



No. 29, November 2004

'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)



Scalan News No.29

The Scalan Mass

Bishop Peter Moran has been familiar with Scalan since his teaching days at Blairs College,

when pupils regularly made their own pilgrimage in summer. On Sunday 4 July he was back as Bishop of Aberdeen and chief celebrant. The sky was overcast, but those who made their way to Glenlivet were fortunate compared, for example, with those who tramped through mud with brollies that day at Scone Palace.

Also under the altar canopy were Mgr John McIntyre, former rector of Blairs and the Scots College Rome; Mgr Eddie Traynor who once again brought musicians from Buckie; our President Canon Halloran; Fr Joe Toal, former Scalan Association Secretary back from the Scots College at Salamanca; and a Mexican priest, Miguel Fernandez. Two deacons of the Aberdeen diocese played their parts during the concelebrated Mass: the Revs. Vincent McQuade and Tony Schmitz.

Mindful of the dark clouds above, Bishop Moran congratulated musicians and congregation for singing at the pace intended by the composer (slow hymns a Catholic custom) and asked for the shortened version of the First Reading. His homily began by emphasising that just as the Eucharist was not simply a recalling of the Last Supper long ago but a making of Christ here present, so we must think beyond Scalan in the 18th century. The place was chosen for calm as well as for safety, and boys studied in that spirit. Coming here on pilgrimage was special, away from our usual daily context, but what we all needed in the busy modern way of living was time for the tranquillity represented by Scalan – prayer, in other words, like an appointment with the divine doctor. Bishop Moran's final thought for the congregation was that every boy who studied there was someone's son or grandson.

Still the rain stayed off as people mingled after Mass. Chairs supplied in recent years by the Scalan Association were put back indoors and the canopy was dismantled. Anyone sad to think of Sandy Matheson's cottage empty at this time of year for the first time would have been cheered when the Buckie ensemble broke into reel time with Scottish country dance music.

Committee Announcement

We would like to apologise to our members for the short notice regarding the 2004 AGM which resulted in a falling attendance and less membership fees. We hope for the AGM of 2005 to send out a separate slip consisting of attendance at the AGM and renewal of membership.

Mrs Jane McEwan, Ogilvie Cottage,

Gallowhill, Glenlivet, BALLINDALLOCH AB37 9DL

Ottawa to the Braes:

On the Ancestral Trail

Maureen Gibb

Early this summer my husband Richard and I drove up from Tomnavoulin to the Pole Inn at Knockandhu, and turned left for the Braes of Glenlivet. It was a second visit for me, but this time I was better prepared to walk in the footsteps of my ancestors, the Stuarts of East Auchavaich. I had spent the winter researching family history and reading background books on Glenlivet. One outcome was a booklet for my mother, Christina Stuart, listing one hundred Braes families from the 1881 Census.

She was delighted, and recognized the names and homes of many. We were staying at Roadside Cottage, Tomnavoulin, an original dwelling which has been lovingly restored. It gave all the atmosphere we wanted, and more.

Although I was already familiar with the layout of the 'punch bowl', the map from *Tales of the Braes of Glenlivet* was an invaluable guide as we drove slowly past the Kirkie and round into the Braes. East Auchavaich, my ancestral home, lies opposite the church at Chapelton, which was our first destination. The great doors were locked, but we were fortunate to meet with the Cowpers who live close by. The day being quite chilly, we gladly accepted the offer of coffee. The next hour sped by with an impromptu accordion ceilidh: now that's Highland hospitality! Later we met Gordon McGillivray who farms at nearby Achnascraw, and he arranged to have the church open for us next morning. Meanwhile we went into the churchyard to take photographs and notes of the family gravestones. Many years ago I had gone from one to another along with my mother, who knew firsthand all the old relationships. That was in my pre-genealogy days!

The colourful altar panels and border give such a peaceful atmosphere to this holy place of worship in which my mother and forebears gathered in days gone by. After a time of quiet reflection, we took photographs of the interior, with a special thought for the much used font. We were also very impressed by the 1897 photograph of the congregation taken on the day the church was opened. How I wished I could put names to what seemed like hundreds of faces! Leaving the car at Eskmulloch and armed with umbrellas, we set off for the Scalan using our map to identify former family dwellings. By the time we had crossed the Crombie Burn, it was raining.

Scalan and the Buiternach

Once inside the interior was familiar, but much restoration work has been done and it now seems larger. Going from room to room, I recalled passages from John Watts' book about Scalan telling of the boys and their studies, their activities, their many difficulties, and their great successes. Amazingly, these boys left Scalan to further their religious studies on the Continent, travelling 'each in suitably tailored attire' and this in the 1700s when roads in the Braes were only rough tracks. We studied the display material arranged on the original furniture, then took our leave to spend some time walking outside. The sun was shining again as we went for the car and a picnic lunch at the Buiternach



Later we walked to the secluded graveyard, winding our way ever upward. The sweet smelling, resinous trees eventually opened out to the expanse of hillside and the walled graveyard. More stones than I had expected were now exposed, and we checked them carefully. On my family tree in the 1600s a Thomas Stuart had married an Isobel Gordon. From this panoramic spot overlooking the Braes we were able to locate the family farms and crofts of Auchnarrow, Clashnoir, Calier, Bolletten, Tomnalienan and Lettoch.

