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EDITORIAL

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Please mark each item of business for the appropriate Official.

We all hope you will enjoy these couple of lectures and the official reports from the AGM. Feel free to ask difficult questions, and to enter names for next year's elections to the exalted offices of your Society so that you can write such reports in future.

I also feel it needs pointing out that "Lucy, Jane and the Bishop" is not a risqué story for telling only in Gentlemen's Clubs but the first half of a serious investigation into the authenticity of passenger lists which will be completed in our next Journal.

Two conferences taking place later this year to note in your diaries. The first is that of The Anglo-Scottish Family History Society with the theme of "The Scottish Connection". It will be held on Saturday 22nd June at St Thomas' Centre, Ardwick Green North, Manchester. Send £10 (cheques payable to Manchester & Lancashire FHS.) and a s.a.e to Mr O W Oldham, 58 Glenville Way, Denton, Manchester M34 1BS.

The other is of the Scottish Association of FHS's (of which we are a member) and happens on Saturday September 28th at the Royal College of Physicians in Queen Street, Edinburgh. The cost will be £5 plus £4 for optional lunch and, as we go to print, final details are not yet to hand.

We must of course have a report on the Dingwall Hobbies Fair wherein about fifty of the town's inhabitants put on displays of what they get up to: beekeeping, radio aeroplaning, collecting of stamps and railways and bottles, and yours truly with Family History. Other committee members helped, and a couple of dozen application forms went so the Society can hope for long-term benefit.

Many people stopped to chat about how they had always meant to one day but never had the time and how do they start? Several had had overseas visitors coming to see the ancestral cottage, one Australian many years before had had a great aunt who lived here. "Oh yes? and would you like to speak to her? She's still here aged 104!". An English incomer was startled by a book I displayed called "The Highland Pioneers in the County of Middlesex", until he found out this county was in Canada.

Finally, a thought: we take the Mormons somewhat for granted while we use the microfilms and IGIs they produce. Would someone like to supply a sensible article of a page or more on the subject of why they do it, or shall I expound my own inadequate knowledge just to hear my own pen?

LUCY, JANE and the BISHOP
An Object Lesson in Extant Passenger Lists

This article is the second submitted to the Society by Jim Lawson. The first on the voyage of the 'British Queen' from Arisaig to Johnstown 1790-1792 appeared in Journal Vol. 8/3.

An ideal collection of ships' passenger lists for entry into North America would first of all be comprehensive, with no large gaps in chronology. The lists themselves would include the name of each ship, its captain, ports of embarkation and disembarkation with precise dates of such; the passengers would be listed in family groupings with the maiden surnames of wives listed just below those of their husbands and would include ages, occupations, names of dependants and former addresses. Ideally their intended destinations in the New World would also be listed. Ironically, while there are no such lists for the period prior to 1865 (and those following do not contain such complete information), they remain alive and well in popular genealogical mythology[1].

Appearances have conspired towards this misconception. The existence of a few lists containing pieces, but not all of the above information has left some family historians with the impression that extant lists are but a part of a comprehensive set since gone missing, and the information found therein but a deviation from the accepted norm. Perhaps none are so unique, yet so deceiving, as the 1790 manifests for the ships 'Lucy' and 'Jane' which bore 328 Highland Scots Catholics from Clanranald's estate on the West Coast of Scotland to the tiny island of St. John on the mouth of the St. Lawrence River some two hundred years ago this summer.

British Emigration to British North America

While the 'French and Indian Wars' raged on the North American continent in the late 17th and early 18th centuries, British settlements established in its thirteen colonies on the Eastern seaboard served primarily defence and trade purposes, a precarious toehold into territories largely controlled by the French and Spanish to that point. The 1763 Treaty of Paris, which brought an end to the fighting and a settlement of territories greatly favouring the British, paved the way for British emigration to the continent for generations to come.

A laissez-faire attitude towards affairs in its colonies was married to a Malthusian domestic policy which combined to create the climate for migration of some 11 million subjects from the period 1763 to the dawn of the 20th century. For much of that time the emigrant trade remained unregulated in the letter and/or enforcement of the law. One of the earlier moves towards regulation, in 1828, attempted to ameliorate the appalling conditions suffered by emigrants to that time. Concurrent with calls for reforms in trade and industrial

practices, successive passenger acts were designed to limit the number of people taken aboard each ship through the creation and deposition of passenger lists, and to force shipping companies to provide at least basic sustenance and hygiene for passengers while on board.

