

highland family history society



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EDITORIAL

Welcome to the first journal of 2002. This is the time that New Year resolutions often begin to waver and it takes great determination to see them through. Though it wasn't actually a resolution that was made, my local society, Clyne Heritage Society in Brora, Sutherland, have a similar commitment in trying to restore the now disused Old Clynekirkton Graveyard to some semblance of tidiness. As anyone who has taken on any sort of similar voluntary undertaking will only know too well, it can be a long and winding road to even get the project off the ground. This is where determination, not to mention perseverance, is a most useful commodity!

In this instance, the Society was approached by an Internet-based organisation, somewhat oddly acronymised as POSH (Preserve Our Sutherland Heritage), which sprang from an excellent website called Highland Hearts <www.highlandhearts.com> and organised by a tireless bundle of energy known as Christine Stokes. HFHS member Christine had spent the last 15 years on a crusade to track down every conceivable branch of her Murray ancestry in the Rogart area of Sutherland, which then became little less than an obsession covering any conceivable piece of information pertaining to the St Callians Graveyard of Rogart parish. This latter lifetime's work will shortly be available in a publication, which really has to be seen to get just a small insight into the amount of work which underpins this comprehensive piece of research, all conducted, I might add, in her spare time when not at work and from the far-flung south of England. Her dedication, organisation and time-management certainly puts me to shame! You can discover more about the aims and ideas of POSH elsewhere in this journal.

Anyway, I digress. Many contributors to the Highland Hearts and Sutherland Rootsweb discussion fora had been concerned with the deteriorating nature of many of the Sutherland graveyards, cemeteries and burial grounds in particular and those of the Highlands in general. Visitors to these graveyards, commonly relatives of those interred and often from abroad had been, at worst, deeply shocked at the state of neglect in which they found the cherished resting places of their ancestors. This, sometimes poor state of affairs, does not reflect well on the local community, contrasting often with the esteem and general high state of care and maintenance afforded to graveyards overseas. POSH was born from this concern, with the idea of annually sponsoring the tidying and restoration of some of the more needy cases using financial contributions from relatives, in many cases now abroad, of those interred. Clynekirkton was selected as being arguably the most worthy case and the wheels were set in motion.

Members of POSH, including Christine, met with members of Clyne Heritage Society at the Graveyard last Autumn with the new group's proposals and the promise of financial backing. The POSH members went away to prepare for the fund-raising side of things and members of the Society, in turn, met on site with officials from the large number of organisations and official bodies, all of whom had an interest in the proposed operations and who needed to be consulted for expert advice and guidance. It was never a case of being able to march into the graveyard and simply attack the vegetation and re-erect fallen headstones. Although Highland Council, the local authority, owned the graveyard and thus was responsible for its maintenance, diminishing annual budgets and perceived higher priorities elsewhere had led to cumulative neglect and Council officials naturally welcomed the trendy and almost mandatory partnership approach involving the local authority, local community volunteers and local funding agencies, as well as important contributions from overseas donors.

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PRESERVING OUR SUTHERLAND HERITAGE

By Christine Stokes

Picture the scene – traveled half way around the world to visit the grave of Great-Grandad who is buried in Clyne Kirkton, Sutherland – eventually find this place – few road signs – no help locally – when I get there I am horrified – can't find the stone – it is buried somewhere in the undergrowth – can't even get close as I did not bring cutters! The place looks like something out of a horror movie! Oh dear, oh dear, six thousand miles I traveled for this? Poor Great-Grandad! Fiction? No, fact. Happens umpteen times every year. Not only at Clyne but all over Sutherland.

During the past few months a group of people have come together and formed a new society – POSH – Preserving Our Sutherland Heritage. We all have one thing in common – we are descendants of Sutherland people and we CARE! Our group is probably quite unique, in so far as we all have a relative buried in Sutherland. We live in many parts of the world and are an ideal group to hopefully bring about improvements.

Our aim is to work with others in Sutherland to ensure that wherever possible graveyards can be 'cared for' and that old stones will be preserved. 'Lost' stones will hopefully be recovered and at least recorded. We will join and work with the local heritage societies and help them to bring pressure on the local councils to look after these burial grounds. To help them find the necessary funding to carry out the work – through fund raising in our and other groups; investigating the possibilities of claiming grants from Government departments, etc. To write to the press and to all those who may be able to help forward our aims. To form work teams at least once a year and physically help with the tidying up of the graveyards.

POSH will raise funds to enable the local heritage societies to repair, tidy and preserve the final resting places of our ancestors. As local people are aware, there are many more people buried in these graveyards than those who could afford a memorial stone. These people are our history and should be remembered. It is hoped that as each graveyard is tidied up we may be allowed to place a small plaque or bench remembering those people also.

