

HIGHLAND
FAMILY HISTORY
SOCIETY

highland family history society



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Welcome to the first Journal in our 19th year of operations. Will I survive to hit Year 20 or will one of you come forward to wrest the job of Journal Editor from my unresisting fingers? This is an invitation and challenge!

There is a trend working its way through our hobby. When we started this Society two decades ago we were very much alone in the field, which is why the name 'Highland' Family History Society was chosen. Bill Lawson runs an excellent Western Isles society, and the Shetland FHS filled an obvious gap, and now more and more specialist societies are springing up. This has to do with the increasing popularity of the genealogy hobby, the increasing population, and also the easier availability of systems for the home production of professional communications: journals printed on personal computers, emails, the internet. Better access to public archives in Inverness and Wick have shown results, as have the internet sources such as those of the Mormons (familysearch.com) and New Register House (origins.org.uk). Museum societies are more active than ever before with lectures and publications. Lately the Caithness Family History Society and Kilmorack Heritage Society - an article on which appears in this journal - have got themselves dramatically off the ground, Assynt and Brora are moving down the runway, and I still have a dream of starting a Dingwall Family History Resource Centre of my own.

Where does all this activity leave the Highland Family History Society? Are we out of date and out of touch and becoming more and more merely an Inverness FHS? Would we be better drawing our horns in or even folding up our tents and heading for the hills?

I think we are in a time of transition, and we need the help of our members even more to show us all the way forward to continue to help our members! Would you like us to collapse in on ourselves, or heighten our profile? We could for instance become an umbrella organisation, a clearing house for the Highland genealogy interest: you in Australia can send us an article (or query, or list of strays or monumental inscriptions) which strongly involves Caithness people, and the Caithness FHS could run with it as well as ourselves. At the same time, should the Caithness journal receive pieces, which would be of interest to our wider audience, we could pass it on. Meanwhile the other heritage and genealogy societies would be doing the same, all this activity enabling the closer focus of a local organisation to produce good work, while our broader approach would help our members spot trends and similarities across parish or county borders.

There are plenty of other ideas, perhaps there are better ones. Perhaps we should give up on the paper journal and concentrate on publishing on the Web? How about concentrating our resources into building a library of CDs of all of our family trees that someone could enter in a genealogy computer program? Ditto census information, strays and MIs?

You may live in an area where there are more deer than people and a local society is unlikely to happen, but you are welcome to send us a list of all the croft names. You may have done a lot of work over half a century - or your grandfather did - on the family trees of people who took ship for America a hundred years ago: we will publish it so that their descendants can renew their ties to our land.

We need your ideas to move us into the 21st Century: where do we go from here?

GETTING IT STRAIGHT

A New Perspective on Tartan

(James Scarlett, talk to the Society 26th September 2000)

There are two images of tartan. One, the more popular and most widely accepted, shows the people of Scotland emerging from the mists of antiquity all wearing their 'clan' tartans, brought from Ireland by the invading Scots and properly ordered so that everybody can recognise everybody else at a glance; the other, which I believe to be the true picture, shows it as an abstract art-form, a product of Highland artist/craftsmen woven into an advanced and durable cloth. It is the latter that I am going to talk about but first we must see how the former came about.

Separating the two is the Act of 1747, which, among other things, forbade the wearing of tartan in Scotland, by men or boys other than soldiers, upon pain of six months imprisonment for the first offence and transportation for a second. Now, you will doubtless have heard lurid stories of men being shot and hanged during The '45 for wearing tartan, but the spreaders of such tales do not disclose, even if they bothered to find out that the Act did not come into force until 1st August 1747, fifteen months after Culloden, when the Rising was well out of the way and Jacobitism was no longer a danger. Indeed, it is difficult to see the Act as anything but precautionary and, although it was applied in some quarters at first and with some enthusiasm, this clearly did not last for long. Factual information on those days is difficult to gather, for stories have been spread with more vehemence and spite than accuracy and a little xenophobia thrown in for luck, especially by those sensation-hunting elements of the media which continue to spread the falsehood that the Jacobite Risings were part of a long-continuing English/Scottish war.

