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comann sloinntearach na Gaidhealtachd

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Comann Sloinntearach na Gaidhealtachd

EDITORIAL

First, I apologise to Dr Bangor-Jones for telling the entire Society that he had been unable to give us his lecture on the Strathnaver Clearances. He very definitely did give it, and it was well received, but we were unable to record it as is our usual practice, and as I could not attend my memory allowed me to think it had not happened.

Thanks to Fiona MacRae for her letter regarding John MacRae's lone grave in Australia following from the February Journal: his father Duncan (born in Glenshiel, son of John dubh MacRae; ggt-grandson of the Rev. Farquhar married Margaret, daughter to John MacRae of Lochbroom, and was a sheepfarmer at Brae, Foderty, and at Letterewe, Gairloch. Their children were Catherine (b. 1828), Isabel (b. 1830), Duncan (b. 1832), Alexander (b. 1834), Farquhar (b. 1836), John (b. 1838) and Colin (b. 1843). John has descendants in Oz.

Our latest investment is in the LDS's index to the OPRs, but as the price of each fiche is £2.50 we have not been able to afford those for the counties outside our area with the exception of Moray and Perthshire. Within our area we have purchased those for Shetland, Orkney, Caithness, Sutherland, Ross & Cromarty, Inverness, Nairn and Argyll.

This year's AGM of the Scottish Association of FHSs is being hosted by the Glasgow & West of Scotland FHS. Its theme is "European Immigration into Scotland" and will take place in the Mitchell Theatre complex on Saturday September 12th. For details of costs and a booking form, please send a s.a.e. to The Conference Secretary, 6 Sutherland Drive, Giffnock, Glasgow G46 9PL.

Alistair Cameron wrote from NSW about the LDS Family History Centres starting to contain CD-ROM readers for the speedy inspection and copying of worldwide trees in their Ancestral File. He suggested the installation of one in Farraline Park, and that the Mormons might support such an idea. Verry interesting.

How many readers will at once apologise for the hard feelings we have expressed about parish clerks when we read what one of them defensively noted on his register for the Argyll parish of Kilbrandon and Kilchattan in 1761?

"Let it not be imputed to the negligence of the Session Clerk that there are not more baptisms registered, for he never refused to record any that came to desire it. But there really was never any did come although Publick intimation was given from the pulpit. And he did not think it a duty incumbent upon him to go about and enquire when this or that Child was born or baptised; so let them blame themselves, (signed) Alex Doves." (but I added the punctuation)

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ANTIPODEAN ASPECTS OF A GREAT SCOT

by Carole Lohoar

While Sir Robert Ramsay McKenzie, X Baronet of Coul might best be remembered for his colonial service to the state of Queensland (he became Colonial Treasurer there in 1859 and then Premier in 1867); perhaps less is known of the role he played in the history of Tenterfield, a small town in the New England area of northern New South Wales in Australia.

Robert Ramsay McKenzie was the fourth son of Sir George S. Mackenzie VIII Baronet of Coul, and his first wife Mary, the daughter of Donald Macleod of Geanies. He arrived in New South Wales in 1826 at the time of the economic depression in Scotland. Land, mostly in the newly developing area known as New England, was available to those industrious enough to take up the challenge and pave a way through the scrub, bush and rough grassland.

In 1837 McKenzie held property in southern New England called "Salisbury", then in 1839 he took up "Furracabad" at Glen Innes, which was later passed to Major Innes, after whom the town had been named. McKenzie's great friend and fellow pioneer was an outstanding figure, Stuart Alexander Donaldson. Although having Scottish connections, Donaldson had been born in England, and as part of his education was sent to the silver mines in Mexico for business training.

After emigrating to Australia in 1834 this astute and successful businessman set up companies and invested widely in land. Noted for his interest in public affairs, Donaldson went on to become the first Premier of New South Wales under responsible government in 1856. There are many stories told of his colourful character and stormy public life.

Back in 1840 these irrepressible pioneers, McKenzie and Donaldson, embarked on a financial partnership in taking up possession, without legal title, of a large area of land. Donaldson called it "Tenterfield" after the name of his maiden aunts' home near Haddington in Scotland. Writing in 1841, Donaldson spoke of his expectation of shearing 18,000 sheep that year, under the management of Robert McKenzie. On 1st July 1842 the first legal title for "Tenterfield Station" was granted in the name of R. R. McKenzie.

However, it would appear that McKenzie soon found himself in financial difficulties, for on 1st July 1844, it is recorded that Donaldson took over Tenterfield Station in his own name, with McKenzie becoming general manager. In this same year Donaldson also held the title of nearby Clifton Station, although McKenzie too held a financial stake in this venture.

In 1846, Robert Ramsay McKenzie married Louisa Alexandrina, daughter of a wealthy Sydney gentleman and politician, Richard Jones. It was claimed that Louisa was the first white woman to come to the Tenterfield area. The McKenzies lived on Tenterfield Station until a tragic accident in 1848 so unnerved Mrs McKenzie that she refused to stay there and persuaded her husband to move to Clifton Station.

