Sir Lauchlan McLean: After the Gaelic emphasis of the last issue it is worth repeating that this is McLean of Duart (in Mull) whose dying request was to be buried where the Saxon tongue would never be heard.

Conrack and Dounan

This article includes 'ramblings' in the title so indulgent readers will permit a detour. Three brothers Leslie of Conrack, at Rothes, were Jesuit priests in the early 17th century. William Leslie, who was superior to the Scottish mission, also contrived to be accepted as physician to the Marquis of Huntly and to Henrietta Maria, the French queen of Charles I. Andrew Leslie served the widowed Sophia Lady Gordon at Aboyne when not in 'the Highlands' mainly Strathavon and Glenlivet. John Leslie was at Charles's Edinburgh coronation in 1633 twelve weeks before coming to say mass at Christmas for the little community formed by his two sisters, married to neighbours at Tombreckachie and Dounan, along with the Gordons of Minmore.

It was a severe 17th century winter and the youngest Leslie (though strong and reckoned a good traveller) never recovered from the ordeal. His brother Andrew reported to the Jesuit Father General that 'John Leslie died in extreme poverty, to his own great joy:

The three brothers are reminiscent of *Beau Geste* but there was no African desert, and a fourth brother living at Conrack was also involved: 'These very brethren he had often himself entertained at his house, and carried them on his shoulders across the rivers in the depth of winter, when in this country it is impossible for horses to ford the streams, the portion of the bank on both sides near the water being a sheet of ice.'

Dounan (old spelling to reinforce the local pronunciation of Downan) almost certainly featured in a dispute between the Leslies of Conrack and John Guthrie the Protestant Bishop of Moray. Based at Elgin, he sent men to intercept a family burial party as they returned from the funeral of one of the Glenlivet sisters. The door of her local church had been locked against them, so the Leslies forced it open and buried her anyway.

Finally, on this lost Catholic burial place, when the Ratisbon Benedictine William Grant of Tombreak was priest of Strathavon in 1736 he 'was complained of for having said Mass where the minister was wont to perform worship, and had performed the Office of the Dead in the Kirk and Kirkyard.' It became an ecclesiastical power struggle, with Bishop James Gordon (the founder of Scalán) 'commending him for the good he was doing and congratulating him on his having so well adjusted the intricate case of the people of Clashmore; wishing also that Mr William might have some settled place in Strathavon, but scarcely thinking that the Duchess could be depended upon.' This was the Duchess of Gordon who brought up her sons as Protestants after the death of the second Duke - the ten year-old heir having just served mass at St Ninian's in the Braes of Enzie.

Buried from Scalán

The article on James Gordon's mother was based on his record of obituaries. It is brief and contains only a single Scalán entry, the widow Elizabeth Grant or McArthur ending her life there on 5th November 1820: 'She died without the Sacraments though she had previously in the same year received the Holy Viaticum and Extreme Unction with the last Benediction from the undersigned. Her remains were interred in the Church Yard Kirkmichael on the 8th inst.' We may picture Widow Grant laid out in an open coffin for the wake as the considerable community in the neighbourhood of Scalán came to pay their respects, before accompanying her to the next parish's graveyard at Kirkmichael. Donald McGregor's drawing of Kirkmichael comes from Sir Edward Peck's *Avonside Explored*.



That entailed a long journey over to Avonside by way of Larryvarry, Lettoch and Inchnacape. Were other Scalán coffins carried so far? Why not to the Buiternach, three miles away, or Dounan? Where were Braes people buried before the establishment of Chapelton? There is a passage in J. G. Phillips' *Wanderings in the Highlands of Banff and Aberdeen Shires* (1881) which emphasises the distance people would travel with a coffin, while drawing attention to the 'particularly strange' local custom of running after a funeral:

'After they had held the "likewauk" and the appointed time for the funeral came, the whole of the people in the Braes could be seen, almost, wending their way round the base of the hills, some on foot and some on horseback, to meet the procession. The places of interment were a long way from the Braes, either Kirkmichael, Dounan or Inveravon. After the body had been consigned to its native earth the race commenced, and never halted until they had reached home again. Their reason for so running is a mystery to me, but run they did as if a host from the infernal regions had been pursuing at their heels. Probably it was a custom of heathen origin.'

The Buiternach

An article about the Buiternach, headed 'The Loneliest Graveyard in the NorthEast', appeared in the *Aberdeen Press and Journal* for 29 August 1932 (and came to this editor courtesy of Isobel Grant). The author John E. Murray claimed to have discovered that the word is Pictish (half Gaelic?) so that the place 'must have been a scene of Druid worship in the early ages. Again, it is believed (strongly) by many who are well versed in the various legends appertaining to the place that it had at one time been sacred ground.'