Isobel Grant

In mid afternoon we drove to Tomintoul hoping to meet Isobel Grant. We were told that Isobel might be having her nap, but on hearing how far we had come to visit her she met us with a cheerful 'Come in, come away in.' This small, lively lady has, through the Tales book of which she is principal author, brought alive for readers a microcosm of old Highland life. Her stories of the families during her younger days in the Braes will live on.

She remembered my Stuart grandparents well, especially my grandmother and told me that my late Aunt Mary was 'dunked' in the burn by the Falkirk cousins after she and another cousin had used whitewash to spatter the newly painted roof of the cottage I think it was Rosebrae. My mother always said they had such fun when the Falkirk cousins came on holiday! I noticed Isobel's class photograph and recognized my mother and late Uncle George, with Isobel pointing out her sister, Meggie, and herself. 'Isobel,' I asked,



'Why didn't you like sitting with my Uncle George in class?' Isobel replied, 'Girls didn't like to sit with boys in those days, but the master made me and Georgie share a desk because we both had fair white hair.' After Isobel and I posed for the camera it was time to say a fond goodbye. We set off for Tombae Church and more gravestone checking. However time was getting short as we were to leave next morning for Fraserburgh and more graveyard exploration in search of my husband's ancestors. But what a marvelous day it had been! Our time spent walking in the footsteps of my ancestors, our wonderful visit with Isobel, the generous hospitality of all we met and especially Rita's welcome at Roadside all helped to create this very special time, so full of happy memories. Back in Ottawa, as the Canadian winter sets in and more time is spent on family research, it would be wonderful to hear from Scalan Association members and perhaps add to my files.

gibb@magma.ca

Leslie Converts and Religious

Br. Paschal OSB

*A Benedictine monk of Pluscarden Abbey responds to Elizabeth Beaton's May 2001 article about the Rev. William Leslie of Darkland, near Elgin. This Presbyterian minister described Scalan and Pluscarden sympathetically in his contribution to the 1798 **Survey of the Province of Moray**.*

Reference has been made in these pages to the Rev. William Leslie (1747-1839) and his positive attitude towards Catholicism. Some account of his Catholic connections may therefore be welcome. As Elizabeth Beaton noted, he had ten daughters and three sons, many of whom made advantageous marriages. Their mother's brother was 12th Earl of Caithness, and Mr Leslie himself had some claim to the title Earl of Lindores (in Fife). His social position and enlightened attitude to other denominations were characteristic of the Moderate party within the Kirk: the support of the Moderates for repeal of the Penal Laws was as much an expression of their desire to snub their Evangelical rivals as it was of a genial tolerance of Roman Catholicism. Leslie was often heard to say that he could understand the Presbyterian or the Catholic Church, but he could never understand the Church of England.

His second son was clearly of the same mind. Archibald Leslie (1789-1851) married Eleanor Atlee on 8 July 1823. She was the eldest daughter of a well-to-do country gentleman, John Falconer Lee of Wandsworth. Archibald and Eleanor Leslie's married home was in London, where they had three daughters and a son over a ten-year period. The entire family were to follow Eleanor into the Catholic Church, and the three youngest – Eric, Mary and Charlotte – would enter religious life.

Converts in Scotland

This all began after they moved to Edinburgh in 1844. Mrs Leslie came from an Evangelical background but – like many Anglicans of the time – she was confused about her religion. At one point the Leslies came under Nonconformist influence, and zealously adhered to Calvinist teaching and practice, but by the time they left London had swung the other way to become followers of the High Church movement. While waiting to find a house they took rooms in Portobello, outside Edinburgh. During their time there Archibald and Eleanor met, at Dalkeith, the Duke of Buccleuch's Episcopalian chaplain the Rev. John C. Robertson, and through him came to be friends of the Duchess of Buccleuch and the Marchioness of Lothian. All three later followed Mrs Leslie into the Catholic Church.

At Portobello the Leslies were introduced to the local priest, James Clapperton, who had previously been a professor at the Royal Scots College Valladolid. It was this native of

Fochabers who took the Leslies on their first visit to St Margaret's Convent in Edinburgh. The story of Eleanor Leslie's conversion need not be described here. It follows much the same pattern as that of many hundreds who were received into the Church in the wake of the Oxford Movement within the Church of England, and who published their testimonies in a stream of books. Mrs Leslie's influence on wellknown Scottish converts was considerable.

She was received into the Catholic Church at St Margaret's, Whitehouse Loan, on 3 December 1846. Within three and a half years the rest of the family had taken the same step, the last to do so being her husband. Archibald Leslie then died in February 1851, seven months after his reception. The eldest daughter Eleanor married a Catholic lawyer, Fraser Gordon W.S. (181661).

Entering Religion



In 1859 Charlotte offered herself as a Sacred Heart nun at the Conflans novitiate house in France: Lady Lothian's daughter Lady Cecil Kerr entered religion at the same time and the two were clothed together on 8 February 1860. The third daughter Mary became an Ursuline Sister at St Margaret's convent, where she had attended school. Two Clapperton sisters from Fochabers belonged to this community. One of them, Sister Margaret Teresa, had been the first Scottish nun to enter a convent on home soil since the Reformation, when she was clothed on St Andrew's Day 1840.



