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EDITORIAL

Marjorie Hanson, one of our members in Australia, in the course of paying her subs suggested that some of the members who live in the vicinity of the Highlands might like to write pieces about the locations they live in or know about. Many of the overseas members have no real idea of where some of these places are now and what they were like to live in over the years. The Old and New Statistical Accounts may be a start, but not all of our members have immediate access to them, so feel free to throw in articles. It is also interesting to many members to hear what happened to émigrés, including descriptions of the areas they went to.

This Journal has the first half of Bob Mackenzie's discussion of pioneers in Canada from the Western Isles which I hope will bring in many more such. The living attitudes of the people in it made me start to think again, which shows part of the value in the story. Languages change over time, otherwise we'd still be speaking Latin or Greek or Sumerian, and they change with geographical isolation, so American is not the same as Scots, Norm or Cockney. So it is with the culture of memories transmitted from generation to generation, differing elements will stay alive in the remembrances of the people who moved and the people who stayed. Which is better, to keep Cultures alive after they have faded, or to shoot them? I think neither is correct. I am always saddened by both the forcible removal or careless loss of and the stubborn clinging to certain attitudes. I think it is a shame that the spirit of togetherness given by the local church housing the entire community every Sunday is disappearing, but I am not going to take a pitchfork to make everyone in Dingwall pick a particular church and go into it.

I think it sad and close to criminal that Gaelic as a language has been picked on (one colleague of mine, younger than I, who spoke it at home in Argyll was slapped in school every time he said anything in it, until he reached the stage of being unable to utter a word of the language) but I am not going to embitter myself shoring up this or other lost Causes. At what point should one give up fighting a cause and accept the situation? A lot depends on what one considers is important, of course. The difference between Highlanders, West Coasters and Islesmen is hard to spot in Canada, thousands of miles and hundreds of years away from the 1790s Clearances, and the Canadian descendants of emigrant Scots can legitimately consider that 'Cap Breton is the purest repository of pre-Culloden Scottish culture in the world'. In Scotland it might be considered that ideas have moved on from those tribulous years (even if many can still argue vociferously over high statues in Golspie) as we have newer problems to worry us, from the War(s), from unemployment, from monocultured Sitka Spruces and fish-farming Issues and the going up of both CalMac fares and the Skye Bridge. I agree with Bob, this dispersal of ideas is decidedly worth an article of its own!

Angus Bethune is still looking for the volunteers who will help transcribe all of the monumental inscriptions in Inverness' Chapel Yard, and it looks like four of our booklets will need to be produced for the number of memorials in there. Extensive pruning of foliage in the Old High Church burial ground has resulted in two new inscriptions becoming visible and amendments to three other inscriptions. A single page listing these errata and addenda is included with this Journal for those members who have already purchased a copy.

I have been holding (I still hesitate to say 'teaching' due to my engaging modesty) adult evening classes in family history in the county town of Ross-shire, so if any of my students join the society there will be yet more members to submit articles on Dingwall's genealogy and local history. You Have Been Warned!

SCOTTISH SETTLEMENT IN PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND AND NOVA SCOTIA

1790 to 1815

by D. Robert MacKenzie

During the process of conducting personal genealogical research, it became apparent that the decision to settle in the so-called "New World" must have had profound consequences for the Scottish people who came to what is now Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia. For example, in 1802 some 400 Catholic Highlanders arrived in Pictou, Nova Scotia from the Isle of Barra in the Outer Hebrides. Undoubtedly, their decision resulted in the severance of strong physical and emotional ties with a homeland in which they and their progenitors had, since prehistoric times, been born, lived, loved, died and were interred. Leaving an overpopulated homeland that boasted almost no trees and arriving in a virtually empty land where impenetrable virgin forests flourished right down to the brim of the sea would obviously have been an enormously stressful hardship for anyone.

This is an overview of the conditions the settlers found when they arrived in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, the kind of environments which faced them upon their arrival and how they coped with these adversities. Almost immediately they had to acquire land, learn to clear forests, cultivate soil unploughed since the beginning of time, produce livelihood and build a home. They would have had to do all of this within a shorter growing season and in a climate much more extreme than any they had experienced heretofore. This account will attempt to determine what the land was like, what species of wildlife were present and what resources were available from the sea in the form of fish and sea mammals, and determine how they survived those first difficult years and why they came specifically to Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia.

Approximately one-tenth or 3,000 square miles of Scotland are comprised of scattered islands. These, for the most part, are rocky, treeless skerries pounded by rough seas. Communication by road was difficult as many areas were roadless. However, this did not mean that there was no communication. Many localities could easily be accessed by boat and Highlanders from the Western Isles were proficient boatmen. The inhabitants were mainly of Irish and Norse extraction who harvested the sea for fish and kelp, reared sheep and Highland cattle and grew potatoes in the temperate climate of the Outer Hebrides.