Family history is the fastest growing hobby of our times. All around the world people are finding links to the folks of Sutherland. We correspond regularly through our Sutherland List on the internet, letters, visits, etc. Throughout the past years many of our group have been able to make the visit back to Sutherland. They invariably are happy to have come but there is one area which is always disappointing – the state of the graveyards!

One of our Canadian members wrote that he is a regular visitor to the cemeteries of Ontario. He/she tells us that most cemeteries, however remote, have every last stone upright, even if it has meant creating a steel frame to loosely hold the stone together and upright as it was meant to be. I noticed a stone with such a frame in Creich graveyard, so we obviously know how to do this! The same gentleman points out that when the Highland Council took over the maintenance of graveyards, surely it meant more than cutting grass nicely around all the rocks in the lawn!

A visitor to Ross & Cromarty and Sutherland searching for his roots spoke to a graveyard worker crew at Roskeen. They told him that they had never been in the chapel ruin on site that looked like jungle – they would not go into the tomb buildings that were falling in and which had fifty years of trees growing through them; many stones were so broken, fallen over

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The Society was also concerned about the unkempt appearance of the land surrounding the adjacent 17th Century bell-tower and took steps to coincide efforts to tidy this area too. Being very unusual and of great historical interest, the bell-tower is a Scheduled Ancient Monument under the guardianship of Historic Scotland, and this led to unseen complications from the outset. The actual land-owner could not be identified for certain, with both alleged candidates, Sutherland Estates and Clynelish Distillery, denying ownership in writing. To initiate the project, an owner had to be identified, in order for them to be informed of the proposed remedial works. Eventually, an owner (as it turns out after all, the distillery) was pinpointed and the ball began to roll.

It was not, and is not, before anyone gets concerned, the intention of the locals or the visitors, Clyne Heritage Society or POSH, for Old Clynekirkton Graveyard to become a sanitised visitor centre. Far from it. It was just felt that the site would benefit from a general tidy up and a couple of like-minded and common-aimed voluntary organisations decided to try to make a small difference to a site which is regarded as being rather a special spot for both the living and the dead.

After several months of organisation, liaising and correspondence, as well as living 'other, normal' lives, most of the preparation has been accomplished and the green light has been received. This apparently 'simple' project, instigated by the goodwill and common interest of several different groups that have the best intentions at heart, for what is a very beautiful and sensitive location, has already taken several months of planning, organisation and energy. The actual practical work itself, which consequently will seem like the easiest part, is due to get underway next month and hopefully all of our drawing board or desktop labours will eventually bear fruit. I didn't realise that making such a resolution can literally take a great deal of resolve!

SALTMARKET to SALT LAKE CITY

Glasgow & West of Scotland FHS will host the 13th SAFHS Annual Conference on Saturday 27th April in the Mitchell Theatre Complex, Granville Street, Glasgow. This is the second conference hosted by the Society on behalf of the Association and will be held in the Society's 25th Anniversary Year.

Lord Gordon of Strathblane will open the conference. The morning session will include talks from Dean J. Hunter on the genealogical records that the LDS Church holds and what it plans to record in future; and by Allan Mackinnon on 'Even Property has Roots'. In the afternoon Trevor Parkhill will speak on 'Irish Records – Alternative Sources', followed by Don Martin, who will give us an insight into 'The Glasgow Commuter'. Member Societies' bookstalls, a popular feature of the annual conference, will display a wide selection of their latest publications.

The conference will run from 9am until 5pm; the conference fee is £11 per person with lunch an additional £8. Application forms are available from the Conference Secretary, 6 Sutherland Drive, Glasgow G46 6PL or can be downloaded from the Society's website <www.gwsfhs.org.uk>.

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or lying asure that it was almost useless to visit the cemetery. This, sadly, is the same story at Clyne Kirkton and other burial grounds in Sutherland. Visit Rogart, Dornoch, Golspie, Kinbrace and the other burial grounds and you will see broken stones, etc. One graveyard even has bits of broken stone as stepping-stones! There is a small enclosure for the first Free Church Minister at Lochinver, Assynt, which is being forced apart by two trees -- can we really stand by and watch the history of this county be destroyed?

Those stones, or lack of them, are our history. The people of Sutherland were proud, loyal folks, who took great pride in their families and often spent most of their life saving for their own funeral -- what would they think now! With family history being a major draw for tourists to Scotland, and if St Giles Cathedral can get millions of pounds from taxpayers to repair two windows, surely bringing the historic old burial grounds of Sutherland up to a respectful standard warrants immediate attention?

A member of our group, who was born and raised in Brora, made the trip to Ontario. He later wrote "When I stood at the family grave of my Great-Grand-Aunt in Ontario, I thought in comparison how neglected the graveyard is in Clyne, where her brothers and sisters are buried. She got a better resting place in Canada as well as a better life". Isn't that just so sad?

