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EDITORIAL

Welcome to the August issue of the journal and again another big thank you is due to those of you who have taken the time and trouble to submit articles, or respond to queries or submit them in the first place.

Having given a talk recently to Clyne Heritage Society in Brora, and due to repeat it to members of the village's Women's Rural Institute next month, and also to Golspie Heritage Society next spring, I feel inspired to discuss the value of local place names with respect to the family historian. When researching family roots, the actual place where ancestors lived and worked is all precious information to possess as part of filling in the background to the person.

Modern day place names are an integral part of every day life for all. Everyone has lived somewhere, or has travelled to somewhere, or has read about somewhere, all of which places have been given a name. Place names affect all of us, all of the time, if not always directly, then at least superficially and indirectly. Without them, we would all, literally, be lost. Place names are, therefore, very important.

What places are named after is really quite interesting, and when thought about, quite simple in actual fact. Our pioneering ancestors would have applied names to places as an aid to navigation during these nomadic times, and as a sense of identity and ownership when these people began to settle permanently and cultivate the land. Thus, initially, place names must have been related exclusively to topographic features, which can be sub-divided into the following: natural, floral, faunal and man-made. Subsequently, with time, place names would also have been created for events, people, activities and folklore.

During my research, I have come across a number of places where I can study place names, and in this age of readily available and highly accessible information, it is easier to do now than it ever has been. Perhaps the best place I have used has been the National Map Library in Causewayside in Edinburgh, which (naturally enough) houses the nation's collection of archived maps. With particular interest to myself has been the collection of the Sutherland Estate maps, commissioned by the estate for varying purposes over the years.

One such map which has given me a wealth of hitherto unknown information, including details of townships and other place names which are not recorded on modern day maps, is one made by David Aitken in 1772. He surveyed the Carrol Estate around Loch Brora, for a boundary dispute between Carrol and the Countess of Sutherland. The information is fascinating and recorded in such large scale detail that these names would not appear on any other map of the time and certainly not now.

Another estate map of similar value was prepared by John Farey, a mineral surveyor, who was engaged by the estate to undertake a survey of the Brora coalfield for the Lord & Lady Stafford in 1812. There are names for many places, even including fields and again townships which do not appear on any modern day maps.

These are just two instances for my own parish in Sutherland, so there must be plenty of other useful estate maps out there just waiting to be investigated. Try the National Map Library – I can almost guarantee your fascination!

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HIGHLAND COUNCIL ARCHIVES AND THE TRANSFER OF RECORDS

By Malcolm Bangor-Jones

In the editorial for the previous issue of the journal, the editor got very enthusiastic about the news that the Highland Council was to provide a new purpose-built Archive Centre. We should, I agree, welcome this development. Although I could have wished that they had found an old building which needed a new use (Inverness has not been kind to its historic buildings), we must acknowledge that this represents a real step forward.

But, the editor then went on to say "The overwhelming good news for all, however, and one with which to leave you all drooling, is Highland Council's apparent new-found commitment to its own boundless cultural heritage and its pledge from the Edinburgh archives to return some of the Highland gems back to their rightful home."⁷

This I found hard to credit and raised my suspicions. I understand that the source for this statement was an official of the Highland Council – not, I hasten to add, someone working for the Archive Service, now or in the past. Having made some enquiries, I understand that the National Archives of Scotland in Edinburgh would be prepared to transfer heritors, kirk session, and local customs and excise records. These are records which we might consider 'local' in nature. Anything else would be a matter for detailed discussion and negotiation.

I could imagine that our editor would be particularly interested in family or estate papers. Most of these are, in legal terms, deposits or accessions. The material is generally not publicly owned. The owner's agreement would be necessary to any transfer. We are thus talking about negotiations having to be conducted between three parties rather than between two. In any event I understand that no approach has been made to the National Archives or the National Library of Scotland, and it follows that no pledge has been made in return.

There is also the frightening possibility that any attempt to open up some of these issues could encourage owners to think of selling or dispersing their records. The public funds are simply not available to purchase all of these records.

There are other questions lurking close to the surface. What do we really mean by returning records to their 'rightful home'? Where and how were these records created? Are these local records? Are they are of national importance? Are they local records but of national importance? These are potentially very complex questions which have to be considered.

Of course, records of national importance do not have to be held in a national repository. But records do have to be stored under proper environmental conditions and made available under proper supervision. We must recognise the achievements of the Highland Archive Service since its inception. However, these were made in spite of the Council's lack of support for its service.