The cause of the upset was a murder and suicide of employees of R. R. McKenzie, although the details do not state if this involved aboriginals or white station hands. While some aboriginals were employed on stations, not all were happy about the white man taking over their land, and fresh in every settler's mind were the murders of several shepherds, watchmen and a hutkeeper on neighbouring properties in 1845.

The year 1848 also saw the sad event of the death of Robert Ramsay McKenzie's father, with his eldest brother Alexander of the Bengal Army becoming the VIII Baronet of Coul. Sir Alexander died in 1856 and the title then passed to brother William, the IX Baronet.

Clifton Station had been managed by another Scotsman, a Dr. R. J. Traill who hailed from Shetland. When the McKenzies moved to Clifton in 1848, Dr. Traill was able to continue the excellent service at Tenterfield Station, building it into a hugely successful property that ran over 39,000 sheep by 1854.

In 1854 McKenzie sold his interests in Clifton Station to Donaldson and moved with his family of one son and four daughters to the northern part of the Colony, which in 1859 separated from New South Wales and became known as Queensland.

With the constant influx of settlers into this new and prosperous area, the most urgent need of the pastoralists was for roads, markets and a township. In 1849 Sir Thomas Mitchell, the Surveyor-General made application for a township to be laid out, and in the same year a post office and mail service was established, the first publican's licence granted, and the fledgling town of Tenterfield was put on the map.

The land that Robert Ramsay McKenzie helped establish at Tenterfield prospered, and today it is a rich centre of a beef cattle and fine wool production district, backed up by orchards, logging and sawmilling, silica mining and a growing tourism industry. Renowned for its beauty and many similarities to the hills and glens of the Scottish Highlands, Tenterfield is one of the most colourful and romantic of Australia's frontier towns.

Mount McKenzie, the 4,217 ft. mountain bordering the south-west of Tenterfield was named in memory of Robert Ramsay McKenzie. The surrounding towns of Inverell, Glen Innes, Lismore, Armadale, Dundee, Glencoe, Maybole, Ben Lomond, Arthurs Seat,

Glen Elgin, Bannockburn and Aberfoyle bear witness to the great Scottish settlement that followed in this area of New England - the descriptive term that is surely a misnomer.

Following the death of his brother Sir William McKenzie in 1868, Robert Ramsay McKenzie became the X Baronet of Coull, and died in his Scottish homeland on 19th September 1873.

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FRANK McMILLAN's CIGAR

Among my few family heirlooms is a cigar. Nothing special about it; except that it is homemade, from tobacco grown and dried in a back garden in Elgin by a 71 year old retired marine engineer, Frank McMillan. Frank is my late father's cousin.

I hadn't clapped eyes on him since the day in 1959 he married Nan McKinlay, a Campbelltown PE teacher, until, in pursuit of family history I had traced him to Elgin.

The cigar is a memento of that reunion. But more importantly, it is a reminder of the vagaries of war and of the vital role of the Merchant Navy in World War II and its struggle to send supplies along the sea lanes to Britain, a struggle which cost around 29,000 lives and over 4,000 ships. Frank's ship was one of those.....

On March 1st 1941, Frank had re-joined his ship, the 6500 ton tanker "Athelfoam" after a spell of leave. A couple of days later, after raising steam, she eased away from the wharf at Birkenhead, and headed slowly downriver to join a convoy assembling off the Mersey Estuary.

With its escort of corvettes the convoy steamed through the North Channel, and leaving Malin Head astern, ploughed silently westwards across the Atlantic. Two days out, the escorts signalled their farewell to the lumbering merchantmen and turned for home. The convoy dispersed. It was now every man for himself.

For the next few days the "Athelfoam" enjoyed a fair passage. Bound for Cuba to fill her tanks with molasses she was untroubled by weather or the packs of German U-Boats which were then inflicting devastating losses on the British Merchant Fleet. But trouble lay ahead.

Lurking over the horizon lay the sleek German battlecruisers "Scharnhorst" and "Gneisenau". Fast surface raiders bristling with guns, they had orders to attack only unescorted merchant ships and avoid direct clashes with the Royal Navy. So successful were they that in the first three months of 1941 they had been responsible for the loss of over 115,000 tons of

allied shipping. The merchantmen, now unescorted, were easy prey.

On March 15th, about 300 miles north-east of Bermuda, Frank was enjoying a spell on deck. Looking aft, he noticed a speck on the horizon. "Scharnhorst" was in pursuit. Frank remembers the situation with irony. "Give me all the steam you've got". came the order from the bridge, "We'll make a run for it!"

"Run for it? That was a laugh. With a full head of steam and the wind and tide in our favour we could only manage 12 knots. The "Scharnhorst" could do over 30 knots. And we were zig-zagging! It seemed as though I'd scarcely turned my back and there she was alongside us firing a shot across our bows and flashing to us to come across. It wasn't a time for arguing. I just threw on a jersey and a blue coat and had thirty bob in my pocket."

But I went for a swim first."

"I was sitting right up in the bow of our boat as it was being lowered and one of the ropes snagged. The bow dropped suddenly and I was tipped backwards into the sea! My lifejacket kept me afloat and I made my way round to get hold of the ladder but the rest of the crew used my head as a stepping stone. Every time it came up there was another foot on it, shoving me under again."