On the West coast too, in certain areas, palm trees will grow in the open air. It is generally believed that the old stories of incomparable fertility are wishful imaginings, yet it is clear enough that much of the sand dune has been heaped up fairly recently over what may well be good 'machair' land near the coast, and some scholars hold that the great peat mosses themselves are not so very ancient.

The situation for the people on the Outer Hebrides was dire. They were without food, shelter or their traditional social support and were physically removed from their houses, their possessions and their houses destroyed without compassion or recompense. They were deprived of their freedom for payment of debt and sold into slavery by those who once inspired their loyalty and respect, their chiefs and their Church. Their position was untenable and there was literally no choice, as they were forcibly removed, but to leave their islands forever. The cry "*C'ha till mi mille!* - We shall return no more!" keened like a banshee throughout the Western Isles.

More than one third of those so displaced came to Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia with their physical possessions amounting to little more than the clothes on their backs. However, they brought with them a richness of language, culture, character and community which continues to shape and colour the social fabric of Atlantic Canada to the present. Their communities, isolated

geographically and insulated by this isolation against the cold and Canadian *Sassaparilla* by the ethos of Gaelic spirit until relatively recent times, have perpetuated this cultural transference. Although records of their eviction experiences document exceptional misery, even more horrid tribulations lay ahead for the landless and destitute Highlanders and their terrible ordeals were far from over.

THE COFFIN SHIPS. The only means of transport were second and third rate ships whose owners were as greedy for the filthy lucre as were the chieftain-landlords. Regulations were in effect governing the number of African slaves the ships could transport. However, no such rules governed the number of Cleared Scots each ship could carry to the New World. The continued wave of emigration attracted some attention to the conditions of emigrant ships, many of which carried larger numbers in more crowded conditions than they were permitted under the slave trade. Shippers were reluctant to pay for improvements to ships involved in the timber and emigrant trade, for it was largely the rough and odorous hulks of timber ships that were used to carry the human cargoes. And until forced to improve the filthy and crowded conditions, some ship owners paid as much concern to one cargo as another. This would appear to be a very sensible business fit for the ship owners, as they carried people to Atlantic Canada and lumber to Europe knowing that on the way over it mattered little if the cargo perished and on the return trip a ship full of wood won't sink unless it gets water-logged or it breaks apart. Further evidence of the abysmal conditions, even worse than that of the transporting of African slaves, in the ships ferrying human beings on a one-way Atlantic crossing is illustrated by the following passage.

In the summer of 1801, George Dunoon advertised the sailing of the *Sarah* and the *Dove* from Fort William for Pictou. Had the laws then governing slave ships applied to these immigrant vessels, they would not have been allowed to carry more than 489 passengers. Dunoon filled the tiny holds with 700 [Note: *Shipping records indicate a passenger count of 569 for these two ships but perhaps these numbers may refer only to the surviving passengers.*]... Forty-nine people died on the *Sarah* alone.

Inadequate supplies of food and water, seasickness, lack of sanitation and toilet facilities, combined with the already weakened state of health in which the Highlanders found themselves, led to outbreaks of fatal diseases such as dysentery, cholera and scurvy. There must have been scenes of unimaginable misery on the appropriately named "coffin ships". The treatment of the Cleared Scots may be explained in part because of the fact that African slaves had value and there was economic benefit to the slave-traders in getting as many of them as possible to their destination alive. Cleared Scots, however, had no such value other than the price of their passage, which was usually paid by their former chieftain-landlords prior to departure, to the shipping agent submitting the lowest bid and there were no incentives to get them to their destination alive and healthy.

TROUBLING CHOICES. In the face of the scourges visited upon a once powerful and resourceful people, it may be asked "Why did so many of them choose Atlantic Canada?" There are a number of answers to this question. The Highlanders had knowledge of Atlantic Canada through communications from Scottish settlers who preceded them during the previous half century. Many were intentionally misled by unscrupulous shipping agents or absentee land owners who required tenants to earn them a profit from their holdings in Atlantic Canada. For some Highlanders, arrival in Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia may have been purely serendipitous.