Murray wrote that there was 'no authentic history' relevant to the Buiternach, although its origins as a Christian graveyard seem clear from the First Statistical Account of 1794: 'It is called the Buiternach and was consecrated more than forty years ago by two R. C. Bishops to be a burying-place for Catholics, but few are as yet buried in it.' One of the earliest must have been the worthy man (*vir probis*) John Stuart whose stone had him born in 1642, according to Murray. He further noted - misleadingly - that the Buiternach was 'on a direct level with the old College of Scalán, now long since demolished.'

In the 1750s (dark days after Culloden, when the seminary was a stone and turf black house on the left bank of the Crombie) two bishops met with their senior clergy at Preshome each summer, Scalán being too small then, to correspond with the Roman Curia. They were Alexander Smith and Hugh MacDonald. The former, a Fochabers man responsible for the Lowland District, sent out pastoral instructions (for example on praying with the faithful on their death beds) from Blackfriars Wynd in Edinburgh. The latter exercised a distant episcopal authority over the Highland District from the Cabrach, where he lived with the young missionary John Geddes who was later to rebuild Scalán. Bishop MacDonald's exile from his Morar homeland was a result of his involvement in the 'Fortyfive'.

Charles McKean, who once conducted a radio interview with this editor out of the wind under the seminary's north gable, states in his architectural guide to *The District of Moray* that the Buiternach cemetery was consecrated by a priest from Scalán for the Gordons of Minmore. He may have taken this from Victor Gaffney but the latter specifies a bishop. Murray drew attention to a tombstone carrying the name Gordon and the date 1796. Minmore (below Gallowhill of the McEwans) may indeed have been home to the deceased, but he died forty years after the blessing of the graveyard. Murray was confident that the man commemorated on the stone 'was heir to the Lairdship of Letterfourie [so not of Minmore] but his physical and mental disabilities debarred him from holding the honour, hence his sojourn and demise in the Braes of Glenlivet.'

Letterfourie

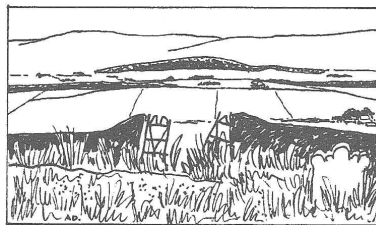
The actual Laird of Letterfourie (in the Braes south of Buckie) has his own memorial in stone - St Gregory's Preshome which, when erected as the spirit of toleration grew in Scotland, was Britain's biggest Catholic chapel after those of the foreign embassies in

London. The Rev. John Reid took responsibility for building it to the design of James Byres of Tonley (who created Aquhorties for Bishop Hay). The laird paid for most of it but died before the church was opened. The simple dedication beside the front entrance, 'DEO 1788', instead of the aristocratic donor's arms, has been taken as a sign of his 'piety and unostentation', so the following story from Blundell's *Ancient Catholic Homes of Scotland* should not be taken to show that he was careless in religious matters. It must have been in the previous chapel, St Margaret of the Craigs: 'He loved to tell the story of the correction he received on one occasion from that reverend gentleman [Mr Reid], who was as famous for his sharp sayings as for his kindly deeds. "Good morning, Letterfourie! Last in and first oot!" he is said to have flashed from the foot of the altar one Sunday as Mr Gordon appeared - Mass half over, sermon just beginning.'

Cairns and Dykes

Returning to the Buiternach ('Butternach' according to Isobel Grant) we encounter yet another spelling to challenge the Gaelic scholar. In a comparison with the next most isolated graveyard in Banffshire, in rocks beside the fishing village of Gamrie, William Cramond of Cullen wrote: 'Bhuternich is in a lonely spot in the wilds of Glenlivet, at the height of 1200 feet above the level of the sea. It is the most singular burying-ground in the county and may have been selected originally from its proximity to a large cairn that formerly stood there. It seems practically a part of the adjoining wild, except that it is surrounded by a rude dyke.' Writing in 1932 John Murray knew only one living person who remembered the original Buiternach Cairn. It was there in the Ordnance Survey map of 1876, marked 'Cairns', but demolished shortly after when land was being taken in for Upper Clashnoir. This was the boyhood home of Bill Grant, now of Nether Clashnoir, who drew members' attention to a different cairn about eight feet high. This was built by a shepherd boy named Grant shortly before the First World War, and remembered in verse by the Rev. R. H. Calder of Achbreck after he died in Flanders: 'And now the visitor may learn/ the meaning of the lonely cairn:/ his skill the builder spent/ on his own monument.'

According to John Murray (finally), 'the old enclosing dyke, which had probably been built when the ground was first consecrated, remained for long in a broken down condition, but in 1908 a pleasing stone and lime wall with cement cope was erected, as also was an iron entrance gate in the southern portion of the wall' Without a compass and site inspection it would be rash to swear that the old gate, which Ann Dean captured when still picturesque, was in the east wall. The new one erected recently by Moray Council is certainly in the north wall, which faces visitors as they come to the top of the forest track which starts just past the Kirkie. We have rambled a long way from the unidentified burying-place of James Gordon's mother, and still without coming near to the standing stones of Chapeltown.



