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Three cheers for Europe and all that its bureaucracy has to offer! As a result of a directive from Brussels, member nations of the European Union have been given the opportunity to introduce 'flexible working' systems to the workplace.

The both of you who are regular browsers of this column may recall that I have been pursuing the compression of my normal weekly hours, currently spread over 5 days, into 4, longer days. Well, hopefully, you will be delighted that my employers have, with some less than hidden resistance and after probably much consultation with 'Personnel', eventually succumbed to agreeing to the majority of my request, and I begin my self-enforced four-day week this week. I should not have advertised this fact to the likes of John Durham, as he will now expect, as a matter of course, a commensurate increase in the number of articles I should now be churning out for the Journal!

What this will mean, of course, in practical terms, is that my three-day weekend (I've deliberately chosen Monday as my 'day off' to avoid ever having that 'Monday morning feeling' again) will probably get swallowed up with domestic things, much like 'normal' weekends do at present. My long-retired parents, who are beginning to feature in this column with disturbing regularity, so often interject their conversations with references to never having been as busy as they are now. They just don't seem to realise that I, too, am busy - but I have to fit in an extra 35 hours, which they no longer have to do, at the behest of my employer!

So, realistically, what will I do with my 50% longer weekends? Had I chosen Friday (my employer insisted that my 'day off' had to be a nominated, fixed day), then I could have spent long weekends in Edinburgh researching family histories at New Register House or delving through archival material such as the Sutherland Estate Papers held at the National Library. However, with my choice of Mondays as my additional weekend day, this option is ruled out.

No. What I think I might do is look to more local resources - with Inverness only an hour's drive away, maybe I can spend more time in the excellent Reference Section of the Library researching the Old Parish Registers, compiled by parish ministers prior to compulsory registration which began in 1855. Or maybe going through the census records of 1881 and 1901. Or maybe going through old editions of Highland newspapers. Or maybe just browsing through the books.

Even more locally, I think I might visit the Library in Dornoch, as it also has some interesting resources. The library has the first digital archive in the Highlands, which includes the Minutes of the Dornoch Town Council from 1729 to 1975, and, with especial interest to me as it covers the whole of Sutherland, the Dornoch Jail Register from 1813 to 1840.

I have used the archive once in the past and found the Dornoch Jail Register absolutely fascinating. There are tales of imprisonment (it is called 'incarceration' in the Register) for a whole variety of reasons, some of the most bizarre include sheep stealing, stealing wood, clipping Patrick Sellar's sheep for its wool (nice one!), bad debt (lots of these), and even 'leaving a bastard child in Brora' (didn't know that was an offence!). Then there are the more serious including murder (two entries so far), and, on almost the first page, Patrick Sellar's imprisonment for setting fire to a Tinker's house and destroying a mill. And I've only just started! I don't think I'll be bored!

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE INVERNESS AREA IN THE 1840S

By Peter Zentler Munro

The first part of this article appeared in the August journal. In the middle of a section headed 'Expenditure' we were left with the following question to be answered: - *poor law relief allowances were inadequate - where could savings be made?*

Mr Stuart suggested that the cost of clothes could be reduced by half, but only by sacrificing a decent appearance. Other suggestions were reduce fuel by 6s - people who could not afford fuel were known to go to bed earlier, or spend the evenings with friends; reduce soap items by half; reduce house rent by 4s or 5s, if another 6d a week reduction were needed, "it must fall on food", probably by substituting potatoes for oatmeal. The budgets would then be for a family of 6, £18-10-10 per year (7s 2d a week) or less by doing without meat or milk:

Item	Amount
Rent	1-15-0
Fuel	1-14-0
Food	10-5-10
Tobacco	12s
Whisky	3s
Clothes*	3-0-0
Soap, candles, school and doctor's fees	1-1-0
Total	18-10-10

Table 6 - Cheaper Annual Expenditure

for a single woman £4-6-0 per year (1s 8d per week):

Item	Amount
Rent	1-0-0
Fuel (½ cwt of coal per week, and a bit of peat)	1-0-0
Food total	1-6-0
Clothes (including 10s-12s for shoes or clogs)	15s
Soap, candles, school and doctor's fees	5s
Total	4-6-0