When peace between the English and French was finally achieved in 1763, many of the troops who mustered out and received for their services to the Crown, grants of land in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island were Hebridean Scots from Highland regiments. They noted the fertility of the land,

pension from the Crown. While Findlay never again set foot in Cape Breton, his descendants arrived in Pictou in 1802 and removed to Cape Breton in 1803. He was a progenitor of those MacKenzies living today in the Washabuck, Iona and Christmas Island areas of Cape Breton [also of the *Barra MacNeils*]. It is likely he gave favourable accounts of Cape Breton Island when he retired to Barra and doubtless he made mention of the topographical superiority of the area to their island home. It is easy to imagine that veteran of twenty-one years service in a Highland regiment of the British Army of the day, sitting around a blazing turf fire, a bumper of *uisge bhairta* in hand, regaling rapt clansmen with yarns of his escapades. Given that Barra is an almost treeless, isolated island approximately eight miles in length and from two to five miles in width situated at the southernmost tip of the Outer Hebrides, and if his descendants are any indication of his storytelling and musical abilities, he must have been equivalent of cable television in eighteenth century Barra.

However, for others desperate to try and sustain themselves and their families, there were only the garish lies of the ship owners to guide them. Those fleeing the cruelties of the lairds' factors were told all manner of fantasies about the weather, the climate, the miraculous things which grew on trees, in what was portrayed as the Promised Land, and what wonderful ships would transport them there for a mere pittance. Witness the following:

NOTICE TO PASSENGERS for NOVA SCOTIA AND CANADA

A SUBSTANTIAL COPPERED Fast sailing ship will be ready to receive passengers at Fort William on the 10th of June and sail for Pictou and CUNACK on the 10th. All those who wish to emigrate to these parts in Summer will find this an excellent opportunity, as every attention will be paid to the comfort of passengers, and they may depend on the utmost punctuality to the date of sailing.

FOR PICTOU DIRECT

And
The Fine Brigantine GOOD INTENT. 220 Tons Burden
E. HIBBARD, Supercargo

will be ready to sail from Aberdeen in March, and intends calling on Cromarty about the end of that month, if a sufficient number of passengers offer. This vessel has most excellent accommodation for Passengers, and Mr. Hibbard the Supercargo will pay every attention...

Based on these splendid portrayals of pampered voyages to the land of milk and honey across the sea, one would almost wish to travel via these luxurious vessels oneself. However glowing the advertisements, conveniently omitted are any statistics as to the probability of dying from a variety of diseases nor are there any hints that if land was not reached with a fair degree of "punctuality", the "attention paid to the comfort of passengers" would run out and many of the said passengers would starve to death. Some of the more imaginative ship owners also promised that "...in Nova Scotia they would find a tree that supplied fuel, soap and sugar..." As far-fetched as this might sound, it is nonetheless true of the maple tree, which indeed grew in great abundance throughout the region. The wood of the maple may be burned for cooking after one had learned to use an axe [the Western Isles and Highlands were almost treeless], cut it down, sawed it into lengths, split it and dried it out for six months. Soap could be made with the ashes of the resultant burning and sugar could be made from the sap if one survived the vagaries of a winter much more extreme than that of one's former homeland and provided there was someone around who was willing to show you how to collect the sap from the tree, inform you of the appropriate time of year to begin this process and the technology [i.e. a big copper pot or cauldron] needed to render it into sugar was available.

the timber and the wildlife available for the taking and how superior it was to that of the Western Isles. They sent glowing accounts of their new homes back to the islands and encouraged their kin to emigrate. This was before the Clearances. With the imposition of forcible evictions, the Highlanders were faced with choosing between starvation and emigration. Exile forever to Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island or some other distant place, away from their familiar islands was their only alternative to a miserable existence or a lingering death. No doubt some of the evictees recalled letters from their kinfolk across the Atlantic.

Many of those who had friends in the colonies, and knew what they had to expect, emigrated with great alacrity; but thousands, who had no such desire, on the contrary, ...were heart-broken at the idea of being separated from them [the Western Isles] by a thousand leagues of raging sea. Many, it is true, especially the young men, gladly embraced the offers of their landlords to assist them in emigrating to a country where labour was abundant and the remuneration ample, and where they could with common industry soon acquire a comfortable subsistence; but the old people, who had passed all their lives in their native glens, clung to their birthplaces with a tenacity known only to the Celts.

This tenacity is a trait passed on to almost every one of their descendants now living in Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia as expressed by this in the following poem:

GOD BLESS CAPE BRETONERS

*Every morning when I wake up,
I thank the Creator for allowing me
To be born a Cape Bretoner.
Upon this beautiful island,
My forebears found sanctuary from war,
Famine, eviction, exploitation and persecution.
For half a millennium they have nurtured
Their families beside her waters,
On her mountains and in her valleys.
They have persevered against every adversity.
Pulsing within me is the confidence that
As their flesh and blood, I can withstand
Anything the Fates may cast my way.
Like the tenacious spruce tree,
My roots are intertwined with those of many others.
Every sinew grips the rocks
With the determined grasp
Of a new-born babe
To its mother's little finger...*

