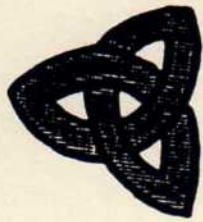


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EDITORIAL

Welcome to another Journal, and more about Dingwall and computers naturally, but you all know how to deal with that by sending me things on other places and people.

A couple of weeks ago I went down to London to attend some presentations and the firm's annual IT Team party (they have now hired me by the way, so I am no longer an Unemployed Scrounger And Layabout), so got to bed about 0500, but nothing would stop me leaping up in the morning like a spring lamb to head off for the new Family Records Centre in Myddleton Street EC1. What a change from St Cat's! In St Catherine's there was a romance in hauling down the huge volumes of each quarter's births or marriages or deaths, slamming them on the counter, opening them to about the right page, riffling to right space, saying 'Oh drat!' when the right ancestor wasn't listed, slamming the book closed and heaving it back to its shelf. All this while crushed shoulder-to-shoulder with hundreds of other researchers, so that moving three feet along to the next volume risked losing your carefully-marked eight inches of counter-space to an aggressive American woman sergeant-major or a shy little granny. The new place has space, loads of space, lots of counters, stacks of room for all the searchers. Still the same ruddy great books though, lucky I have the shoulders of a weight-lifter, like those grannies. Another change, the certificates are A4 and fit in my plastic pouch things, whatever happened to the long thin certs that fitted nothing and you had to fold them up awkwardly, is nothing sacred? Thin end of the wedge.

Try <http://www.open.gov.uk/gros/faq.htm> to see NRH stuff on the Web. The latest info suggests that the indices for births and marriages (not deaths) held at West Register House in Edinburgh will be available on a pay basis on the net by Easter 1988. It is stressed that these are only the indices, viewing of actual certificates will still require a personal visit. And the indices will only be available for records more than 100 years old. Then looking at press releases and other websites I note that the PRO has started its Archives Direct 2001 (AD2001) project, which aims to have jolly things on the Internet, like their Guide (the index to the index), bulletin boards, email and so on, and a start made on finding aids to the overall catalog of pieces. Try <http://www.open.gov.uk/pro/prohome.htm> for the rest.

In these pages you will find my over-long-delayed announcement about the National Burials Index project. At the moment this is intended just to include the death and burials entries in the old parochial registers, but as they carry on perhaps other sources will be used. Many registers are very thin on the ground deathwise but we will catch the seven (7) burials mentioned in the Dunnet OPR. And then we learned of member Sandra Norton who has been transcribing the mortcloth lines from the Dunnet Kirk Session accounts held at the SRO. She is up to the 1830s with about 300 entries at the last count!

Aren't the old parish registers exciting? I watched a lady looking up the baptisms in the Fodderty OPR for all of those ancestors she has near here, and in all the scores of years from the 1730s to 1800s at least, the children seem to have come into the world without the benefit of mothers. As one of dozens of examples, on Feb 25th 1805 Alexander Dingwall in Ussie had a daughter born and named Jean. More bad news came from the interesting tables in a Skye register, numbering all the unbaptised children in the parish, the registrar counted 230 in 1835 (and 223 in 1837) split between a dozen areas within Snizort and organised by three age groups so he must have known every single one of those kids but did not write them down for you and me. Drat and double-drat.

SCOTTISH SETTLEMENT IN PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND AND NOVA SCOTIA

1790 to 1815

by D. Robert MacKenzie

[Continued from previous journal]

THE PROMISED LAND. At this point we have a people mercilessly evicted from home and hearth. They came to settle in Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia in some cases, because of accounts received from kinsmen or friends who had already settled there. Others may have ended up here serendipitously as did the Irish settlers from Belfast. However, for the vast majority, they came here because that was where the coffin ships emptied their cargoes of survivors. What did they find facing them when they arrived?