John Milne of Livat's Glen

In the June issue of Aberdeen's glossy *Leopard* Magazine attention is drawn to the poet (or balladeer - he sold his verses round feeing markets) John Milne 'of Glenlivet'. In fact he came from near Stone haven to live with his wife's McHardy relations at Demick, on the other side of Tomvoan from Chapeltown, and exploited an area which had become renowned for its whisky by the poetic form used in the title above. In *Leopard* your editor makes a slightly misleading link between Milne's 'The Cattle Plague' (which had 'cleared out many a farmer's byre') and Mad Cow Disease because of the poet's concern over what was being fed to cattle *in* the byres - misleading because 'the food of man' which Milne regarded as unnatural for beasts was barley and oats, not offal.

Before he made versifying into a paid occupation John Milne had been a shoemaker at Demick (a ruined farntown which is interesting for the way water has been led across flat ground to the mill pond) until his hands became crippled. Prior to that he was involved in whisky-making and probably involved in the 'battle' of Glenbuchat, on the other side of the Ladder Trail, when McBain and his gaugers were forced to yield. Milne probably got on well enough with the less devout element among the men of the Braes, but it is still surprising to find him anti-Catholic. Several poems condemn what was seen by many as an alarming increase in Papal power when the English Hierarchy was restored through the efforts of Cardinal Manning.

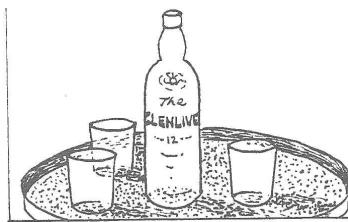
The background to the verses below is that George Smith of Upper Drummin was the first to break ranks after the 1824 Act and set up a legal distillery - the Laird of Aberlour presenting him with a £10 pair of pistols for protection as he led his pack animals through the gauntlet of former fellow smugglers. John Milne had come round to the view that Smith was a local benefactor by the 1840s, when he had acquired the farms of Blairfindy, Nevie and Minmore and produced 200 gallons a week of high quality spirits.

Sir, may you long possess Minmore,

Have health and wealth in a great store,
 No want of cash to clear each score,
 And pay each bill;
 And may you whisky rin galor At your new still.
 May your still quickly pay the cost,
 Your great expense will not be lost,
 Their's many of your whisky boast,
 Baith great and sma';
 Of colick, grips, an' barking hoast,
 'Twill cure us a' .
 Smugglers of whisky, wi' great skill,
 Made store of ankers in the hill,
 But none of them has now a gill,
 Though wames should gizzen,
 But what doth come from your new still,
 To weet their wizen.
 Glenlivet whisky bears the bell,
 It doth all whisky far excel,
 Alike for flavour, taste, or smell,
 I understand;
 Thousands of ankers you will sell
 Through all Scotland.

For anyone not completely expert in the old Scots tongue some translation may be welcome: 'hoast' is a cough, 'ankers' are four gallon barrels, 'wames' are

stomachs, 'gizzen' is to dry up, and 'wizen' is gullet.



The Catholic Church in Scotland: 1560-1829

Rev. Michael Briogay

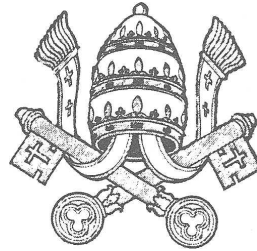
On the 24th April 1603 James Beaton, Archbishop of Glasgow since 1551, died in exile at Paris aged 86. He had fled Scotland in 1560 at the time of the Reformation, and his death ended the line of bishops who were then active in Scotland. The upheaval of 1560 left in considerable disarray those who wished to remain faithful to Rome. Distance, difficulties of communication, and long Roman memories of northern barbaric tribes meant that Scots Catholics were neglected for quite some time, and when help did come it was distinctly piecemeal.

Support for English Catholics was better. They had a priest appointed by Rome as early as 1598 to be overseer of the English

Mission, as it came to be called. He was not a bishop but had the title of 'archpriest'. Theoretically Scotland was also within his remit but it was always unlikely that he would venture north. When English Catholics were given their first bishop in 1623 (actually named William Bishop) he was appointed for Scotland as well.

Prefect Apostolic

Scots priests on the Continent made bold to remind Pope Gregory XV that his predecessor Celestine III had recognised the independence of the Scottish Church in his bull *Cum Universi* of 1192 - a recognition confirmed by Innocent III and Honorius III. The appeal was technically successful but still little was done for Scotland. Finally in 1650 a group of Scots priests - James Crichton, William Leslie, Thomas Lumsden, John Smith, John Walker and William Ballentine met in Paris and petitioned Rome to organise missionaries to revive the Catholic faith in Scotland.