D. Robert MacKenzie

One Findlay MacKenzie [No relation to the writer], commonly known as *Fionnlath Glas*, served in the British army for twenty-one years. He took part in the capture of Louisbourg in 1758 and the capture of Quebec the following year. After the capture of Quebec, he returned to his native Isle [Barra] where he lived in single blessedness during the rest of his life and was supported by a

with the Admiral's permission. He made a decision while on station to steer a shipload of illegal immigrants to the United States to his land holdings in Prince Edward Island. The crew of a military ship was used to carry out improvements to the "noble captain's" land, i.e. they cleared land, built homes, planted crops and provided tools for the colonists. The captain received rents from his legacy, the colonists had a place to live and the "enemy", presumably the United States, did not increase its numbers. Everybody won. It is not inconceivable that the Cleared Scots may have confronted similar circumstances. It is open to speculation that the Captain of the *Aeolus*, the Rt Hon James Townsend, while out on the high seas in command of a ship of the line, was looking for prospective settlers and may have encountered a few Scots whom he steered to his land holdings and used his position to advantage.

[To be continued in the next Journal]

BOOKSHELF

(I can't read everything, so if you have read a book or magazine or used a piece of software or a Web site, please share your opinions of them with us in Bookshelf. These reviews are by Jonathan unless credited to someone else)

Scottish Endings: Writings on Death. Compiled by Andrew Martin, introduced by James Robertson. National Museums of Scotland, 1997. £7.99.

Here is a delightful book, whether you just dip into it, as into a commonplace book, or sit and read it through. To sit in the garden in the blazing sun of a September morning and to start at the beginning and end at the useful glossary, left this reader with a very comfortable feeling towards this world and the next.

The thing that comes through from the selection of Writings, is that our forebears were not afraid to die. They had a strong hope of a future life, that might well be an improvement on their present one. William Dunbar, 1460 - c1513, lists just about every sort of person who has died, ending each verse with *Timor mortuus conturbat me*, which I read as 'The fear of death puzzles me.' An advertisement in the *Sunday Times* of 5 January 1834, for an executioner for Inverness, lists all his emoluments, which were considerable, quite apart from the £5 for every execution that he performed, and £5 was worth something in the 1830s.

The book has illustrations, some in colour, and descriptions of all sorts of deaths and funerals, sometimes they cover the same events. To go by the illustration of the execution of William Burke in January 1829, the crowds that packed London at the time of the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, were mere amateurs. The throng of spectators in Edinburgh was not only on the ground, but hanging out of windows, balanced on roofs and arches, and all cheering, 'not a single indication of pity was observable.'

The Resurrectionists were deplored by all, even the medical students did not care to see a neighbour lying on the table before them. Details were given as to how to get a corpse out of its coffin, which must be done with care, if no mark is to be left, 'which is not difficult, as the soil over a fresh-filled grave must always present signs of a recent disturbance.'

In other instances, the Cleared Scots may have arrived in Nova Scotia purely by happenstance at the whim of wind and tide as did a group of Irish settlers in Prince Edward Island. The source may not be as reliable as would be desired, coming from a book of ghost stories and legends. Nevertheless, there was an Irish settlement at Rollo Bay, King's County Prince Edward Island and this account does have an aura of authenticity about it as there is a community in King's County called "Belfast".

We had not been long at sea before we spoke an Irish Guineaman from Belfast loaded with emigrants for the United States; about seventeen families. These were contraband. Our captain had some twenty thousand acres on the Island of St. John's or Prince Edward's as it is now called, a grant to some of his ancestors which he had been bequeathed to him and from which he had never received one shilling rent, for the very best reason in the world, because there were no tenants to cultivate the soil.

It occurred to our noble captain that this was the very sort of cargo he wanted, and that these Irish people would make good clearers of his land. He made the proposal, and as they saw no chance of getting into the United States, and provided they could get nourishment for their families it was a matter of indifference to them where they colonized, the proposal was accepted, and the captain obtained the permission of the admiral to accompany them to the Island, to see them housed and settled. Indeed, nothing could have been more advantageous for all parties; they increased the scanty population of our colony, instead of adding to the number of our enemies. We sailed again from Halifax a few hours after we had obtained the sanction of the Admiral, and, passing through the beautiful passage between Nova Scotia and the Island of Cape Breton known by the name of the Gut of Canso, we soon reached Prince Edward's Island.

During our stay, the crew cut down trees and built log-houses for the new tenants. They cleared by burning and rooting up as much land as would serve to sustain the colony for the ensuing season; and, having planted a crop of corn and potatoes, and given the settlers many articles useful in their new abode, we left them agreeable to our orders.

Although the preceding account is taken from a book of ghost stories and legends, there may be some truth to it. In her *ABC of King's County* [P.E.I.], Joan Easton provides us with a more specific and detailed version confirming the basics of the account.