Eric William Leslie was at school with William Gordon (18271900) one of the Gordons of Kethocksmill near Aberdeen – and 'the two Willies' remained lifelong friends. William and his older brother John both became Catholics, and then Oratorians in 1848. A year later William Leslie (having dropped the Eric) entered the Jesuits at Hodder on the Stonyhurst estate in Lancashire. After completing the long course of studies he was ordained in 1859 at Innsbruck in the Austrian Tyrol. He then spent four year's at St Joseph's in the Woodside district of Glasgow, which had just been handed over to the Jesuits. After serving several English missions he moved to London in 1875, spending the last thirtyfour years of his active life at Farm Street in Mayfair. He had a gift for friendship, and was much sought after as a confessor and spiritual director.



Father William Leslie S.J. had considerable talent as an artist. In youth he executed a number

of lithographs on antiquarian subjects for Cosmo Innes, a relation, and later put his knowledge of sacred art and architecture to use in publishing a Catholic Guide to Westminster Abbey. His mother was also competent in sketching, having been taught by Queen Victoria's tutor Samuel Prout. Eleanor Leslie moved into Whitehouse Loan in 1870, taking one of the rooms made available for lady boarders. There she was looked after by her youngest daughter, Sister Mary Sales. Unlike her husband, Eleanor had a strong constitution and survived several illnesses and falls. She died at St Margaret's Convent on 8 April 1892 in her ninetysecond year.

The last notable act of her Jesuit son was in 1908 when, at the age of eightytwo, he preached an entire monthlong retreat to the Marist Brothers at Dumfries. (Sadly they have recently left after 130 years in the town.) Father Leslie retired to Manresa House, Roehampton, early in the following year, remaining there until his death in 1917. He was described then as 'the Patriarch of the English Province', an unexpected soubriquet for the grandson of a Scots Presbyterian minister.

Biking to the Braes

John Stuart

The following description of an arduous pilgrimage is by a descendant of the Shop family at Chapeltown. John's journey began in Ireland (County Antrim) where he is a headmaster.

At last I was able to be present at the Annual Scalan Mass in the Braes of Glenlivet on Sunday July 4th. However I did not have the luxury of a car. My wife needed it to look after her very elderly mother, so I set off by bicycle from Ballymena to Larne. There I crossed by ferry to Troon, then a sixty mile journey to Stirling where I arrived very late on the Saturday evening. Next morning it was the 9.40 Scotrail service to Aviemore, changing at Perth. The train was half an hour late due to debris left on the line by vandals – all praise to Scotrail for avoiding an accident, and also for a policy which is much more supportive to cyclists than that of many passenger operators in England.

I left Aviemore about one o'clock facing a thirtyfive mile climb to the Braes. It was very tough, especially around the Bridge of Brown, but I reached Scalan at ten past four, just before Bishop Moran began his homily. I found his words inspiring. It was a very special occasion for me, going back to 'roots', so to speak, and it was gratifying to see so many present also to have the singing led by such a superb choir from Buckie. Fortunately it stayed dry during the Mass. There had been heavy showers, judging by the puddles on the track from Eskmulloch, so I was lucky to get there dry.

Anyway the experience of cycling to Scalan made it for me a real pilgrimage. Although I am

fairly well used to long cycle runs with friends on a Saturday this was different! I took the opportunity to look round Scalan and was much impressed by the work done since I first visited in 1996. On the way back I found the Braes church open and in remarkably good condition. Baptised at the font there were my father (Ian) grandfather (Charlie) and no doubt many other relatives. A browse round the graveyard revealed it to be very well kept and made me aware of what a thriving population there was in the early twentieth century.

Tiredness prevented a direct return to Aviemore, and I stayed overnight in a Tomintoul B&B: There I learned that Isobel Grant is now living in the village. She is a relation by marriage, of course, and I had visited her London flat in November 2001. I didn't have much time and decided against calling on her without warning. Please God I will be back next year with time to meet a lot more people, including Isobel.

The first leg of my return trip was more downhill, and shorter by way of Nethybridge instead of the main road. After the train, and the return trip to Troon, I was back in Larne at 10.30 on Monday evening and home in Ballymena by 1.30 a.m. on Tuesday 6th July. So it can be done, and thank God I am still able to do it. Next year I hope to tackle the isolation of the Braes from the Aberdeen side, taking the train to Dufftown – easier than the Bridge of Brown! The hard journey this year in 2004 made it very clear to me how remote and inaccessible the Braes were in seminary days. No wonder Scalan survived and thrived. Keep up the good work with the Scalan Association!

More About Mathesons

Ian Matheson

I suspect that George Watt rues the day I got hold of his email address! I have been looking at why Philip Matheson arrived in the Braes, and George thought my ideas should be offered to the readers of Scalan News. These are still far from being finalised, but somebody out there may be able to help.