On 13th October 1653 William Ballentine, a Lanarkshire convert, was named Prefect Apostolic for Scotland. Though not a bishop, he was the first recognisable leader for Scottish Catholics since the death of Beaton. Three years into his appointment he was arrested, then released after two years on the personal order of Oliver Cromwell with a gift of £60 'to take him to France'. Ballentine was able to return to Scotland but died after only sixteen months there - at Elgin in 1661. His successor Alexander Winstler alias Dunbar was Prefect through the good and bad times of James II and VII's reign (Catholic monarch, last of the Stuarts) and was happy, in old age, to hand over to a superior.

Vicar Apostolic

In 1694 Scotland became a Vicariate Apostolic when Thomas Nicolson was appointed as its first bishop since the Reformation. He had been a professor of Greek, mathematics and philosophy at Glasgow University before being dismissed in 1681 because he 'demurred to take the Test appointed by Act of Parliament'. He was received into the Catholic Church in the following year. By 1687 he was back in Glasgow as a priest, but when James fled to France in the following year Nicolson was held a prisoner at Stirling. When appointed Vicar Apostolic he too was in French exile and had to undergo a second prison sentence, this time in England, before finally arriving home in 1697.

Bishop Nicolson's principal achievement was to organise Scotland into fixed missionary areas. He drew up what today would be called a pastoral plan which remained the basis for missionary activity throughout the 18th century. After the failure of the 1715 Jacobite Rising he was imprisoned once again, gaining his freedom 'by the judicious use of money'. He died in 1718 as a 'very great man, both in learning and piety'.

Two Vicariates

His assistant and successor James Gordon, who founded the Scaln seminary, was bishop for almost forty years and gained a reputation of being both apostolic and heroic in his persevering visitations of the Highlands. After these summer journeys to Morar and the Isles he returned to Scaln for the restoration provided by its goat's milk. In 1727 the Scottish Mission was divided into Lowland and Highland Vicariates or Districts on the basis of cultural differences between Gaelic- and Scots speakers, although the dividing line, roughly from Dumbarton to Nairn, meant that much of what we would today consider Highland, including Scaln, was in the Lowland District.

The division was delayed because the man first appointed to the Highland District died in Italy before being consecrated. Alexander Grant was a Lowlander from the Enzie who had learned Gaelic while rector of Scaln. He came to Rome as bishop-elect just before the death of Giuseppe Sacripanti, the Cardinal Protector of the Scottish Nation and its college. Pope Benedict XIII appointed Cardinal Falconieri to the post without asking James III and VIII the Old Pretender. Consultation on this was one way in which the Papacy normally showed that it recognised James's claim to the throne, and the breakdown in relations affected the progress in establishing two Vicariates. Grant went on pilgrimage to Loreto and was last heard of at Genoa in December 1727 - suffering from the age and in abject poverty. He is presumed to have died soon after at the early age of 34 although rumour had him a Trappist in the south of France, in silent symbolism of his incomplete command of Gaelic.

Highland Bishop

Grant's replacement was to be the redoubtable Hugh MacDonald, one of the first two priests to be ordained at Scaln in 1725 and only

32 years old when he was consecrated by Bishop Gordon at Edinburgh in 1731. He spent a year in Paris preparing for the appointment, experiencing the full liturgy of the Church for the first time in his life and assimilating the policy of *Propaganda Fide*, Rome's Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith: 'Distance yourselves from all politics and affairs of state. The Sacred Congregation has always strictly forbidden such involvement and this holds good whether Religion is under fire or even when this kind of action would promote and increase the spread of the Faith.'

One of the simple strengths of the vicars apostolic was that they were pastoral bishops, not members of the establishment or even officers of state like many of their predecessors. This was to be felt in more places than Scotland, some parts of the Church in Europe not having seen the like since before Constantine. Since vicars apostolic were not linked to old diocesan boundaries many rulers who thought they controlled episcopal appointments found that they had been disenfranchised by Propaganda.

In keeping with this non-political line Hugh MacDonald was among the party of his clansmen who tried to persuade Bonnie Prince Charlie not to go ahead when he landed in 1745 - after which 'he was little more consulted'. The Bishop knew that it would be bad for Scotland (especially the Highlands) and the revival of Catholicism, but reluctantly blessed the royal standard at Glenfinnan. After Culloden he went abroad, his house and former seminary on Loch Morar having been destroyed by the military, and spent three years in France. One benefit of this period of exile was that Hugh MacDonald received an annual payment from James for the rest of his life as a token of the King's gratitude. It equalled the entire subsidy sent by Propaganda.

On returning to Scotland he stayed out of the Highland District, but was betrayed while in Edinburgh in 1755 and brought to trial. Times were changing, with 'priest-catchers' despised, and the sentence of exile was not enforced: Bishop MacDonald was able to live quietly at Shenval in the Cabrach and administer his district from there. While in Edinburgh, curiously enough, he assisted in the secret consecration of Bishop James Grant who was related to the unfortunate Alexander. In 1761 Hugh's nephew John MacDonald was appointed coadjutor or assistant bishop and consecrated at Preshome. Over the next fifty years he and one more MacDonald, along with two Chisholms, were to cater for the needs of the Highland District.