First of all, as they sailed through the Gut of Canso along the coast of Guysborough, Antigonish and Pictou Counties, they must have been struck by the never-ending trees to the water's brim. This writer has observed virgin forests in Nova Scotia and, even being familiar to the present trees covering our province, the sight of trees five to six feet in diameter extending upwards of forty or fifty feet skyward before branches emerge was quite impressive. One can only conjecture what the Scots, coming from a virtually treeless environment, must have thought at the sight of such giants arrayed before them to the horizon.

The weather too, must have been somewhat of a shock to the new arrivals. As previously noted, the Western Isles enjoyed a temperate, though stormy climate due to the confluence of the Gulf Stream and the Minches. In his *A History of Cape Breton Island* written in 1869, Richard Brown gives us the following description of what the settlers faced. The inference is drawn of a certain, but not absolute, degree of uniformity across the region.

...before the island was settled, [it] was covered with dense forests of pine, spruce, hemlock, birch, maple and ash with a few oaks and elms. The soil of the first region is generally good yielding abundant crops of grass, wheat barley, oats, potatoes, stone fruits and garden vegetables. On the banks of some rivers there are extensive tracts of rich alluvial soil of great fertility.

Although lying within the temperate zone, the climate of Cape Breton is marked by extremes of heat and cold; but, owing to its insular character, and its proximity to the Gulf Stream, the cold of winter is not so intense, nor the frost so continuous, as in Canada. During the summer the mercury has occasionally been observed as high as 92°, but it does not often exceed 75°. In winter it has only once fallen, in the course of the last forty years, to 30°, but it has frequently been seen as low as 20° below zero. Snow lies upon the ground from December to April but the atmosphere during that period is generally bright and clear. In the spring the drift ice, the Gulf of St. Lawrence to the ocean is often driven upon the North-east coast by the easterly winds which prevail at that season, chilling the atmosphere and retarding the operations of the farmer, but it generally clears off before the middle of April, although it sometimes does not leave until the first week in May. The summers of Cape Breton, say from May to October may challenge comparison with those of any country within the temperate regions of the world. During all that time there are perhaps not more than ten foggy days in any part of the island except along the southern coast, between the Gut of Canso and Scatar. Bright sunny days, with balmy westerly winds, follow each other in succession, week after week, whilst the mid-day heats are often tempered by cool refreshing sea breezes. Of rain there is seldom enough; the growing crops more often suffer from too little than too much. The rainy season, which sets in upon the breaking up of the summer, is of brief duration.

selam extending beyond the middle of November; and even this, the most disagreeable season of the year, is often shortened by an intervening week or two of warm balmy weather, known by the name of 'the Indian Summer.'

This is a rather lengthy quote, but it provides a very detailed description of the environment that the Cleared Scots must have experienced upon their arrival in Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia. As Mr. Brown's account is dated 1869 and extends back through "...the course of forty years..." to the late 1820s, his observations are but two decades from the chosen time period of this research project and therefore his observations have a high degree of currency. It is presented to clearly illustrate the extent of adjustment the newly arrived Highlanders had to undergo. Although the Western Isles are north of Northern Ireland, their climates are quite similar. As previously stated, palm trees can grow out of doors and snow is unusual except on mountain peaks. Summer temperatures in the Western Isles would rarely climb to 70° and there is constant precipitation necessitating the wearing of heavy woollens or homespun tweeds much of the time. From Richard Brown's account, it appears the greatest difficulty for the new arrivals would be coping with the savage winters. Even the most experienced boatmen from the Western Isles would have been astounded by the pack ice which locks up the Gulf of St. Lawrence, the Northumberland Strait and the Gut of Canso and persists until late April or early May. Settlers in Cape Breton would also find the Bras D'Or Lakes frozen solid during the same time period. Farmers accustomed to having lambs dropped in late January or early February [February 1st is the ancient Celtic Feast of Imbolc which celebrates the lactating of ewes] and planting potatoes in March would have to adjust their agricultural clocks by at least two months. They would have to produce more in order to feed themselves through a much longer winter period. Also, it was necessary to accumulate a sizeable store of fuel, usually wood but sometimes coal, to keep themselves from freezing to death.

