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EDITORIAL

On November 10th, about 150 representatives of approaching 100 organisations each devoted to an aspect of Highland culture gathered in Nairn for a conference on *Making Heritage Work* organised by the Highland Council Culture and Leisure Services, or really the Archives department. It didn't help me that I'd squished a disk in my neck so had to take the morning off and missed Jim Hunter's keynote address. Bob Steward, the Archivist, talked of the issues and challenges facing his department and then there were workshops, and all well populated by the delegates. The workshop leaders were all trustees and officers of Highland museums, local history and heritage societies, libraries and the Highland Council archives, archaeologists, libraries, I wore the two hats of Dingwall Museum and the Highland Family History Society. The other workshops than the one I introduced discussed the jobs of acquiring and managing buildings, community involvement, conservation, exhibiting, oral history and (the one which really involves money!) Genealogy And Tourism.

Five of us displayed *Information Technology in Action*: Anne Wood of the HC Archives demonstrated family-tree applications; Mark Elder of the Grantown Museum showed how he was digitising and cataloguing their immense collection of photographs; Kerr Yule showed off (on his iMac, we were not 100% PCs) the Wayfarer's Project, putting Ross-shire's culture onto the web; Paul Basu demonstrated his webpages designed to keep descendants of émigré Highlanders in touch with their homelands; and Iain Morrison of Eolas showed off his Stornoway-based company which won a BAFTA award last year for its television. My own element was the Internet in general and how to use it to find genealogy and local history, and is summarised inside these pages, giving websites for the other presenters. I've been using computers for years to write and calculate with and the Internet has been of use, but only recently has it become nearly essential, and is turning into the *Hitch-hiker's Guide to the Galaxy* with mobile phones accessing it, they just need *Don't Panic* on their covers to bring that particular idea to life. As an overall summary, all 150 of us discovered there was an awful lot we all wanted to know to improve the offerings of our organisations. If I can get a report on the day we will publish it in a later issue of the Journal.

If you're not fed up with IT just yet, have a look at this issue's Bookshelf. If you are fed up with it for the moment, please send me articles on your family-history events: reunions, discoveries, record-sources, ancestral anecdotes. Reviews of books and magazines (yes, and computer programs and websites!) are always welcome, as I cannot read everything there is, and would love regular updates on what the world's other organisations are saying about our spheres of activity. If you are a member of a Clan society, or use a particular record depository, or have just organised a massive family gathering, do tell!

Our library has just benefited to the tune of 140 fiches listing all the Scottish immigrants to New Zealand registered up to 1921, compiled by the Scottish Interest Group of the New Zealand Society of Genealogists.

Our record on the National Burials Index is not passing excellent, so we are very pleased that Sandra Norton has volunteered to fill the post of co-ordinator. We are passing all we have on to her. If you are interested in the listing of burials in the OPRs please contact her at Cromarty, 15 The Loanings, Peebles EH45 9JT.

John Durham and I have been editing the Journal for something over a decade now, and many of you over the years have commented pleasingly on the results of our quarterly efforts, but we feel the Society would benefit if we were to hand over the baton to someone with new blood and new ideas. Computeracy would be important, but not geography as the Journal could be put together anywhere and emailed to a central point, ie John who is happy to continue the printing and distribution, because as Treasurer he always has the current member list. The only requests I would make in advance to any new editor is that s/he does not allow apostrophes in plurals (like CDs or 1960s) and can distinguish between its and it's. After that I'd leave the person alone to get on with it!

We also need someone to take control of our sales. We are selling through GenFair (see the article elsewhere in these pages) and John Durham looks after the stock of back-numbers of the journal and the graveyards we have published and Catherine Harper takes them to lecture evenings, but it would be good to have someone who can look after the complete stocks and supplies of anything we might wish to supply to our members and others: the booklets and fiches we do ourselves already, booklets, books, CDs, photos and fiches published by others, special forms for research or presentations, whatever may be available. Being based in the Inverness area is only an advantage for close contact with the Society's library and committee members, the important thing is to have access to the postal system! You would keep good accounts of the stock, costs and money, and would turn around requests very quickly. An email address would likewise be very useful, both because many people would order or enquire by this method and because you'd need to be in close contact with the Treasurer. Volunteers please contact us.