The availability of capital funding for a new building does not guarantee the revenue funding to run the institution. Indeed, the lack of revenue funding is an ever present threat in the cultural sector as a whole. A commitment to build a new archive is not the same as a commitment to fund it over the longer term. There might be local records which could be transferred from the National Archives to the new facility in the short term and I should be

happy to see that happen. But beyond that, I would suggest that we wait until the Council has proved itself.

The Highland Archives Service has not, to its great credit, ignored the world beyond Inverness. There have been many developments in recent years building up the archives infrastructure throughout the Highlands. But these emphasise the point that making records available in Inverness, as opposed to Edinburgh, is not necessarily a vast improvement to the people of Durness.

My own conclusion is that the Council official in question let his enthusiasm run away with him. It was an example of spin running out of control. I am sure that the concerns raised here may not be of great interest to family historians. But I hope I have managed to suggest that beneath a simple enough looking proposal lie a host of complex issues.

BITS & PIECES

Like the one above, this journal contains a considerable number of contributions from members in response to articles appearing in previous journals. This is most encouraging as is the fact that after a couple of years in the doldrums, our membership figures are starting to rise once again. These facts indicate that, as our Society heads towards its 25th anniversary in September 2006, it is still 'alive and kicking'.

Strays Index

Although Alan Ross has not sent in an article for this journal, he has received a response to his piece in the previous edition. Irish Jermain had referred to a John McLean, blacksmith, born in Kiltarlity c1824 and George Campbell e-mailed as follows: -

"I don't know whether its the same family of McLeans or not, but when I was growing up in Beauty in the 1950s I used to pick up nails and bits and pieces from the ruins of the old blacksmith's shop at the back of the present day Priory Hotel. He was in business there when my father was a kid during the First World War and he was a McLean. In my teens I met his daughter Margaret, then well on in years, who spent all her days working for the family of Sir Duncan Grant at Polmailly and Dublin. She was single, but had a married sister in Dingwall who may have had family."

Emigrant Ship "Glasgow"

On pages 17 and 18 you will find a piece by Alastair Grant in response to the article by Graeme Mackenzie that appeared in the previous journal. In addition Shirley McCormick e-mailed to ask for Graeme's e-mail address and to say "I am hoping that Graeme might be interested in learning of the names of at least two more people who were on that ship. One was my 3xgreat grandfather John MacKenzie."

Timespan Museum

In the February Journal Jacqui Aitken mentioned that families evicted from Kildonan were among those who re-settled in the Gartymore area, which was the subject of an exhibition in the Timespan Museum in Helmsdale this Spring. The mention of Kildonan has resulted in the

following e-mail from Mary Davidson of Salt Spring Island in British Columbia - "Two brothers, Wallace, left Kildonan and came to British Columbia. They were the founders of Kildonan, a remote settlement on the west coast of Vancouver Island, 25 miles along the Alberni Canal towards the Pacific Ocean, from the twin towns of Alberni and Port Alberni, B.C. Some of the Kildonan, B.C. residents have information, newspaper clippings and such, but the best source if you want further info is to get in touch with the Alberni and District Historical Society and Archives - I didn't check, but I am sure they have a website which you will find quite easily through Google.

Try the Internet

Margaret Campbell, a member living in Kilwinning, Ayrshire finally put pen to paper with the following: - It is always with anticipation I open my newsletter, hoping there will be someone researching the same line as I am. However, to date this has not happened but I live in hope. I have had some extremely good "finds" via the internet though (how did we manage without it!) which I would urge others to use.

My surnames are MacLeay/MacLean and Macrae from the Loch Broom area and some time ago I placed them on a message board. My gr.gr.gr grandfather was Donald MacLeay who was a gamekeeper for the Duke of Sutherland and lived at Loch Achall, Wester Ross and he had a large family. After years of researching the family surnames, it never failed to amaze me that I could find no local people with the name MacLeay. However, my entry on the message board brought forth not one, but SEVEN replies! I was all but hopping up and down, I can tell you! Only just a few weeks ago I was contacted by a young 18 year old girl from New Zealand who is eager to find out about her roots.

It seems old Donald was a cantankerous old so and so and eventually several of his sons left the area - one to Lewis, one to Australia and some to New Zealand which solves the mystery of why there are no MacLeays in the area! I found it particularly amazing that the people who made contact were, like me, all descended from siblings of the same generation, sons and daughters of Donald.