Owing to the fertility of the soil and the greater amount of summer warmth and sunshine, the settlers were able to establish a tenuous foothold along the shores of Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia. In addition to the more favourable summer climate and the fecundity of the previously untilled earth, there were other assets available to them which were unheard of in their former homes. In Scotland only a powerful laird or a king could hunt or fish as the exclusive rights to fish, fowl and game were held by the nobility. In Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia rivers teemed with sturgeon, salmon, shad, trout, gasperaux, eels and smelt. The inshore waters yielded cod, mackerel, herring, haddock, halibut and sole, to mention but the most common. Bays and inlets held copious quantities of shellfish: clams, mussels, scallops, crabs and lobsters. So plentiful were lobsters that the common wisdom held that two lobsters to a hill of potatoes made excellent fertilizer. The forest was home to moose, caribou, bear, deer, and many varieties of small game abounded. The marshes yielded seemingly limitless numbers of geese and ducks. Besides fish, the seas were also home to seals and whales. All were there for the taking. The following incident took place in 1834, slightly later than the chosen time period, but it is most likely illustrative of what earlier settlers experienced.

July 14, 1834. On Thursday last about 1 p.m. a large shoal of Grampuses [commonly known today as pilot whales, blackfish or potheads, about 25' in length] in full chase after small fish was seen from Orwell Cove [King's County, P.E.I.]. On reaching Seal River they divided into two, proceeding up the two rivers to the number of about two hundred. Twenty boats took after them and managed to drive on shore about one hundred and thirty of them from ten feet long to twenty-five. The blubber was immediately cut off in squares, and a considerable quantity of oil obtained - a lucky windfall for these fishermen

With the bounties of nature all around them, it was not long before the determination and toil of the Scots made inroads against the forest and they began to adapt to their new circumstances. One of

the largest landowners in Prince Edward Island, Lord Selkirk provides us with this description of the situation with regard to the arrival of 800 Scottish settlers and the progress they made on his own estate after they arrived there in 1803.

Coming late in the evening to the encampment established on disembarkation a few days before, Selkirk saw that each family had a large fire near the conical 'wigwams' (of poles covered with spruce boughs) that they had erected in a former Acadian clearing dotted with thickets of young trees. People milled about and 'confused heaps of baggage were every where piled together beside ... {the} wild habitations.' A month or so later, most settlers were on their own land, despite a contagious fever that ran through the camp in late August. Generally, four or five families 'built their houses in a little knot together' and similar hamlets lay less than a mile away. By this means, the rite of 'emulation was kept alive'; settlers worked together, shared experience, lifted the spirits of those who grew despondent and cast out 'the terrors which the woods were calculated to inspire.' Although 'their first trials of axe were awkward, they improved rapidly.' Soon rough log cabins, fifteen or eighteen feet long and ten to fourteen feet wide, chinked with moss and clay and roofed with bark and thatch, housed the new arrivals. A year later there were about two acres of cultivated land for every 'able bodied working hand' in each hamlet; potatoes had yielded in abundance; there had been a small harvest of various grains; and fish taken from several boats built by the settlers, supplemented the produce of the fields. Zealous industry and the 'pride of landed property' wrote Selkirk, had allowed these people to secure a considerable degree of independence in short order. For all that, the conditions in Orwell Bay, as in most other new settlements were far from easy. Some families had failed to gather a crop adequate to their own supply, and all lived in primitive conditions. 'Their houses' admitted Selkirk, 'were, indeed, extremely rude, and such as, perhaps, few other European settlers would have been satisfied with.' Yet here, as elsewhere, improvements came with time. Tighter, neater log houses, with shingle roofs and wooden (rather than dirt) floors were built within a few years; the treed horizon was pushed back, stumps and stones removed from fields. Success was never assured, but most knew something of it. By 1810, the newcomers' efforts had left their mark on the regional landscape: along the many valleys and coastal inlets, modest (and even occasionally substantial) farms had been carved from forests unbroken a decade before.