So what can our group do? We can work closely with the local Heritage Societies, help them raise funds, even roll our sleeves up to clear undergrowth if required. However, the most important need is money -- we have met with Clyne Heritage Society who have admitted that we have given them a push towards rescuing the historical old burial ground at Clyne Kirkton. During the first year of our fund raising endeavours we will concentrate on helping Clyne Heritage. As years go by we will move to other burial grounds. Our sole aim to preserve the final resting place of all our ancestors -- the people who made us.

Our committee met with the lovely people of Clyne Heritage recently and they have since written to tell us that a beginning has been made:

"Since our meeting we have met with our committee and discussed at length the project of preventing further deterioration at Clynekirkton graveyard. We all agree that the time is right to gather support from the community, seek advice from Historic Scotland and approach funding bodies. I am in the process of compiling a list of essential maintenance work for each site and will separate them into different stages, starting with Stage 1 objectives. This will involve initial scrub clearance to determine the extent of the graveyard and recover broken tombstones from the graveyard periphery. The next stage will be to identify the gravestones most at risk and determine the measures required to protect or conserve them, which will require professional advice."

"I am sure I speak for all our members when I say that Clyne Heritage Society very much appreciate the efforts of your organisation and we hope that Clynekirkton will be a place that visitors will come and be informed, stay a while and be able to contemplate and when they go take some special thoughts with them".

Now, we need YOUR help. We need funds to enable this work to go ahead. We need your donations, we need fund raising events; we need the world to know what we are doing. We need all the Clan Societies around the world to organise an event; we need all the newspapers to carry our plea; we need money -- will you help?

For further information contact
Christine Stokes
3 Holyrood Walk
Corby, Northamptonshire, NN18 9JD, England
Telephone 01536 747339
Email: chris@northants26.freemove.co.uk

Visit the web site at <www.p-o-s-h.co.uk>
Want to join our newsgroup on the Internet?
<www.highlandhearts.com>

Subscribing details at

HIGHLAND FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

At the Society's AGM, which will be held on Tuesday 26th March at our new regular venue in the Lower Hall at the Methodist Church in Huntly Street, Inverness, a change to the constitution has been proposed by the committee. The Chairman, Neil Murray, must stand down at this meeting having held that particular post for the past three years. It was agreed among the committee members that the problem of finding his replacement would be mitigated if there were a vice-chairman ready to take over the post of chairman. To that end the following amendment to Section 4 (i) of the constitution has been proposed: -

"Subject to any direction by the Annual General Meeting, or by an Extraordinary General Meeting, the affairs of the Society shall be managed by an Executive Committee, meeting at least four times in each year, and consisting of a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and Librarian, with not less than two, and not more than seven, other members. A quorum of the Committee shall consist of four of its members. The Chairman shall have his own, and one casting vote, if required, and his decision on all points of order shall be final."

The effect on the original paragraph is to: -

1. Add in the word 'Vice-Chairman' after 'Chairman'
2. Remove the sentence "The Committee may elect one of its own members as Vice-Chairman"
3. Reduce the maximum number of other Committee Members from eight to seven.

Several members of the committee have served for a number of years. They would like to see more members of the Society offering to come onto the committee. With only four committee meetings per year this is not too onerous a task. The Vice-Chairman would help at the monthly talks by introducing the speaker in the absence of the Chairman. This would free other committee members to deal with members' queries. It is very important that at the AGM both a Chairman and Vice-Chairman be appointed for the coming year so please make a special effort to come to the meeting and help to keep your Society going forward by strengthening the committee structure.

OLD TIMES REMEMBERED

by James Simpson (1873-1954)

This article came into my hands as a result of James Simpson's daughter, Helen, carrying out family history research on the other side of the Atlantic! In the 1970s Helen had successfully located and met descendants of her mother's Scottish family but had no information about her father's family, except that her paternal grandmother, Catherine Cameron, and her children were in Kiltarity at the time of the 1871 Census and that her grandparents died there in 1915/16.

In 1993, when Helen was 84 years old she made a final effort to discover if any surviving members of the family still lived in Kiltarity and, via a circuitous route, at last made contact with a 2nd cousin (in her nineties) living in the croft where her grandparents had retired all those years ago.

Helen visited the croft in 1994 and met her cousin, my aunt. Three years later, I went to stay with Helen in Canada where I was given the manuscript of this article by James Simpson which had appeared in a Saskatchewan newspaper, date unknown.

Joyce Winterbottom

I came to this country from Scotland in 1885 with my father and mother and two older brothers, 14 & 16 years of age respectively. This was the year of the Rebellion on the Saskatchewan River but it was practically over by the time we got to Winnipeg in May, as the battle of Batoche had been fought and won. All we saw of it was a battalion of soldiers entraining for the West at Winnipeg & that any Indians passing our Homestead always showed their passes for a long period afterwards.