Gone perhaps were the days when families only able to provision themselves for twenty days suffered through voyages of sixty to eighty days, not gone was the illegal loading and off-loading of emigrants at unregistered ports by ships' captains seeking to circumvent the poorly enforced shipping laws. Scottish emigration to North America proceeded in an ever-increasing stream from the Jacobite defeat of 1746 until the British government began to worry that insufficient number of peasants were remaining to provide a stable tax base and labour supply for their lords. Attempts to monitor the outflow resulted in the keeping of passenger lists for ships bearing Scottish emigrants for the years 1774 and 1775[2]. Their fears apparently confirmed, Scottish emigration was halted by the British in September of 1775 and did not resume until the end of the American Revolutionary War in 1782.

With the North American holdings then effectively cut in half, the British encouraged emigration to the sparsely populated northern territories in what would become Canada, built around the substantial but isolated clusters of Loyalist refugees who had fled persecution in their homes to the south. As ever, emigration from Britain to British North America continued on a 'free entry' basis and few records were kept. Had there been any incentive to create comprehensive passenger lists, even after 1828, there was no reason to keep them, and there was certainly no interest in maintaining accurate records by those involved in the illegal shipment of emigrants. Not until the dawn of Confederation (1867) in Canada, in the year 1865, did an active immigration policy take shape involving the retention of records by authorities in Canada[3].

Records relating to 18th century British emigration to North America reflect a predictable pattern between major ports of trade. Shipping companies were not engaged in the passenger trade per se, these were cargo ships following the age-old principle of haulage - never sail with an empty hold. The trip to Britain carried the raw materials which fed the growing Industrial Revolution, the trip to the colonies carried the victims. The capitulation of 1782 notwithstanding, the impetus which shifted British trade north into the port of Quebec came from the French blockade of Baltic ports during the Napoleonic Wars, upon which British shipyards relied heavily for supplies of lumber. Not until the post-War era, with improvements in ocean-going vessels (larger, stronger hulls and steam power) did the era of regular trans-Atlantic passenger service take hold, concurrent with effective reforms in the regulation of trade. In due course, the emigrant trade of old yielded to the

passenger trade of late as people became able to cross the Great Pond at will, on ships better suited to the task.

Highland Scotland was slow in realising these developments, the effect being that emigration from the Highlands is best removed from the pattern of the day. The year 1790 saw the height of the notorious Highland Clearances when southern landlords began forcing tenants from their small land-holdings to make way for sheep pasture, all part of the demise of age-old Highland customs which followed the disarming of the clans by the British after the debacle at Culloden in 1746. North Americans are particularly prone to attributing any Highland migration to a clearance, and the scarcity of material documentation on the phenomenon makes it easier to claim than it is to prove. By far, Highland emigration had at its roots the two factors which have always conspired against the homeland, destitution at home combined with the sheer industry and opportunism of the Scots people themselves.

Pre-1865 extant passenger lists are an odd lot taken as a whole. Most striking is their diversity, they do not appear to have been written to any particular standards. Some are very specific, such as the 1774-75 lists, and given that we know why they were created we know why such information was recorded. - Most lists for the period are simply aggregate compilations - statistics but no names. Others list heads-of-families but not dependants. Some lists indicate ports of embarkation and disembarkation, others do not. Some give specific information about the emigrants, such as their addresses, others mention only nationalities; and so on.

In the case of the 1790 manifests for 'Lucy' and 'Jane', details include the Gaelic names of the farms of the emigrants alongside the names of heads-of-families, but dependants are listed only statistically. And while their destination is marked on the manifests, there is no suggestion as to where the passengers embarked for their voyage. In fact, the existence of these lists in the Scottish Catholic Archives in Edinburgh might beg the question as to whether these lists, let alone the emigrants, ever saw the shores of St John's Island at all.

But most intriguing of all has to be the question raised by the strange linking of heads-of-families to their addresses in the Highlands, that is: In a time when passengers paid by age, what would a ship's captain care whether he was carrying John MacDonald from Frobost on South Uist, or John MacDonald from Cleadale on Eigg? For that matter, what did he care who John MacDonald was at all, forty years before the keeping of passenger lists was required? The fact is, he probably didn't care, and discovering who was motivated to the task goes to the heart of the mystery as to why these lists exist and others do not.

As is suggested by this information, 18th century Highland emigration was largely a localised phenomenon. Unlike that going on to the south, where emigrants were able to muster at any number of ports to catch a regular sailing to North America, Highland movements followed less predictable patterns owing mostly to a scarcity of capital on the part of the emigrants. The closest point of refuge was often the lowlands, or Ulster; relatively few had the resources to move their families to Newfoundland, Cape Breton, Quebec or America. Most would need to be organised to make such a trip, their resources pooled, a ship chartered, their numbers mustered at a given port in a given week and their fare sufficiently underwritten to make the trip to an obscure Highland port worthwhile for the captain of a trade vessel.