As well as via the internet I was amazed and delighted on a recent visit to Ullapool to be shown a copy of a booklet published by a lady called Jean Stewart from Australia. This book is utterly fascinating and has a comprehensive tree from Donald MacLeay onwards together with copies of letters, photos etc. I have since passed on copies of this book to other family members who have been as enthralled with it as I am.

When I first started family history research it was with great excitement I would visit Register House in Edinburgh. To be in the dome, surrounded with all those amazing ledgers was just wonderful. These days it is so much easier - and a lot quicker - to do research because of computers. Nowadays, however, when I go to Edinburgh I come out with very little - the more you find out, the less there is for next time! I often find too, that even if you haven't done any research for a while, one day you get the "bug" again and sure enough, you find something new to add.

On closing I would urge people to investigate the internet if they have not already done so, there are always so many more pieces to the puzzle out there. Maybe one day I will open the newsletter and find a letter or query from someone in my line.

I would also say that, as I live in Ayrshire and have too much time on my hands, I am more

than willing to do any research for this area for members who can't get here. I was in Ardrossan Library having a nosey around and they have a great deal of resources available and all just beckoning to me - isn't it just typical that I have no ties with Ayrshire! So, please, anyone with ties in North Ayrshire, please feel free to contact me.

THE FALL AND RISE OF THE COMET II STEAM-PACKET

(A follow-up to Joan Leggett's article in May 2005 Journal)

By Karin Thompson

I have always maintained that, being Scots, I do guilt better than most, and ever since reading the 2 or 3 Journal editorials a few years, I have been determined at some point to submit something. The difficulty of course was trying to find something that had a broader interest than just my concerns with chasing Mackays and Youngs through the glens of history.

Curiously, and proving that coincidence often is more influential than application, I had decided on a topic and was slowly working it up, when 23/3 arrived through the post with its very interesting article by Joan Leggett on the "Fall and Rise of the Comet 11". I had been reading through a book on Old Greenock (the other side of the family) when I came across the following "On the east side of the [Greenock Old] churchyard we reada touching remembrancer of the loss of the steamer "Comet" run down by the steamer, "Ayr" off Kempeck Point, Gourrock, on 21st October, 1825, when a large number of passengers from the Highlands unfortunately perished."

I (almost) immediately thought about strays and spent a bit of time chasing memorials through the memorial indices produced in Renfrew. I didn't find very many but there were some — the attachment provides details. I also found an interesting broadsheet on the trial of the captain of the Comet which contained some extra details: "If the Ayr had taken its proper course, no collision could have taken place; and if the master of that vessel had afterwards rendered what assistance was in his power, the whole or most of those who were lost, might have been saved..... All of whose evidence tended to attach a good deal of culpability to the conduct of Mr M'Innes, the master of the Comet, in not having a light out at the time of the accident, nor a good look-out ahead. &c.

The pannels' declarations were then read, in which M'Innes stated, that he was master of a steam boat on the Clyde for many years, and detailed the progress of the voyage of the Comet from Inverness till she met the Ayr- He stated that there was a scarcity of candles on board the Comet at that time, which was the cause there were no lights hung out, and he considered there was no danger after they passed the Cloch, which they did before he left the deck that morning.[The Judge Admiral] reprobating in strong language the conduct of the Ayr, and urging the necessity of an example being made, to prevent a recurrence of similar accidents by carelessness.

I have a more complete report on the trial along with an earlier broadsheet reporting the accident which I would be happy to forward to Joan.

Finally, I have also done some research into the Comet, which has led me to conclude that were I ever to own a boat (which is unlikely) I would not call it Comet, as the internet seems

HFHS PROJECTS

MONUMENTAL INSCRIPTIONS

By John Durham

As mentioned in the previous journal, the revised edition of the MIs for Fortrose has been published. It contains 155 more transcriptions than appeared in the original publication. Access to the ruined Fortrose Abbey has allowed us to record all the inscriptions on the walls, floors and inside the Mackenzie enclosure. The key to the padlock allowing access to the ruins can be obtained locally, but the key to the Mackenzie enclosure is not normally available. Fortunately for the Society two members of staff from Fort George were sent to the Abbey grounds for one day while we were working there. They had the key on them so we took the opportunity to get inside the protected area to record the inscriptions within.

One of the inscriptions on a stone lying on the floor of the ruined Abbey was very badly eroded, in fact several were in the same state. Thanks to the information that Donnie MacLennan had obtained from the burial records we were able to reconstruct most of what was inscribed on the stone originally. Letters and words appearing between [and] are our best guess at what would have been carved there and this is what we finished up with.