From this account we can now observe a new societal alloy being formed in the crucible of necessity from the meltdown of their former lives and we can perceive a sense of community being forged out of the shared need to survive. The evolution of a social support network for fellow settlers who may not have produced enough to see them through a winter or who were despondent, established new bonds. As well, the pride that came with owning their own piece of ground, an impossibility in the Western Isles, also gave impetus to the settlement process. These years were a period of adjustment and a time for renewing old relationships and forging new ones.

In the space of seven years the Cleared Scots had managed to go from living in wigwams to modest houses and farms. It can also be seen that by 1834 there were some twenty boats in the Orwell Cove area and the settlers were confident enough to chase pods of whales up rivers and catch them. It is obvious also, that they now had gotten over "the terrors which the woods were calculated to inspire." It is not difficult to imagine the reality of the apprehension in which the Scots must have held the forest. For someone used to locating his or her place in the landscape from seeing prominent land marks in line of sight perspective, the forest must have been a place of considerable dread as one could easily become lost and there were wild animals such as bears, wild cats and moose which could cause them great fear. However, in seven years the Scots had begun to tame the wilderness.

Acadian communities in Prince Edward Island and Cape Breton were not effected by the Expulsion to the same extent as their kin in Nova Scotia because these islands remained in French hands until the Treaty of Utrecht in 1763. By the time the Hebridean Scots began arriving in great numbers at the beginning of the 19th century, there were not a great deal of reminders of the Acadian's presence in the areas where the Scots settled. Except for cleared areas where we have seen settlers and land owners such as Lord Selkirk and James Townsend first set up headquarters to develop their holdings, little remained of the French presence. However, there were some Acadian structures still standing in Eastern Prince Edward Island when the Scots arrived.

When about the year 1805 the family of Andrew McDonald, Esq. of Eilean Shonea Invernesshire and afterwards of Panmure Island [P.E.I.], came out to the land which their father had purchased in the eastern portion of Prince Edward Island, they found upon this point of land, which guards the southern entrance to Georgetown harbour, a large and venerable house. It was going to ruin. Indians used it as a shelter, and sheep had herded in its cellars but it bore signs of past importance. It was built on a luxurious scale and the roof was covered with lead, a sure sign of the nationality of its builders. There can be little doubt that it was a French mansion of considerable importance in the days of the old regime.

Mr. McDonald repaired it, and lived in it for some time. It then passed in to the hands of the Wightman family who still reside there.

Below the point on which this little house is built, a few hundred yards from the shore was at one time a pretty little island, which was in the last century a French burial ground. The early Scotch Catholics of these parts preferred to bury their dead on Panmure Island but the Protestants availed themselves of the more ancient cemetery, having perhaps a vague idea that they would profit by the blessing breathed over its precincts by the holy men of old. [NOTE: *The small island has since been completely eroded by the sea and the bones of those who slept there are now interred in the nearby Pioneer Cemetery*]

The Highlanders from the Western Isles who settled in Prince Edward Island and Cape Breton did share with their sparse Acadian neighbours, the Roman Catholic religion. Despite a significant language barrier, Gaelic and French, there must have been some contact and interaction between the two communities, even if they used the language of the Catholic Church, Latin. The main commonality was the sharing of a priest, Father Angus Bernard MacEachern. When Fr. MacEachern arrived in Prince Edward Island in 1790 to join his parents and family, the settlements had been without the services of a priest for five years. The bulk of the Roman Catholic population were Acadian survivors of the Expulsion and immigrant Highlanders. In 1798 there were approximately 2,000 Roman Catholics in Prince Edward Island but by 1835 this number had grown to roughly 15,000. Such was the paucity of priests that Father MacEachern's missions eventually included all of Prince Edward Island, along with the Magdalen Islands, Cape Breton and the Gulf Shore of Nova Scotia.