Few would be motivated towards such a task: a tacksman, perhaps, faced with the displacement of the tenants under his care, may have been moved to lead them to a new home where he in turn might achieve the status of a landlord; also the Church, specifically a priest or pastor faced with a similar displacement of his flock and their imminent destitution who may have been moved to accompany them to the new world in search of better circumstances. Such a move would require initiative on the local level coupled with the co-operation of Church authorities, always anxious to create new colonies of the faithful in faraway places. Such were the events leading up to the migration of these 328 Highland Catholics to the Island of St John in the summer of 1790.

The priest was the Rev. Angus Bernard MacEachern[4], native of Kinlochmoidart (b. 8th February 1759) and missionary in the Hebrides from the time of his ordination in 1787 until his migration in 1790. Capable in English, Gaelic and French, MacEachern had the qualifications which made him the ideal candidate to lead such a migration. It has been widely repeated as an oral tradition that MacEachern's family had travelled the Island of St. John in the year 1772 as part of the church-sponsored Glenaladale settlement led by Capt. John MacDonald, in company with Father James MacDonald, but material support for this tradition is presently lacking[5].

Were the story true, no keener motivation could be found for MacEachern's desire to settle there, yet there were other pressing reasons. The Catholics of St. John's Island were then five years' lacking in a priest, and their peculiar linguistic diversity made MacEachern a man well-suited to their needs. Researchers should generally be wary of a migration of Scots Catholics during this era which did not include a priest; with so much of life dependant upon the church (baptisms, education, marriages, funerals, etc.) the prospect of emigration to a remote point lacking in clergy would have caused particular distress to prospective emigrants no matter what circumstances at home. In 1790 the need for priests in the Atlantic region of Canada was critical, but any single area was

sufficiently lacking in Roman Catholics as to make Church authorities reluctant to send priests. Neither was the bishop in Edinburgh anxious to lose a man from the area MacEachern was serving, where Gaelic-speaking priests were in particular demand.

On Clanranald's estate in the Highlands events had long been at a critical point. Clearances or no, the reforms brought on by the Agricultural Revolution had already displaced a significant portion of the Scottish peasant classes and were then sweeping the Highlands, and although the boom in kelp-harvesting proffered some hope for the future, it was not sufficient to sustain a large populace for any length of time. Improvements in farm technology inevitably raised the value of farmland until rises in rent became too burdensome for tenants to manage. The situation had already resulted in a substantial hemorrhaging of Clanranald's tenants to St. John's in 1772. As the situation worsened, the Church had no reservations in sending more to join them. The situation on Clanranald's estate is described in a letter from Bishop Alexander MacDonal, Duchamas, to Bishop John Geddes in Edinburgh dated 20 April 1789[6]:

"Thus it has turned out more favourable to the small tenants than what we were at first given to understand would be the case. Everybody was allowed to overbid each other, notwithstanding the former possessors had preference, & got, some of them, a considerable deduction of the offers made by better bids than themselves. The rents are however exorbitantly high & great numbers will not be able to make them good for any length of time, unless divine providence will interfere. Clanranald seemed very desirous, if practicable, of serving the poor people, which has in a great measure served to re-establish his reputation amongst them a second time".

Thus, while it does appear that Clanranald was guilty of evicting his tenants, successive rises in rent caused by competitive bidding produced the same effect..

(To be concluded in next Journal)

FOOTNOTES

[1] Scotland to Canada passenger lists are indexed in the author's book: Lawson, James; The Emigrant Scots: An Inventory of Extant Passenger Lists in Canadian Archives for Ships Travelling from Scotland to Canada Before 1900, Aberdeen & Northeast Scotland F.H.S., 152 King Street, Aberdeen, 1990.

[2] Cameron, Viola Root; Emigrants from Scotland to America 1774-1775, Genealogical Publishing Co., Baltimore, (1936), 1980.

Copies of V.R.C.'s work appear periodically and are indicated

along with other works in P.W. Filby's Passenger List Bibliography, Gale Research Co., Detroit, vols 1-6 and supps.

[3] Comprehensive passenger lists for the Port of Quebec begin in 1865, starting with microfilm 4520, National Archives of Canada, and run until 1908. Passenger lists for the Port of Halifax begin in 1880 on microfilm 4511, NAC.

[4] Biographical details on Rev. MacEachern are dependant upon: Macdonald, Edward; The Good Shepherd: Angus Bernard MacEachern, First Bishop of Charlottetown, The Island Magazine no. 16, Fall/Winter 1984. P.E.I. Museum & Heritage Foundation, Charlottetown.