A family tree was passed on by my father, and with the advent of Internet access to Scottish records I decided, last year, to start digging into the family history. All went well until I purchased Margaret Shand's book on the 1851 Census in Inveravon. There I found that Philip Matheson and Henrietta Clark had a son James, born at the Scalan in 1845, of which none of my family had any knowledge. He was not on our tree.

My initial assumption that he had died before records began in 1855 was disproved when I found that at the time of the 1861 census he was working for William and Margaret Grant at Belnoe farm in the Braes of Glenlivet. The next thing to be uncovered was James Matheson's 1864 marriage to Grace Grant at Inverness, given as their usual place of residence. The 1881

census shows that Grace was born at Inverallan outside Grantown in 1841. George Watt helped me to find a daughter of the marriage: Elspet Matheson, born in 1864 at Anagach, Cromdale, past the old Spey Bridge from Grantown.

James Matheson was working as a ploughman when he moved with his wife and young child to Cothal Mills, in the parish of Fintray near Aberdeen. There three more children were born: James Philip (1867), Henrietta (1868) and John (1871). Henrietta died of croup at the age of five, as registered at Tomintoul by her uncle John Matheson. Sometime before 1875 they moved to Dundee, where in that year Charles William Matheson was born. Three years later, in 1878, the family was completed by the arrival of Theodore Alexander.

James Matheson died in Dundee's Royal Infirmary on 17 October 1879, some twentyeight hours after suffering 'crush of body, injuries to brain and spinal chord'. He had been employed for some years as a stone quarrier, his family home at 24 South Church Street in the Lochee district of Dundee. The last record of the widowed Grace 'Mathewson' and her children has them in Liff and Benvie parish which included Lochee. This 1881 census entry shows them living at 17 Mid Street (now vanished) with Elspet helping her mother to look after the five younger children. The oldest son James Philip, now aged fourteen, had started as a railway clerk. Searches of later Scottish records have proved fruitless, and there is no trace of the Matheson family in the 1901 census for England and Wales. A possible move to Ireland is under consideration by George Watt and myself. Information or ideas from readers well be welcome:

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Los Gordon en España

Mike Morrison

The Gordon *Congreso* at Madrid on 6 November was the experience of a lifetime. The food was excellent and the hotel the best that I have ever stayed in. All were issued with ties or scarves if they were Gordons, and presentations were made by each family. I made up my mind after a sleepless night to give away copies of the Spanish version of our book *Los Gordon Españoles y Huntly* and prepared a short speech in Spanish.

They were twenty minutes late for the first coffee break so I decided to liven things up. I explained that in the year 2000 sixteen Spanish Gordons were in the Huntly church donated largely by John David Gordon of Wardhouse, and that Ann Dean and I had written a book about it. I held up a copy and said '*Pero es en Ingles y no va la pena !*' 'But it is in English and not much use to you,' throwing it on one side.

Then I produced a pile of the Spanish version and told them that this was a present from

Scotland. They erupted and surged forward to collect them: 180 copies at one per family, since there were 330 present. I was then inundated with people asking me to autograph it. Later Alfonso continued the theme by ripping up his speech, claiming that the book had done it all and that he remembered the *patatas con patatas* (stovies) at Huntly 2000. Later still I danced the Gay Gordon with Margarita Borbon dos Sicillias who is related to King Juan Carlos. I went there with the idea of selling the book to raise money for the Scalan Association, but the many contacts may prove more valuable.

Aberdeen's Hidden Gem

Bishop Peter Moran

Union Street in Aberdeen sweeps eastward, gently downhill to the Market Street junction, and then more steeply upward past the Town House to end in the imposing square at the Castlegate: and off the Castlegate, through an unassuming archway, lies the 'Hidden Gem' which is St Peter's Roman Catholic Church.

St Peter's, which celebrated its bicentenary in August 2004, is 'hidden' not only because the building is away from the street frontage, and entered through the venerable paved courtyard, but because so much of its heritage and history is generally unknown. This book corrects that ignorance and records that heritage.

Regularly practising Catholics in Aberdeen today, at the start of the twentyfirst century, number about two thousand, with nine churches or chapels. It is startling to discover that about that same number flocked to St Peter's over one hundred and fifty years ago. Catholics in Aberdeen today are recognised as a minority, perhaps some five per cent, spread across all areas and all levels of society, but few if any Catholics are household names in the city. One hundred and fifty years ago the percentage was much higher, and their priest was so well known that he had a civic sendoff at his funeral!

This history is, perhaps inevitably, mainly an account of the successive parish priests of St Peter's – and for decades each of them was in turn parish priest of the whole of Aberdeen – rather than an account of the parishioners. From Robert Strachan in the late 1600s, through Gordons, Grants, Chisholms and MacWilliams, they were indeed *gigantes in diebus illis* – larger than life. This is a local history, but there are links with Continental seminaries, most notably the fact that Priest Gordon's studies for the priesthood at Douai in NorthEast France – after Scalan – having been interrupted by the French Revolution, were completed in the Castlegate premises. However there are in the story laypeople's names, still instantly recognisable today, such as Young, Middleton, Mellis and Shaw; and there are many fascinating glimpses of social history being made in some of the now vanished streets and closes of an older Aberdeen.