Table 7 - Cheaper Annual budget - Single Woman

Another estimate (in Longformacaus) quotes 1s 5½d per week per adult for food alone (£3-16-0 per year). Levitt and Smout say "Over Scotland as a whole, about half the expenditure went on food, on this basis a married couple would need £15-4-0 to cover everything." A Dr Handyside of Edinburgh reported to the poor law commissioners that 6d a week was enough to keep a single man in food, and that a family of 6 could live on 2s 6d a week and be comfortable on 3s or 3s 6d a week. "However, later he says of the man "... sometimes he has no more than a roll per day." This was also reported in the "Medical Times" and the London

"Times". A committee of the working classes was started to refute these "monstrously absurd" and "barbarously cruel" statements, and report to the poor law commissioners.

Clearly, even where one person was the sole source of income, and there were fewer than three children, artisans (except weavers) and farm servants were likely to be able to save some of their income in a savings bank or friendly society, or spend more. In contrast, in those families where the man was of a different class of worker, it was essential for wives, and often children to work as well.

Savings

There were 2 savings banks and 4 friendly societies (chiefly masonic) in Inverness, according to the New Statistical Account there were 9 friendly societies. One of the societies was the Rechabites (a temperance order), another was the Incorporated Trades. In Scotland as a whole, several different types of friendly societies existed, occupational clubs, burial clubs, societies which paid an annual dividend, those that paid out during periods of illness (or in some cases unemployment), and the 'affiliated orders', for example, the Oddfellows, the Foresters, and the Rechabites. The Commissioners regarded savings banks and friendly societies as 'preventives of Pauperism'. They said "Societies so formed, have proved highly advantageous, as the members rarely, if ever, either in sickness or in old age, become burdens on the poor funds."

According to the NSA, the Incorporated Trades charged its members 10s to 15s of entry money, and 1s 6d to 2s per quarter; when ill, a member received 3s to 5s per week for the first 6 weeks, thereafter 9d to 1s 3d a week. In Hawick, in the Borders, Rechabites' members paid 3d a week, when they were ill they received a benefit of 7s 6d a week.

Society	Weekly subscription	Weekly Benefit	Sickness
Name not known	2d	6s	
Rechabites	3d	7s 6d	
Foresters	4d	10s	
Oddfellows	4d	10s	

Table 8 - Friendly Societies

Unemployment

The minister stated that there were very few able-bodied unemployed, but this was because there had been subscriptions to provide employment for them. As a general principal, able-bodied men had no entitlement to any relief from the poor fund in Scotland, though some local authorities did provide relief, and a few friendly societies provided benefits for their members. There was also the difficulty that farm servants who became unfit for their work lost their accommodation, while some would come to a town and work as a carter, and others would find work as a weaver, a pinn-winder, or as a gardener, they might find difficulty in getting (and paying for) an alternative place to live. Carters were often former farm servants putting their skills with horses to another use.

There were 2 pawnbrokers shops, and 137 places to obtain liquor, though some of these may have been no more than huts. According to William Cumming, there was one licensed pawnbroker and flying ones (unlicensed – “they come from the country, for a week or so”). These flying ones, also known as “wee pawns”, charged exorbitant interest since they were not subject to control.

Poor Relief

There was tremendous variation in the quality of answers given to questions about the proportions of various groups receiving poor relief. According to Levitt & Simout, as a whole in the population, there was variance in the treatment of different groups; some supported unemployed and temporary sick able-bodied men, others did not. Immigrants, and mothers with illegitimate children were often excluded. The report for Inverness is different to many of the other parishes, in that there is less detail about the groups and individual recipients, but more detail about costs in general.

What did recipients receive? It seems to have been dependent on a number of factors: the wealth of the local community; attitude to the poor; custom; local notions of what constituted a minimum standard of subsistence; the availability of work, such as winding pirns, which would allow the parish to avoid giving a full allowance; attitude to begging.

In Inverness, there were 3 paid officers employed in the management of the poor. These were the collector, who collected subscriptions, paid recipients, and produced reports on applications, and paid £30 per year; the secretary and assessor, paid £40 per year; and the clerk, who kept minutes of the meetings and accounts, paid £10 per year. Presumably the clerk had another job. The collector evidently complained about his pay, in 1843 it went up to £35.