{Slab, very badly eroded} Sacred to the [memory of] James [FOWLER Esq. of Raddery], who departed this life on the 4th [August 1842] in the 80th [year of his age] [also to the memory of] Sophia [WOOD, his spouse], who departed this life on the 11th [.....] in the 36th [year of her age]; [also] to [the memory of their son] James [FOWLER], who departed this life in March 1802, aged 6 months; also to the [memory of] Andrew [FOWLER], [their son], who departed this life on the [5th January 1819] in the 10th [year of his age].

Yet another memorial inscription that was unusual turned up and I would be interested if anyone could suggest why it appears in the grounds of the Abbey. Unfortunately it was much worn and badly damaged and consequently it was very difficult to make out some parts of the inscription. What was readable was the following: -

{Slab, very badly eroded and is broken in several pieces with the top right corner missing} Sacred to the memory of Robert MEE[CH], son of Tho^s MEECH Esq^r & Betty], his wife, of Dorchester in the County of Dorset and late Cap^t --- in the 67th Reg^t of Foot, in which Corps he [serv]ed during the siege of Minorca ----- ly wound ----- 17--.

Note: The Regiment was in Minorca from 1763 to 1771.

With Fortrose complete we have now turned our attention towards Old Urquhart Churchyard on the Black Isle. Bob Steward, now recently retired from his post as Archivist for the Highland area, has joined Graham Tuley and myself in the task of checking Angus Bethune's original transcriptions. Those of who read the *Inverness Courier* of Friday 12th August will have seen a photograph of the three of us at work there with an accompanying article, which will be good publicity for the Society. We have completed phase one which was to arrange the memorials in rows to allow us to carry out the checking of the transcriptions without missing any. As Angus did a very fine job in transcribing the vertical memorials there have been hardly any alterations to make to his work with the exception of people who have died since he did his original transcriptions and have been added to an existing memorial stone.

to be littered with accounts of their sinkings. I think I am right in saying that the Comet that sank in 1825 was also a Bell design and a replacement for the earlier Comet. It was made smaller so that it could navigate the Crinan Canal.

I shall now return to the drawing board with my search for an article to submit — perhaps something on John Macdonald, the 18th century footman? Would that be of any interest? Yes, definitely. Ed]

Highland Servants Drowned

1. *Extract taken from "Old Greenock" 2nd series, 1888 by George Williamson.*

"On the east side of the [Greenock Old] churchyard we reada touching remembrancer of the loss of the steamer "Comet" run down by the steamer, "Ayr" off Kempeck Point, Gourock, on 21st October, 1825, when a large number of passengers from the Highlands unfortunately perished, among them the piper, cook, man-servant, and two women servants of Sir Joseph Radcliffe, Bart, who erected this tablet to their memory. They were buried on 25th October, Sir Joseph and his brother-in-law, Captain MacDonell, attending them to the grave. Sir Joseph carried the head of each successively. The young women were buried in one grave. It was said they were to have married two men-servants who attended the funeral. One gentleman who met his death on the same mournful occasion was Mr. John Reid, son of James Reid, Esq., formerly of the Exchequer, Edinburgh.

Footnote

Narrative of the loss of the Comet: this was not Henry Bell's Comet but another of the same name, "being the smallest of her class, registering only 28 tons burden, 14 horsepower and 5ft draught of water. She was the first of the kind built in the kingdom," and required to be of small tonnage, to admit of her passing through the Crinan Canal.

2. *Extract taken from Renfrewshire Monumental Inscriptions (pre-1825); produced by The Scottish Genealogy Society, 1992.*

1. Greenock Old Churchyard

By Sir Joseph Radcliffe bart in memory of his servants drowned on the "Comet" 21.10.1825: Mary WINCHUP, Sarah RIGLEY, Hannah MITCHEL, Mary MEEK, Ranaid MACKENZIE.

2. Gourock Chapel Street

Mural. Donald MACKAY, blacksmith, native parish Duthil, Strathspey, drowned with other passengers aboard Comet steamboat, 21.10.1825, aged 23.

Mural. Chas Baillie SUTHERLAND of Rosshire drowned with many other passengers in the Comet steamboat off Kempeck 21.10.1825, youngest son of late Captain Geo. Sackville SUTHERLAND.