"When we were all aboard the "Scharnhorst", a salvo of shots was fired along the "Athelfoam's" waterline. She slowly turned over and went down."

"Then we were all sent below. They kept us somewhere down near the magazines for next day we could hear the ammunition going up to the gun turrets. The "Sardinian Prince", "Empire Industry" and "Deverton", were all sent to the bottom that day and then the "Scharnhorst" headed for Brest in company with "Gneisenau", the two battlecruisers having destroyed 12 allied merchant ships in two days."

"They were cockahoop and painted a big white swastika on the foredeck."

"We were treated well enough, although of course they didn't have any proper accommodation for us. The food was good. Lovely big pork chops and sauerkraut and stuff like that. Oh, I thought the Germans were alright."

"I didn't think so much of the French! The French women were alright though. When we were marched through the streets of Brest they ran up to us and handed us bits of bread and things to eat."

THOUGHTS ON FAMILY HISTORY SOFTWARE

I did ask.

I asked for the odd comment or review on any of the two or three computer programs for family history (and the request stands, by the way, for future reviews and recommendations) and received several answers including Ms MacDonald-Greig's floppy disk for one program, an advert for a paper-electronic filing system, and an American magazine's listing of nearly a hundred packages available over there!

Having said that there are specialist magazines for family history computing, I ought to have realised that these couldn't exist without a large following. At least two have been pointed out to me, with the imaginative titles of 'Computers in Genealogy' and 'Genealogical Computing'. The first is in our archive in Inverness, but our copies are very dated now (like six to ten years old) and the little you could get then bears no resemblance to the amount and type you can spend a lot of money on now.

The other magazine is American and the bits kindly sent to me by Jock Sutherland of the Clan Sutherland Society include summary descriptions and reviews of many packages to be found across the Pond. Although they were very helpful for learning the jargon (what is an Ahnentafel?) the GC reviews were not quite what I was looking for, as to a certain extent the readership they were aimed at might appear to love computers less as tools and more for their own sake.

The reason for this article is to pose and to go some way towards answering the question: why would I want to use a computer? Well I have one, so is it that I'd like to think of a use for it? No, it's because I am told over and over that they are terribly wonderful things to do family history with, so rephrase the question: what do I want to do? I wish to write a family history for me, my relations and our collective descendants.

The format I choose has a chapter for each surname, each chapter comprising a series of mini-biographies of the generations. When I know enough about a wife's family I promote her to a chapter of her own. Threading together each chapter is a series of detailed drop-chart trees, depending on space or Artistic Needs these will be nuclear families only or extended just enough for clarity. A scattering of maps and pictures fills up the corners.

A third element, not yet off the ground, is a database backing up all of this with the facts and sources. This will contain family members with their dates, places and interconnections, and I fancy adding another database for all the people of the right surname but of unknown relationships who turn up in

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"The next five days were spent in a cattle truck as we were transported by rail to a POW camp between Bremen and Hamburg. That was bloody awful. You couldn't get to sleep and even sitting or standing was miserable. It was cold, hard and stoorie, and we had one big drum in the middle of the truck to serve as a latrine. There were twenty one of us in each truck and it was only when we reached Cologne that they stopped to let us empty the drums. By that time they were filled up to the brim! We just had to tip them out on the grass at the side of the railway. I went back for a holiday a year or two ago to see if I could find the exact spot to see how the grass was growing."

"The Red Cross were there and they gave us bowls of soup. The only utensil was a dirty meat tin that had been lying around. The smell of it was enough to make you sick, but I was hungry, so I just poured in the soup and shoved it down. The last thing I'd eaten was a big skate at Brest."

"That was the only break we had until we arrived at the POW camp at Sandbostel. The first thing they did was to de-louse us. Everything had to be stripped off. While we were in the showers, French POWs took our clothing for de-lousing and that was the last I saw of my jersey. One of them pinched it. And they were supposed to be on our side!"

"But do you know, the Germans took the blue coat and my thirty bob from me when we went aboard the "Scharnhorst"; and when I was released from the POW camp in 1945, the coat and my thirty bob were returned to me!"

While Frank endured the drudgery of life in a POW camp, for his captors, the crew of the "Scharnhorst", things were different.

Hitler was obsessed with the idea that there would be an allied attack on Norway, and ignoring his advisers, issued personal orders for "Scharnhorst" and "Gneisau" to return to Germany. They made a celebrated surprise dash through the English Channel in 1942, suffering only damage caused by striking mines towards the end of their voyage. After repairs at Wilhelmshaven, "Scharnhorst" joined the battleship "Tirpitz" in Norway and together they bombarded allied wireless installations on Spitzbergen on 6th September 1943.

Her last foray was on 26th December 1943. Only one day out of port on her way to attack a British convoy heading for Russia, she encountered the battleship, "Duke of York", the cruiser "Jamaica", and four destroyers off the North Cape. Continuous gun and torpedo attacks finally blew her apart in an horrendous explosion.

Of her crew of 1,940 men only 36 ratings survived.