There are impressively detailed accounts, too, of how the church site and its surrounding tenements were acquired, adapted and developed.

A strong thread in the story is the practical support and kindness offered across the years to the desperately poor, Catholic and nonCatholic alike, by the parish and by the priests who shared their hardships, occasionally even unto death (from typhus in 1835). Another is the priority given to education, with the setting up of the schools, both those of Constitution Street with over three hundred pupils, and those conducted elsewhere by the Franciscan sisters and by the Society of the Sacred Heart.

Perhaps the best known evidence of this closeness to the people is Priest Gordon's fiery eloquence in the Doric, sermons for his flock but also entertainment for visitors from other denominations.

For me, and perhaps for other readers too, there are some surprises in this account. How widely known is it, for example, that St Peter's all but closed down in 1860 after the Cathedral was opened, and was kept as a Masscentre only because the Sisters of Nazareth, newly arrived from Hammersmith, were lodged next door? Who would have guessed that music and singing were unknown at Mass in Aberdeen, and indeed frowned upon, until 'the pressing importunity of . . . the most respectable part of [his] congregation' led Priest Gordon to ask the Bishop to turn a blind eye to it! Yes, 'Hidden Gems' indeed – bit a'body maun read the hale thing theirsels; it's affa fine.

*Readers will no doubt be interested to know that there is a new edition of Canon Sandy MacWilliam's history of St Peter's (the Aberdeen church he took over after bringing the Scalan Association into being while at Chapelton). Under the title **Aberdeen's Hidden Gem**, it was brought up to date for this year's bicentenary by the Scalan News editor and is available for £4.70, including postage, from myself as publisher: Rev. Tony Schmitz, 16 Huntly Street, ABERDEEN AB10 1SH, or*

director@ogilvie.ac.uk. A video or DVD of the Mass is also on offer at £10.

Readers Write. . .

'Aberdeen's Hidden Gem' brought back many memories of the interwar period to my 86yearold mother. Her own mother, who often spoke of St Peter's, was a midwife in the City Hospital nearby and knew all about the area's grinding poverty. She told a story of Fr Andrew Grant. He visited the statue of Our Lady of Aberdeen in Brussels with a group of northeast soldiers at the end of the First World War, and they spoke about taking her home. There was a twinkle in his eye as he told the St Peter's congregation that considering the veneration with

which she was surrounded perhaps she should be left in Brussels. My mother also passed on the old lady's opinion that there was no use giving Fr Grant anything because he would only give it away.

Michael Olizar, Putney.

I am enclosing £20 as my wife and I can no longer take part in the Annual Mass due to ill health. We have had the good fortune to attend ten of these, starting on 2 July 1989. Father Briody was the priest who started these pilgrimages from our part of Lanarkshire, and we have a lot to thank him for.

Alex and Rose Byrne, Coatbridge.

When Cardinal Winning was chief celebrant in 1995 he applied the Gospel of the day to one bus party – 'the people of Coatbridge, their faces set like flint. As Secretary of the Scalan Association, Fr Michael Briody (now at Moodiesburn) writes the AGM Minutes.

What a delight it was, Alasdair, waking up on Saturday morning to hear yourself and others talking about Blessed Morar on Radio Four's Open Country. It was also good to hear the Highland voice of a MacDonald. I shall listen to the Thursday lunchtime repeat on 9 October.

Charles Francis, Dagenham

Ewan MacDonald, Loch Morar boatman, taped the 6.30 a.m. programme which was mainly about our local equivalent of the 'Nessie' phenomenon. The producers usually improve Open House for the larger audience, and my thoughts on the seminary island were given airtime after all – to the effect that midges couldn't have been as bad then or Bishop Hugh MacDonald would never have built his house and school on the island!

A member of the public has asked for information on an artist called Ann Davidson of Aberdeen, whose sculpture 'African Woman and Child' is held in Lothian Road, Edinburgh. The Internet led to Scalan News. Can you help?

Library Services, Oldmeldrum.

Readers will recall Ann's Christmas card from last year and the story of Tony Blair giving a statue to the Pope. Her website, worth repeating for those with very special Christmas presents in mind, was passed on as www.ajdsculptors.co.uk.

My wife's relative Father James Mowat Marr was priest at Tynet in the 1920s, finishing at Aberlour and Dufftown. His brother Thomas called his first child John Andrew Stopani after Father William Stopani who married him in 1882. Is there any way we can find out more about these priests?

Neil Cameron, Melbourne.

Information was sent contrasting Dean Stopani, who created the grandeur of Aberdeen's Victorian cathedral, with Fr Marr. He was responsible for Tynet at a time when the roof of Scotland's oldest postReformation chapel was 'gey ripe' for collapse. It was restored in the spirit of Scalan.

My brother and I enjoyed a lovely visit to Scalan this summer. My gggrandparents were William Stuart born Refriesh 1810 and Elspet Kellas born Blairfindy 1801. William's parents were John Stuart and Elizabeth Mitchell, and for at least two generations before Refriesh the Stuarts were at Tomnalienan near Scalan. Is there someone I could contact who could give me more information about their past history.