We have an early glimpse of Bay Fortune in 1811 when Captain Marryat the novelist was at that time a midshipman on the frigate *H.M.S. Aeolus*. In the Spring of 1811, the warship out of Halifax, bespoke an incoming ship from Belfast, Ireland, carrying seventeen families of emigrants to the United States. The Captain of the *Aeolus* was the Right Honourable James Townsend, son of the 1st Marquess of Townsend who was granted Lot 56 on Prince Edward Island.

The captain persuaded several of these emigrants to leave the U.S. bound ship and join him on board the *Aeolus*, which then set sail for Fortune Bay. After landing, they made a previous settler's house on Abell's Cape their headquarters, and every day the emigrants with the captain and members of the ship's crew made an excursion to Lot 56. There they cut down trees, hauled them out of the forest, and built several houses. More land was cleared and corn and potatoes planted. Thus the new settlers were given a good start by their landlord.

It would seem an idyllic situation for the colonists and given the uncertainty of sea travel in those days it is not unthinkable that Scottish settlers may have ended up in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island in the same manner. Although it was probably unintended, the preceding account provides a clear example of a military commander exploiting his position for personal gain, albeit

THE NEW MEMBER or IT SEEMED A GOOD IDEA AT THE TIME

by Angus Bethune

There are a number of reasons why anyone would volunteer, or should that be drafted, to serve on any committee. Could the chairman not persuade anyone else? Is it for the dubious privilege of seeing your name on the syllabus? Is it for the chocolate biscuits at the committee meetings? Is there nobody prepared to risk public humiliation for the good of the Society? Apart from these reasons, perhaps new members are expected to put up with the way things are presently run, or perhaps they are expected to come up with some fresh ideas.

At the last committee meeting, Mr Editor McColl, presumably not for the first time, sought contributions to the Journal. The new member in his bid for infamy suggested that the committee members could perhaps contribute an item for inclusion. The big idea was promptly adopted, and for his pains, the new member was persuaded to become the first contributor to the Newsletter. Ideas are fine at the time, but a slightly different proposition when it comes to putting them into practice. What should I write about? What does Formula One have to do with Family History? Nothing at all, of course, but I had to give it a mention! The usual standby seem to be writing about my own interest and introduction to Family History, so . . . here we go.

I have an advantage in researching my own family history as far as my name is concerned, because Bethune seems to be a relatively uncommon name, so I don't have to go through pages and pages of Mac...s to find the particular branch of the family for example. My primary school has a wall plaque to record the names of those former pupils who fell in the Great War, and one of those names is Murdo J. Bethune. Now I knew that this must have been a relative of mine, as Murdo is a family name, but back in the early sixties, when I was a mere youngster, I had little inclination to find out who this man was.

My first visit to Register House was in the early eighties, when I took advantage of a free day from rehearsals for one of the Festival concerts and spent an intriguing time amongst the registers. I had by this time a general knowledge of my immediate family history, with various dates and places to start from, so I made a start with my grandfather's marriage and worked back from there. Another advantage that I soon found was that my Bethune forebears all seemed to live in and around the Dingwall area, not moving about the country as so many did. I was amazed at some of the information which I found, even in a couple of hours, and this in the days before direct on-line access to the full computerised records. It took me through the OPRs and Census records, and I was delighted with what I found. I was able to piece together the full list of my direct family through three generations, with details of Baptisms pre-1855, and with all the Birth and Marriage details which I didn't previously know. Time was against me on this first occasion, but I was able to return a couple of weeks later and garner more information. One of these days, I plan to return!

My great-grandfather was born in Dingwall in 1843, the eldest son of a family of seven. Like his father, who farmed at Blackwells, this Murdo also became a farmer, at Dreim (now Barevan) Muirton and Easter Urray. When I was a boy, all those years ago, I was told that my grandfather was born at Easter Urray, but I couldn't understand why he lived near Glasgow. My dad was born in Glasgow, so why was he living and working in Culbokie? What made my grandfather move away from the north, and what became of the rest of his family? It was only once I had pieced together the family history that I could answer some of these questions.