From IT In Action at the Nairn Local History Conference November 10th 1999

by Jonathan McColl

Once upon a time the car was for rich people who liked to tinker with engines, but now there are probably more vehicles in the country than pet dogs and they are essential to our way of life. The progress of the computer has been similar: from expensive toy to expensive tool to useful adjunct, and it too has become essential to nearly any activity. Statistics used to be published as to how many people used the Internet: ten million, 20, 30; but now all that can be said is that most children in the G7 countries use them in school and the users number way over 100 million.

The Internet for History Research

This is the Simple Guide, one could expand on all of the steps to write a book and many have done so. Common jargon is italicised.

Out There is a lot of information from sources of all levels of sophistication and authority, ie from lots down to none at all! American schoolkids have their family trees there, but you'll also find the Mormons' Ancestral File and the official libraries and archives of many countries. It is a very important resource now.

1. Get an account with an *Internet Service Provider* like AOL, BTClick and many others. There are freebie CDs all over the place. Expect to pay three elements: monthly subscription, cost of use per hour, phone bill. The balance between these elements varies: some may charge a high monthly rate but give you unlimited free hours; or charge a low

rate, then give you (say) five free hours and charge for any extra time online. The phone bill may be minimised by the ISP allocating a lo-cal number (0845-) and, if a personal line, by you making it a BT Friends-And-Family or Special Friend will cut it down even more. There is a fourth potential element: Support, where you phone a premium-rate line for help. There are many 'free' services available at the moment, which may or may not survive.

2. Kit needed: phone line, modem, computer. Software to include a *browser* on the CD supplied by the ISP. If you're serious about this, sign up with an *anti-virus* software provider like McAfee or Norton to protect you from some of the idiots out there.

3. Go online!

4. The address of anything looks like this: <http://www.elephants.co.uk>, all in lower case and you pronounce each full stop as 'dot'; the <http://> is techy, www means the World-Wide Web, Elephants is the place you're looking for, and www means a British corporate site. American ones end .com (say: Dot Com), German ones .de and so on. If an address (or URL) is underlined and coloured differently it is a *hyperlink* on which you just click once and it takes you straight to that page.

5. You need a search engine to find anything. Some search engines: Yahoo, Altavista, Excite, Lycos. Meta search engines (which don't search the net, they search the other search engines!): AskJeeves, Mamma, Webcrawler. In each case *point your browser at* <http://www.askjeeves.com> substituting the other names as appropriate.

6. Ignore all the surrounding advertising, just type *keywords* into the search file and click *go/ask/find* or whatever. Seek Dingwall for anything on that subject, or Dingwall+history to refine it a bit or "Dingwall History" to look for the phrase. You'll be offered a zillion sites, click on an underlined address and follow any hyperlinks. Try the variations that appear when you search on Scottish Archives!

7. Here are just a very few addresses to start you off, this list includes the websites of all the presenters in the *IT in Action* workshop.

<http://www.eolas.co.uk/> Eolas website

<http://www.host.co.uk/m/dm/tr/005/index.html> Avoch Heritage contacts

<http://www.highland.gov.uk> Highland Council

<http://www.uhi.ac.uk/rchis/index.html> Wayfarers Project

<http://www.scotweb.org/homecomings/homepage.html> Highland Homecomings Project

<http://www.scran.ac.uk> Scottish Cultural Resource Access Network

<http://www.genuki.org.uk/big/scot/Highland/FHS/home.html> Highland FHS. The

GenUKI site itself has many links

LDS site for ancestral searching.