There was little in the literature which pertained specifically to relationships between the Mi'kmaq and the Hebrideans who settled in Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia between 1790 and 1815. However, there must have been some contacts occurring between the two communities. There scarcity of mention may possibly indicate that the relations were friendly. This observation is based on the fact that every sort of minutiae has been recorded about every aspect of the lives of these Scottish settlers. It is reasonable to think that if there were unpleasant circumstances occurring between the Mi'kmaq and the Hebrideans, they would have made mention of it. Then as now, people would probably made reference to a raid, a massacre, a theft, a beating or encroachments on lands claimed by both parties, yet there is none. Previous references in this paper have made noted that the settlers in Lord Selkirk's estate were temporarily housed in wigwams [the conical

Cape Breton into this century. Archie' first language was Gaelic and he was a descendant of Findlay MacKenzie.

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**Scottish Association of Family History Societies
9th Annual Conference**

The Duffries & 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 *Crichton Hospital, Museum and Records*
- George Scott *Covenanters' Memorials*
- Graham Roberts *Castle and Families*
- Dr David Devereux *Social History in Galloway*
- Ian D Whyte *The High Road to England*

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, "Kylelea", Corscock, Castle Douglas, Kirkcubrightshire DG7 3DN. Tel: 01644 440279. Please enclose a stamped, addressed, envelope.

'wigwams' (of poles covered with spruce boughs)'. As wigwams are not a part of Scottish architecture and neither are poles and spruce boughs common Scottish building materials nor is the technique of arranging the spruce boughs so that they shed water, one must conclude that the Mi'kmaq must have shown them how to do it. This in itself would indicate a lack of animosity between the two groups. Also, the shipping agents in Scotland were lauding the amazing properties of the maple tree ["...in Nova Scotia they would find a tree that supplied fuel, soap and sugar..."]. This too, would indicate Mi'kmaq - Scottish amiable contact.

Upon their arrival the colonists from the Western Isles found a land vastly different from their former homes. Their Hebridean islands were barren, rocky and treeless. The resources such as fish and game were critically over-utilized and there was little arable farmland. Their climate was moderate, although damp, and winters were just like the rest of the year except there was more rain. Their new homes had fertile land, but it was covered with virgin forest in all directions from the high tide mark. Fish and game abounded and winters were quite severe in comparison to the Western Isles. These factors meant that the newcomers had to adapt to a seemingly hostile environment and acquire new skills such as using an axe and a saw; trapping and shooting game; and building with logs.

In Darwinian terms this wave of immigrants to Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia has had a major impact not only on present day Atlantic Canada, but Canada as a whole and the world, in all fields of endeavour one would care to name. The weak perished and the strong, tenacious, intelligent and ingenious survived. To the survivors, language, culture and community really mattered to them and they held on to these concepts as tenaciously as if they were tangible. Isolation and insularity preserved the basics of their society in Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia [primarily the Counties of Pictou, Antigonish, Inverness and Victoria.] for nearly two centuries. Scholars such as Dr. Donald A. Ferguson, recorded in his collection of Gaelic tales, *The Hebridean Connections*, the oral legends handed down over many centuries through generations of *seinnichies* [Persons, who passed on the oral accounts of legends, genealogies and poetry of their people.] It can clearly be seen that their music, to mention only one small example, performed by persons with names like MacNeil, Cameron, Rankin and MacIsaac, all of whom are descendants of settlers from the Western Isles, is presently having a major impact on the world's stage. Their descendants who follow callings in law, finance, education, politics, the clergy, medicine, writers and even historians, can hold their own with any in the world.

NOTES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY. In conversation with the late Archie Alex MacKenzie he mentioned "What a pain in the arse it was when someone broke the bottom part of the quern." I was quite astounded at this as the only reference to a 'quern' that I could ever recall was in scholarly accounts of archeological digs uncovering primitive artifacts. In case the reader is unfamiliar with querns, they are small devices made out of stone used for grinding grain into flour. The bottom piece is a basin-like depression carved into a stone. The top piece is another stone, solid and carved to fit smoothly into the basin. There are grooves radiating out from an off-center hole in it. Grain is put in the hole and a stick is inserted to use as a handle to rotate it and so grind the meal [referred to in the literature as a rotary quern]. It was this type of device used by Archie's family in the early part of this century. Archie explained it was a great deal of work to carve out another basin if the bottom part of the quern got broken. The top part never usually broke because it was thick, solid stone. This may be a direct link with a very ancient culture, traces of which existed in the Western Isles up to 1802 and was still present in

IN SEARCH OF HIGHLAND ROOTS

(by Alan Ross)

To add perhaps a slightly different aspect to family history research I would like to put to you the trials and tribulations of an Englishman researching his Highland ancestors.