Even Bishop Forbes' painstaking investigations, published as *The Lyon in Mourning*, do not tell the whole story, for they are concerned mainly with the verification of individual accounts and not with overall history, and a more general picture of the post-Culloden Highlands is given by the *Statistical Account of Scotland*, usually called the "old," or OSA for short, to distinguish it from the much later *New Statistical Account* and the *Third*, which is still incomplete. The OSA was compiled by Sir John Sinclair from questionnaires sent out to the Ministers of every parish in Scotland in May 1790 and gives details, parish by parish, of such things as the numbers of various tradespeople who make up the population, their habits, faults and virtues, local industries, land-use, antiquities and almost anything else that the Ministers cared to add of their own initiative. In the Highlands, relatively little is said about dress, only three Ministers bothering to comment, but what is said is significant. In Moy and in Petty, to the south and north respectively of the battlefield, the people continued to wear the old dress, true, this was ten years after the raising of the ban, but the accent is on continuation, not on re-adoption. A Minister in Argyll went further, saying that, though most of his people were fishers and did not wear the Highland dress, it would take more than an Act of Parliament to change the habits of the others.

Clearly, the Act did not stop the Highlanders wearing tartan but it did stop them making it. However, tartan was still very much in demand. Britain was engaged in wars over much of the known world and Highland regiments - regular, fencible and militia - were constantly being raised for the battlefield or for possible home defence, the Colonies were largely occupied by emigrant Highlanders, who wanted it for themselves and for their work people. As a cheap, colourful and durable cloth it was popular for clothing slaves, though the story

that it was chosen for this purpose because its brightness would make it difficult for escaping slaves to conceal themselves holds no water: tartans of those times were superb camouflage. Tartan had to come from somewhere and so large weaving communities grew up on the Highland fringes, and these grew fat, at least for a while but, when peace set in and the Colonies became self-sufficient, things began to look rather bleak and recourse had to be sought elsewhere in order to preserve their very considerable prosperity.

By 1815, though nobody knows how it originated, the idea of tartan patterns peculiar to particular Clans had become established and when Sir Walter Scott and others came along to glamorize Clan life, making each clan's territory into a little kingdom and its Chief into minor Royalty, a desirable degree of exclusiveness was brought into the equation. The way into the exclusive circle was by 'entitlement' to wear the 'clan' tartan, and the genealogical gymnasts performed Olympic feats to bring such entitlements to as many as possible; the factotums and the wild romantics did their bit also and any who could not be fitted into the system by normal stratagem could be found a 'sept' to belong to or a 'district' in which to bury their roots. 'Septs,' originally groups within clans, were introduced to widen the catchment area and names allotted arbitrarily to them. Thus, all Clarks became Macphersons, all Smiths, the Gows and MacGowans, were put into one clan as if it were a trade union, as were the MacIntyres also. Anything would do, so long as the shop assistant could point to a name on his list and supply the necessary entitlement.

The tartan trade was only too happy to go along with all this and quickly learned to add some nonsense of its own. By the 1820s there were patterns named in honour of celebrities - Wellington, Sir Walter Scott, Flora MacDonald - events - Waterloo and King George the Fourth - and characters in fiction - Meg Merrilees, Maggie Lauder. These were the forerunners of the modern epidemic of so-called tartans named after beers and soft drinks and to commemorate such momentous occasions as National Baked Beans Week. Clubs and Societies also had their tartans and, from about 1825 onwards, the wholly spurious Douai Manuscript, to be published later as the *Vestiarium Scoticum*, gave sanction to Lowland tartans.

So tartan became Scottish and the Lowland and Border Families, though their organisation and life-style were quite different from those of the Highland Clans, became Clans, at least for the purposes of selling tartan.

Later, further flights of fancy were indulged in. The antiquarian/historians, having decided that tartan had been brought by the Scots from Ireland, even though it probably came in from the North and its essential feature were known before the Scots arrived, promptly traced it back to Asia Minor and the Old Testament. In days not so very far distant from those in which "A thousand ages in Thy sight are but an evening gone" was considered a sound arithmetical basis for calculating the age of the Universe, it is not altogether surprising that, as late as March 1875, the London Pall Mall Gazette, published the following information, apparently without a trace of tongue-in-cheek:-

"the word tartan obtained its present application when the Assyrian general Tartan (Isaiah XX 1-4) took Ashdod, and carried away the Egyptians captive in an imperfectly clothed condition, which must have made them bear a striking resemblance to Scotch Highlanders in their native dress."

As dyeing techniques improved, the old soft colours were supplanted by the first synthetics, which did nothing for tartan and were later themselves replaced by the washed-out 'ancient' colours and, after the second world war, by 'reproduction' colours, neither of which bore any close resemblance to the original colours but gave the customer the impression that he was getting something older and therefore better than he had before.

Like an upside-down pyramid balanced on its point, the huge mythology of tartan has been built upon a small amount of solid truth. Examined carefully, it is badly out of balance, but is prevented from toppling by a solid column of coinage under each corner.