I wonder if any of them is now growing his own tobacco?

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parish or census records. A rationale for these inclusions is that sorting the list in various ways will throw up likely relationships and that information appearing afterwards, maybe years later, will be supported by elements already to hand. An Olivetti word-processor does the history and trees (its 'outline' facility draws drop-line charts beautifully) and Paradox on an IBM PS/2 was on hand to do the databasing until I bought my own Apple Mac II with Microsoft Works which I hope will do the entire job.

So why should I buy a published genealogy package? I don't really want to and they can be very expensive.

Memory space in computers used to be a problem, when the machines we had were Spectrums and Commodores and Beebs, some with what we thought were enormous memories like 48k, 64k, 128k! So clever-clogses designed programs which took up as little of the surface memory (the RAM) as possible and used what was left in a very efficient fashion to very specific purposes.

However this is no longer necessary when 20Mb (ie the capacity of more than 400 Spectrums!) is counted a small 'hard disk' memory and even the bytes of RAM are counted in Megs rather than Kilos. So what need the programmers do for us now? Perhaps the specialist software can or should address bigger problems, perhaps the communications one among others. (What others? Let me know your opinions.)

This communications problem is simple, its solution not so. Until the advent of (a) powerful personal computers and (b) huge popularity for genealogy, if you wished to take the unusual step of sending your lists of family members to other researchers, you did so by writing or typing or printing out those lists; now you might care to post them one small 3.5" disk. And there's the rub: everyone has different computers and even if two people have the same make and model, they certainly will not have the same programs in the things. If I put your disk in my machine all I will get out of it is an error message, so where do we go from here?

The Mormons again appear at this point. The LDS Church wants your submissions of the work you have done and in quantify comes diversity, so under their auspices has been developed GEDCOM, which translates your data files into a standard format and out again into that of your Australian cousin's. We received for review a copy of David Hargood's booklet on "GEDCOM Data Transfer" (44pp, £2.50) which goes into detail about how it works, how it does the format changing, and generally how to use it.

He points out that you can also use it not just for sending to other relations but also to Utah as a permanent research source, and for making a copy of your files now for use later

if you change (or lose) your computer or your program. The booklet would appear to be very useful if you go for GEDCOM or a program which includes it, but I do not know what instructions come with the utility should you buy it.

Then there are the packages. Genealogical Computing recommended last year (and remember that a year is a very long time in computing) Roots III, Everyone's Family Tree and Brother's Keeper, and also the LDS's own PAF, Personal Ancestral File, this last being notable for clarity and power but especially for being a fifth or tenth of the prices charged for others. A frequent point brought out in these reviews was to what level was GEDCOM supported or supplied in the packages, so if you go seeking one, ask the same question.

I still think that I am perfectly satisfied with a non-specialised database linked with a word-processing package, (although I've just discovered that mine will only accept dates between 1904 and 2039 so other formats are needed to give 18th-century years) but I shall take note of the standard linking of families with individuals, and vice versa, used by PAF, GEDCOM and the rest. Perhaps I might buy PAF as it is 'only' £25, but I shall need some very heavy persuading before I will spend £100-£200 on a program that only I would use and only for a single task.

SOFTWARE REVIEWS

We have received two reviews from members of software packages and we print them below. As few members will be computer literate some of the terms that are used need some explanation.

PC - Personal Computer. Consists of a hard and/or floppy disk drive for data storage, a screen which displays the data, a keyboard for typing in data and reacting to messages displayed by the software and a printer.

MS DOS - The standard basic operating system for PCs.

RAM - Random Access Memory. This is usually measured in thousands of characters or bytes (kb) and is the area within a PC which is used to process the data. In crude terms the larger this figure is the faster the machine will work, particularly when sorting data.

Floppy Disk - A term for disks which are inserted into the PC and, after being read or written to, can be removed. The software will be supplied on such discs, which nowadays are more likely to be solid than flexible as they were originally. A point to note is that, although the disk drives can be either 5.25" or 3.5", there is a move towards standardising on 3.5".

Hard Disk - This is the area where the data is stored and is expressed in millions of bytes (Mb). It should be remembered

that this data should be copied on a regular basis onto floppy discs or, on larger machines, onto cartridge tapes in order to protect the data. The hard disc can be corrupted which means that it may not be possible to recover the data on it!

User Friendly - Software which consists of 'menus', or lists of options presented on the screen to the user. You only have to type one key to move to the desired option. If you are not sure what to do next one of the options will display information to help you make up your mind.

Personal Ancestral File, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (£25 from their Distribution Centre, 399 Garretts Green Lane, Birmingham B33 0UH, phone 021-784 9555 for order form.)

Firstly I must point out that I never had any previous experience in using a PC up to six months ago. For quite some time I had discussed the possibility of transferring the mountain of research paperwork onto disk storage as my ever-increasing files were mounting up in my bedroom/study. My son presented me with a PC running under MS-DOS v3.3, 512k RAM with 5.25" floppy disk drive and 21Mb hard disk, which he assembled for me.