My father who was a good farmer had made up his mind, as he had three sturdy sons, & as conditions in Scotland at that time were not very bright that he would try to make a home for himself and sons on the Prairies. Being not too blessed with money, he had planned to leave my mother and his two younger boys somewhere and that he and his eldest boy would get work of which there was a lot at that time as the C. P. R. was not yet completed. In this way he hoped to get in to the ways of that country.

However, as it happened, he met the Manager of one of the Land Companies in Winnipeg and was induced by him to change his plans. This Land Company was offering to advance \$1000 to him and the eldest boy as soon as they had filed on homesteads, and also promising to assist them in their selection of land, naturally of course contiguous to their Land Company's Holdings. The result was that we proceeded West from Winnipeg into what was then called Assiniboia & detrained at a small mushroom town there.

The Land Company provided a tent to make our home in while my father and brother were taken out by a guide of the Company to view the promised land.

Of course they were equipped with a camping outfit also and after about a week of exploring they located what was to be our future home for 18 years. They then proceeded to purchase a yoke of oxen, wagon, plough etc. etc.

The location of the Homestead was about thirty miles away out on the prairie & about 20 miles from the nearest railway station. I, for one, enjoyed this trek of 2 days very much, everything being new, and I felt like the explorers I had read about. The country being very

wet at that time, we had to cut out roads through the bush to get around some of the sloughs to avoid getting the wagons stuck.

We purchased a milk cow from a settler on the way. She was due to frishen the following January. This cow turned out to be the nucleus of one of the finest herds of grade cattle in that part of the country in future years.

Well, we got our tent pitched just in time before a terrifying electric storm and a downpour of rain came down. Fortunately, our nearest neighbour appeared on the scene before the storm broke and took my mother with him to his home for the night to get acquainted with his young wife. Nevertheless, we spent the first night quite comfortably. On the morrow, the menfolk proceeded to break up a likely piece of prairie to plant a few potatoes in, even if it was late, and our neighbour donated a fireguard around his buildings which he had broken and backsett the previous season.

We dug some very nice potatoes in the Fall from the fireguard but the ones on our own place being just on the sod were not so good of course. However, they provided many a good meal the following Winter with the addition of the meat from Jack Rabbits and buck rabbits etc.

The next job was to haul a load of firewood and other timbers to build a house with as there was not a twig on the whole section. My father and eldest brother now went ahead digging a cellar and erecting a sod house & my other brother aged 14 years kept on breaking up more land with the oxen for which he developed quite an aptitude.

My humble servant's job was to change the cow's picket & see that she was getting water regularly & in my spare time pull bark off the timbers for the house.

The house when completed was very comfortable, cool in Summer and warm in Winter. A framework of poplar timbers was first erected, then a 2 ft wall of sods built on the outside. The inside was lathed with small poplar poles and then plastered with clay & finished off with a white clay which I had discovered in a dry creek bottom nearby. The roof was thatched with the long rushes which grow around some of the sloughs.

I inspected the sod house some 25 years afterwards, and the roof was still watertight and serviceable.

The next event was securing hay of which there was all kinds in the sloughs as they dried up. About this time my eldest brother went to work for a farmer & kept on with him until the freeze-up in the Fall. My father cut the hay with the (Armstrong Mower) and a scythe and my job was to coil it up nicely. We then built a hayrack on the wagon of poplar poles also & hauled home the hay & stacked it at the back of the stable site.

We secured upwards of 30 loads of beautifully cured hay as my father intended buying a few more cows when he received the last \$500 of the promised \$1000 from the Land Company. However, the 'best laid schemes of mice and men gang oft agley' as we had the misfortune to lose all that grand hay by a raging prairie fire which came down on us fanned by a strong gale.

We had what was considered by older settlers an ample 'fireguard' ploughed around the haystacks & buildings but, in spite of that & a valiant fight by all of us, the hay could not be saved. My father was quite severely burnt in the struggle. I must say that I myself have never felt so utterly discouraged since & we were all more or less the same way.

However, as it happened, we were all able to secure a considerable quantity of hay and oat straw from some of our kind neighbours who were more fortunate. Also the grain crops this

year were more or less of a failure on account of early frost & we were asked to take all the wheat sheaves we required as there were acres & acres in our locality that were never threshed, some never cut, some cut and stooked and some not stooked.

If it had been today, that wheat would have been worth good money, but as the markets were then, a person could not dispose of it even for 15 or 20 cents a bushel & that would not pay for threshing it.

Our next setback as a result of the discouraging crop was that our friends, the Land Company, got cold feet and refused to come through with the last \$500 loan promised. Of course we could not have bought the stock until Spring anyway as we had lost our hay, but I have always maintained that if the Land Company had not lost their faith in the country for the time being, we could have repaid them their original \$500 much sooner than we did.