Where, then, does this get us in relation to our claim for a Highland origin to tartan? First of all, a fragment of cloth found at Falkirk and dated to the third century A.D. shows that the regular check pattern and twill weave which are essential to tartan were known in Alba before the Scots came to give the country their name. This does not mean that we were all dancing about in tartan then, merely that we could have done if we had wished. Secondly, nobody has offered a satisfactory explanation of how the Irish 'Saffron Shirt,' an ankle-length garment of linen, pleated and 'manifoldly sewed,' and dyed yellow, turned into a large sheet of multicoloured, chequered-pattern woollen cloth, simply wrapped round the body and worn at knee-length. My guess is that exploring Scots would have arrived at our West coast, after a voyage in a boat which, made of skins stretched over a wicker frame, would have given a lively ride on a millpond, cold, wet and probably seasick and would have accosted the nearest local inhabitant with a request to "take me to your tailor."

However, we must look more deeply than that into both the art-form and the reasons behind it. It has been suggested that the pictures with which the Picti were supposedly adorned were actually tribal tattoo patterns and it would be in character for such people to demand a formal pattern in their clothing. Whatever the truth of that may be, when the weaver had produced cloth that would serve his customers' requirements in the rigours of the Highland climate, his next task was to devise patterns that would take their fancy. For this, he could dye wool with remarkable permanence and consistency in a limited range of colours and employ it in any design he might fancy so long as it was in the rectangular format enforced by the weaving process. Not by any means all of the weavers were brilliant artists but all possessed and used the ability to make bright and attractive patterns in an almost infinite variety, patterns that have outlasted and outlived fashion to become 'Clan' tartans. An attempt to analyse the art-form reveals it as highly complex, with strong mathematical overtones and dependent on many outside influences.

Setting aside the inventions of the Sobieski brothers (and the few Lowland tartans that they did not invent, which were mostly chosen from catalogues) and those tartans of the blue, black and green kind, which are looking increasingly as if they owe their origin to military fashion, we are left, by default, with red, green and blue as the main colours of the vast majority of patterns; old specimens show that red and green were of roughly equal 'grey value' and blue was dark, unlike modern tartans, which have blue and green almost black as in 'modern' colours, or washed-out and scarcely distinguishable from each other, as in 'old', or 'ancient' colours. My knowledge of artistic theory is less than slight, but I am a practical photographer with an inclination to experiment, and the first thing that struck me here was that these were the colours of the light filters used to make the colour-separation negatives that were the first stage in colour-printing before all the electronic miracles came about. Subsequently, I learned that they are also the first colours to appear in all primitive art, so it may be that they fulfil

some deep physiological or psychological purpose, but that is a digression and explanations must be left to specialists in those fields, though it does seem that the way is open for somebody to write a large book on the Psychology of Tartan and, probably, for several others to write even larger books to explain the first.

When red light is superimposed on green, something yellowish results; add blue light and a muddy green appears. It is evident that a cloth patterned in these colours will merge with the landscape very well indeed when seen from such a distance that the pattern is no longer clearly defined. From the point of view of art, red and green provide colour contrast and red and dark blue, or green and dark blue, provide grey-scale contrast; the prime task of the artist-weaver was to arrange blocks of these colours in such quantities and proportions as would suit the purpose for which the cloth was intended and please the eye of the customer. Although there are many beautiful patterns made up from just these three colours, it is usual to break them up into 'eyeful-size' areas and to embellish them with overchecks of one of these colours or of others from the rather limited range available. This range normally extended from the aforementioned red, green and blue to black and white, light blue and yellow, but the limitations are more apparent than real, and this is where the arithmetic comes in.

A tartan pattern consists of stripes in both directions of the cloth and each stripe in the twill therefore crosses every stripe in the warp. When a stripe crosses another of its own colour a block of plain colour results and when a stripe crosses one of another colour the result is an equal mixture of the two; given that suitable shades are used, a distinctly midway colour will emerge but, all too often in modern tartans, one colour swamps the other and the effect is completely spoiled. The number of mixtures increases in rapid proportion to the number of 'starter' colours, two starter colours giving one mixture, four starters giving four mixtures (eight shades in all), six starters giving fifteen mixtures (21 shades) and seven, the normal maximum, twenty-one mixtures (twenty-eight shades). Blocks of plain colour can meet only corner-to-corner, on the diagonal; laterally and longitudinally they are separated by blocks of mixtures which lead the eye from one solid colour to the next. It follows that, the more starter colours and the more stripes, the softer and more diffuse will be the finished pattern, with consequent enhancement of its camouflage value; tartan is nothing if not paradoxical.