Pamela L Gordon Stuart Thorne, Dufftown, tininver.g.stuart@verizon.net.

The combination of names brought to mind the late Stuart Mitchell whose map is partly reproduced on p. 2, and it turned out that he was a relation. Can anyone else help?

Readers who recall the second of my two articles on the Rev. Charles Fraser will know that

there is a mystery, still unsolved, about what went wrong in Ireland. A letter quoted by Fr Thomas Morrissey S.J. compares Fr Fraser to a seventeenthcentury Jesuit who gave up his faith, the implication being that Fraser was also an 'apostate' – that he left Clongowes and the Irish Jesuits after embracing Protestantism.

His welcome in Aberdeen and his association with Priest Gordon's public preaching of Catholic doctrine prove that Charles Fraser was no 'heretic'. Even more convincing evidence has recently come to hand. On 20 October 1833 the Right Reverend John Murdoch was consecrated as the coadjutor bishop of the Western District of Scotland in support of Bishop Andrew Scott, both of whom featured in the last issue. The sermon which was preached in Glasgow on that occasion (and later published) was delivered by the Rev. Charles Fraser of Aberdeen. Three years after Ireland, where his reputation as a preacher was made before the crisis, Fraser was highly honoured in his native land. This has been drawn to Fr Morrissey's attention in Dublin.

James Russell, Edinburgh.

*Mary Hunter, whose letter and article follow, may be quoted here from her 1989 **History of the Parish of St Andrew, Braemar** (£2 at the back of the church). Regarding the education of the Rev. Walter Lovi who built the present church, she wrote: 'He was sent to a Jesuit college in Ireland, perhaps because he was considered too old for the seminary at Aquhorties. . . He was accepted by the Jesuits of Clongowes Wood from where he wrote: "I am to receive the education of a secular priest. A Mr Fraser, a Scotsman, is to teach me who is a clever man."' This is helpful evidence that Fraser was a secular priest in 1821.*

I have been trying to arouse some interest in Ardearg, near Braemar, for many years. I wanted the County Council to open up the old road down to the site. Bishop Foylan said Mass there with Mgr Copland many years ago. Our erstwhile Bishop, Mario Conti, asked me to write something for him. He knows nothing about Ardearg and thinks, 'Mary has a bee in her bonnet.' I sent him a card before he left showing bees swarming on a bonnet and flying up to his mitre, but they didn't settle there. The article I wrote for him has disappeared without trace – almost like Ardearg. But the Bishop was very good when I was in hospital and after, and I do want to die in Holy Mother Church!

Over the years Father Gerald Fitzgibbon S.J., who was born in Aboyne and loves to return, has been interested in the Jesuit Farquharson brothers. Canon Sandy MacWilliam covered the early period very well in his 1973 article for *The Innes Review*, 'The Jesuit Mission in upper Deeside, 1671-1737'.

Mary S. Hunter, Braemar.

Our President Canon Halloran's 'Jesuits in 18th century Scotland' appeared in the same journal of the Scottish Catholic Historical Association in 2001. Miss Hunter commissioned a new card from Wilma McLellan of St Margaret's, Braemar, which now has pride of place in the editorial 'office'.