It all started about fifteen years ago when I was informed of the death of an elderly Aunt. As a young boy in the late 1950s I would often come from rural Huntingdonshire to Scotland during the summer school holidays and when visiting her, listen intently as this old lady told stories of her grandparents, parents and her youth in the Highlands. Of course being a young teenager one would listen at the time and then forget it. Some of it was naturally fiction or truth-based stories with a touch of glamour added, but on the whole most are proving true. Many is the time when I have sat in my study, head buried in papers and letters, wishing I had taken more notice of her or that she was here to explain something. She used to have large albums of photos of those bygone days and I remember as she looked through she knew everyone in every photo. Sadly all those photographs along with her knowledge were lost forever with her passing.

It was at this point that we had just had a baby daughter and I began to think that something should be done as one day she, like me, would want to know just who her ancestors were. At that time I had not got a clue how to go about things so I spent time reading books and visiting the local library. We had moved to a small town in Oxfordshire and I decided the best way to learn was to pick a local family name at random and try to go back a few generations. This research could be done over a short period in the local library and would involve little or no 'cost', (*hints of Scottish blood perhaps?*), as well as giving me valuable experience on the subject as a whole. Locally, at the time, we knew only a few friends and all our relatives came from other parts of the Country or Scotland. My wife was also beginning to wonder about her family so we decided to have a go at her surname as that family appeared to remain in the same locality for generations. Plus the fact that Huntingdonshire was a lot nearer than Inverness. One thing led to another and we progressed fairly well along her line of ancestors. Visits to the Huntingdonshire Records Office proved very useful and I was beginning to feel very confident about tackling my Scottish ancestors. It was at this point that I hit my first major obstacle. Scottish records were not very obtainable in England.

Over the preceding few years I had not visited Scotland and in that time even more elderly relatives had passed on. Sitting and weighing up the situation I soon realised that things were now almost at the desperate stage. Ancestors with knowledge of the past were disappearing fast along with any written or photographic evidence that they had and I had better do something before all was lost.

Throughout the 1980s I wrote to as many relatives I could asking for any information that they were prepared to offer. Some would offer a lot while others were not prepared to divulge anything. All this information was sifted and names etc. were put on to a rough line chart before being placed into a large cardboard box for future reference. By the early 1990s information by post was drying up so we decided on a visit to Inverness for a week. This was definitely not long enough as I was trying to visit relatives whom I had not seen for many years and records offices as well as trying to give the family a holiday. So I went back to England with not much achieved. In fact it raised more questions than answers. Through that winter the cardboard box was opened many times and I realised that with a surname like

ROSS linked to the Black Isle I might just as well have been a SMITH in England. My maternal side was not much better either as they were SHANDs from Speyside, another very common name in that locality. Add to that the fact that most males had the forename Alexander and I now had a rough chart covered in Alexander ROSSs and Alexander SHANDs. Even the husbands of females on the tree were named Alexander. With hardly any confirmed dates I was, to say the least, getting more and more confused.

By the end of that winter I had obtained copies of the IGI for the surname ROSS in the Ross and Cromarty and Inverness areas. There were hundreds and how many more were not listed. My problems seemed to grow. After discussions with my wife it was decided that I should go up to the Records Office in Edinburgh for a week on my own. There I would be able to find some certificates and dates and also be able to look at Census returns. Over the next few months I read up on the Scottish Records Office and 'was it as good as it made out'? I asked myself. For I had read about computerised records, ease of access and for a daily fee you could copy as many certificates as you could find. We here in England are still lugging great big reference books off shelves and paying through the nose for certificates that we are never really sure are the correct ones until we get them. How could the Scottish system be more advanced than the English? I was soon to find out.