There are two ways of making woollen cloth weatherproof. One is to make it from a softish, woollenspun yarn in plain weave and then shrink it and felt it, making it thick and heavy; this was the broadcloth upon which England's textile fortunes were founded and it is totally unsuitable for skipping about on mountains. The other way is to weave it from fine, hard, worsted-spun yarn closely woven in the twill weave that makes a lightweight cloth about 50% denser than plain weave. For obvious reasons, whether consciously or not, the Highlanders chose the latter and produced a gaberdine-like cloth so tough that two centuries of mastication by moth makes little impression.

In a plain-woven cloth, the crossings of colour mingle in pepper-and-salt fashion, but twill produces diagonal ribbing in the cloth which gives an effect like pencil shading, with fine lines of colour alternating, along the diagonal, the colour has a subtly different appearance from the cross-diagonal view, giving some life to the pattern, even as one walks past it in the shop window.

Now we come to what is to my mind one of the most interesting questions, "Why tartan, anyway?" The story that it was brought from the East by the Celts who came through

Brittany, Cornwall, Wales, the Isle of Man and Ireland is a good one if you want to convince the Bretons, Cornish, Welsh, Manx and Irish that they simply must buy your products and incidentally, tap the huge market of emigrant Lowland Scots, but it does not explain why no residue of developed tartan-type patterns was left along the way, or why the ancient languages have no word which expresses what we mean by tartan. The Romans could say 'chequered' but usually went no further than 'striped' and, despite attempts to find some Gaelic derivation for the word, 'tartan' just means a kind of cloth, as is evidenced by a merchant in Edinburgh who, as recently as November 1828, ordered a quantity of 'Plain dark green coloured tartan, no pattern on it.' Hindsight sees more clearly than foresight and it is always easier to explain why something happened than to deduce that it will happen, but this is my interpretation of the circumstances that caused the tartan pattern to develop.

People like a bit of colour in their lives, and in the days before bright lights and in a country where the sun can disappear behind a mountain in October and not reappear until March, this must have been especially so. I once saw a very beautiful plaid in a tartan pattern made from several natural shades of undyed wool but, in general, natural materials are not sufficiently colourful. Colour therefore has to be added by dyeing and there are several ways in which dyes may be used. The Highlanders of old lived in small, isolated and self-sufficient communities. Their manufactures took place on the spot and if there was anything in the nature of a dyeworks it was on a pretty small scale using domestic-size dye-pots. The Batik technique can be used to introduce a jolly look to cloth but is limited in scope and not suited to mass-production; good enough for use in the sort of climate where a handkerchief is big enough to give protection against the elements but too cumbersome to use for our own belted plaid. Tie-and-dye is another way of applying an irregular individual pattern and piece-dyeing can apply a single over-all colour, but all these need big pots. If at least half of the yarn can be dyed in one batch, cloth can be woven coloured but small dye-batches and the consequent inevitable slight mismatches will cause streaks in the colour. A way round this is to dye the fleece in batches and blend these to give even colour, but the dyeing removes the natural grease from the fleece and this has to be replaced before the yarn can be spun, so a ready source of suitable oil is needed and this was not always available.

The human eye is very good at picking out minute errors in matching in the body of cloth but much less so if two slightly differing shades are separated by a band of a contrasting colour, so the simplest way of achieving a planned pattern is to make the cloth striped. Several colours can be used and the widths of the stripes can be varied, but the result is still not very exciting and a plain weft tends to degrade the colours of the stripes in the warp. Also, for best results an even quality of weft is required and this was not easy, even if possible, to manage. According to Dr I.F. Grant, the Saxony type of spinning wheel was rare in the Highlands as late as the eighteenth century and most spinning would therefore have been done with the spindle. The spindle can spin a very fine and even yarn and its slow rate of production would not have mattered when there was a plentiful supply of spinners; however, lots of spinners would have spun lots of different thicknesses of yarn and the indications, from old specimens, are that it was the habit of Highland weavers to use the finest and best yarns for warps, which take the tension of weaving, and the rest as they came for the weft. There are specimens of old tartans in which the thickness of the weft yarn varies from one colour to another.

Despite the difficulties, though, stripes look to be a good bet and somebody must have been very gratified to find that most of the problems were removed if the pattern was made striped in both directions. The rest is a matter of refinement of the basic idea. If the weft stripes are

made the same as the warp, the pattern becomes symmetrical, and the cloth can be used any way round. In weaving, the weft pattern can be read from the warp, and all the weaver has to do is to work the pedals and throw the appropriate shuttle back and forth until the particular square is complete, then change colour and do the next one. That part of the job could be left to an apprentice, while the real weaver, whose skill was required to design the pattern and set up the loom, went off to start the next piece or to cut his peats or to do anything else that he had on hand. It was only natural common sense to make the unit of pattern, the sett, of manageable size and to divide it into mirror image halfsetts to repeat back and forth along and across the web. Both made the pattern easier to follow and to remember in an age when nothing was written down.