The main problem is in the older section of the churchyard. Of the 943 memorials identified at the moment, 753 are in this section and it looks as if 500 of them are either partially or completely covered by turf. To date we have checked 339 out of the 753, so there is some time to go before we will be in a position to publish. What is very exciting is that this appears to be a very old churchyard. To date we have located 91 memorials with a date in the 1700s and no fewer than 14 in the 1600s, including the oldest so far at 1608. In addition there are several other memorials with no date on them but quite obviously of pre-1800 origin.

As if his work in Dores, Lochend and Old Urquhart was not commendable enough, Angus Bethune is back on the trail once more and has recently recorded all the visible (not buried) inscriptions at Moy Churchyard. He has now moved on to Moy's sister churchyard at Dalrossie and has already spent a day there. Hopefully a local history group covering Loch Ness is going to transcribe the memorials in the burial ground at Boleskine for us. I went to speak to a couple of members who said they would get to work once the summer rush was over.

INDEXES to 1851 CENSUS RETURNS

By John Durham

Elizabeth Nicholls completed her transcription of Gleneig Parish and her output has been input to computer, checked, indexed and published. As I indicated in the previous journal, with the exception of the remaining parishes in Sutherland that Billy & Margaret Mackay will be working on his winter, we are still left with Applecross in Ross-shire and a large number of parishes in Inverness-shire needing volunteers to transcribe in advance of indexing. The outstanding parishes are: -

Abermethy	Alvie	Ardersier
Boleskine & Abertarff	Cromdale & Inverallan *	Croy & Dalcross
Daviot & Dunlichity *	Dores *	Duthil & Rothiemurchus *
Inverness Parish	Kilmonivaig	Kingussie & Insh
Laggan	Moy & Dalrossie *	Urquhart & Glenmoriston

In order to speed up the transcription of these parishes, we intend to purchase copies of the census returns for the Inverness parishes. This will allow volunteers who live close to Inverness to borrow the film along with the Society's film reader and work at home in transcribing the parish of their choice. The first film will contain the parishes flagged with an asterisk* above and any volunteers to assist in this project should contact me.

SCOTTISH NATIONAL BURIAL INDEX (SNBI)

By Sandra Norton

The database for the Highland Family History Society's remit of the Scottish National Burial Index (SNBI) has finally been completed from the available death and burial entries in the Highland parish registers up to 1855. Many of the parishes hold only birth/baptism and marriage registers.

The volunteers from our Society have had to contend with damaged records, almost illegible handwriting, idiosyncratic spelling and a changed geography as well as with technical difficulties for the inputters of the data. Most of the information held has been double checked where possible through the use of old maps and gazetteers.

The parishes and dates covered with a total of around 23,000 entries are -

ARGYLL

Bowmore 1817-1831, Campbeltown 1773-1854, Craignish 1761-1769, Dunoon and Kilnun 1755-1760, Gigha 1792-1854, Iona 1835-1854, Jura and Colonsay 1848-1854, Kilmartin 1746-1752 and Kilmodan 1786-1799

CAITHNESS

Bowser 1790-1795, Dunnet 1751-1756 and Reay 1783-1791. I also hold a photocopy of Thurso parish burials for 1671, but much is illegible.

NAIRN

Auldearn 1816-1854 (1360 entries)

INVERNESS-SHIRE

Barra 1849-1854, Bracadale 1834-1839, Dores 1753-1796 (also 1 entry for 1831, Kingussie and Insh 1783-1854, Kirkhill 1783-1801, Inverness parish 1688-1854 (several thousand entries) and Petty 1796-1853.

ROSS AND CROMARTY

Contin 1825-1854, Cromarty 1839-1854 (1 hold dates 1827-1838 on hard copy only); Dingwall 1783-1852, Fearn 1783-1791, Fodderty 1758-1794, Kilmuir Easter 1783-1789, Rosemarkie 1775-1854 Rosskeen 1801-1813 (only available with myself in hard copy).

SUTHERLAND

Dornoch 1821-1854, Kildonan (1 entry only) 1831, Lairg 1804-1844 and Loth 1830-1849

Very many thanks for your assistance to Will Morrison, database co-ordinator, to the transcribers of the death/burial parish records (named in an earlier Journal) and to the database inputters from both here and abroad, namely Margaret Allan, Heather Bain, Susan Boag, Mary Chandler, Elsie Fraser, Jan Hitcham, Nancy White, Dr. Kenneth J. Cameron, P. and H. Milne, Mags Campbell, John A. Burke, Grace Mackenzie, Rhona Smith, F. R. Munro, Rosemary Shaw, Alastair Ross, Karin Bell, Lorna McIntosh and especially to Olwen Jones (Australia).