<http://www.familysearch.com> General Record Office (Scotland) which leads you to their record-search facility

Origins

<http://www.uhi.ac.uk> University of the Highlands and Islands,

many education links

<http://pw1.netcom.com/~reincke/homepage.html> Sir Hector MacDonald specialist

Hell Hath No Fury

by John Durham

This well-known quotation normally refers to the fairer sex, but in 1861 it could have applied to a man called William Gray, who had been thwarted in his attempts to marry the daughter of the house. In his frustration he resorted to the pen in an attempt to sully the reputation of her elder brother, whom he believed had turned the young lady against him. The details of the subsequent indictment for criminal libel, which is the subject of this article, only came to my notice as the result of one of those lucky accidents that sometimes occurs while researching one's family history. So who was this elder brother and why was he of interest to me?

Like most family historians researching their families in Scotland, I was able to trace my main family name of Durran back to 1800 in Cathness without too much trouble. At that point I discovered that my 3xgreat grandfather Donald Durran was a farm servant and that he had married Janet Sutherland on Thursday 19th November 1801 at Millhill in Orlig Parish. The problem was that Donald recorded the baptisms of only three children, all sons, in 1806, 1814 and 1817, all in different parts of the county. In the early 1800s as a farm servant he would have been moved from farm to farm as the land was being improved and this probably contributed to his failure to record the baptisms of his other children. That there were more is confirmed by the names of witnesses to baptisms of ten Durran children which were noted in the OPR for Dunnet between January 1831 and May 1840.

However, on consulting the 1841 census, I discovered that five of these witnesses were not included in the returns. One must assume that, provided they had not died prior to census day, they must have emigrated. One of these five, whose baptism had been recorded in 1814 at Netherside of Orlrick, had been named James Smith Durran. The use of the name Smith as a second name intrigued me and I wondered at first if it had come from the female side in a previous generation. It was sometime later that, while looking at the 1841 census for Orlig, I noticed a James Smith, born outside the county, who was the proprietor of Orlig House. Perhaps Donald worked for him and named his son after his employer? If that was the case maybe there were estate papers that might possibly give me some more information about Donald and more importantly his children?

In pursuing this theory I made a note of all the subsequent census returns for Orlig House to see how long the Smith family had remained in possession of the land and property. The family appears in each census up to 1891 and the valuation roll confirmed that the family were proprietors of the Mansion House, as it was called by then, up to the outbreak of the First World War. A search of the Kirk Session records for Orlig Parish in Edinburgh indicated that the family had been occupying Orlig House for quite some time prior to 1841. On 8th April 1819 the following entry appears: - "*The Session feel themselves called upon to record the generous deed of Mr. James Smith, nephew to James Smith Esq., of Orlrick, who has been pleased to decorate the pulpit and Precentor's desk with green cloth and fringe*".

The census return of 1861 lists the principals in the drama which is soon to unfold, namely James Smith, aged 28, his mother Isabella Ross, aged 60 and his sister Williamson Pole Smith, aged 20, the object of Gray's desires. The adjacent entry for the family of John McKay, who was the gardener at Orlig House, shows that he had named one of his daughters Williamson Pole Smith McKay. This fact added weight to my theory that in 1814 James Smith Durran was almost certainly named after the then proprietor of Orlig House.

Armed with these facts I contacted the North Highland Archivist at Wick to enquire if there were any estate papers relating to Orlig House and to the Smith family in particular. The reply from the archivist gave me the bad news that there were no estate papers deposited there but she sent on some background details about Orlig House. As an aside, she indicated that, in cataloguing a series of volumes containing the details of notable Cathness Law Cases, she had come across one relating to James Smith of Orlig. She included a copy of a couple of pages from it and asked if I would be interested in having a copy of the full indictment. Having sent off the appropriate sum I subsequently received a total of 39 pages which included all the letters which were the subject of the indictment. I have made a selection from these letters which I hope you will find as entertaining and, in some places, as unbelievable as I did.

The defendant was William Gray, 'now or lately a Procurator before the Sheriff Court of Cathness' and he had written a total of seven letters and separately a note attached to a cutting from a newspaper, all of which were submitted as evidence. One was to Mrs Smith, two to Robert Pope Ross of Aberdeen, her brother, and the rest to James Smith of Orlig. In all of the letters his mood swings dramatically from praising the person to whom he is writing to making quite vitriolic attacks on their integrity. As a Procurator himself he must have realised that what he was writing was libellous, but we must assume that his disappointment at not being allowed to marry Williamson must have blinded him to the fact that what he was writing in his letters was defamatory. The first letter to Mrs Smith, dated 2 July 1860, sets the scene. As Isabella Ross, she was aged 29, and her husband 70, when she married him in 1831.