That is my hypothesis of how natural circumstances could have made the development of the tartan type of pattern almost inevitable in isolated, self-sufficient and wool-producing communities and I see some encouragement in the fact that Bhutan produces tartan-type patterns - though not tartan-type ballyhoo; only in Scotland has that reached the status of an art-form. Recently, also, there has been a report of the discovery of mummies clad in what appears to be tartan at an archaeological site in a mountainous district of southern China, which gives some further credence to the theory. It seems a tenable supposition that tartan is an outcome of environment rather than race and a peculiarity of people of the High Lands. Periodically, one hears of pockets of 'lost people', living among mountains, speaking a strange language unlike any known locally and wearing 'tartan'; the urge to dismiss such stories as travellers' tales and romantic nonsense is compelling but perhaps there is something common to the countries called Alba, Alps, Albania and the like.

The Kilmorack Heritage Association

By Harry Harrison, President

Kilmorack Heritage Association, which has recently joined the Highland Family History Society, consists of a small group of enthusiasts dedicated to recording the history of the places and the people of the ancient Parish of Kilmorack. We include in our scope those parts of Kiltarity Parish now subsumed in the Strathglass Community Council area, that is to say Erchless, Tornich and Guisachan, together with those parts of Urray and Kiltarity transferred from Kilmorack by the Boundary Commission in the late Nineteenth Century.

The Association was formed in early 1998 when a public announcement of a meeting in Kilmorack Hall brought together sufficient numbers to enable a committee to be formed, and an initial programme of work to be established. One of the first tasks was to identify the extent of local interest, and a series of public lectures was therefore organised which took place during the winter of 1998-99, covering a variety of topics, including a description of the facilities offered by the local Archives and Library Services and the activities and responsibilities of Historic Scotland. A number of people came forward with offers of help, and application was therefore made for the assistance of a local expert who advised on the collaborative studies which would be needed to produce a book on the history of the parish. Meetings were held in the Lovat Arms Hotel in Beaulieu.

The Association organised minibus tours and guided walks around local sites of interest as a contribution to the Highland Archaeology Week in October 1999, and the guided walk was repeated this year too.

We have now made considerable progress with the study of the Old Parish Registers, and with the various Censuses. Extended computer-based indexes have been prepared for the OPRs for Kilmorack, which enable us quickly to identify the names and domiciles included in all baptisms, marriages and deaths recorded. For the Censuses, we have prepared extended indexes of the ones for 1851, 1861, 1871 and 1891. The census for 1881 is of course already available on CD-Rom. Memorial Inscriptions for all the burial grounds in the parish (including Kilmorack Old and New, Struy, Cannich (Fasnakyle), Clachan Comar, Beaully Priory and Beaully St. Mary) are now complete, and, as well as having details of names recorded on War Memorials, we also hold further information about these soldiers of the parish.

We intend to make available a booklet of the MIs, but we have present plans to publish the OPRs and Census indexes. However, searches in these indexes can be carried out on application to the records keeper, who can be contacted as shown below. We ask for an appropriate donation towards the funds of the Association commensurate with the effort involved. The records keeper also has copies of old maps, photographs, and a variety of other references relating to the parish. May we take this opportunity of appealing to all those who have such items in their possession to let us have details, or perhaps even copies, so that we may enhance our capacity to assist those who seek our help? We have already assisted many enquirers from the USA and Canada anxious to learn about their forebears and their former homes in the parish.

Our website can be found at <www.kilmorack.com> which contains further details, including the present programme of activities, the main task of which is the preparation of a series of books on the history of the parish to coincide with the Millennium. Three books are planned: one on the village of Beaully, one on the Straths and Glens, and one on the townships of the Braes not already covered in the book entitled *Urchany and Farley, Leanssie and Breakachy* which was completed in 1998, several copies of which are in local libraries. These three new books will be similar in scope and content to *Urchany and Farley*, and will probably be produced in very limited numbers on private circulation, as before. Drafting is now about three-quarters completed, and the compiler has been able to draw upon the assistance of each and every one of our members. However, we do need to identify the likely demand for these books, which will probably be offered at cost of production plus a small premium to cover administration expenses. The Association is non-profit making, and does not have the resources required to publish them commercially.

A number of pedigrees of local families is to be included in the books, although with the coming into force of the Data Protection Act this largely precludes us from including recent (living) generations unless we can obtain permission. At least there is no difficulty with the deceased!