It was in late September of that year that I went armed with my paperwork to Edinburgh and after my first day realised just how good the Scottish system was. As I sat in my hotel room with copies of certificates in one hand and a wee dram in the other the picture for the first time began to unfold. I have to admit though that after a few more whiskies it became slightly blurred again. By the Wednesday night I had confirmed birth, marriage and death dates going back to the mid 1800s. By Friday evening I had even more from the Old Parish Registers. I came back home with a tree with much proven on it and some more people that I did not know of. I had indeed obtained more positive information in one week that I had obtained in the previous twelve years. By copying out as many certificates as I could I also had other information on them that I could sift later and that would lead me to further points.

By now I had purchased a computer and had the wife's family tree firmly planted upon it. During the winter mine was added to it along with every scrap of information about each individual, whether proven or hearsay that I could find. Since then I have joined the Highland FHS and the Society of Genealogists along with other various FH Societies. At the moment my only access to Scottish records is on visits to the SoG library or the new Family History Centre in London. Where incidentally for £8 an hour you can access the Scottish computer database. Rather expensive but cheaper than travelling to Edinburgh.

I will be visiting Inverness, and, for the first time Speyside in November of this year. So now that I have roots firmly planted on my tree I hope I hope to find more positive information about those that I know of rather than try to find just more names. Over the past few months I have been finding some useful snippets via the Genealogy Forums on the Internet so that I can spend my limited time in the Highlands to full value.

To end this article I would like to ask if anyone can offer advice on how or where may I find any information on my 3 times great grandfather. The true identity of this person has eluded me ever since I first knew of him many years ago. All I know from the OPRs is that Robert (Ross) and Ann Gordon had a son Colin in 1828 in Urquhart and Logie Wester. It appears that the couple never married although Colin was given his father's name. Ann remained

unmarried on all the census entries living with her brother and sister in Culbokkie where she remained until her death. The son Colin was brought up with the Gordons in Culbokkie. Where Robert came from, his birth and death dates and where he went remain a total mystery to this day as all I have is that one OPR entry.

MODERN GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH METHODS

(Talk given October 28th 1997 by Jonathan McColl)

This is the grand title I gave to a talk quickly produced to fill a suddenly-opened gap in our lecture series when Craig Ormand was forced to drop out, but he will be back later. The title could have been *Jonathan Blethers About The Internet As He Seems To Do A Lot*, but that would not have attracted so many members to listen, which they did very politely.

First, computers. The presentation was just to give a flavour of what we can do with these overgrown calculators. First it was necessary to talk about the things themselves, limiting the jargon and speaking in English. Unlike just a few years ago when only businesses bought them, and if you wanted a 'personal computer' you had to get a second mortgage to buy one to last for many years, we now buy them more casually (yes I know the one I was using cost about £2000 but I'm sure you get my point) and expect to 'upgrade' them every few years. Apart from obvious bits like a mouse to make using it easier and a tv screen to help you know what's going on, they consist of *Memory*, a *Hard Disk* and *Software*. The Memory (or RAM) is a dark room in which you swing the cat of the job you are using the computer for, whatever that might be: family trees, typing, maths and so on. The bigger the amount of memory available, the bigger the cat you can swing. The older computers had so little memory that you could come out with a badly hurt pussy, but usually you just used very carefully designed miniature mogs. The Hard Disk is the large internal filing cabinet for storing the Software you bought (the family tree program, or word-processor, or spreadsheet etc) and is also where you keep the files you produce when you enter people on the family tree, or type a new story, or prepare a set of accounts. The bigger it is, the more you can keep on it, and while computers in general have not actually become cheaper over the last six or eight years, they have become hugely more powerful, faster, and easier to use. If you network several computers together with the right wire and connexions you have effectively built an even bigger decentralised one that may be used by lots of people. Join up lots of networks and the world of the Internet is your oyster.