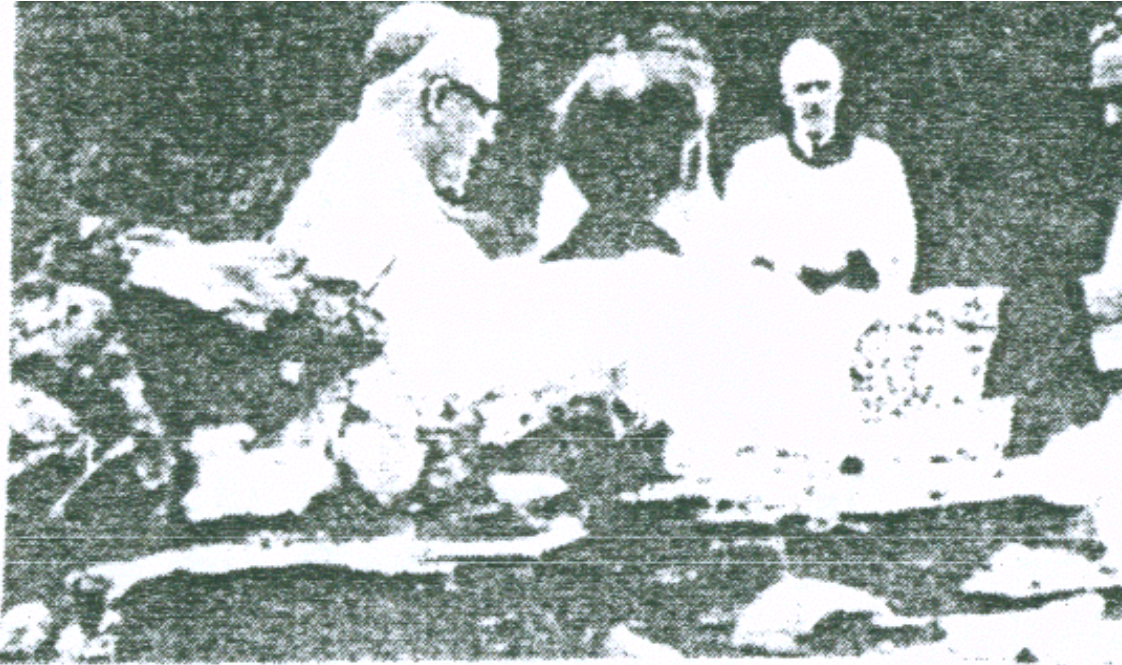


Ann Dean's drawing cannot convey its soft colours and the relief effect of bonnet and mitre. When we spoke on the phone she used the Gaelic pronunciation Ardjerg (it means the raised red place) so it is worth adding that Quoich is Cooich: John Grant's book, which is featured after the article (no longer 'disappeared without trace') spells the place opposite Ardearg as Allancuaich, which may help some reader to come up with the meaning. The map on the back cover deserves to be improved by magnifying glass.

Ardearg in the Braes of Mar

Mary S. Hunter

The historic settlement of Ardearg is best viewed from the Quoich across the River Dee. It lies – a miniature valley – below the level of the Linn Road, under which flows a small stream making its way towards the house and chapel once the home of Father Charles Farquharson S.J. This secluded spot was chosen as a safe haven for Catholic priests during penal times. It is pictured by Dom Odo Blundell OSB in *The Catholic Highlands of Scotland*. Until recently the area was thickly forested, screening Ardearg from public view. Today nothing remains except the Farquharson 'Chair' – a recess in the grassy bank which carries the inscription 'F^r Cha^s Farquharson 1785'. It was put there by Canon James Paul who came to Braemar in 1882 and died there thirty years later. During the short period Fr John Copland was there (1964-66) Bishop Michael Foylan came to say an outdoor Mass at Ardearg. Fr Charles Skelley S.J. (a supporter of the Scalan Association when at Tomintoul) was also present. Mass was said in the ruins of one of the old cottages and not, as was said at the time, on the site of Father Farquharson's chapel.



The site is described in *Farquharson Genealogies* No. 11. The old road which went through the settlement is clearly visible from the layby above Ardearg and could easily be made usable. There ought to be a sign pointing down to the site, and one drawing attention to the Chair on the left below the place where Bishop Foylan said Mass.

Outside the present church of St Andrew's, Braemar, which was built in 1839 by the efforts of the Rev. Walter Lovi and the money of the Duchess of Leeds stands the old stone font. It might be thought of as witnessing there in silent reproach, for there is nothing inside this splendid church to remind one of Ardearg.

The remarkable Braemar register begun in 1703 by an earlier Jesuit, Fr Hugh Strachan, is rich in detail about people such as 'Janet Farquharson at that time a Catholick but now an unworthy and base apostate from the Catholick faith'. Father Charles, who died at Ardearg in the last year of the eighteenth century, left a census of his people which ended: 'This parish is ten miles in length lying from east to west on the river Dee. Including all the rivers and branches it extends to thirty miles in circumference. There are about 118 whole Catholik families . . . 44 families partly Catholik . . . 48 whole families Protestant . . . about 500 [adult] communicants . . . [and] about 1000 souls in all the mission.'

Charles Farquharson, born on 3rd March 1713, was the fifth son of Lewis and Margaret Farquharson. He was laird of Auchindryne, beside the Castletown of Braemar, and she was the daughter of his cousin Alexander Farquharson of Allanquoich. Charles was educated at the Scots College Madrid and at Douai before becoming a Jesuit in Bavaria. He returned to Scotland in the fateful year of 1745 and served as a chaplain in the Jacobite army. After being released from a prison hulk in the Thames he returned to Deeside. There, thanks to his friendship with the Earl of Fife, he was able to minister with a certain amount of freedom in

Glengairn and then Braemar, based at Ardearg.

Beginnings of the Mission

Late in life, at the request of Bishop John Geddes, Father Charles wrote an account of his father's conversion. Lewis Farquharson had studied divinity in Aberdeen before becoming assistant to the Minister of Crathie. He was promised a kirk if he wrote a book against the Papists. When it was finished he met secretly with Father Henry Forsyth, the first Jesuit to work on Deeside, to discuss the problems he met with in writing it. Lewis became a Catholic, though always known as 'the minister', and his second son John Farquharson entered the Society of Jesus some years ahead of Charles. His mission was Strathglass, west of Beaulieu. Perhaps because of his medical skill, Fr Charles used to say, 'I cannot work miracles: my brother John can work miracles.'

All too little is known about the Jesuits and their mission, although one readily accepted theory is that it would have been too dangerous to entrust anything to writing in those times. Canon MacWilliam's article quotes a Church of Scotland source: 'Mr Hugh Strachan, a Jesuit, resides in Ardoch [Glengairn] which belongs to Callum Grierson alias McGregor of Dalfad who has built a house for him and a garden and furnishes him with all necessities.' He gives a vivid, disturbing, account of life in Braemar: 'The people are so poor they keep their cattle in their dwellings.' According to Fr FitzGibbon, 'It is clearly that of a Lowlander in a state of culture shock!' Still, he mastered Gaelic and made himself 'able to read and write and catechise in the Highland tongue.'