Most of the deaths were ordinary enough, but Second Sight, Witchcraft and Superstition appear, as well as the jollification (or otherwise) which attended the funeral. Today the rules do not allow interesting inscriptions on gravestones, which is a pity. What have we lost when the following were allowed? *Executed lately at Leith / for 25 years of murder / and cannibalism / Sawney Bean / of Bonmahoe Head, Ballantrae / his wife / his eight sons, his eighteen grandsons / his six daughters, his fourteen / granddaughters / justly dismembered and burned alive.* And a charming stone from Aberdeen - *Here lies the bones of Elizabeth Charlotte / Born a virgin, died a harlot. / She was a virgin at seventeen / A remarkable thing for Aberdeen.*

But one of the best stories is traditional. *Two golfers were on their way home from the links in Fife, when they met a funeral. As the cortege passed by, Alex took off his cap. "What's up with you?" asked Tom, "you never usually bother with that." "Ach, well," said Alex. "She was a good wife to me."*

Over a hundred years ago, the death of a cousin left in Scotland was announced in a letter to the emigrants in Australia, saying that George *'had launched himself into eternity on the sea beach at Portobello.* ' But that is not in this charming book. [Lorraine Maclean]

Website: http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/neil_in_fife

This is a good one. Neil Reid in Fife (or 'Scotty' as I see him elsewhere on bulletin boards) has done like many another and put his family tree up on the Internet, but has improved his website to make it of value for anyone researching their own family in or from Scotland. It is said to be part of the Genring collection which I must have a look at some time. The site is in ten sections, all short, clear and to the point and linked to each other, covering A Basic Introduction, Starting Your Research, Church Records, Statutory Records, Census Records, Useful Resources, FHSs, Researchers, Parish Locations and his own Family Tree. His OPR section has links to a timeline, a quickie ecclesiastical tale of years with the splitting and joining and rejoining of the Churches in Scotland over the last few hundred years, including a mention of the statutory charge of 3d after the 1783 Stamp Act which encouraged baptism, marriage and burial entries to dry up for a few years.

The Statutory Records gives a clear description of what to expect from the certificates, with a special mention of the Jackpot Year of 1855 when the entries included lots of extras, like lists of the rest of the family, ages, marriage places, how many still living and more. The FHS page gives links to the Scottish Genealogy Society web pages, and the half-dozen Scottish FHSs who have web pages of their own, including ours. You can find out all the parishes of each county (although not the other way around if you have an unfamiliar parish name and want to find where it is) and the earliest year of the OPRs of each, such as Gairloch 1781 or Dingwall 1662. His own family tree, or rather pedigree, is again clearly presented, with links from some of the names to mini-biographies. He lists online researchers with their email addresses and websites too.

This is an excellent place to start searching on how to research your Scottish family, and gives links to all over the place for further, deeper and wider study. Tell him I sent you.

My great-grandfather was married in Glasgow in 1874 to a Skye woman. Why? It inspired that her mother and brother were sheep-farmers, and I suppose that the Skye sheep were wintered in the more sheltered districts closer to the mainland markets. Presumably a wedding in Glasgow was more accessible to the Skye side of the family in the days of steamers. The family were brought up in Easter Urray, and this brings me back to Murdo John. There were two Murdo Johns, as the first one, born in 1876, died in infancy. The second Murdo John was born in 1880, two years after my grandfather. The usual pattern of naming children was followed, and my grandfather was named after his maternal grandfather. In 1887, the family moved to Badrain farm at Culbokkie, and the children attended Culbokkie school as I was to do many years later. My great-grandfather died in 1890, but the farm continued to be run by my great-grandmother until the third son was old enough to take over. Although my grandfather was the eldest son, he chose a life at sea, becoming a marine engineer, and hence his move to Glasgow. The farm remained in the Bethune family until the early seventies.

Researching the family history through the archives in Inverness library has proved fruitful, as I have found much of interest in the microfilm pages of the Ross-shire Journal. I knew that Murdo John was killed during the Great War, but had little knowledge to work from. I understood that he was killed at the Somme, so looked for any obituary around that time. Sure enough, the Ross-shire had a half-column, including his photo, recording his death. Interestingly, the date of death differed from that previously known, and as recorded on the family gravestone in Fodderty graveyard. I have since found the record of his marriage through the Ross-shire, and this adds to the facts already known.

An intriguing postscript to the story of Murdo John came in the form of a phone-call from a man in Edinburgh a couple of years ago. He was researching the history of the Edinburgh battalion of the Royal Scots, and, in the course of his enquiries, came upon the name of Murdo John Bethune. I cannot recall how he tracked down my phone number, but perhaps tried each of the Bethunes in turn in the hope of finding one who may have been able to help him. He got the right one, and I was able to give him a lot of background information about Murdo John and the rest of the family. Imagine my surprise and delight a few days later when I received a letter enclosing a photo of Murdo John, and details of his death, together with a plan identifying the war grave cemetery where he is interred. Some day I would hope to visit the Somme region and see for myself the war grave of this distant relative, after whom my father was named, and whose name was always on the wall plaque in my classroom.

A final thought: has a record been made of all the memorials to the war dead in schools, halls and churches in this area? Oh no, another big idea from the new member!