Together with his patience and instruction, I gradually overcame the mysteries of computer usage during the following weeks, and I availed myself through my local library of some very helpful literature on computers and programs for Family History. I strongly recommend members peruse some of the easy-to-read booklets before sending for FH software, the reasons being the expense and the suitability of their own computer system.

Having read and digested the excellent advice offered, I decided on the Mormon Church's PAF mainly because it was excellent value and 'user-friendly'. The PAF is available in both 5.25" and 3.5" disks, together with two excellent and easy-to-follow reference manuals, plus extra key charts, the entire package being of excellent quality. Any of our friends who considers the PAF should have a minimum of 512k memory capacity in their system. I have at all times found the staff most kind and helpful therefore I strongly advise writing to the LDS for an application form. This gives full details of the programs available and the user is asked to give details of their PC specification so that they can return software suitable to their needs.

After 'configuring' the disks and loading the programs onto the hard disk in my system, I was ready to start. There are many menus to choose from, ie individual births, christenings, marriages, places and events together with Family Groups, all having their own ID number, which can be keyed onto the screen

at any given time. There is also plenty of scope for Individual or Family notes which have proved to be of immense value as once again they can be related to the respective ID number of the person concerned.

I have only researched my own family line, the Clarks of Inverchapel and Cowal, and though I have over 200 individual entries dating back to the early 1600s there is memory available for the other branches of my family as I proceed with further research in the future. As one feeds the information into the computer, wonderful things seem to happen internally. Many charts are available at the touch of a key, which display the entries of your names, places and events in both alphabetical and statistical form, plus the 'pedigree' and Sorted Lists menu to be had.

There is also a Printing Menu with a varied choice and the results have proved most interesting and pleasing. There are entries for Temple and LDS Church statistics, although this is entirely optional and voluntary. I have tried to keep off the technical jargon and any member taking their first steps in computer experience will be pleased to know the step-by-step instructions are very easy to follow - PAF has proved to be a most enjoyable experience.

John R Clark, Merseyside - Member no 497.

Recommended reading:

David Hawgood: "Computers for Family History" ISBN 0948151048
J Bloore: Vols 1-3 on commercial programs and shareware, available to FHS members for £1.75 each from Birmingham & Midland Society for Genealogy and Heraldry, 92 Dimmingdale Bank, Birmingham B32 1ST.

REUNION, Leister Productions, 14 Hill Boulevard, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055, U.S.A. (\$149 in 1991)

A computer came into my house almost four years ago, and one of the big thoughts for it was genealogy. On a typewriter, I had typed up several hundred names in lists, and found myself in frequent need of adding revisions to the lists - which was done by cutting and pasting and Xeroxing the result. So began a search for a suitable program.

One after another, although slowly, proprietary programs were considered on the basis of reviews, or tried. One was PAF, which came to me from Australia with family information. Neither it nor any of the others was useful to me, being too difficult to use, or obscure, or too limited or full of irrelevancies. Then I got DBase IV, and tried developing my own program. Though the reporting facilities of DBase IV gave me everything I wanted,

THE LATEST FROM NEW REGISTER HOUSE

The Computerisation of the Statutory Indexes to Births, Deaths and Marriages (1855-1991) is now complete. Observant readers of The Scotsman will have seen some letters in its pages on the merits and drawbacks of this system, with some professional genealogists complaining about inaccuracies and omissions in the new indexes. There is no doubt that this is the case, as I have come across some myself - but, as the Registrar General has pointed out in the same correspondence, this is hardly surprising since his staff had to transfer some 50 million entries in the course of the exercise. The paper indexes, though withdrawn from general use, are kept round the corner if needed (as they were one day some weeks ago when the computer system went down) and the supervisory staff will check them - or the actual register books - for anyone who cannot find the entry they are seeking.

The present complaints of some professionals are reminiscent of those some of them made when the OPRs and Censuses were first microfilmed; and while no one can deny the difficulties of using the films (which are sometimes very badly exposed), they have enabled millions more people all over the world - not to mention Farraline Park, Inverness - to have access to the records. They have also helped to preserve the delicate original records in Edinburgh for those of us fortunate to be here and requiring to look at them for those entries that are unreadable in the films - a privilege, I am happy to say, accorded when necessary to all members of the public searching in New Register House.

The microfilming of the actual statutory registers is also continuing apace - and again with not infrequent omissions of single entries or groups of entries which fail to make it onto the microfiche (and again the original books still available for the staff to find the missing entries for you). Births 1855-1989 are now done, along with deaths from 1855-1912 and 1939-1989, and marriages 1918-1989 - all of which records can now be accessed immediately by inclusive searchers under the new self-service system. For searchers upstairs only using the OPRs and Censuses, those microfilms have also been made self-service - and I am told that these films will soon be so available for inclusive searchers in the Dome Room too (as soon as the requisite space is created by the ongoing structural alterations).

The result of all these changes is a dramatic increase in the amount of research that one can get done in a day in New Register House - and while of course the charges for searches have gone up considerably in the past few years to fund these improvements, I think most searcher's productivity will almost certainly have increased more than the charges.

data entry was simply a plain nuisance, and several hundred entries into the database have now been abandoned there.