"My ever dearly Beloved Mother, I sincerely hope you will now consent to give me Williamson. I know you can do so if you please. Be pleased to speak to herself and to James also on the subject, because of course he would like and very properly to have some say in the matter too. He has looked shy at me for sometime without any cause, but he will see the folly of this yet. He has by such conduct made many very bitter enemies to himself in this county, and particularly in the Thurso district, where I believe some of the people would actually murder him if they could do so with impunity. Poor thing, it was indeed very ill his part to do or say anything against myself as he has done, for I have ever had the greatest respect, regard, and love for himself and you all. Indeed you may rely that I have ever loved you all as sincerely and dearly as ever your own dear husband loved you, and wished you equally as well, and not withholding your shameful, disgraceful, low, and ungrateful conduct towards me, my feelings are as good as ever towards you.

Had the contrary been the case, and had I only pretended a regard for you in order to get Mina as you seem to suppose (altho' she married another tomorrow it would not in the smallest degree diminish my well wishes and love for her and you all). My attachment is too sincere towards you all ever to allow me to do otherwise, and altho' my ever beloved mother, you have different suspicions, yet on the present occasion you are wrong and your suspicions unfounded I can assure you. It is a great misfortune to be over suspicious, without any grounds, and unless my feelings towards you had really been such as I have represented them to be, and I wished to give you and put you to trouble, expense, annoyance, and what you would consider exposure and shame, I really could easily have done so, and it would have highly pleased and delighted your sincere friend who robbed your dear family of £8,000 or £10,000 some years ago, to please another, for under your Bond you could have sold the last rig of land until you were paid the last farthing due, but very unfortunately you were advised by him, and still you stick to him, but James actually seems afraid of him, and seems to think that if he turned against him, his influence, which is now nothing, would ruin him.

immediately, and also that you will give me Mina. I really wish her as well as you do yourself, and wish you all equally well, and feel indeed the same *interest* in you as if I was *actually a member of your dear family*. Under such circumstances it might and no doubt would prove as agreeable to you all to give Mina to me as to another.

I know she would agree if yourself and James approved of it, and I earnestly hope and trust to God, my dearly beloved mother, that you will do so at once, and not keep me any longer in such anxiety and pain. Believe me that neither Mina nor any of you shall ever have cause to regret it but the reverse, and everything I can do to be *good and kind* to her and you all shall ever be done with the highest pride and gratification in the world. I really deeply love you all, you may rely on it, and my notions and *désires* have indeed been that I could never do *enough* for you or be *good enough to you*. I cannot, however, account for my feelings towards you all. But believe me, my dear mother, that they are and always were such that if I thought you were well and happy, and if I could be *good to you*, I felt delighted and easy as to the rest of the world, even myself.

Yourself and your family I dearly and dearly indeed value and love *above every other person and everything under heaven*. I actually esteem, value, love, and would take you in preference to the whole, ten thousand times over. You cannot fancy such feelings on *earth*. I know you don't give me *credit for them*, but you are in error for *once at east*, for to be plain with you I have indeed *felt ashamed* to admit or tell you how much I loved you all, and if you, my most dearly beloved mother, give me your only daughter - your sweet, pleasant, agreeable, amiable, accomplished, young and most beautiful daughter - you may well and fully rely that no effort of mine shall be awaiting to render myself as worthy of her as possible, and of the confidence reposed by you in me. I hope you will do as I have asked you.