(page missing from manuscript)

By this time we had come to realize that raising stock was undoubtedly a much surer method of farming than relying on grain crops only. However, I would like to say that this Land Company were not Shylocks as they never compounded interest & in fact when we made the final settlement they dropped practically all the accrued interest.

My father & eldest brother put in a considerable time in the Fall assisting the neighbours to thresh their crops. As money was a very scarce commodity with everyone, they had to take grain mostly for wages but as we required seed for the following Spring that worked out alright. I earned my first money assisting our neighbours to dig potatoes.

The summer of 1886 proved very dry - so much so that all the sloughs dried up & getting enough water for the house and stock was quite a problem. My two older brothers worked out this summer and your humble servant was promoted to the job of ox driver & ploughman while my father went on building a granary to accommodate our crops as we had hauled lots of material from the bush the previous winter for this purpose.

But unfortunately on account of the drought the crop was very light with the exception of potatoes of which we had a grand yield. So much so that we secured an old reaper to cut the crop and bound the sheaves with long grass which we called thatch grass.

When the freeze-up came, we did not even call in a threshing machine. My father & eldest brother did that job with the good old flail & we cleaned it with the wind. This kept down expenses at any rate even though the work was hard.

We spent a considerable time this winter digging wells but with very poor success. However, about this time I happened to be sliding around on the ice on a little pond of water in a dry creek about a mile from home & what did I find but a spring of open water. This spring was certainly a godsend to us as well as to all the neighbours around as it did away with the necessity of melting snow in the house for the stock.

The rest of this winter was devoted to cutting & hauling home logs to build a larger house.

The following Spring, 1887, my two brothers secured passes to proceed up the Rocky Mountains to assist in building snow sheds on the C.P.R. at fairly good wages. We reaped a bountiful harvest this year of everything and even if the price for wheat was only around 50 cents per bushel, we felt we were making some headway.

I also had some luck discovering abundant good water again at about 5 ft depth, this time in the bed of the aforementioned dry creek which went past our house.

As we had 3 or 4 cows from the original cow, and as I said previously my father was a first-class stockman, he decided to purchase a real sire to head his herd. One of his arguments in favour of this was that he considered the sire as half the herd & in a few years I saw that he was completely correct in this. He was lucky to secure a yearling bull from what was considered a very famous herd at that time, the Benchard Herd of Shorthorns, and he proved a wonderful stock getter.

The price was considered very large at that time & I as a boy of course came in for a considerable amount of sneering from some of the neighbours about investing so much in a sire when our female herd was so small. They did not dare to suggest it to my father at all & afterwards they admitted they were wrong as not only we benefited but our neighbours also did, particularly those living closest to us.

Shortly after this the 'Fall Fairs' began to be organized in our part of the country and they proved a great impetus towards developing & improving our livestock. There were three of these within a radius of 25 miles of us and although the distances were great & we had no trucks to transport the animals in those days, we always managed to have a good representation of our herd present, headed by the purebred sire I mentioned previously. In fact, this sire was never defeated in the local show rings even after we had sold him to an outside district entirely.

There were 4 or 5 very nice herds of Shorthorns in our vicinity at that time. But to show how pre-eminent a stock-getter our animal was I remember on one occasion at one of these Fairs there was a special prize offered for 'the best herd of five head of any breed' grades or purebreds. Well I had the audacity to enter this sire of ours and four of his progeny, consisting of one 2 year old steer, one 2 year old heifer, a yearling steer and a yearling heifer. Strange to relate they won the prize handsily. It was a popular win as well because the other breeders crowded around afterwards and congratulated us on our well-deserved victory.

The following year, 1888, started out wonderfully as far as moisture & growth were concerned, so we thought we would build a new house of logs which we had secured the previous winter. My father decided to keep my brother older than I at home this season to assist him in erecting the house while I kept on doing the farm work.

My eldest brother had decided to cross over to the United States about a hundred miles south of us to work there as wages were reported better and more easily secured than in Canada. He & the brother older than I started out early on a Monday morning after seeding with the oxen and wagon, covered of course to sleep in, and a camping outfit to cook their meals. The following Saturday, the younger brother got back before dark having parted with his brother a little way inside the U.S. boundary.

My eldest brother still had 80 to 100 miles to go to reach the nearest town and railway, the Northern Pacific, and of course packing his turkey as it was called at that time, containing all his worldly goods. He had fairly good luck over there & eventually drifted west into Montana.

We did not see him again until the year of the Klondike Rush 10 years later although he always kept sending some money home to his parents. And they needed it to some extent as our wheat that year had the misfortune to get nipped in the milk stage on the 9th day of August with a heavy frost & our only source of revenue was from eggs and butter. The result of this early frost was that although we had over 50 acres of wheat seeded, we only reaped a little over 200 bushels & that off the high ridges. The rest had to be burnt off the following Spring to clear the land for another crop.