[5] Notably two studies referred to the author: Mackay, Iain R.; Glenaladale's Settlement, Prince Edward Island, Scottish Gaelic Studies 10, 1965, pp 16-24, Edinburgh. Bumstead, J.M.; Captain John MacDonal and the Island, Island Magazine, no. 6, Spring-Summer 1979, pp 15-20, P.E.I. Museum & Heritage Foundation, Charlottetown.

[6] Blair's Letters, Scottish Catholic Archives, Edinburgh, BL4/11/4.

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Old South End Cemetery, Port Elizabeth, S.A.
Donald McLeod WEIR died 27 July 1942, born 23 July 1880 in Wick, Scotland; spouse Johanna Georgina died 17 June 1949 aged 65 years; block H NS plot 249.

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Old South End Cemetery, Port Elizabeth, S.A.
Isabella MacDONALD (nee CURRIE) died 4 April 1933, born 14 April 1860 in Bowmore, Islay, Scotland; spouse of Donald Ross died in London 19 Aug. 1935; 'our dear mother'; block H NS plot 224n.

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Old South End Cemetery, Port Elizabeth, S.A.
James Lamont MacFARLANE died 5 April 1942, born 25 April 1869 in Rothersay, Bute, Scotland; spouse Janet OLIVER died 26 Jan. 1944 aged 80 years; block NS F plot 172.

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Old South End Cemetery, Port Elizabeth, S.A.
Mary Gertrude ALVAREZ (nee MUNRO) died 14 Nov. 1936, born 25 Aug. 1877 in Inverness, Scotland; wife of Edward Jule ALVAREZ 1864-1944 born Las Palmas; other surname in same plot = DELPORT; block RC B plot 140.

IN SEARCH OF ALEXANDER SELKIRK

by Ivy Jardine

(Talk given to the Society 26th March 1991)

The story of Alexander Selkirk, born in Lower Largo, in the year 1676, has long fascinated the people of Largo and indeed from all over the world. Many visit the village to see and photograph the magnificent bronze statue on the site of his birthplace in Main Street.

On the 6th January 1983 I, along with my son Allan, a direct descendant of Selkirk's brother David, made a 9000 miles pilgrimage to the Juan Fernandez Islands, 400 miles off the West coast of Chile. It was on Isla Robinson Crusoe (originally named Mas-a-Tierra) that Selkirk lived completely alone from 1704-1709.

Visiting this remote island proved to be quite an adventure for us. From Santiago airport in Chile, we chartered a small five seater Cessna aeroplane and flew for 2½ hours over the Pacific Ocean. Excitement mounted as we caught our first glimpse of Isla Robinson Crusoe. It appeared, just as R.H. Dana had described it in 1834, as a large blue cloud rising up out of the sea. We braced ourselves for the bumpy landing, 800ft. above sea level. Some of the islands fishermen were on the 200yd. landing strip waiting to meet us with the mules that would carry us and our cases down the mountain to the sea shore. This part of the island was very barren and uninhabited.

We then got into the sturdy fishing boat that would take us across the sea to the point of the island where the 500 islanders lived. The 2 hour sail was the highlight of our long journey. The changing colours of the sea from the dark blue to light green, the clear water where so many kinds of fish could be seen were sights long to be remembered. The seals and sea-lions lazing on the rocks and in the sun and suddenly coming to life when they saw us, made us laugh at their antics. We watched the fishermen cook two enormous lobsters over an open fire in the centre of the boat. The lobsters proved delicious, with the splendid Juan Fernandes white wine. The sun shone and it all seemed a far cry from the bleakness and greyness of a Largo winter sea.

As we approached the harbour we could see the towering sea cliffs hundreds of feet high all around us. We spotted the wild goats on the ridges half way up the cliffs and remembered that it was the flesh of the wild goats that had supplemented Selkirk's diet of fish, wild vegetables and fruits. Many of the islanders were waiting on the harbour to greet us - 'Hola' they chorused! There was much laughing and waving of arms.

We made our way to the Crusoe Hotel, opened specially for us. The hotel was situated in a most beautiful setting, surrounded by many wild and colourful flowers. It was here that we planted

our heather, which was still fresh, in spite of the heat and long distance it had travelled from Scotland with us.

The next six days we explored most of the island which is 12 miles by 5 miles. We climbed 2800ft. up to Selkirk's lookout (El Mirador). Allan placed a commemorative plaque alongside the one erected by the officers of H.M.S. Topaze in 1869. It was here that Selkirk used to go each day to look out for a friendly passing ship. Later we visited Selkirk's cave and found two families inside and some women outside the cave cooking and children playing nearby.

We were shown round the school which was empty as the children were enjoying their summer holidays. There are no cars, newspapers or T.V. on the island. We found the islanders made their own entertainment. They sang, played flutes and guitars for us and we in our turn entertained them. Allan playing the bagpipes fascinated them - they had never seen or heard the pipes before!