Bishop Hay

It was George Hay who finally clarified the political loyalties of Scots Catholics. He too had become caught up in the 'Forty-five among a group of medical personnel in Edinburgh who were obliged to help the wounded after the battle of Prestonpans, and to stay with the Jacobite army on its English advance and retreat. Hay spent two years in prison for his trouble, and soon after release he became a Catholic. His 1750 meeting with Richard Challoner, Vicar Apostolic of the London District and architect of English Catholic revival (as Hay was to be for Scotland), led him to the Scots College Rome and ordination to the priesthood. In 1769, at Scalán, he was consecrated coadjutor Vicar Apostolic for the Lowland District with right of succession.

The Lowland District operated a system whereby, as soon as a bishop had become established after a few years in office, he would have a coadjutor appointed so that the Vicariate would not be 'widowed' on his death. (The Highland District was supposed to follow the same system but regularly failed to maintain it.) Hay succeeded James Grant in 1778, and he in turn lost no time in appointing as coadjutor John Geddes, who had just rescued the Scots College in Spain from extinction and re-established it at Valladolid. The two were students together in Rome but this was surely a friendship of opposites.

Towards Toleration

Geddes was a cradle Catholic from the Enzie district of Banffshire which produced so many priests in the 18th and 19th centuries. No ghetto Catholic, he was an inveterate socialiser who drew his religion to the attention of fashionable Edinburgh when it was becoming the 'Athens of the North'. Almost single-handed he persuaded an entire generation to look kindly on Catholicism, whereas a few years earlier George Hay had been lucky not to be burned along with his chapel off the High Street. Hay retired to the north (Aberdeen, Preshome, Scalán) and heard with something like dismay the stories of John Geddes openly admitting his episcopal status at dinner parties.

But Bishop Hay was hardly less in the public eye. He was a prolific writer whose books and pamphlets defended his adopted faith and drew attention to some of the things which were happening to Catholics in different parts of the country - as with an attempt to convert the inhabitants of South Uist by force. It was Hay who made sure that the Catholic Relief Act passed for England was extended - eventually - to Scotland. Six years later he was able to use the new legal toleration to leave his beloved Scalán and open the larger (*and* government-funded) seminary at Aquhorthies in 1799.

Although urging political neutrality, *Propaganda Fide* supported the Jacobite claim until the death of the Old Pretender in 1766 on the grounds that his father's throne had been usurped, but the Papacy never recognised the increasingly dissolute and religiously indifferent Charles Edward as king despite the fact that his brother Henry was a cardinal. On Charles's death in 1780 Bishop Hay went a crucial step further and directed that Scottish Catholics should pray publicly for 'our Sovereign the King [George III], the Queen, and all the Royal Family with all our Civil Magistrates and Rulers under whom we live'.

Hay was a stern and serious individual, not popular with his priests and not bothered about it. Hard on himself and them, he pushed relentlessly for the legal restoration of Catholicism in Scotland. We owe him a great deal. Bishop Hay resigned office in 1805 and died six years later at Aquhorthies aged 82. In 1827 came one more sign of his effectiveness when *Quanta Laetitia*, the Apostolic Constitution of Leo XII, created three vicariates apostolic: the Northern District based at Preshome (later Aberdeen), the Eastern

based at Edinburgh, and the Western based at Glasgow. By the time bishops had been appointed to all three it was 1829, the year when Aquhorties was replaced by Blairs and the Catholic Emancipation Bill had passed through Parliament.

An article by Ann Dean and Alasdair Roberts, 'The Leslies of Balquhain and the burial of Bishop Hay', which appeared in the autumn 1995 issue of Recusant History, can be obtained on request (without charge) by writing to the address inside the back cover. Also another, with Ian Bryce, 'Post-Reformation Catholic houses of North-east Scotland', the already published first part of a planned three-part series.

Readers Write

The first item may appear slight, since it is only a few words added to the reply slip which was sent out to members. However it comes from a deacon who is finishing his course at the national seminary, now Scotus College Bearsden. The connection with Scalan is obvious. On a recent visit, while being shown round by Keith Herrera of the Aberdeen Diocese, the editor spotted a picture of Bishop Geddes inside the library door. A set of newsletters has since been sent to Scotus for the edification of staff and students.

I will not be attending the AGM on Tuesday June 4th nor, sadly, the Annual Pilgrimage Mass. Please God one day I will manage! NB I hope to be ordained as priest on 26th June and shall let you know my future address in due course.

Rev. John McInnes, Scotus College

With reference to your editorial comment in the June 1995 issue, I don't think Fr Patrick took the name Primrose 'in religion'. *[This refers to a speculative link drawn between the 'Prima Rosa' inscribed on the base of this Dominican's chalice and the Rosary, which was closely associated with his Order of Preachers.]* I think it can safely be said that he is the Patrick Primrose born in 1614 to David Primrose (c1580-1651), an advocate in Edinburgh who was involved in the unsuccessful defence of Isobel Young on witchcraft charges, and his first wife Marion Purdie widow of

William Marjoribanks. David Primrose was a first cousin of Archibald Primrose, an Episcopalian and Royalist who inherited the post of Clerk to the Scottish Privy Council from his father, bought the Dalmeny estate, and fathered the first Earl of Rosebery.