Our district being low-lying was worse than some of the neighbouring districts as they had a bountiful crop. However some of our neighbours suffered worse than we did. I remember one neighbour who only threshed about 50 bushels of very poor wheat from quite a large acreage. You understand these were the days of the good old Red Fyfe wheat & it just took too long to mature.

In our case, the direct result was that construction of the new house was suspended for lack of funds to purchase shingles & flooring & time to finish it.

My brother, next older than I, now decided to follow his older brother over to the States to obtain work there also. So on the following Monday morning he struck out over the same route followed by his brother & I had to go with him to take back the oxen and wagon. I must say that I enjoyed the first 3 days immensely as it was through a fine country that had been homesteaded in the early eighties but the majority of the homesteads deserted on account of early frosts and being too far away from railway transportation. That part of the country has since turned out to be one of the finest grain-growing parts of Saskatchewan. They got railways in & it was re-settled again closer than before.

On the morning of the 4th day, I parted with my last brother after breakfast, he starting on foot carrying his pack & I hitching up the oxen for the long trek home alone. Believe me it was lonely at night particularly. Can I be blamed if I felt pretty blue being only 15 years of age when I lost sight of him over a ridge & did not see him again until the year of the Rossland Mining Booms. He also drifted West into Montana where he took a course in the School of Mines in Butte City & devoted the rest of his life to prospecting and mining, mostly in BC.

I got home on the Saturday night O.K. & was I glad to get there, back with my parents. My father & I now proceeded to finish haying & securing the remains of our crop that was worth anything. I also cut some 50 acres or so of crop for people in the neighbouring districts who were fortunate enough not to be hit with the early frost. This netted us a dollar an acre for the use of our binder and oxen and I had lots of time in which to do it.

The following year, 1889, started out under the finest conditions imaginable, but June & July became too hot and dry with the result that the crops simply burnt up. We barely managed to save enough grain for seed & we certainly had to do some scratching to get enough food for our little bunch of stock. This was the year that a great exodus took place among the stockmen to any place where hay could be secured & was the start of a number of large ranches in suitable localities.

The next year, 1890, gave promise of wonderful returns but our old friend Jack Frost came to visit us too early. The result was the wheat was frosted & could only be disposed of with difficulty & at very low prices. We sold enough of it to pay for threshing & twine & decided to feed the bulk of it to hogs. As soon as Spring opened up, we built a large hog pasture of poplar poles & bought up some 40 or 50 young pigs to feed the frozen wheat to. In this way we netted a fair price for the wheat but had to wait an extra year for returns. This year we had a bumper crop. It was the first year I had seen grain lodged, it was so heavy. Well, we got the crop all stacked up & were waiting for a threshing machine when along came a terrible prairie fire &, in spite of good fireguards & strenuous efforts, we had the misfortune to lose about two thirds of our crop and about one third of our hay in stacks. However we felt that we were lucky not to get burnt ourselves as several people in the path of the fire were, one of two fatally. Naturally we felt the loss but personally I must say that it didn't discourage me as much as the loss of our little bit of hay the first year we were in the country. You see we had a nice little bunch of cattle by now & we had our hogs to fall back on. We marketed the hogs

in batches of 8 to 10 as they came ready. We had to kill & dress them ourselves & in that way I became a tolerably fair butcher.

From now on the seasons appeared to improve as far as grain growing was concerned & we continued to make steady progress financially. So much so that at the end of 18 years from the time we came to Canada we decided to sell out as my father & mother were getting too old, & deserved a rest. I could have carried on but the urge to see a little more of the country prevailed & I took a vacation also by accompanying my parents back to Scotland & seeing them comfortably settled there.

Now do not get the impression from these memories that pioneering was all work & no play, far from it. We always had the local picnics & sports days in the neighbouring towns to attend & of course the socials & dances in the Winter time. Some of us also took trips to the cities or to the nearest lakes in Summer for a spot of fishing, swimming & boating. In my case I used to enjoy those trips to a neighbouring lake so much that a chum & I made what we called an 'Annual Outing' of it, sometimes ourselves & sometimes with one or two friends. Of course, you understand that the lake resorts in those days were quite different from what they are today. I think there were only two permanent cottages at the lake I refer to, where today it is like a village. However, I very much doubt whether they get any more enjoyment out of it than we did only in a different way.

So now I will close the 1st chapter of my pioneering experiences by hoping & trusting that the succeeding generations will get as much out of life as I did.

Signed *J C Simpson*

ODDS & ENDS

Sue Thomson of the Kilmorack Heritage Association sent in the following items. If any other member has any similar little snippets we will certainly find a space for them.