All too soon our visit came to an end, the fishing boat arrived and as we sailed away, we agreed that the island was, just as others before had described it, one of the most beautiful and romantic places in the world and we will long remember the happy and contented islanders, the warm friendship and help they had given us, and the magnificent grandeur of this historic island. Our lovely colour photographs will remind us of a wonderful holiday.

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ALEXANDER SELKIRK was born in the Seatoun of Largo in 1676. He was the seventh son of John Selcraige and Euphan Mackie. Selkirk's eldest brother David worked with his father in the shoemaker shop in the village, while his other brothers went to sea. Alexander was educated at the village school, where he showed considerable aptitude for mathematics and navigation. He was his mother's favourite son; his mother, we are told, had formed "most extravagant hopes for him".

Like most of the other young men of the village, Selkirk went to sea, not as a fisherman like his brothers, but to join one of the many privateering expeditions against the French and Spanish colonies. Soon his experience at sea and a definite flair for navigation advanced him in rank from common seaman to respected navigator.

In the year 1704 Selkirk joined a privateering expedition under Captains Dampier and Pickering. Selkirk was appointed sailing master of the "Cinque Ports" under Captain Pickering. When Pickering died command passed to Lieutenant Thomas Stradling. Aboard the "Cinque Ports" all was not well. Captain Stradling was a hard and rather mediocre commander. Forty-two of his crew

went ashore and declared they would not re-embark so long as Stradling commanded.

Later Captain Dampier of the "St. George" persuaded the men to return to their duty, but dissension and bitterness continued to afflict the "Cinque Ports" and Alexander Selkirk shared the lack of confidence the crew felt for its captain. The ship by now was riddled with shot, the result of more than one "engagement" on the high seas; Selkirk warned the captain that the ship was not safe and that he wished to leave the vessel at the first opportunity.

When the ship finally reached Juan Fernandez early in October, he resolved to leave the ship and join the next friendly privateer. Selkirk was landed on the Chilean island of Juan Fernandez 400 miles off Chile's central coast, with his sea chest containing his clothes and bedding, his mathematical instruments and navigation books, his Bible, a kettle, hatchet and his gun. Selkirk's decision to leave his ship was a sound one. After leaving Juan Fernandez, the "Cinque Ports" returned to the Peruvian coast, where it foundered on an island off Babacora. Before sinking, the vessel struck her Colours before a Spanish force. Stradling and seven of his men were saved and spent the next seven years in a Lima Prison!

Most of what we know of Selkirk's four years and four months on the island comes from the account of his rescuer another privateer; Captain Woodes Rogers, and Sir Richard Steele, who published a political journal called "The Englishman", and included an account of Selkirk in his Journal in December 1713. After meetings with Selkirk in London, Sir Richard wrote, "I had the pleasure frequently to converse with Selkirk soon after his arrival in England in the year 1711. It was a matter of great curiosity to hear him, as he is a man of good sense, give an account of the different revolutions in his own mind in that long solitude".

When the famous English sea captain, Woodes Rogers, and his pilot, one Captain William Dampier, the best hydrographer and geographer of his day, arrived off the island of Juan Fernandez in the frigate "Duke" on February 1st 1709, they saw a light ashore and wondered who was on an uninhabited island. The following morning they sent a pinnace ashore to investigate. Woodes Rogers wrote in his journal: "Immediately our pinnace returned from the shore and brought abundance of crayfish with a man clothed in goat-skins, who looked wilder than the first owners of them. He had been on the island four years and four months, being left there by Captain Stradling of the 'Cinque Ports'; his name was Alexander Selkirk, a Scotsman who had been Master of the 'Cinque ports', a ship that came here last with Captain Dampier, who told me that Selkirk was the best man on her, and I immediately agreed with him to be Mate on board our Ship".

Woods Rogers continues: "Selkirk diverted and provided for himself as well as he could; but for the first eight months he had much ado to bear up against melancholy and the terror of being left alone in such a desolate place, but by the favour of providence and vigour of his youth, being now but thirty years old, he came at last to conquer all the inconveniences of his solitude and to be very easy". Woodes Rogers styled Selkirk the Governor of Juan Fernandes. Captain Woodes Rogers was impressed with Selkirk and gave him command of the "Increase", one of the small prizes taken in the South Seas from the Spaniards by the "Duke" and "Duchess".

It was not until October 1711 that Selkirk landed in England. The account of his adventures excited great interest in London, where he frequently met Sir Richard Steele. After getting his share of the prize money, which amounted to £800, he made his way back to the old Seatoun of Largo and his surprised family who after his long absence thought he was dead. He stayed for some time in Largo and he frequently bewailed his return to the world, which could not, with all its enjoyments, restore to him the tranquillity of his solitude.