Enter REUNION! - which was ordered on the basis of a desperate try, relying on advertised performance. Data entry is a dreamlike delight, with absolutely crystal-clear simplicity. Navigating through the most complex relationships is equally simple, with mouse clicks in the obvious places. Learning the program involved only a fast browse through the manual, which itself is very complete and easily followed.

REUNION will produce all the usual kinds of charts, but has the great ability to transfer them to other programs for fancying up. With the REUNION program itself a chart-enhancer is included which automatically converts the straight REUNION charts into fancier things, and allows even more to be done to them manually.

REUNION should have been on my machine from the start, for it is extraordinarily useful. It cost \$115 from a mail-order outlet in the USA and I have it on a Macintosh computer. Whether it is available for MS-DOS I do not know - but then, who would want to struggle with MS-DOS in a genealogy program anyway?

A G W Lamont, Ontario, Canada - Member no. 289.

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I'm still worrying about computers. Be terribly careful about viruses in passed-on software, know where you are getting it from. (The advice and security precautions sound very similar to government warnings on safe sex!)

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The 1881 Census-Indexing Project for Scotland is taking off and we have been sent notification for intimating to our members. This has been going on south of the border for a few years now and the co-ordinators now could use our help as well.

They say that the Scottish Association of Family History Societies, the General Register Office for Scotland and the Genealogical Society of Utah (LDS) have made the 1881 census for Scotland the object of a national indexing project. The LDS, with permission from the copyright holders, will lend photocopies of the census to Societies for transcribing, and the forms onto which to transcribe. On completion the work is checked, and then forwarded to LDS for computer input. The names will then be indexed to provide a valuable research tool.

If you are interested in being part of the project, send a s.a.e to Mr Richard Sowler, National Co-Ordinator, 2 Hill House Road, Downend, Bristol BS16 5RR.

cannot be found, his father Archibald (who was married to a woman with distinctive, though variously spelt, name of Macriville/Macaveil/Macaveal) can be found having two children in 1843 and 1858 in the parish of Dingwall under the name of Cameron. I have not, as yet, found the death certificate of Archibald to see under what name he died - or traced the fates of his children - but I should be interested to hear of any later examples of surname adoption or indecision.

SOME PATRONYMIC PUZZLES FROM KILTARLITY

The patronymic is sometimes the most useful and sometimes the most infuriating thing that you can come across in your research. If you find a person you can otherwise identify given in the OPR (or in other records such as rent-rolls) by his or her patronymic, you may at once jump back a further one or two (or sometimes even more) generations.

So we find in the Kiltarlity OPR - a fascinating but, for this reason, often a very frustrating record (stretching back to 1714) - the following entry:

1776, Dec.12: "John M'Ean mhic Alistair, Kirk Officer of this parish had a child baptised named Grizzel; Alexr. Duff & Peter Fraser, both in Kiltarlity, witnesses." As a Kirk Officer this man might well be identified easily enough from other records - but in this case the Session Clerk (was it himself?) very helpfully adds in the margin: "Fraser M'Ean mhic Alistair." So we have, in one fell swoop, John Fraser, son of John, son of Alexander. Or have we?

In theory (according to some scholarly Gaelic-speaking genealogists), "mhic" (or "vic" as it is often transcribed phonetically) means not "son of" like "mac", but "of a son of" (i.e. the genitive of "mac"). If this is the case, then our Kirk Officer is in fact John Fraser, son of John, of a son of Alexander - in other words we are missing a generation between Alexander and the older John.

In practice it seems to me that the theory (if indeed it is correct) is often - perhaps usually - ignored, and "mhic" or "vic" or "ic" is promiscuously used to mean "son of" instead of "mac" - though usually for the second and succeeding patronymics after a "mac" has been used for the first. Perhaps some of the Gaelic speakers or scholars amongst our members might care to comment about the theory and the practice of this in future editions of the magazine.

To return to my examples in the Kiltarlity OPR. Another Fraser case seems to work the other way round. The main entry reads: 1759, Feb 10th: "Donald Fraser m'Rorrie, taylor in Drumgherachan had a child baptised named Kathren. Witnesses William Chisholm in Cruive & Dun. Dorg in Culnaskiach." The explanatory note in the margin reads: "McAlistair."

Nonetheless the outcry about the increases has been such - combined, it would appear, with a decline in the number of paying customers in New Register House last summer - that the GROS have not raised the charges for Inclusive Searches this year (which therefore remain at £15 per day, or £50 per week); those for OPR and/or Censuses, however, have gone up (as of April 1st) from £8 to £10 per day, which is also now the charge for a search only of the Statutory Indexes/Certificates.

THE LATE ADOPTION OF SURNAMES

It is well known that surnames were generally adopted very late on in the Highlands - in the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries in many cases. In some cases, however, it was even later that particular families seem to have decided which surname to use. These cases of indecision often seem to be related to small clans which had fallen under the sway of chiefs of more powerful clans who tried to persuade (or bribe, or force) their tenants to adopt their own names.

The most well known case in the Inverness area is of course that of "The Boll o' Meal Frasers" - and there are many entries in the local OPRs of Beatons, Lees (or McLees as I have recently come across them in the Kiltarlity Register), Barrons and others clinging to their real clan identities as an alias to the name of Fraser.