Rev. Fergus Kerr OP, Edinburgh

Fr. Kerr, who is Prior of Blackfriars in George Square which serves as a chaplaincy centre to Edinburgh University, receives the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity from Aberdeen University this year. Also in the University's 1996 honours list, with a Doctor of Laws degree, is Cardinal Winning.

I heard of the Scalan Association years ago but thought that membership was for priests only. Recently I found out that it was open to others so I contacted Fr. Michael Briody who sent me the form. I would be particularly happy to join as I have family connections with Banffshire - my maternal grandmother was born in Buckie and I spent my summer holidays there when I was a child. Since then I have visited that part of the country several times but have never managed a visit to Scalan. I have my name on Fr. Briody's reserve list for the bus and I'm hoping to attend the mass in July.

Anne M. Mays, Wishaw

The following letter and accompanying illustration confirms Anne's impression of membership in 'the old days'.

Only the other day I came across the enclosed photograph. It was taken after one of the meetings of the Scalan Association which were held in the afternoon of the Blairs Society meeting, most of the members being already present at Blairs on that day. Those included would seem to date it in the early 1960s. Bishop Walsh of Aberdeen is there alongside the Rector of Blairs in the middle of the front row, ergo 1960/63. Nearly all are dead now. I can only find three who are in the land of the living.

The Minutes of the Association were very carefully kept by Mgr. Sandy MacWilliam, seen holding them. Did they find their way to Tomintoul, or was that merely the centre which kept an eye on things? I remember it was the priest at Tomintoul who reported on activities at the Scalan. It would be a pity if the Minutes have disappeared as they must contain a record of the painful struggle to keep things going over quite a period. It is well that we persevered, since it now has borne fruit in the wonderful work undertaken in these last times. I can well remember kicking up a row about the fact that the chimney needed some kind of wind and rain control, and coming up from the south armed with brush and shovel to clean up muck left by the birds etc.

Unhappily I have not been able to get up these last few years. I used to go every year with the Altar Servers and some folks from

Rosyth, but since I retired they have not been running a minibus. In any case it is a long run up and back for one day, but I still live in hope of visiting again soon. I really appreciate the little magazine, which has opened up new perspectives. Keep it up!

Canon Daniel Boyle, Kinross



We are having difficulty in identifying some of the clergymen in this photograph. Anyone who can send in a complete list of names (by rows, left to right) will be providing a valuable service to the history of the Scalan Association. Even a series of incomplete lists would probably do the trick.

The next letter presents marvellous evidence of Scalan's wide appeal. All the way from Alaska, which may fairly be considered one of the ends of the earth, comes a Christian missionary to visit Bill and Jane McEwan at Gallowhill.

While on holiday in June 1994 my husband and I penetrated into Scalan's world. Our friends the Macintoshes of Easter Elchies took us and I was captivated. While we were there Michael Taitt was restoring the windows. It was not until later that I realised his mother was a good friend of my own mother in Devonshire. Subsequently we met again down there and he was kind enough to lend me materials on Scalan. We are to be back again in June of this year. I wish I could be there for the Annual Mass in July though I am an Episcopalian.

Rev. Teresa Thomas, Fort Yukon

This letter was spotted in 'The Scotsman' for 25 May 1996 and is reproduced here because the writer wrote memorably about piping in the last issue under the heading 'The Old Tongue in Tomintoul'. Another article by him on Glenlivet priests in the Falkirk area will appear in December.

Your report on the opening of a new piping centre in Glasgow was most welcome, but must Scotland's leading newspaper resort to the most banal journalese of the tabloids? Jim McBeth, in his opening paragraph, says: 'The skirl of the pipes wailed defiantly.' I can assure you that pipes do not skirl, and no piper would wish to own or play pipes that did so.

James Cameron Stuart, Falkirk.

I was a pupil at the Braes school and my aunt, Ann Lamb, was born at Larryvarry. She is very lucid, with a wonderful memory, and (while resident at Woodcot Hospital in Stone haven) has compiled a book on her life as a nurse. Her mother was a McPherson of Abbe Paul's branch of the family, of which she claims to be the last remaining member:

It would be advantageous to have her great Glenlivet knowledge chronicled.

John Lamb, Newton Mearns

A start is made below. The pairing of Ann Lamb's account of childhood at Larryvarry with Isobel Grant's stories makes possible an even better book on the Braes, as discussed before but so far not begun - except that Deirdre Roberts has typed out about 35,000 words of relevant, lively material from the many letters sent from London.

Meanwhile a start has been made in transcribing material on tape at the School of Scottish Studies in Edinburgh.