Do agree to my request. Do take away your *strong opposition*. Do remove *all opposition*. I know you have, or at least *pretend*, to have a *quick temper*, but I am *satisfied* your heart is really *good and kind*. Do *feel* for me and take pity on me owing to my feelings for Mina. Do my ever dearly beloved mother give Mina to me, and if I can never recompense you for so doing, God Almighty will do so, and he will take pity and compassion on you. Do no be *hard hearted* in such a matter, seeing that I could actually, *as God knows*, take your dear daughter in *preference to the whole universe*. Do *think* of this, think seriously of it, impress it on her, assure her of it. Do not think that *all* in the world are *altogether worldly minded*. Do give your only daughter to one who prizes her above all under heaven. Do rest assured of this - do no withhold her - give her to me, and write to me about it immediately. God bless and prosper you all. Do believe, my most sweet and dearly beloved mother, that I shall ever remain, with best and kindest love to you all, not forgetting your sister and brother."

Six weeks later on 17 August 1860, having obviously not received the letter he had been hoping for, indicating that his suit for Williamson had been successful, he launched an attack directly upon James Smith with this threatening letter:-

"Having stood and endured desperately bad and most revolting conduct from you for some time, without any cause or reason, I have resolved to do so no longer, and should such conduct be still repeated and continued, *I shall as sure as death retaliate with a vengeance*, for I shall no longer submit to insult and injury from you more than from

You have no idea how he speaks and has spoken of yourself by *pretending to mimic* you, call you in short everything *but a Lady*, and that you during your husband's life wished to get him engaged to marry you; that he was used to have awful frolics with you, and that you were always at him if he was not thinking of getting married, and that he was used to tell you that he was only waiting *until you were a widow*, which he said highly pleased you and delighted you. It is, you may rely, quite true that he said so, and I only tell you in order that you may know and beware of such a base character, for he has no good wishes to any of you, and it is surely ill his part, and he fully admits that all his ill will and malice towards myself is because I seemed to regard and think more of James than of himself, and this makes me feel James' conduct more than ever because it will *gratify* him.

It is too bad of yourself to encourage or indulge James in such conduct, and you should give it up and get him to do so immediately, for why should there be any misunderstanding or dryness of any sort between us? It is said that your reason is in case Alex Henderson should think that Mina is engaged to me, and that you are actually afraid to allow James to speak to any young man or ask him to your house in case Henderson should suppose the same. Really you must be in a *state* about him; you surely have an opinion of him different from others. I would have thought that his refusals by others would induce Mina not to have him, but I dare say you will be the cause of it. Besides he is by far too old for Mina, as he could be far more than her father. You really must see the force of what I say, and do for any sake give up your present conduct towards me, for surely if you wished to give Mina to Henderson he will think no more of you or her to see you make such work hunting and chasing after him at such a rate, by calling at Stemster pretending to be for his mother and sister, altho' it is said you make *no calls* when you know *he* is from home, and then that you invite and create, or make James create or make some excuses or reasons for wishing to see him at Orling when it is said you pay *great attentions* to him and have Mina dressed in silks for the *special* occasions. Indeed I am very sorry to hear so much said, as the only *proper* courting should come from the other side.

You should really my beloved mother give Mina to myself. My love to her is sincere and earnest, indeed none could be *more so*, why should there be any difference between us, for whether you give her or not my feelings, yes my very sincere feelings indeed of love and attachment towards you all shall remain *unaltered* and *unchanged* for ever and for ever, altho' remember that *I do* expect and fondly hope you will give her to me. I am ashamed to ask you so often my dear mother, but my feelings towards her are really *keen*, and *very keen*. If you do give me the young lady I am sure I shall do anything you like, and anything to please you and her within the range of my possibility, for I would really lay down my life for her, or for any of you, for my very Heart and Soul burns Hot indeed with love for every one of you, and I am sure we would live happy to a degree - yes, and happier far than she will be with a character who only takes her on account of her means, and says otherwise that in point of *family* she is not *quality*, altho' her *family* is at least as good as his own any day.