Subscriptions were collected from householders towards the cost of providing the poor relief, houses worth under £3 per year were exempted. The funds raised are markedly different from year to year, depending on whether the subscription was forced or voluntary. The funds collected were: from April 1841 to August 1841, £329-13s-5d; from August 1841 to August 1842, £782-7s; from August 1842 to April 1843, £613-11s-10d.

I had expected that the total raised would be equal to the total relief payments plus the costs of collections and disbursements, but I can't reconcile the totals. Funds were normally disbursed quarterly, but William Cumming visited and paid the bed-ridden poor monthly. Several of the witnesses seem to have counted claimants, Archibald Brenner noted that there were 865 claims, of which 644 people were in absolute destitution and were admitted to the poor roll; 111 were temporarily relieved.

Analysis of the payments was provided by a solicitor, Peter Anderson. In 1842/1843 there were 496 paupers relieved, plus 13 orphans and imbeciles, receiving a total of £211-6s-9d (£211.34) per quarter-year.

This is broken down as follows:

Paupers	Payment per quarter-year	Payment per week	Total Amount
2	3s	2½d	£ 0- 6s- 0d
79	4s 4d	4d	£17- 2s- 4d

79	5s 5d	5d	£21- 7s-11d
146	6s 6d	6d	£47- 9s- 0d
104	9s 9d	9d	£50-14s- 0d
84	13s	1s	£54-12s- 0d
2	19s 9d	1s 6¼d	£ 1-19s- 6d
13 orphans and imbeciles			£17-16s- 0d
Total 509	Average of 8s 3½d	7½d	£211-6s-9d

Table 9 - Payment Analysis

Analysis of the poor was provided of the roll in 1840 by Peter Anderson.

Not natives of the parish	Male	Female
Not natives of the parish - Resident before 1810	30	134
Not natives of the parish - Resident after 1810 but before 1830	16	96
Not natives of the parish - Resident after 1830 but before 1837	4	35
Not natives of the parish - Others	1	4
Total not natives of the parish	51	269
Natives of the parish - aged over 70	14	41
Natives of the parish - aged between 50 and 70	4	70
Natives of the parish - aged under 50	11	39
Total natives of the parish	29	150
Total on the Roll	80	419

Table 10 - Analysis of the Poor (on the Roll)

The New Statistical Account said “.... A recent survey, occasioned by the distress arising from cholera, demonstrated 800 persons (many having families) in Inverness in extremely indigent circumstances.” It should be noted that although it was normal in many areas not to pay relief to persons that had been born outside the parish, this does not seem to have been the case in Inverness at this time.

There was a Dispensary (opened in 1832 on the Green of Muirtown), and the Northern Infirmary, both supported by voluntary contributions. Medical men gave their assistance to the sick poor gratuitously. Alexander Forbes said that cholera epidemics were chiefly in poor areas, the Maggot, the Merkinch, and the Green of Muirton. David Fergusson, who was on the dispensary committee, noted some of the “cases” that had come from the country: George M’Kenzie, of Abbey St, was lame of one hand, and had come to Inverness to find work; William Callum had a farm which failed. John Inglis said that there was enough space for ordinary patients, but not enough (only 8 cells) for lunatics. All incurables were rejected. He noted, too, that a lot of able-bodied people were destitute, out of desperation, “... they go to neighbouring plantations, and gather leaves and dung from the roads to raise potatoes, and steal what they can”.

It was reported that bastardy and desertion of wives and children was on the increase, and that early marriages were less frequent than before, but there was no definition of what was considered to be an early marriage.

There were 3 charity schools, and a girls' school at which the children of the poor were taught. They were taught English reading, writing, arithmetic, book-keeping, geography, composition, scripture instruction, and psalmody. At Raining's school, the children of the poor were taught gratis due to a bequest, other children paid between 1s 6d and 2s a quarter for reading, writing, and arithmetic. At the Central school, where the General Assembly paid a teacher's salary, 60 to 80 children were taught free. Even so, Thomas M'Kenzie said that many poor children in Inverness were not educated. According to the New Statistical Account, Raining's school had 2 teachers to look after 250 pupils, and they were paid £48 and £40 per year, plus lodgings and gardens. At Inverness Academy, the rector received £90, and 3 to 5 other teachers got £30 to £40. Teachers at other schools in the landward part got a lot less, between £15 and £17.