He loved to wander alone in Keil's Den, about a mile from Largo, and to take solitary boating excursions from Largo Bay out to Kincaraig Point. He later said that he was a better man while in his solitude than ever he was before, and feared he would ever be again. By 1720 Selkirk was back at sea again, this time as a Lieutenant of His Majesty's ship "Weymouth". However on 3rd December 1721 his Captain recorded in his logbook that Alexander Selkirk died (probably of yellow fever) and was buried at sea at Cape Coast Castle (West Africa).

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Mrs Carole Lohoar (Member no 837) sent in the following obituary noticed during research in Tenterfield, N.S.W. last year. It appeared in the 7th July 1924 edition of the "Tenterfield Star" and this is an abridged extract :-

RODERICK McLEOD died 26.6.1924. Born near Loch Broom 21.6.1828, second youngest son of 8 children. Left Scotland on "William Ingalls" 2.6.1837, arriving Sydney 27.10.1837. Went to Liverpool Plains, Moodabill, near Singleton, then later to Coomoo Coomoo. Moved stock to Aitken's Flat, finally settling at Glenlyon, named after a place near his Scottish home. In December 1871 Mr McLeod returned to Scotland, and was back in Queensland by 1874. He was one of the best horsemen of his day. Despite his 96 years, his faculties were keen to the end. Interred in little cemetery at Terrica. Mrs McLeod predeceased him by several years. Surviving children :- Mr Scott McLeod of Terrica Station, Mrs Bligh (Condamine), Mrs F P Wallor (Glenlyon) and Mrs A L Jeffrey (Darthula).

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting was held on 26th March 1991. There were no changes on the committee and exhortations from the Chairman and Secretary at previous meetings failed to persuade new blood to come to our aid. As a punishment you will now have to read the reports of the Society's doings of the last year presented to the meeting by the Secretary and Treasurer.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

I am afraid this Report will be much like its predecessors. It has been quiet, but much work has been going on behind the scenes. We need more help with answering the Queries that come in, and to record the names on grave-stones. Our financial position is good.

So here goes for the year from March 1990 to March 1991. Yes, it has been a fairly quiet year. We now have in print and available the Monumental inscriptions for Geddes and Easter Suddle with Kilmuir almost ready and Killearnan next in line. Many more have been recorded, largely thanks to Sandy Gillies, who perseveres come rain or sunshine. We could do with more helpers to take the typed copies of all graveyards now covered and to go round each one, to check every word against what has been typed in. This has to be done before we can safely publish the results.

The Journal has now sailed into calmer waters, and those of the committee who previously had to answer endless letters complaining about delays no longer have to do so. The co-editors, Jonathan McColl and John Durham, both of whom said they knew little about such things have now produced a run of excellent Journals during the past year. They now come out regularly in November, February, May and August with the remainder that subscriptions are due sent out appearing with the last one of the year. The rest of the committee would like to congratulate Jonathan and John. Contributions are always welcome, as are ideas for the syllabus - at any time of the year.

We could do with some members offering to help Barrie with answering the queries which pour in from our 476 members - and from others, too. Often it is only a matter of looking up the answer on the machines in the Library, and this is not too difficult. It is however a lot of work for one person.

We must thank our Chairman, Neil Murray, for the excellent series of lectures that we have had this winter. Most, if not all of them, have been printed in the Journal. Mrs Murray has struggled with transcribing the lectures from the tape-recordings, and Jonathan McColl has become an excellent paraphraser of her work. We have one more to come after this evening's talk.

The committee has decided that we should continue to meet here in the Music Room of the Central School. It is warm, and there is ample parking space. We do not have to re-arrange the furniture before and after each meeting. The 'kitchen' is not lavish, but quite adequate for our needs. We must thank those who bring the 'goodies' to be eaten and drunk month by month, whether they are on the committee or not. And we have a nice, friendly Janitor, which makes a big difference to those who arrange such things.

The committee has meetings from time to time, and our Chairman goes, when work does not get in the way, to represent us at Committee meetings of the Scottish Association of Family History Societies. Hamish McLennan went to Troon to the annual conference, on our behalf. Any member of the Society is more than welcome to go to these conferences. We have offered to host the one in 1992 and this will involve many of our members. You have been warned!

It is too late for anyone to say that they would like to come on the committee this year, but I do recommend a stint on it, because only when you have been to the meetings do you understand how much is actually done although each year the secretary reports that 'we have had another quiet year'.

TREASURER'S REPORT

As you can see from the Balance Sheet for the Financial Year to 31st August 1990 the Society made a loss of £956.51. At last year's Annual General Meeting I indicated that the production of 6 Journals during the year would cost in the range of £2,200 and, as a consequence, I expected a deficit for the year.