We are at present seeking more members, and any prospective members interested in the history of the parish and in joining us should get in touch with the custodians of the records, John & Sue Thomson, at: -

North Lodge, Beaufort, Beaully IV4 7BE
by telephone on 01463 783168
and e-mail to john@northlodge.freeserve.co.uk.

MONUMENTAL INSCRIPTIONS

By John Durham

As indicated in my previous report, the monumental inscriptions for Rosemarkie Churchyard have been published and are now available for purchase by members who may have ancestors or relatives buried in that cemetery. Greyfriars Churchyard in Inverness was the next to be tackled. There are only 130 memorials in this small cemetery, which is tucked away behind the Telephone Exchange. Some of the inscriptions were very difficult to read, particularly those lying flush with the grass. As a consequence we have only recently completed the transcriptions and indexing and will be publishing later on this month. Incidentally, we were unable to find any stones beneath the turf in spite of Grahams' efforts with his dibber.

Some of you may wonder why we are recording monumental inscriptions in burial grounds that have already been published. Comparing the inscriptions we recorded with those published in 1996 by the Scottish Genealogy Society in the booklet entitled *Inverness District East monumental inscriptions pre-1855* more than justifies our decision to do so. In the SGS booklet on Greyfriars there are 53 inscriptions, three of which, containing only initials, we were unable to find this year. Of the 50 that appear in both publications, we noted errors on eleven of them. Two of them were very significant as the following comparison of the inscriptions shows.

The first was a stone lying flat on the ground inside an enclosure that must have suffered a considerable blow at some point in time as it has split into five pieces. This must have caused some problems to the SGS transcribers as all they could record was: -

FS. Henrietta wid of John d ? .8. a ?y.

However by rearranging the five broken pieces and the judicious application of the contents of a bottle of tap water we are able to read the entire inscription, which was: -

{Slab, broken into 5 pieces} In memory of Henrietta COOPER, widow of John COOPER, formerly of the Island of St. Christopher. After a residence of more than twenty-eight years in the town of Inverness, she died on the 11th day of August 1797, aged 60 years. The virtuous and beneficent need no Epitaph, their worth is recorded in the Book of Life. "*He that liveth and believeth in me shall never die*" John 11, 26. "*For if we believe tha[t] Jesus died and rose again, even so the[re] also which sleep in Jesus will G[o]d bring with him*". 1st Thessalonians, 4th, 14th. Also the earthly remains of her daughter Mary COOPER, who died 31st December 1811, aged 56; and Francis COOPER, who died in November 1809, aged 51.

The second example was a sarcophagus on the top of which was the oldest inscription in the burial ground. In the SGS booklet it is recorded as: -

TS. {top worn; inscriptions on panels on sides} John Oig MacIaine of Dochgarroch d 1707 a 80y; John Maclean of Dochgarroch d 1748 a 75y; Charles M of D; John M of D; William M of D d 24.11.1841 a 79y; w Elizabeth M d 25.2.1828 a ?y.

Whereas by using a piece of wood (to avoid damaging the stone) to clean out the moss that was obscuring the lettering on the top of the sarcophagus we were able to record the entire inscription: -

{Sarcophagus} Here lies an honest gentleman called John McLEAN, of Davocgarroch, who departed the 8 of October 1674; and his spouse Agnes FRASER. J MFL - A F. & also Alexander McLEAN, his eldest son. *Memento Mori*. (LHS) Charles MACLEAN of Dochgarroch, ob 1778, aged 61 years; John MACLEAN of Dochgarroch, ob 1826, aged 74 years. (RHS) John Oig MACLAINE of Dochgarroch ob 1707, aged 80 years; John McLEAN of Dochgarroch, ob 1748, aged 75 years. (end) Sacred to the memory of William MACLEAN, of Dochgarroch, who departed this life on the 24th of Nov' 1841, aged 79; also of Elizabeth MACLEAN, his spouse, who died on the 25th Feb' 1828, aged 69.

In addition to the 11 incorrect inscriptions we found a further 25 stones which had pre-1855 inscriptions on them. This 46% error rate in the SGS booklet more than justifies our resolve to continue to record all memorial inscriptions in burial grounds. On the previous occasion when such a comparison was done, following our transcribing of the inscriptions in the Old High Churchyard in Inverness, we found 52 pre-1855 stones had been omitted and there were errors in 97 of the 220 stones recorded in the SGS booklet. I rest my case!

In addition to his work on census indexing, Angus is recording the inscriptions in the Old Churchyard at Urquhart on the Black Isle. Our next project is to record the inscriptions in the Old Petty Church burial ground. We have heard a rumour that Historic Scotland may be working there already so we will be checking it out first before we commit ourselves. This problem will only be resolved when a central database is set up to note which burial grounds have been recorded and by whom. Perhaps SAFHS should be the body to take on this responsibility as they are already doing for the Scottish National Burial Index?