Further south among the most notorious name-changing chiefs were the Lochiels; and as a result of their pressure the very ancient Lochaber names of MacMartin and MacGillionie have virtually disappeared, with their bearers' descendants almost universally now known as Cameron. Within the same area two equally ancient tribes (who were nonetheless incomers like the Camerons) were strong enough to resist this Cameronisation - the Clann Dubhsithe (Macphees) and the Clann Ghille Mhaoil (MacMillans).

It is ironic, however, that when members of these clans settled outwith the Lochaber area they were often there called Cameron and it is among some of these families that one finds an identity crisis well into the nineteenth century.

So in Glenurquhart one Finlay was married in 1786 as MacMillan, under which name his first four children were baptised; his next child however, was called Cameron, as was his last - but with another MacMillan in between. His eldest son died in 1811 as MacMillan; Finlay himself went to his grave as "Cameron alias MacMillan" - and so far as we know all his other children passed away as Camerons.

An even later example can be found in Easter Ross, where a ploughman called John married in 1859 in Urray - and gave his and his father's surname as MacMillan. While John's own birth

In this case we have Donald Fraser son of Roderick - and perhaps Roderick was the son of an Alexander; but here we are to beware of another problem with patronymics - there are more than one kind; indeed one could say there are three kinds. The original, and most useful patronymic, is that which simply identifies a person's father; then there is the patronymic that has evolved into a surname, as is the case with the Mac..... clans; but there is often found in the old records what might be called a halfway house between these two - where all the later descendants of a particularly noteworthy individual are identified by the same patronymic as his sons.

This of course is the beginning of the process of a patronymic evolving into a surname - which sometimes it does (if this "clan" becomes powerful enough in its own right) and sometimes it doesn't (where the identification with the parent clan is more important.) So among the Clan Donald, for example, you will find some to this day still called Macranald - but many more called MacDonald who nonetheless had ancestors known in their day as "Mac Ranald", after one of their famous MacDonald ancestors called Ranald. (And of course because of this process it is highly likely that some MacDonalds today are not actually of the famous Clan Donald, but descendants of other men called Donald who may have been of other clans entirely.)

In the same way we see McAlister (also the surname of a powerful sept of the Clan Donald, the descendants of the eponymous Donald's younger son Alasdair) in the margin - or indeed as the patronymic of an individual - as in this Kiltarlity example, we have to bear in mind the possibility that it identifies what we might call a mini-clan rather than the father of the individual concerned.

All this highlights the care which must be taken in these cases to gather corroborative evidence from other sources before jumping to conclusions about the identity of individuals sporting apparently very useful patronymics. The Kiltarlity OPR has a host of other frustrating and confusing examples to ram home the lesson. There are a number of families in the parish in the 1760's known as McRobb or McRobert (or in at least one entry by the Gaelic McInrebhard, and it is not at all clear from an initial look whether in any of these cases this is a personal patronymic or a mini-clan - though I don't think in any case it emerges as an eventual surname.

What is apparent from the occasional notes in the margin, however, is that at least two different clans are involved - for one family are sometimes identified as Mackenzie, and another as Frasers (and in both families, at the same time, there are individuals called Andrew - though thankfully where the surnames are not added they can still be told apart by their places of residence.)

Finally, the most frustrating entry of all - if one happened to be interested in this individual (who I have just plucked out of the register as an example;... with no marginal surname added, there is this birth:

1758, Dec. 27th: "Alexr. m'Ean vic Duncan vic William in Consent had a child baptised named John; witnesses, John M'Ean there & William McPherson there." Three generations back in one leap - but who can now tell who he is?

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Anyone wanting further information on the above items, and any HFHS members wanting specific entries in New Register House checked free of charge (maximum of 3 at any one time) or research done at a 25% discount can contact Graeme Mackenzie at: HIGHLAND ROOTS, P.O. BOX 155, EDINBURGH EH7 5UW or phone 031-668 3521.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting was held in the Dunbar Centre, Inverness on Tuesday 24th March 1992. All the existing officers and committee members were re-elected. To their delight two members at the meeting were persuaded to join the committee, namely William Fraser and Graham Tuley. Reports by both the Secretary and Treasurer were given to the meeting and a precis of each appear below.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

The committee does need suggestions for the syllabus. We have to thank our chairman, Neil Murray, for the excellent syllabus he has again provided for the year that is ending. He would be glad to receive ideas for subjects that you feel would provide an interesting talk.

During the past year we have acquired the 1891 census for the area we cover - the counties of Shetland, Orkney, Caithness, Sutherland, Ross & Cromarty, Inverness, Nairn and Argyll. This completes the set of six which were taken every 10 years from 1841 to 1891. The census returns are very useful as they do not relate to a person's religion, merely where they were residing on the night of the census.

The IGI, on which we rely so much, is an index of the entries in the Old Parish Registers, and so it is confined to those of our forebears who were members of the Church of Scotland. I have to tell so many people this simple fact, that I now have a short piece set up on my word processor, and can just copy it into any letters that I send.