While looking at entries in the Kiltarity OPR for the period 1780-1790, she and husband John noticed that the baptisms showed a '+' alongside the name of the child. Why? Any suggestions?

They also found the following baptism in the OPR for Kiltarity, which is in Inverness-shire. **30th October 1829, John McLeod and Mary McDonald of Kessock in the Parish of Knockbain (ROC), bapt. Barbara born 23rd October.** An interesting stray.

And finally Dr Simon Taylor of St Andrews University will be giving two lectures on 'The Viking Connection, the lost names of Kilmorack and Kiltarity', showing old maps and documents researched for the first time. The first meeting will be in Beaulieu Church of Scotland Hall at 7.30pm on Wednesday 29th May on Kilmorack Parish. The second meeting will be held in Kiltarity Community Hall at 7.30pm on Thursday 30th May on Kiltarity and Glen Convinth Parish. Admission is free.

HFHS STRAYS INDEX

By Alan Ross

In this first article of 2002 I would like to offer my sincere thanks to Donnie MacLennan for all the strays that he extracts and sends to me. Being away from home a lot of late, I always switch on the computer and find a number of files from Donnie waiting to be added to the index. Thanks also to Fiona and anyone else who has sent me information. Reflecting on our wonderful postal system I received, during the second week of January, a letter from Alan Maryon of Wisbech in Cambridgeshire. The letter had no legible postmark but inside were the words 'Christmas and New Year greetings', so I assume that it was posted before Christmas!

Reading from time to time, through old papers that came with the Stray's Index when I took over the role of Strays Co-ordinator, I often find things that intrigue me. A classic example was an 1881 census entry for Madron, Penzance in Cornwall. It simply read '8 St. Mary's Terrace, WELCH, Julia, boarder, 11, Scholar, born Scotland Caitness Wick'. That was it, plain and simple. The first thing that springs to mind is why was Julia at school in Penzance? Looking through the WELCH surname in Cornwall gave me no answers, as Julia was the only one from Scotland down there. The school that she attended was called a 'Ladies School'. Run by a German Governess who taught French and German and assisted by an English Governess who taught Music, the school had just seven scholars. Julia, at the age of eleven, was the youngest. As there were no leads as to why Julia was at school in Cornwall, I wondered if I could find an answer by looking at the 1881 census for Wick. Sadly, no one by the name of WELCH turned up either living or born there so to date I am none the wiser. Perhaps the answer lies in the 1871 census.

Another simple unrelated entry reads 'Jane McPherson, unmarried, born Crondel, Strathspey, residing Gallowgate, Died 3/2/1846 aged 18. Cause of death, Decline'.

The surname I have highlighted this month is that of SUTHERLAND.

Surname	Forename	City	Birth Parish	Year	Age	Event	Source
SUTHERLAND	Andrew	CAI	Wick	1872	31	Death	MI / Young / NSW / AUS
SUTHERLAND	George	CAI		1871	25	Census 1871	Census / Glasgow / LKS
SUTHERLAND	Donald	CAI	Wick	1871	20	Census 1871	Census / Glasgow / LKS
SUTHERLAND	Donald	CAI		1796		Death	MI / H Trinity / Berwick-on-Tweed / BER
SUTHERLAND	James	CAI		1866	52	Death	MI / Toowoong / Brisbane / QLD / AUS
SUTHERLAND	Elizabeth*	SUT	Dornoch	1919	72	Death	MI / Lawrence / Otago / NZ
SUTHERLAND	William	SUT	Dornoch	1919	87	Death	MI / Lawrence / Otago / NZ
SUTHERLAND	Elizabeth	SUT		1881	23	Census 1881	Census / Gateshead / DUR
SUTHERLAND	Nell	SUT		1861	38	Census 1861	Census / Fraserburgh / ABD
SUTHERLAND	Agnes*	SCO		1851	40	Census 1851	Census / Isle of Man
SUTHERLAND	Alexander	SCO		1851	40	Census 1851	Census / Isle of Man
SUTHERLAND	Frances	SCO		1851	13	Census 1851	Census / Isle of Man
SUTHERLAND	James	SCO		1851	44	Census 1851	Census / Isle of Man
SUTHERLAND	Donald	CAI	Lyster	1900	80	Death	MI / Hoylake / CHS
SUTHERLAND	Marjorie*	CAI		1904	76	Death	MI / Hoylake / CHS
SUTHERLAND	Marjorie*	CAI		1943	91	Death	MI / Hoylake / CHS
SUTHERLAND	Anne	CAI	Halikirk	1851	44	Census 1851	Census / Edinburgh St. Cuthberts / MLN
SUTHERLAND	Elizabeth*	CAI	Milton	1851	49	Census 1851	Census / Lasswade / MLN
SUTHERLAND	Francis	CAI	Forse	1851	21	Census 1851	Census / Miscellaneous Inst. / KEN