I hope, my dear mother, you will believe me, for I am sure I never *deceived* any of you, or pretended towards you any feelings which I did not entertain; yes, I am indeed proud to say that I have not and never had any *selfish* motive in *view*, or made any *pretence* to any of you. I regarded, respected, and dearly loved you all in the most earnest and sincere manner in the world, and it is rather a pity that you should act towards me as you have done without any cause whatever, and I really do hope that you will give it up

any other person. I am certain I little deserved such conduct at your hands, and put myself some years ago to considerable trouble and anxiety to get claims of a most *disagreeable* and *delicate* nature from being persisted in on the Poors' Roll in the Court of Session against your father's Trustees, by some characters once living about Clyth. They were handed to me after I had substantiated other claims of a somewhat similar nature in the Court of Session against the Trustees of the late Robert Innes, from whom considerable sums of money were recovered, and the poor family annoyed and grieved, solely because one of the Trustees was a vile base character, and just provoked me to such an extent that I fairly confess having put myself *much about* to get the Actions raised, otherwise not one, I could swear, ever would have been raised, and the Young Lady and her Aunts are, I am glad to say, were aware of this, and blame him alone for the whole.

From your dirty evil conduct towards me for some time, I certainly would have paid you home long ere now in a similar manner, had it not been out of respect for the feelings of your Mother and Sister, who would have felt, I am well aware, greatly vexed and hurt if such Actions had been raised. I never mentioned this to you, but kept the claims by me for some time for fear the parties might apply to another and give you annoyance, and ultimately I pretended to them to take the opinion of Counsel, and asked an Edinburgh Agent to write me a letter, which I could show to the parties, giving it as opinion the in consequence of *moræ* and otherwise the claims could not be made out. Of course I read and showed this letter to the parties as the opinion of a Great Edinburgh Lawyer, which fully convinced them, as I told them you denied the claims, that they could not make them out, and that they could only be insisted in before the Court of Session, as one of your Trustees was resident in Aberdeen, and consequently was not subject to the Jurisdiction of the Sheriff of this County. This ended the whole affair.

The letter was a mere *sham*, and the agent who wrote it was not told the *nature* of the claims. I sent him the form to write, and only told him that it was merely to prevent the characters from annoying me about imaginary claims against your Trustees. This Letter contrary to my own opinion, and I really did so solely in order to oblige you, altho' I am inclined to think that the parties could make out their claims by one pursuer giving evidence along with another. All this I did to oblige you, and only considered it my duty to your Mother and Sister to have *done so*, and did it even *after* you commenced your ungrateful wicked vile conduct towards me, but indeed I can see no reason why I should do anything to oblige those who have done *all they could do to stab me* in every way they can, and I shall not longer do so; and whatever may take place as to this and anything else I can do, however unpleasant, I can always reflect with great pride and satisfaction that I was not the Aggressor, or to blame in any way, but that you through your evil conduct brought the whole on yourself and your relatives, and they must just blame *you* for it and not *me*. I understand one of the parties is still living about Clyth, and the other two in Glasgow, and the whole would readily, if encouraged, yet raise the actions. My *own* belief is that their claims were all paid long ago, but they said they *never* signed any Receipts, and that more than one-half was still due, to which they were ready to swear.

I would certainly regret to annoy your Mother and Sister, and gratify at least one W.S., who would of course be your Defender through fear alone, by raising such *tender* actions, but I shall be very *plain* and *caradid* to tell you that if you continue to annoy and injure me, I shall exert and put myself about to the utmost limit I can conceive to do the same to you; and however much all such unpleasant proceedings may hurt and wound your Mother and Sister, they must just blame *you* for it, for as you have put me to it rely on it that I shall be *ready* and prepared at all times to give you your heart's content of a full and complete return of your evil, vile, and wicked conduct, with *interest* and *compound interest*, and you will have yourself alone to thank for it."

Having warned James Smith that he had some hold over him in relation to the running of a Trust by his family, Gray now turns to Robert Pope Ross, a brother of Williamina's mother, to ask for his assistance in curbing the activities of James in a letter dated 1 November 1860.