INDEXES to 1851 CENSUS RETURNS

By John Durham

There has been considerable progress made in the past three months. Donnie MacLennan has been very busy indeed and the parishes of Contin and Fodderty that he transcribed for us have been indexed and published recently. I have just received his latest effort, the parish of Alness and he informed me that he is now going to start on Roskeen. As our secretary Angus Bethune is working on Glenshiel (completed), Kintail and Lochalsh it looks as if it will not be long before the whole of Ross & Cromarty will have been indexed. If that were not enough to be going on with, I have just received an e-mail from Margaret Mackay to say that she and her husband Billy have completed Latheron, which is a large parish with a total of 8,200 entries. Flushed with success, they are now going to start work on Orlig.

SCOTTISH NATIONAL BURIAL INDEX (SNBI)

By Sandra Norton

In my last update in August I made an appeal for volunteers to help with transcribing the death/burial records for the SNBI and mentioned that the Society would be willing, if

necessary, to have these records photocopied from the Old Parish Registers held on microfilm at Record Offices etc. This has now been agreed so Transcribers are now supplied with the photocopies, instructions and extraction forms on which to copy the information. All of the copying can be done at home - something to get on with on a dark winter evening!

Volunteers are now busy transcribing parishes in Sutherland and Ross and Cromarty. However, there are still several in each of these counties to be done as well as Inverness-shire at present. Barrie Tulloch has transcribed all the burial entries for Auldearn Parish in Nairnshire and these are now ready to be added to the database. Argyll parishes will need to be started on soon, so anyone willing to help with any of this will be most welcome.

At present there is no intention to include Monumental Inscriptions (M.I.s) in the SNBI. However, one Society member, Ruth McMillen, has kindly donated M.I.s for The Old Graveyard, Mill Street, Ullapool, the work on this being carried out by herself and two others. I can check any entry for a Society member if you contact me at -

Alexandra C. Norton, Cromarty, 15 The Loanings, Peebles EH45 9JT
e-mail: <sandranorton@yahoo.com>

HFHS STRAYS INDEX

By Alan Ross

Now that I have been co-ordinator for two years this seems an appropriate time to bring members up to date with the current status of the 'Strays Index' and to briefly outline my plans for the future of this project. When I took over the role of co-ordinator I inherited a box full of pieces of paper and a list with about 800 names. As soon as I was able I increased the entries, from mainly census returns, up to just under 3000 and entered them on a computer database (Access). A printed copy of the index is now, as you know, in the Society's own mini-library in the reference room at Inverness library.

My current aim is to consolidate those names and pieces of paper by creating a uniform card index in addition to the printed index. This card index is intended to be the master reference source, as it will contain more details of the original entries. The layout of census entries is standard so I will be creating a separate listing of them. As numbers on the database are rising it is taking longer to create and cross check the card index. When the number of entries exceeds 5000 on the database I will prepare an update to the listing for library use. The committee have agreed to my suggestion that, when this update is issued, a microfiche copy of the cumulative index of all 5000 entries should be produced as well.

To date I have only had a limited number (under 45) of search requests and they have all been from people quoting a membership number. Can I also remind anyone who comes across strays that they should send them to me at my home address and not to the Inverness Library?

The relevant details are: -

Alan Ross, 89 Burwell Drive, Witney, Oxon OX3 7NE

e-mail: <AlanRoss10@cs.com>

The Forgotten Mutiny By Malcolm Lobban

The following story appeared in the *Dumbarton Herald* (6/2/1862). The author at that time would be around 83 years of age, and possibly dictated his thoughts to a journalist; neither of whom is identified by name. The mutiny referred to appears not to have been widely publicised, and the story is here reproduced as written.

"I propose to give your readers a brief relation of the circumstances which brought me in connection with the Grant Highlanders, and of the doings of the regiment previous to the mutiny. I am one of those unfortunates who never saw their father. Mine died a week before my birth, and my mother married a discharged soldier six months afterwards. Poor woman! – happy would it have been for her, and for me too, had she remained faithful to the memory of her first husband, for the cruelty and debauchery of her second sent her to an early grave, and drove her boy forth a wanderer from the home that should have sheltered him.

After struggling with the difficulties such as only the friendless have to encounter, I at length reached that period which was to mark my future destiny. This was in 1794, when I would be almost fifteen years of age, tall, strong, and prematurely manly.