Our chairman represents us on the Scottish Association of Family History Societies, and I must warn you that on Saturday 25th September 1993, our Society is to host the Association's

Conference and A.G.M. It will be taking place at Culloden Academy and we shall be having four speakers on subjects pertaining to the Highlands. We shall also need some sponsors, so any ideas on this would be welcome. Too often the A.G.M. is held far from the Highlands, so please put this date in your diaries for next year.

TREASURER'S REPORT

A much better year with last year's deficit of £956 turned round to show a surplus for the year to 31st August 1991 of £616. This was the result of a reduction in depreciation on equipment, 2 lots of tax refund on covenanted subscriptions and the production of our normal 4 quarterly Journals rather than the 6 that were published during the previous year.

The number of new members joining during the year was 68, slightly down on the previous year's total of 84. The number of members who failed to renew their membership was 46. This has resulted in a total membership at 31st August of 482, and if that trend continues we should go over 500 by the end of the current year in 5 months time.

This figure of about 45 members who fail to renew each year creates a problem which needs to be addressed. Each year a reminder is sent out with the August Journal asking members to pay their subscriptions. This is then followed up with a final reminder which accompanies the November Journal. In the case of those who fail to renew their membership this results in the loss of both the printing costs of the Journal and the postage.

It also makes the estimation of how many Journals we should print very difficult. The cost of photocopying extra copies of Journals is now more than £1 per copy compared with the 54p to print them originally. In order to save this cost I have decided that the reminder sent out with the August Journal will be the only one. Journals for the new year will only be sent out to members following renewal of their membership.

As promised last year the binders and wallets used to contain the microfiche owned by the Society were replaced. The total purchases in the year at £272 is much less than intended as the reels for the 1991 census arrived 3 days after the close of the 1990/91 financial year. Although our members have had use of them for the past 6½ months the cost of purchasing them (£1,340) will not appear until this current year's accounts are presented to you.

Our bank balance is standing at £2,665 and normal expenditure for the remainder of this Financial Year is estimated at £1,050. The next item we are looking to purchase is the latest and extended Mormon Index of baptisms and marriages for the whole of Scotland.

MEMBER'S RESEARCH INTERESTS

883 Mrs Brenda Lupton

Researching ALLAN & MacKENZIE in Lochcarron, Ross & Cromarty pre-1840; ALLAN in Dunvegan, Isle of Skye 1820-1860 and McIV(E)OR in Lochcarron pre-1840.

904 Mr James Semple

Researching SEMPLE & CRAIG in the Glasgow area. Robert SEMPLE married Janet CRAIG in 1849 at Avondale, Lanark. Their son Andrew SEMPLE married Jean Bell HAMILTON 11 April 1873 in Carlisle, Lanarkshire and they emigrated to the U.S. in the 1880's. Also RODGER c1835 possibly in Memphis, Lanarkshire and CALDER/SPENCE in Caithness 1770-1890.

907 Mrs Margaret S Bain, 155 Old Castle Road, Glasgow G44 5TJ

Her husband's roots are in the Highlands. BAIN in Dingwall and KENNEDY from Sleat, Isle of Skye.

908 Mr David M M Paton, 31 Carlisle Avenue, St Albans AL3 5LX

Researching MacKENZIE of Meddat in Kilmuir & Logie Easter 1700-1799; ANDERSON of Udol in Cromarty 1600-1699; GORDON of Langdale in Farr 1700-1799 and PORTEOUS in Inverness 1600-1799.

909 Mr Gordon P I MacAskill, 3 Brooksby Street, Islington

Researching MacASKILL in Skye pre-1850; McASKILL in Inverness post-1850 and MACBEAN in Rothiemurchus pre-1900.

910 Mrs Eileen M Lothian, Mead Lodge, Beechwood Road,

Combe Down, Bath, Avon BA2 5JS
Researching several families in our area - ELDER in Halkirk 1800-1899; JACK in Reay 1700-1799 and Westfield, Halkirk 1800-1899; TAYLOR & MURRAY in Dunnet 1700-1899; HENDERSON in Reay 1700-1799. Outside our area - WEST in Gamrie and REID in Rathven, both Banffshire 1700-1799; MIDDLETON, THOMSON, LINTON and PARK in Brechin, Angus 1800-1899 and finally HUTCHISON in Aberdeen? 1800-1899.

911 Mrs Marian Jane Upton, 123 Manor Way, Aldwick Bay,

Bognor Regis, West Sussex PO21 4HN
Researching MACKAY in Strath Oykel 1769 and Inverness 1807+; DOUGLAS in Easter Clunes, Aird, Kiltarlity 1800; DINGWALL in Dornoch or Tarbet c1770; FRASER in Kiltarlity 1800; MacDONALD in Dornoch or Tarbet 1770s; RAE in Dumfries 1860-1900; MATHIESON in Kilmahoe, Dumfries 1860-1869; HENDERSON & HERRIES in Troqueur/Kirkcudbright 1800-1899.

912 Mr Joseph Reeves, 4210 Burrland Road, Portsmouth,

Virginia 23703, U.S.A.