From time to time there were societies that had collected money to persuade people not to beg by providing money or jobs, like one of which James Suter had been the committee secretary, which provided between 6d and 1s 6d per week. Around 1843, it is evident that the poor were expected to beg, in addition to their allowances.

Emigrants

Three questions in the survey dealt with emigration over the years 1840 to 1842; the number of emigrants that have left, the countries to which they went, and what assistance they received towards emigration.

In contrast to much of the rest of the Highlands, the minister reported that there had been very few emigrants during the past 3 years. Those that went, had gone to Canada, but had not received assistance to go.

BITS AND PIECES

It is most encouraging to have received several letters commenting on the previous journal. These comments, as well as helping to fill spaces in the journal, mean that members are not only reading the journal, but are interested enough to put pen to paper when something interests (or annoys) them. Here are the latest contributions.

Relative value of money in 1840

Laurence Draper has written in to give us some idea of the value of the money referred to in the first part of the above article by Peter Zentler Munro - In Family Tree Magazine (March 1999) an article by Evelyn M Smith quotes the multiplier to convert from: 1840 as 43.8 and 1850 as 58.1. A more recent article by Bob Bryson in the Surrey Industrial History Group magazine (Aug 2003) quotes: 1840 as 60 and 1850 as 80.

This would have given him the equivalent of around £45 to £70 per week today - probably not much luxury as we know it, but he wouldn't have had costs of travel to work, TV, holidays and any of what we nowadays expect as a right! At that time he might never have heard of even a railway train.

So the value of money may lie between 50 and 70 times what it would be today - if either of these are to be believed! Peter Munro's problem is clouded by not knowing what 'perks' his ancestor might have received in kind - food, rent etc etc! Hope that this helps.

Thanks for help

Laurel Lohay writes in from Canada to say that she would like to take this opportunity to thank the volunteers who work so hard to produce the 'Highland Family History Society Journal.'

If not for the journal, I probably would not have made contact with a family member living in Nairn, who was able to provide me with a family tree, census reports and pictures of my BEATON family. I put a query into the August 2003 issue of the journal and was very grateful to receive a reply from John MacKay.

In my query, I had asked if anyone had any information about my great grandmother, Helen (Ellen) BEATON b1870 at Midcoul, Petty. According to John MacKay, Helen married a Chemist by the name of Walter LYBURN on November 15th, 1922 in Partick, Lanark. They may have lived in Glasgow. Walter was from Scotstoun and Yoker in Glasgow, and died on July 8th, 1932. Walter later worked as a town gardener. This information gives me another avenue to pursue. I always look forward to receiving the journal. Thank you very much!

Exchange journals

Mrs Celia Geary from New Zealand wrote in to say - I receive the Highland FHS Journal on a round-robin from the Scottish Interest Group of the New Zealand Society of Genealogists. I am member No. 5527.

My grandmother was named Margaret Jane McDougall, the youngest daughter of the 11 children, of Highlanders William McDougall b.1839 in Islay, and Isabella Drummond b.1838 in Appin, both of Argyll. They married in Scotland in 1862 and emigrated to New Zealand in 1864. Twenty years later, my grandmother was born on 31st January 1884, but when I went to get her Birth Certificate, I was told that there was no one of that name born on that date.

After checking my facts again and, having known my grandmother until her death in 1956, I returned to the Registrar not once, but twice more. Still nothing! So then I asked if any female child was born on that date. Luckily, the Registrar employee was agreeable and found 'Mary Ann Brown McDougall'. In pencil on the side of the entry was written '*name changed to Margaret Jane on baptism on 6th July 1884.*'

How I wished that New Zealand had the 'RCE' indication that Scotland has, as it would have saved me a lot of worry. I don't think my grandmother knew of the change; she never mentioned it. Having since done other family research, I think the name was changed