There is something awesome about a clock in the background ticking away the hOllrs from half a century ago, as Adam Lamb of Fuarendearg speaks out in praise of his native glen: 'Look at the fine land that there is in the Braes of Glenleevat! Supposin' they had been aye decent roads roond, you wouldn't get better grub on land nowhere for growin' crops. Even this place here, one thousand three hundred and seventeen feet abeen sea level, I've seen as fine crops o' corn at the back o' the hoose there as any ferm'll ever grow.'

Childbirth in the Braes

Ann Lamb

There was this well we used to go to, away over beside Meg Gordon. She would have been called the howdy, the midwife for the district, and she liked a dram - oh it was comical! I was brought into the world on 25th February 1902. There was six foot of snow and the doctor never saw me for six weeks because the roads were all blocked. Talk about sepsis - there was no sepsis. People were self-taught and they were wonderful.

None of us were ever fat or had much wrong with us. I never remember any of us being ill: maybe it was because the doctor charged 7/6 for a visit. So Mother was our doctor. She really was quite good at prescribing for anyone who was sick, and was always being asked to 'dress' the folk who died. She didn't seem to mind doing it. There was a very nice mention of her in the 'Banffshire Journal' when she died. She was a bit of a midwife as well, and the doctor always told them, 'Get Mrs Lamb until I come.' He had to come all the way from Tomintoul on a horse, or from Achbreck in Glenlivet, and when my brother Willie was born Mother didn't see the doctor for weeks as there was a storm and the snow, they said, was six foot high.

She told me once how she dressed the baby's cords (or umbilicus). She washed and boiled old white linen rags, dried them and lit a candle. She then cut a hole in the centre of each square of linen and held it over the hole until it was burning, then blew it out and rolled them all up in a clean towel. That was sterilisation and she didn't know it. Very few women were in bed long, and all nursed and fed their own babies. No money was given them and the family had to manage as best they could. Still, everyone seemed to live to a good old age. There were no ambulances, and seldom was anyone ever sent to hospital. Needless to say some folk must have suffered a lot. I remember being sent to a house with a message and, oh, the smell was awful and the poor woman in bed. That same smell met me in a ward later on in Edinburgh Royal Infirmary.

Isobel Grant's memories follow on very naturally, for these two ladies share a common experence.

I was born on 26th March 1915 at Comelybank in Blin' Drift. Dr Black, Tomintoul, couldn't get there through the snow, so Nurse Lamb's mother acted midwife. The Tomintoul doctor did the Braes in those days, not the Glenlivet one. Once when a new doctor arrived in Glenlivet he visited all the houses and said 'No need for me here. Every house has a kale yaird.'

I lived at Comelybank for ten years, until my mother remarried. My grand uncle was the local shoemaker, and his little shop is still there. My mother was a widow with three girls after my father died on the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, July 16th 1914. I was a posthumous baby. My oldest sister Mary was then aged one year eight months and my sister Margaret seven months. There was no widow's pension until 1916 so widows before then got nothing, and of course children's allowance is only a recent thing invented by Mussolini.

Presbyterian Bishop

This is the striking title of a book which has just been published at £9.75 by New Millenium, 312 Kennington Road, London SE11 4 LO. The author Or William Young describes his experiences as a Church of Scotland missionary in the Lahore diocese of Pakistan from 1947, the year of Partition. Latterly he was Bishop of the Protestant churches which came together in 1970. There are several reasons for reviewing it here.

Dr Young became a north of Scotland man in retirement (the book was typeset in Nairn) and the friend of an ecumenically-minded Scalinite, Canon John Symon. Bishop Geddes was a great explorer of common ground among people with different beliefs, and Canon Symon is also preoccupied by the problems of Church Unity. Here they occur in a mountainous area where the Bishop and his fellow missionaries brought comfort to scattered rural Christian communities. They learned Urdu, as the Jesuits learned Gaelic in the Braes of Mar, and found converts among the rejected - in this case low caste Hindus. Seminary training held the whole enterprise together.

Catholics were stand-offish at first but come out of it well at the end. The book is illustrated, indexed and clearly written by a man who was reared in the Scottish religious mainstream but made it up the slippery bank (see p. 5). Some habits died hard: he discouraged the kissing of his episcopal ring and never wore a mitre - only garlands of flowers! Or Young has been to the ends of the earth to bring back a fascinating story.



Publicity for Scalán

Mgr. Copland emphasised at the AGM the value of last November's award in terms of wider recognition, and 1996 has continued to provide good publicity for Scalán. In January an article by Leonella Longmore appeared in the *Inverness Courier* with an appropriately wintry picture of the seminary. It was well written and made a link with Bishop Conti's invitation to preach in the Old High Church in Inverness Scalán once again being made to stand for religious toleration.