Difficulties with the Tax Inspector meant that the tax refund on covenanted subscriptions had not arrived before the end of the Financial Year. That shortfall was balanced by a profit on the sale of publications. Other than those 3 items there were no significant differences in expenditure under the various headings as compared with the previous year.

At this meeting last year the increases in membership subscriptions I recommended were approved and they came into effect at the beginning of the current Financial Year. Those of you who pay by Bankers Standing Order on 1st October each year should have informed your bank of the increased amount prior to that date.

Unfortunately only 35 of the 70 members who pay by this method have passed the amended form to their bank. As the majority of this group have covenanted their subscription I am unable to re-claim the tax on the full amount of the subscription until they do so. In order to encourage the defaulters I shall be enclosing yet another standing order form with the May Journal. Please sign it and send it on to your bank.

DATA PROCESSING FOR THE TIMID FAMILY HISTORIAN
by Alistair Cameron
(Talk given to the Society 23rd October 1990)

I want to represent the needs of some of the older members since in a society like this, the spectrum of ages is a little compressed at the top end. I belong to another Society of Genealogists in Sydney (no. 13464) which has a very active personal computer group whose members do their family history on a PC (personal computer) and get exceptional results but it can be disappointing for an older person, with the difficulty of teaching an old dog new tricks and I faced that problem.

Whether we use an exercise book or a machine, we need to handle I.G.I. and OPR references, certificates, memorial inscriptions, valuation roll extracts, village and parish information, photos, old letters etc. The word "data" encompasses an enormous variety of material and as we succeed in our research the quantity goes up and becomes difficult to handle.

When one processes data with a machine or a pen there are four basic actions: STORE - you write in one of many files; I store it at a keyboard. SEARCH - having got the stuff stored away, inevitably you are going to have to retrieve it. "I have a certificate for that marriage, where did I put it?" You may have an A-Z file and flick through the pages, or the memory of a clever typewriter. EDIT - you change or add to it. You may have stored John Cameron of Contin whose marriage date you didn't know until now when you want to edit the file to put in the missing info. It may not be just an addition, but a correction or even a major bit of surgery. PRINT - which means (of course) to write. A friend needs some information so you write it or photocopy it or instruct your machine to print it.

One of my busiest files is called "Next visit to the library". In the past I have sat down and - "What am I going to do today?" - so I keep in the memory of the typewriter a set of targets I wish to meet on my next visit. I am an untidy person, I lose things so I have greatly enjoyed the transition from working with loose sheets into the use of machines.

Virtually all Australians born before 1900 were immigrants so if you attempt any family history work from Australia you are going to correspond a great deal; this needs to be more pleasure and less of a chore and the use of word processing allows you to make good-quality letters with the minimum effort to several people at the same time by changing details. This raises your productivity by increasing your mailing rate, putting out a lot of "fishing lines".

After my first system of box files and exercise books my next step was to use this battery-driven memory typewriter from Boots or John Menzies which can hold several pages of typing in its memory. It can process reasonably fast and also has on

Last year I remarked on the fact that the regular annual increase in membership of the Society had come to a halt. I am pleased to report that during the year the upward trend re-asserted itself and the membership rose from 421 to 460 as a result of 84 new members joining. Each year we lose a number of members for various reasons, but I believe the regular production of the quarterly Journal has helped to reduce these numbers.

Because of the cost of printing the 2 extra Journals we made only one purchase during the year. That was the 1861/71/81 census reels for Orkney and Shetland at a cost of £434.10. With the purchase of those reels we have copies of all the census returns for the Highland area. The 1891 census will not be available for sale until 1992, and I estimate that the cost of the reels for the area covered at present to be of the order of £1,200. The committee has already agreed that I should purchase the set as soon as they are available.

Our current bank balance is just over £3,000 and normal expenditure for the remainder of this Financial Year is estimated at £950. In the interim those of you who have seen the state of the wallets and binders in the library used to contain the microfiche owned by the Society will be relieved to learn that I have just ordered replacements.

There will be 10 ring binders rather than the 6 currently in use, and they will be hinged at the centre so that they can be propped up for ease of use. The extra binders are necessary as I have decided to revert to wallets which can hold only 17 fiche per side rather than the 22 used for the 1988 IGI. The latter wallets have been prone to tearing at the edge as the plastic is thinner to allow for the extra fiche. The cost of these replacement binders and wallets will be £283, but I expect them to last much longer than those they are replacing.

Finally I would like to thank Alan Imlah, one of our members, for once again auditing our accounts.