McRAE of DINGWALL and RENFREW, ONTARIO

by Malcolm Sissons

My grandmother, Margaret Hope MacRae, was born in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, in 1892 and orphaned four years later when her father Peter, mother Maggie, and older brother Ivan drowned in a tragic yachting accident on Lac Deschenes. A squall knocked down the sailboat and none of them could swim. "Hope" was raised by her mother's family and subsequently lost touch with her MacRae relatives. One hundred years later, I have taken an interest in finding out her origins and this has led me to Dingwall.

John MacRae (or MacRae?) was born in 1806 in Ross-shire, exact location and parents unknown, but he seems to have been living in Dingwall. His wife to be, Catherine McKenzie, was born in Torridon in 1815, but raised in Dingwall. There was a John Macrae who married a Catherine McKenzie on 20 December 1835 in Glenelg which is about right according to their ages. Their son Hector was born in 1836. Some time in the next three years, the young family moved down to Liverpool, perhaps in search of work.

On 12 August 1840, Catherine's obituary states that they were married in St. Paul's church in Liverpool. Either this is an error, or the Glenelg wedding was someone else or they were remarried in order to have official Church of England papers, since that was the official religion in the Upper Canada of that period. They boarded a ship for Canada and arrived in Quebec in October 1840. The usual form of transportation upriver from Quebec was "bateaux" which may have carried them as far as Bytown (Ottawa). Their second child, Margaret, is supposed to have been born in 1840, in Nepean, near Ottawa, which would have made for a difficult trip.

The following year, they established themselves at Burnstown, in McNab Township. Archibald MacNab of McNab, chief of the name, had previously quit Scotland and beginning in the 1820s, had tried to establish a quasi-feudal domain in the wilds of the Ottawa valley. After having obtained a land grant from the colonial authorities, he succeeded in populating it by intercepting Gaelic-speaking immigrants in Montreal whom he convinced to sign a perpetual rent agreement. His autocratic ways did not endear him to the settlers and squabbling became intense between 1835 and 1845.

The McRaes, now including Elizabeth, born 1842, moved north from Burnstown to Horton Mills, leaving the MacNab to his troubles. At first, John MacRae operated a grist mill for Peter Morris before acquiring it in 1846. The nearby town of Renfrew had less than 100 souls but in 1847 John MacRae and merchant Robert MacIntyre took up a collection to establish a Presbyterian church. In 1853, he joined the temperance movement which was then sweeping Ontario and in 1859 became a trustee on the first Board of Education and in 1866 a town councillor. In 1856 he moved into Renfrew and built a new mill to compete with the McDougall mill which had been built a year earlier.

John and Catherine had several other children while in Horton and Renfrew: Alexander (1845), John William (1847), George (1850), Peter (1853), George (1855). The happy family life was later marred by a series of tragedies. The first George died of croup a year after his birth. Alexander was caught in the mill machinery on Christmas Eve 1866, and died at age 21, causing his mother's health to become fragile in subsequent years. The second George had become a physician in Ottawa, but died of tuberculosis in 1881 and his mother Catherine, who nursed him, died a week later. John died in Renfrew in 1893. Peter married Maggie Bell, great-granddaughter of the well known pioneering Presbyterian minister Rev. William Bell of Perth, Ontario. They had two children and Peter was in partnership in Ottawa with his brother Hector. The sailing accident claimed the father, mother and brother in 1896, leaving Hope to be raised by the mother's family. Hector appeared to take advantage of the situation, wound up the business and invested the money in gold mining in British Columbia. A fire swept through Ottawa in 1899, destroying a carbide factory which was the business of John William. On the verge of bankruptcy, he "accidentally" shot himself in his office in 1901, leaving a widow and five children and an insurance policy.

PEOPLE WHO LIVED IN (OR HAS CONNECTIONS WITH) CLAIGAN IN THE 19TH CENTURY

by *Marjorie W MacInnes*

Claigan, sometimes spelt Claggan, is a small township in the parish of Duirinish on the Isle of Skye. It forms part of the MacLeod Estate and is a peninsula lying due north of Dunvegan Castle, between Loch Dunvegan and Loch Bay.

This article lists all the people I know of who lived in Claigan in the 19th century. I am at present compiling a similar list of people who were here during this century.

I would like to hear from anyone who has any connection with Claigan, whose ancestors lived here or who knows of people who lived here whether included in this article or not. Any additions, however small, to this information or any amendments and corrections, would be most welcome.