"Sir, You will doubtless think it curious that I should address you on such a subject as the present, but knowing your relation to, and the interest you feel in, the family in question, I do not hesitate to do so. To explain the ungentlemanly conduct, vile and ungrateful treatment I have received for the last few years from Mr James Smith of Orlrig would be endless work. I regarded greatly indeed himself and all his family, and this is the only reason I tolerated his conduct a *single day*. It has now, however, really got insufferable, and *worse than could be expected from the most wretched and most abandoned character in the Empire*, and he knows this full well; and as I must in justice to myself take measures and proceeding against him and otherwise, which shall cause more grief and more pain and shame to himself and his family than ever they experienced before, in order to put an immediate stop to his conduct, which I can easily do, I have just thought that I would mention the matter to you, in the hope that you might be the means of bringing him to his senses, for altho' he pretends to be very religious there is indeed everything but religion in his Actions.

I write this to you with the very best wishes *even for your Nephew*, altho' I certainly detest and despise his actions, and with the best feeling and wishes for his family and all connected with them, and if unpleasant consequences shall be avoided, I shall be happy indeed, but if, on the other hand, they be rendered necessary, I shall always regret it deeply, altho' in justice to myself I cannot avoid doing what shall prove very unpleasant and annoying indeed to others in this instance, and I further regret that the other members of the family should suffer on your Nephew's account, but of course I am aware that what shall be unpleasant to one of the family shall be so to all, and if I am really forced to it the only consolation I can ever feel is, that it was not my blame or my fault, as I had been forced to it by conduct which *no Human Being could stand or tolerate who regarded himself in any degree whatever*."

I am, Sir, Your very Ob.Svt., Wm. Gray

Nine days later he writes a letter to James Smith in which he castigates him for nearly three pages for the 'low company' that he has been keeping. He then goes on to say:-

"----- I intimated your conduct towards myself to your Uncle the other day, who would doubtless <?????> the same to you. I did so because I am not one of those who can readily or easily indeed forget terms of intimacy, and what I considered sincere friendship and attachment of many years' standing. I cannot do so without feelings of

at Bed and Board as *Man and Wife*, she saying to the people of the house *in his presence* (without any contradiction by him), bring *so* and *so* for Mrs Smith. This followed by the carnal connexion, which could easily be proved, and which he could not deny unless he committed perjury, together with his letters, and in my opinion, according to the Law of Scotland, entitle this Prostitute to a Decree of Declarator of marriage against him if she raised an Action, and if some *evil* disposed person should see the letters, [I wonder who that could possibly be? Ed.] which is very likely, she would be put up to this, and in this way she would be entitled to the same allowance as a regularly married wife, whether he lived with her or not, which would take a great part of his Income, and if they have any family, as to which I am not sure, the child or children would fall heir or heirs to his whole heritable and moveable property, and of course if he attempted marriage with a *decent* person it would be complete Bigamy, for which he would be criminally punished, and this Prostitute and her children would succeed to all he has, and no doubt they would be little if anything better than herself, whereby his House would be converted into a *common Brothel*!!!

..... some years ago, I happened during the Holy Days to be in the Village of Castletown one day, and having an hour or two to spend, I called at Orlrig to see your Nephew, and did not consider it a great *crime or offence* to do so. When I called I was shown in to the Breakfast Parlour, where the late Mr Smith was sitting, *very frail like no doubt*. [he died in 1853, aged 92] I was not in a minute or two when Mrs Smith entered, altho' I could not believe it was she at the time, evidently in as great a passion as if I had been a Beggar who called on her for Charity. Latterly I was asked into the Parlour, where your Nephew and myself were treated to Glass of Wine, and his mother was pressing on him that she was going out in *the Carriage* - so of course I could not think of Keeping the *Lady* in the house, and rose, took my hat, and was to shake hands with her and bid her goodbye, but she kept her large fist firmly clenched and would not *condescend to open it to me*, and as I was leaving she called out, "*Is it Mr Gray they call you?*" and had I been like some others who were calling on her, I would have retorted, but I refrained. On one occasion Mr Phin had some words with her, when she tried to come very largely over him, but, as he says himself, he soon *-fired* at her. On another occasion Alex. Auld called on her, when he wished to get Phin's Manse, and he says she gave him a fearful dressing, by accusing him of wishing the death of Mr MacKenzie, his Predecessor. He has spoken of this all over the County.