The applications software available is amazing, and getting amazing. Family tree apps (you can say 'apps') I use Reunion, a program designed for the Mac and now in its fifth incarnation for that machine, but still v4 for the Windows users among us. If you buy it just now you will be upgraded to v5 in a few months when its new owners Sierra release that. It stores the family info (dates, places, relationships) with notes and pictures all very efficiently and lets you print out all sorts of reports on your word-processor. It produces excellent charts which are very customisable to show what you want with pretty titles and photos. Other apps do different things well or even better but Reunion has the best collection of facilities at the moment.

Then we had a look at what **New Register House** is doing online, ie what you can get at through computers and not having to go to Edinburgh. At the moment they are only looking at putting stuff in quantity into the Internet, so you still have to go to your local Registrar, and

pay money to get further. The Registrar will call up the NRH using her computer, you will supply names and dates (and a fiver per 15 minutes) and she will add a lot of detail to your family tree. The NRH database holds an index to all the OPRs and the General Register and the 1891 census. You say Birth, McColl, Jonathan, 1860 and the computer will show you all of the registered births that year, or if none, just enter 1861, 1862, 1863 and repeat until satisfied (or broke). As we find out more of what they are doing we will let you know.

Next we examined the **Mormons**, why they count genealogy so important and what they have produced to help themselves and as a spinoff help non-Mormons. As to why, since we are all descended from Adam and Eve as stated in the Bible, it must therefore be feasible (no-one said easy) to construct a complete family tree of everyone in the world and their interrelationships back to that first couple, we really are all cousins. It is also not necessary for most Church members to proselytise because part of the training for an Elder is to do a couple of years as a Missionary so no-one needs to grind that axe except them. Finally as they practise retrospective, and even posthumous, baptism, they do not need to force you into their mould immediately for the good of your soul, so you are safe from having someone else's beliefs, which could be unwelcome, forced upon you when you go to a Family History Centre to research from the wonderful tools they have prepared. The microfilmed OPRs we all use came from the LDS, so did the family tree program PAF, Personal Ancestral File which is related to the huge database of family trees called the Ancestral File. Because computers have different 'platforms' like Apples and Windows you often cannot take a file you have prepared in one to put into another, they developed the GEDCom standard to allow family trees to be transferred between different computer platforms and programs, so always check that a new program you are about to buy includes GEDCom in its list of facilities.

Email was next, what it is, how to use it. If you have joined the Internet (more about that below) one thing you can do is send electronic mail (email, gettit?) around the world to anyone else attached to the Internet. You type your message and enter the address that looks like ABC@DEF.CO.UK, showing that your chap ABC has an account with a service-provider named DEF.CO in the UK. Then click the send button and a few hours later ABC will turn on his computer, catch DEF.CO's attention and receive any email messages awaiting him there. A 20-second phone call at local-call rates is about 5p, and an Australian will receive it usually within twelve hours, compare that with what emaiers call Snail Mail! You can also go on fishing expeditions with email and the Internet. There are directories out there, so as an example, I looked up the email addresses of everyone in the US of A named Kratz and sent all 92 the same message asking if they knew something about my Kratz relatives, don't answer and sorry to bother you if not. The answers came back pointing me at a Pennsylvania man who was an expert on the family.

That lead nicely into the Internet. This is a collection of networked networks all over the world, especially the US. If you plug into one network by opening an account with a service- or access-provider then every time you press the right button you make a local-rate phone call to join into that huge spiderweb of phone wiring, special cabling, satellite links. The Web (short for World-Wide Web, explaining the www in a lot of addresses) is the pretty face of the Internet where you can have a look at what businesses are offering. You can buy and sell, examine or offer an awful lot. I joined CompuServe who built up their customer base by offering a forum for discussions about anything. Look up a genealogy bulletin board and you will see emails written in from all over the world asking about where their families came from, like the Queries in the HFHS Journal, and other emails come in from others who can answer.