Marjorie W MacInnes, 3 Claigan, Dunvegan, Isle of Skye IV55 8WF

WILLIAM ANDERSON, a shepherd born 1806c, his wife **Williamina Oliver** born 1811c and their first child **James** born 1830c (not in the parish of Duirinish) were in **Swordale** when **William** was born 20/9/1832. **John** 28/5/1836, **Elizabeth** 17/10/1837, and **George** 8/2/1841 were all born in Claigan. **William** was an agricultural labourer in 1841 and live-in maid, was 20-year-old **Janet MacDonald** who was perhaps the eldest daughter of **Farquhar** and **Ann MacDonald**(qv). **Dr Donald MacAskill**, tacksman in the farm of Claigan, made a list of his tenants and cottars in 1840. He said of **William** that he "was a very intelligent and trustworthy person". Their family then were: **James** 11, **William** 7, **John** 4 and **Elizabeth** 2. They lived at "Carnus Bawn", now a ruin at Coral Bay, Camus Ban. The **Andersons** had left by 1851.

DONALD BETHUNE, son **Kenneth** was baptised 17/11/1819 at Corlarach.

JOSEPH CAIRNCROSS was in **Totochocaire**, wife **Ann Sharp**, son **John** born there 6/9/1853.

CATHERINE CAMERON, Claigan married **Alexander MacDonald**, Unish 5/6/1826.

DONALD CAMERON was bought in as manager when **Norman MacLeod** took over the farm after **William Young** left. He was in Claigan in 1881. **Donald** was a married man but his wife does not appear on the 1881 census. Perhaps she was just from home or perhaps she did not come to Skye with him. **Donald** was born in **Glenurquhart** about 1835. His household at Claigan in 1881 included his housekeeper **Catherine Matheson** 36 from **Snizort**, shepherd **Allan Nicolson** 25 from **Portree** and ploughman **Alexander Beaton** 20 from **Duirinish**. **Donald Cameron** had left Claigan by 1882 when **Nicol Martin** came in.

D C CAMERON - 1848 accepted offer of £735 for **Greshornich**, Claigan and Bay for 15 years. Castle papers.

MARGARET CAMERON, Kirkton married **Norman Ferguson**, Roag 10/3/1840.

MARY CAMERON, Kirkton married **Richard Ramage**, Claigan 1855+

Despite this "massacre", the family was not wiped out. **Hector** had married **Elizabeth Skead**, a senator's daughter and had five children. His many business ventures did not seem successful and he eventually left for the United States, where contact was lost with the family. **Margaret**, the second child, married **John Carruthers**, the head miller in her father's mill. They had at least one son **Charles**, who was killed in the First World War. **Elizabeth**, the third child, married widower **James McLaren** in later life and stayed in **Renfrew**.

The orphan **Hope MacRae** (as she spelled it) married a young barrister from **Winnipeg**, **Gerald Rutherford**, following his service in **World War I** where as a captain in the infantry, he earned the military cross. They had two daughters who grew up knowing very little about their highland background and the **McRae** family.

John William's five children also survived, the three boys **Jack**, **Jim** and **Percy**, all becoming engineers, and of the two girls, **Madge** remained a spinster in **Ottawa** while **Mamie** married a young physician who later served as a mounted surgeon in the First World War, having five horses shot from under him. Children and grandchildren of the three boys spread out across the world and now live in places such as **Tokyo**, **China**, **Australia** and the **United States**, in addition to **Canada**.

Two years ago, I tracked down **Bob MacRae**, a descendant of **Jim** and together we have been making up for the lost 100 years in our family and trying to put together a family genealogy of the **McRaes** of **Dingwall** and **Renfrew**, Ontario.

Malcolm Sissons (grandson of **Hope MacRae**), 17 Noble Court S.W., Medicine Hat, Alberta, T1A 4A2 Canada. E-mail: jsissons@telusplanet.net

SCOTTISH ASSOCIATION of FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETIES 9th ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The **Dumfries & Galloway Family History Society** look forward to hosting the 1998 Conference in **Easterbrook Hall**, **The Crichton**, **Bankend Road**, **Dumfries** on **Saturday 25th April 1998**. The theme for the Conference is "People, Place and Peregrinations" with the following speakers and topics.

Morag Williams	<i>Crichton Hospital. Museum and Records</i>
George Scott	<i>Covenanters' Memorials</i>
Graham Roberts	<i>Castle and Families</i>
Dr David Devereux	<i>Social History in Galloway</i>
Ian D Whyte	<i>The High Road to England</i>

The doors will open at 9am and the Conference will close at 5pm. Lunch will be available in the **Side Hall** between 12.30pm and 2.25pm. The cost of the Conference will be £16 (Conference £8, lunch £8). Application forms are available from the Conference Secretary: **Mrs Betty Watson**, "Kylielea", **Corsock**, **Castle Douglas**, **Kirkcudbrightshire DG7 3DN**. Tel: 01644 440279. Please enclose a stamped, addressed, envelope.