On another occasion she <????> Miss Traill because she called on Mrs Phin before she called on her. Again she on another occasion created a fearful Row with D. Macdonald, her Tutor, for paying some attentions to Miss Flora Smith, now Mrs Gordon. On another occasion Mr Kenneth Brodie gave her a Call, when, he says, she concealed herself and would not appear, when he left, and she afterwards sent him a present of a Brace of Grouse, which, however, he returned *with his Compliments to Mrs Smith*. On another occasion she was like to go completely out of her Judgement and to take the House down about her when her husband a few years before his death sent £300 out to William Smith in Australia. She wrote everywhere that herself and her family would be ruined, and wrote themselves also to the same effect, but what I was most sorry to hear of the whole was her disgraceful conduct towards her poor sister Williamina (who would not, I am sure, injure any one), and then she wished to ill use her family after she was dead.

the deepest regret, and I shall do nothing to break asunder such ties, but indeed everything to increase them. You know, however, there are some things which *cannot* be stood, and your conduct towards me for some time has been of this order, and I really *cannot and shall not stand it any longer*, and if you force and compel me to do to you which shall cause you much pain, grief, annoyance, and shame, and thereby please your enemies, remember the blame shall not be mine but yours. Do not *deceive* yourself and *think* it is a *Threat*, for I assure you it is not so, as you will find if you put me to it, and if I once begin I can assure you I shall *not stop half-way*."

Gray continues to delude himself that he is not threatening James but only "pointing out the error of his ways". The next letter, dated 18 December 1860, is the second one he sent to Robert Ross in Aberdeen. It is extremely long (12 pages) and after reproducing the opening section, I have selected a few of the more bizarre comments Gray makes about the Smith family in the rest of the letter. In addition to containing yet more revelations about James, Gray then goes on to vilify other members of the Smith family, including Mrs Smith. This latter attack is somewhat surprising as the recipient of the letter is her brother.

"Sir, I lately addressed you regarding the conduct of your Nephew, Mr J. Smith, Orlrig, thinking you might influence him to discontinue his *vile* conduct and save himself any unpleasant consequences, but it seems that on *mischief* and on *mischief alone* he is bent, and if so it would be a great pity but he should get it. He has of late been going about *knowingly, wilfully, and intentionally, telling or circulating falsehoods regarding myself*, by insinuations and otherwise, by saying that he could not or would not believe anything I say, altho' *he knows* as well as *I do* that I never told him a falsehood in my Life, and in addition to doing so himself he is keeping a most *intimate, distinguished, and particular* friend of his her doing so - A character who is driven by Crowds of Boys several nights a week in a state of complete intoxication round the whole place in a Hurley, and *often almost naked* when his Clothes are torn off him in pieces by the Crowd, and the *respectable* individual sent home actually covered in mud. This is as true and as certain as *Death, Judgement, and Eternity*, and is of course publicly and notoriously known here, altho' I believe your Nephew, wishing to be *highly respectable in his associates, does not, as he would fain say, believe it, notwithstanding* that his own Letters and papers are often taken out of this truly distinguished individual's pockets when in this state, and often found in the streets.

Of course I would never pay attention to anything such a Character would say, but I shall no longer stand any more of your Nephew's *evil* conduct even if his *life* depended on the result, for he is really unworthy of it, and if it be continued I shall in the first place *expose* and *publish* him thoroughly to the world. It is truly a disgrace on the name of Religion to see him *pretend piety, for there is none of it at his heart*, but quite the reverse, and his only object in pretending it is an attempt to deceive the public, but almost the whole around him are now aware of him and see through him, so that they know what he is in *reality* independent of his *pretences*.

Poor thing, I was very sorry to hear lately by a person who SAW AND READ HIS LETTERS that he has been *corresponding* with an writing *an utter prostitute* named Jane Muir, with whom he lived and cohabited the last 6 or 8 months he was in Edinburgh, addressing her, "*My dear Jeanie*" !!! This is beautiful conduct, and may lead into serious consequences, as I am told on good authority that they lived together