Bishop Nicolson appointed James O'Sheil, an Irish priest, to replace him but he was withdrawn when Fr Robert Seton S.J. arrived in 1708. Braemar continued as a Jesuit mission: Frs Gordon, Riddoch and finally Fr Charles Farquharson, by which time the Society of Jesus had been suppressed worldwide. He is buried with other priests, including his brother, in St Andrew's graveyard close to the first church. There a table-shaped sandstone memorial used to read: 'Sacred to the memory of the Roman Catholic clergymen who are interred here.' Details of Fr Forsyth and the two Farquharsons are carved on stone which has deteriorated; also of a secular priest the Rev. William McLeod who died June 3 1809.

Ardearg after Fr Charles

Censuses for Corrymulzie for the years 1851 onwards show that Ardearg continued for a time as a thriving little community, with occupations such as stockingknitter, gardener, contractor and carpenter. In 1901 James Phillips agreed to rent Ardearg at a yearly sum of £2 10s. His son Norbert and his daughter Stella Maria were born there although it seems that the son who became Canon George Phillips (190386) was born somewhere else in the area. The Agricultural Returns for 1938 state baldly: 'Ardearg not now in existence.' It seems appropriate to end with words which were carved on the clergy grave at Braemar:

They died to live that living worth regard

And with like virtue seek the same reward.

Father Charles Farquharson:

A Legend of the Braes o' Mar

*A new edition of **Legends of the Braes o' Mar** by John Grant, Glengairn, is just out and can be obtained through 01467 681666 or editor@leopardmag.co.uk, price £10. First published in 1861, this classic book has been out of print for almost a century. Along with two brothers from Abergairn, the author studied for the priesthood at Blairs but became a teacher at Auchindryne, where he collected stories. John Grant went on to become a banker at Tarland before leaving for Australia with wife and family. His brother Colin Grant was Bishop of Aberdeen for six weeks of 1889, before dying unexpectedly 'under a complication of fatal diseases.' The extract emphasises medical skill.*

As a physician, Father Charles was scarcely less renowned than Fear na Bruaich [*the man of the Braes – one of Prince Charles Edward's surgeons*] and he undoubtedly did a great deal of good in the country. He is said to have left a MS. containing modes of treatment for the various maladies prevalent. . . The Jesuit had a peculiar way of arriving at the truth, when examining the prevaricating relatives of a patient as to the treatment employed. If they suspected it contrary to his ideas, no earthly advantage would induce them to disclose the nature of it.

Fuaregs

He was called to see a darling child in a house near Gairnshiel at one time. The boy was evidently dying.

'Ah! Um! Do you give him plenty of milkmeat?' asked he, as if thinking there had been a woeful neglect in this.

'Well, I am very sure he never wants for that,' answered the mother.'

'Ay, um! But when ye churn,' crossexamining with an air of doubt, 'Ye donot give him a "fuareg" [*oatmeal mixture*] of the cream?' 'As sure as death,

Mr Farquharson,' was returned, 'I never mak butter but he gets a good "fuareg" out of the churn.' 'Just so, goodwife,' concluded the physician. 'Well, you just buy his windingsheet with the butter, for you have irretrievably destroyed your child's digestion with so many good "fuaregs". See that you be more careful with the rest of your bairns.' . . .

A Grim Gamekeeper

A gamekeeper of Lord Fife's, of the name of Munro, had a cancer in the upper lip. He went to Edinburgh to consult the most skilful doctors, but without avail. When the lip had been eaten away as far as the nose, the case was submitted to Father Charles. He simply prescribed a potion made up by himself, and without any outward application – without any surgical operation – that alone effected a cure. The man lived a long time afterwards, though he had a particularly grim look from the want of his upper lip. . .

At the time I now speak of the Duffs had acquired the greater part of their Braemar estate. They were rigorous in putting down poaching; but in spite of their utmost endeavours poaching abounded on their best moors and in their finest forests. The Earl of Fife, wishing to enlist Father Charles in the cause and sure that his advice would do much with the people, determined on paying him a visit to talk over the matter. He went over to the Ardearg accordingly and found the priest busy in raising a bulwark to keep the Dee off his little croft. . . *[The excerpt is included for the sake of that homely detail, although the story turns on a haunch of the Earl's venison which the housekeeper was preparing for dinner.]* The long staff with round head of horn that served to pilot Father Charles through the wilds of Glengairn and Braemar may yet be seen in Auchin-dryne. . . The Earl met his funeral coming from Ardearg. 'I wish to God,' said he, 'I were such as he was; I would willingly lie where he does.'

Exile fae Braemar

James Cuthbert Donaldson, 1985

**Nigh 50years ha'e passed awa'
Afore is heard a Braemar loon,
The latest exile o' them a',
An' sick o' heart in London Toon.
Gie me the names o' fair Deeside:**

**Clunie, Luy, Inverey;
And from auld Faither Charles' Seat
Gaze o'er Quoich and, close beside,
Carn na Drochaide and Craig Leek.
Oh! Never let the old words die,
Plain and simple, nae oracular,
Keep haud o' the vernacular.**

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