SUTHERLAND	John	CAI	Latheron	1851	31	Census 1851	Census / Edinburgh St. Cuthberts / MLN
SUTHERLAND	John	CAI	Halikirk	1851	31	Census 1851	Census / Edinburgh St. Cuthberts / MLN
SUTHERLAND	John	CAI	Wick	1851	37	Census 1851	Census / Brechin / ANS
SUTHERLAND	Alexander	SUT	Tongue	1900	37	Marriage	Marriage / Islington, London / Metropolitan Police
SUTHERLAND	Jannet	MOR		1851	19	Census 1851	Census / Tarves / ABD
SUTHERLAND	Angus	SUT	CAI?	1851	28	Census 1851	Census / Lochgirthhead / ARL
SUTHERLAND	Ann*	CAI	Wick	1889b		Death	Hastings / NZ
SUTHERLAND	George	CAI	Wick	1887b		Gen Info	Family / Hastings / NZ
SUTHERLAND	Christina	CAI	Wick	1909b		Gen Info	Family / Hastings / NZ
SUTHERLAND	Tait	SUT		1851	53	Census 1851	Census / Dull / PER
SUTHERLAND	Robert	SUT					

The Parishes for this month are those of Lochaber, INV and Kincardine, ROC

Surname	Forename	City	Birth Parish	Year	Age	Event	Source
CAMERON	Cathren	INV	Lochaber	1851	37	Census 1851	Census / Abbey / RFW
CAMERON	Janet*	INV	Lochaber	1913	90	Death	Ship Arch / M & D Cert / Obit / AUS
CAMERON	Mrs.	INV	Lochaber	1851	70	Census 1851	Census / Abbey / RFW
CAMERON	Sarah	INV	Lochaber	1851	27	Census 1851	Census / Abbey / RFW
CAMPBELL	Cathren	INV	Lochaber	1851	40	Census 1851	Census / Abbey / RFW
HENDERSON	Margret	INV	Lochaber	1851	34	Census 1851	Census / Abbey / RFW
KENNEDY	Lewis	INV	Lochaber	1851	19	Census 1851	Census / Perth / PER
McALPINE	Mary	INV	Lochaber	1851	30	Census 1851	Census / Abbey / RFW
McARTHUR	Catherine*	INV	Lochaber				Ship Arch / Obit / S.Aus
McARTHUR	Donald	INV	Lochaber	1882	72	Death	Ship Info / WWII / S.Aus
McDONALD	Catherine	INV	Lochaber	1888	71	Death	Ship Arch / Death Cert / Obit / AUS
McDONALD	Donald	INV	Lochaber	1851	60	Census 1851	Census / Monvem / ARL
McDONALD	James	INV	Lochaber	1885	75	Death	Ship Info / Obit / Penola / S. Aus
McDONALD	Janet	INV	Lochaber	1913	90	Death	Ship Arch / M & D Cert / Obit / AUS
McDONALD	Mary	INV	Lochaber	1851	34	Census 1851	Census / Abbey / RFW
McGILP	Cathren	INV	Lochaber	1851	38	Census 1851	Census / Abbey / RFW
McMASTER	Flora	INV	Lochaber	1851	62	Census 1851	Census / Monvem / ARL
McMASTER	Hugh	INV	Lochaber	1851	55	Census 1851	Census / Monvem / ARL
ROBERTSON	Isabella	INV	Lochaber	1851	11	Census 1851	Census / Dull / PER
TAYLOR	Elizabeth	INV	Lochaber	1908	77	Death	Clarence Cemetery / Ottawa / Ontario / CAN
THOMSON	Janet	INV	Lochaber	1851	45	Census 1851	Census / Glasgow Outer High / LKS

Surname	Forename	City	Birth Parish	Year	Age	Event	Source
BEATSON	John Mack	ROC	Kincardine	1945	45	Marriage	Midland / Aus?
DOUGLAS	Margaret	ROC	Kincardine	1871	54	Census 1871	Census / Fodderty / ROC
MacINTOSH	Isabella	ROC	Kincardine	1881	42	Census 1881	Census / Dingwall / ROC
MacLENNAN	Catherine	ROC	Kincardine	1881	38	Census 1881	Census / Dingwall / ROC
ROSS	Christina*	ROC	Kincardine	1850	45	Death	MI / Neilfield / ABD
ROSS	George	ROC	Kincardine	1847		Death	News Obit / Toronto / Can

Work on the Index has, for the past few months, been virtually non-existent owing to the amount of time that I have been away from home. This situation is unlikely to change for the next few months at least. It is for this reason that I have not been able to produce an update of new additions as I had hoped. Please bear with me as I can assure you that it will get done eventually. In the meantime please keep sending in any strays you come across.