Sir James Grant was then engaged in raising a new regiment – the 97th, or Grant Highlanders; and many lads from the district in which I lived – a lonesome valley in Inverness-shire – enlisted under his banner. At first I felt no desire to follow their example, for the remembrance of a certain red coat, which at one time lay in a drawer in my mother's kitchen, and which had engendered a dislike to all soldiers, now arose vividly before me.

One beautiful spring morning, however, as I was tending cattle on an upland pasture, there came floating on the freshening breeze, which hurries oceanwards, sounds of distant music. I was wondering and debating with myself whence they proceeded, when suddenly I beheld a numerous band of red coats emerge from the gorge of a gloomy valley at an angle of the hill whereon I was standing.

On, on they came, and the merry roll of the drum set my heart dancing. My whole nature seemed to undergo a revolution. Old antipathies were forgotten, and giddy with delight, I hastened down the hill to meet the approaching Highlanders, for it was Sir James Grant's new regiment on the march to Fort George.

In the mood of mind which possessed me, it required 'no oily tongue persuasive' to induce me to become a King's man, nor had I before me the fear of breaking the heart of a poor old mother or that of a sweetheart, therefore I readily accepted the shilling which Lieutenant Macdonald offered me. Sending my dog Chance, off to watch the cattle until a more trustworthy servant than I should come, I marched away with a swaggering air from the hills of my boyhood, never more to behold them except through a dim mist far away.

Drill, drill, drill – months of continuous drill and then we were pronounced fit for duty. In the summer of 1794, we together with the Gordons and Seaforth Highlanders, sailed from Fort George for Southampton, in England. We had hardly got settled in our new quarters ere we got the route for the Island of Guernsey, where we passed a miserable winter – our duty being

onerous, rations scanty, and weather severe. Glad, indeed, were we when the spring of '95 saw us once more safely located on the shores of Old England.

But there was no rest for the wicked. Government, having now more need for our aid on the sea than on the land, bethought of rendering us available as sea soldiers; and, in conformity with this idea, we were lent, as it were, for a short season to the marine service.

In our new character we joined the Channel fleet under Lord Bridgeport. To us it was mere pleasure cruise until 21st of June, when a frigate brought us intelligence that the enemy's fleet was out; but much more to the chagrin of Jack a heavy gale was blowing at the time which forced us to remain inactive and to tack about under easy sail. At midnight, however, the wind somewhat abated, and by the first streaks of morning we decried the enemy right ahead. Cheer after cheer rent the welkin as his Lordship's signal for general chase and to prepare for action flew forth to the breeze.

The chase continued all that day and night, for the gale had lulled to a dead calm; and since 'screws' (propellers) were then unthought of, our progress was slow. Oh, how we did whistle for a few puffs of our late visitant, the gale! At four in the morning of the 23rd a fine breeze sprang up to our whistling, and ere two hours had passed the French were brought within range of our 'long Toms'.

The *Irresistible*, the *Orion*, the *Robert* and the *Colossus* – on board of which last vessel I was – being the headmost ships-of-the-line, were the first to enter into action.

It is strange how quickly the mind assimilates itself to the spirit which prevails around. At first there is a slight tremor of fear mixed with courage; and the sight of the mangled bodies and limbs of mates well nigh sickened me. But the stir and bustle of the battle, the thunder and glare of the cannon, and the shouts of the combatants, mingled with the shrieks of the wounded, soon drove my sentimentalism away as if it had only been a preview instead of a great struggle I was engaged in.

The breeze which carried the *Irresistible* and six others into action, having failed before the heavy line-ships could come up, the seven had to begin and maintain the fight with fourteen of the enemy. We were beginning to feel two to one rather a little unpleasant, when the tide of the battle was turned by the arrival of the others; and as the Admiral passed us on the *Royal George*, we welcomed him in three thundering cheers. The battle now was soon over, and we were left in possession of the *Formidable*, 80; the *Tigre*, 80; and the *Alexandre*, 74 guns.

About forty of my comrades were among the killed and wounded, but to me providence was kind – I came out of the fight without having received a scratch. Our ship, besides receiving numerous damages of a minor character, had her main topmast shot away, and the mizzen greatly shattered. The *Prince of Wales*, the *Robert*, and the *Orion* being also considerably damaged, were ordered along with us into port with the prizes to get repaired.

On landing at Portsmouth, we were quartered in Hulsea Barracks. We mustered at that time about 1200 men altogether. This number being considered by those in power too many for one battalion, the regiment was divided into two, one of which was sent on board the hulks to guard the prisoners while the other was left on shore to do barrack duty. The latter division, to which I belonged, soon after received orders to be drafted for the marine service only. To a