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We have received a note from Peter Gibson, P.O. Box 169, Maroubra 2035, Australia who is building a computer database forming an index to the 1851 census for the mainland parishes of the Argyll area. For each name he is entering census district, surname, given names(s), age, whether born outside the county, census book and page number. In a newsletter he says that he has about 25000 names completed for Ardchattan, Ardnamurchan, Ballachulish & Corran of Ardgour, Craighish, Dunoon & Kilmun, Kilmartin, Kilmoran, Kilmilver & Kilmelford, Lismore & Appin, Lochgilphead and Lochgoilhead. About 75000 more names are partially done and 2500 a week are being added. The database should be available sometime next year.

the side a "RAM cartridge", an external memory holding a few pages of typing as a sort of auxiliary filing system.

After two productive years I found it necessary to move to something more powerful so I tested both PCs and dedicated word processors. The principal features of a wp are like any other typewriter: the keyboard, the roller for paper and the golf-ball or daisywheel printing head. What is different is an illuminated screen to display the page being typed and a slot or two in the side for floppy disks. So it has the elements of a PC but is totally dedicated to the job of word processing.

I don't think I'm the only one with the view that many people are intimidated by the keyboard and some of the mysterious characters on the keys. Sometimes when a demonstration is given they see the man hitting keys which don't seem to suit the operation. "Why hit that upside-down V? They may even find there are ten different functions for that key. This is great if you have the patience to wade through the instruction manual, which may run to hundreds of pages and is a wonderful hobby in itself but if I go for a PC I'll go to classes.

I think the inhibition is temporary as they are now part of our everyday lives like TV and VCR remote control or cash dispensers. Some libraries including New Register House have their indexing on computer terminals which are very easy to use. I've been told by the LDS Church that they are bringing out the 1881 census on a CD ROM (compact disk read-only memory) which no doubt Inverness and other libraries will wish to have.

How do PCs differ? They have a screen, a keyboard, one or two disks. They may be modular or all in one box but the fourth element, the printer, is always separate. Your employer might have one and you may be permitted or even encouraged to use it on the basis it increases computer skills in their employees. It sometimes includes a tracker ball or "mouse": you walk it round a flat surface and while you do that the cursor is moving around the screen and thus speeds up the editing process because you can find quickly the paragraph or word you want to change. And as well as genealogy you can use it for business work, invoices, health diagnosis or as an aircraft simulator.

The features which facilitate their use for letter writing are called software. There are popular programmes in software with names like Word Perfect and Word Star, used in industry and commerce and evening classes are available to teach them.

An important feature of the use of any computer is the accidental loss of data by inadvertent erasure or disk failure. We have a friend in Sydney who was happily converting all her family history onto a software system and doing it the proper way, making "back-up copies" i.e. duplicates of the files, but in up-dating one she made an error. In one hit she wiped out both the back-up and the original, months of work just

disappeared. It is just self-discipline, training and effective working; you have to be on your guard against accidental erasure which could just come from turning off the power point or a momentary power cut.

The battery-powered memory typewriter cannot accidentally lose data, you have to command it to erase, that's a significant difference between the 240v and the battery systems. Don't expect to be able to use it seven hours a day for ten years; it will eventually wear out but I've kept it quite busy for three years. This Canon Typestyle 7 is portable, it runs on batteries and I've used it in my car, in the train and in any room of the house and am now trotting around the U.K. with it as part of my holiday furniture; and the fact that it is silent is a great feature.

Both the PC and the wp are usually very friendly to use. A menu of options and helpful remarks are given on the screen for you to choose from. My machine has tutorials, and an indexed training programme.

The little fellow can do all these operations, as can its big brother but it has rather limited storage capacity. With the wp or PC, storage is virtually unlimited. Disks are pretty cheap and you can store many pages on them. They have other features, one of which is spell-check. The computer has built into it a dictionary and when you misspell a word it tells you so: beep, beep, beep! Some machines like mine have a "personal dictionary", for entering words of your own. In our area is a little community called Ardnagrask and the people at Smith Corona had never heard of it so the first time I typed it the machine said - beep, beep, beep; but I added it to my personal dictionary and now it only screeches at me if I misspell it!

Reliability is a strong point with the two machines I use. The only problems I've had have been quite trivial and have been the keys themselves. A bit of grit gets under them but all you have to do is use a nail file to take the whole key out, clean out underneath and tap it in again. In this I can type visiting cards, postcards and aerogrammes and the one at home will also take A3 which is very convenient. You have full control of the margins. I would recommend these sorts of machines to every genealogist.

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Robert MacFarlane (member no. 128) is interested in receiving copies of letters sent from Brae Lochaber (East of Fort William in Parish of Kilmornaig) to people in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, United States or wherever, during the 19th century. Anyone who can assist should write to Robert at 'Loch Sloy', 8 Exner Street, Brits O250, Transvaal, South Africa.