In February your editor, in trying to interest the Aberdeen and North East Family History Society in a long and complex account of James Michie (the teacher turned farmer and whisky smuggler from Scalán - they will welcome it into their library) had one of his shortest ever efforts published in the newsletter under 'Catholic Records and the Scalán Association'. On 20 April Canon (formerly Father) Peter Moran of Inverurie (formerly Blairs) followed up with a repeated-by-request talk on Catholic records and family history. Apart from receiving a number of interesting letters, I am happy to think that the mushrooming membership of this people's history movement (7,249 at the latest count) have learned about Scalán. The Family History Shop in King Street, Aberdeen, now has a set of newsletters and is 'a member'.

In March *Aberdeen Leopard* devoted a page to Robert Henderson's account of his ancestor Abbe Paul McPherson entitled 'Precarious Journeys'. The author contrasted the air-conditioned luxury of his own swift journey to Rome with the four months taken by young Paul from his home above Scalán to the Scots College. The most interesting feature here is a passport issued to the Abbe at the height of the French Revolution at Gravelines on the Channel coast. It shows that he was only five

foot four inches, if we can accept the equivalence of 'dnq pids quatre pouces' before Napoleon introduced metrication. Clearly Ann Lamb's height (see p. 18) comes from her father's side of the family, where most of the males became policemen.

Finally, and after considerable delay, Rennie McOwan's article 'The College by the Bum' appeared in the June issue of the *Scots Magazine*. Even before it appeared in the shops a piping acquaintance was excited enough by what had come through his letter box to plan a camper-van detour on holiday to paint the Old College. He even thought of camping by the Crombie, but according to Sandy Matheson (who may have to accustom himself to more visitors) this did not happen. Incidentally Gray's School of Art in Aberdeen have this year identified the St Michael's Centre as a good base for painting places like Scalán.

Rennie is a very experienced journalist as well as being a member of our Association, and this article will achieve the widest possible publicity in all those parts of the world where exiles pine for Highland glens - and that includes Glasgow! The story is well told, from the beginning up to the modern restoration, and altogether the College is presented in a much more positive light than when first mentioned in the magazine:

'The General Assembly of the Kirk in 1760 deputed two of their number to report upon the state of religion in Glenlivet. The ministers in question accordingly made their appearance on a certain day at the door of the seminary.

The superior, who was expecting a visit from them, went out and courteously invited them to enter. But they would not take the trouble to alight from their horses, and rode off with expressions of surprise that a place of so mean an appearance should have aroused such undeserved interest.

'Nevertheless they did not fail to describe Scalán, in the pages of the *Scots Magazine*, as the residence of three priests - a notable inaccuracy, since Mr Gray was merely a deacon and there was no other ecclesiastic living in the house at the time. They were probably misled by the exaggerated accounts of neighbouring ministers with whom they came in contact. One such authority was bold enough to maintain publicly that there were as many as thirty students in residence, when as a matter of fact their number did not exceed five.'

This is taken from *Sidelights in Scottish History* written by Michael Barrett, a Benedictine of Fort Augustus who died in 1928 at the monastery's summer house of St James' on the Letterfourie estate - see p. 8.

John Watts - Scalán Man

Dr John Watts and the editor met in 1993, upstairs among dangerous joists, after the Scalán AGM Mass. He has since stayed *chez* Roberts in the Braes chapelhouse while pursuing an interest in the Scalán seminary which began, appropriately, at *Eilean Ban* on

Loch Morar. As headmaster of St Kentigern's Academy in West Lothian he acquired regular experience in bringing Catholic history to life on field trips to Morar with the pupils and now, in early retirement, he has produced a 30-page booklet entitled *The Story of Scalán for Young People*. The Catholic Heritage Commission which Bishop Conti chairs has recognised its quality for people of all ages (a Jesuit vouches for its readability!) so Scalánites should not be put off by the fact that it was produced as a '5-14 Curriculum Resource Book for Lothian Region Education Department'. That's to encourage teachers, including those in non-Catholic schools.

As the flyer going out with this newsletter makes clear, John has also written *A Cairn of Small Stones* with the Morar seminary featured prominently. There is at least one more book to come in addition to the new edition he has edited/introduced of the Rev. Charles MacDonald's *Moidart; or Among the Clanranalds* - an agreement has been reached to publish an adult book on Scalán in 1999, two hundred years after the College moved to Aquhorthies. There is scarcely space left to say that a donation of £3 for the schools book will go towards the publication costs of the adult one. The address is: *Dr John Watts, Chapelhouse, 37 Blackburn Road, Addiewell, West Lothian EH 55 8NF*

A CAIRN OF SMALL STONES

JOHN WATTS

DESCRIPTION

Set against the background of the Western Highlands *A Cairn of Small Stones* recounts the events of the 18th century - perhaps the most tempestuous century in Scotland's history - through the eyes of an old tenant farmer as he tells his life's remembrances to his local priest, Randal MacDonnell.

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THE AUTHOR

John Watts is a graduate of Oxford and Glasgow, and a Research Fellow of Edinburgh University. He was a secondary school head teacher for 21 years, and rector of several academies. He is now retired and lives in Addiewell, West Lothian with his wife and six children.

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