Will Morrison has had a particularly difficult task collating the entries using the program dictated by the Federation of Family History Societies a good few years ago.

More information on how and when our Society will publish the Highland Burial Index will be given in a future Journal and the data will also be passed to the FFHS in the near future.

MORE SUTHERLAND LETTERS

Transcribed by Joan Leggett

Joan is a descendant of Captain James Sutherland (1726-1789), Factor to the 17th Earl of Sutherland. In the National Library in Edinburgh she found a number of letters written by her ancestor to John McKenzie Esq of Delvin, Horse Wynd, Edinburgh. They cover the period 1762-1778 and are to be found in the Delvin Papers (Ref MS 1485). Although of special interest to her, some fascinating historical events are referred to in some of them. The letters below follow on chronologically from those that appeared in the February 2005 journal. [NB: all spelling copied as found!]

Continued from May 2005 journal, these are the penultimate series of letters:

Dunrobin 9 July 1767 MS.1485 f.81 ...Return'd from making roads over the hill that joins to the brd [border?] of Caitthness. I had 43 score of the highlanders from Kildonan join'd to the Parish of Suth. people and I have the pleasure to tell you that I never saw the Kings Troops worke better nor with more cheerfulness than those men did. I kept them working from Tues. morning to Sat. evening and the part of the road we finished will serve as a pattern to the C'ness Gentrie to make their roads by.

...I find all the people belonging to us are very hearty about working rates, except the Strathnaver men, who want I should send them Tools and plead that as an excuse for road having begun at the time their Tenants did belonging to the Family... pleased with road making this year...as its consequence must prove to be of the greatest utility to the Country. ... I am at present very much engaged about securing the burn of Golspie with a good fence... Natural planting thriving.. ...and in 20 years hence it will be one of the greatest beautys in Scotland.. Fences are of hedge and ditch as the Dykes from the day they are built grow daily worse, whereas hedges grow better daily and are cheaper....

P.S. Capt. Gun of Machamish died yesterday. His Grace will have many bidders, half pay Officer has offered me already 10 Pounds augmentation for a nineteen years tack. I imagine there will be higher offers made.

Dunrobin 21 July 1767 MS.1485 f.83 ... Just returned from making a tour of the whole Earldom... working hard on estate matters...
PS. I at the moment have received a letter from the Commanding Officer of my Regt. There is a General order for us to join but as he imagines it would be inconvenient for me to leave this country just now, he has indulged me with 3 months leave of absence so the winter months will approach before I need leave this place. I will write to you more fully on this subject next post.

Dunrobin. 26 July 1767 MS.1485 f.87/89

Dear Sir,

I mention'd to you in my last that I was indulg'd by the Commanding Officer of the Regt. with three months leave of absence notwithstanding of the General order for all officers and Recruiting Partys to join immediately. I wrote to you that I made a Tour of the Earldom and I meant to have gone to Assint this week but the Sacrament is to be given Sunday first in this parish and I do not chuse to give offence by going from this place when this affair is going on.

You and Lord George Sackville are the only two ffrriends I have disclosed my mind fully about my future plan of life and the less my intentions are known the sooner I will attain my point in view, and I think from the great connections my Major has he cannot be long in

my way and if I can by my influence with the Regt. obtain leave of Absence during the summer months by staying a few months in the Winter with the Regt. I hope you will approve of it till such time as I can leave them with that advantage that twenty years service entitles me to.

You are no stranger to my sufferings for the sake of truth. I have felt severely the spirit of party which makes me now wish to quit the Army but was the same thing to be don again, I could act no other part then I did, without doing what you and every man of principle most dispise one for, the ffrriends who suported me when I was under a Cloud are now gone and God forgive me I have often lamented my being left behind them. Nothing could give me greater pleasure than to be thought usefull to the slender pledge they have left us, and I am perfectly satisfied that the sooner I get rid of the Army the better, hence I will have for making up for the loss of my best days that I have spent in it, but in my personal situation at the head of the Capts. it would be improper to quit when probably a few months will get me a step for the Person in my way is connected with one of the first Family's in England, the Duke of Rutland is his Uncle, the desire of having your approbation in this matter is the reason of my giving you this trouble.

There is an Estimate given of the repairs of the Schoolhouse of Golspie which amounts to Eleven or Twelve Pounds Sterling in which is included Four Pound Ten Shillings for seats, tables and desks. I should be glad to know whether this last article ought properly to be paid by the Heritors or Parishioners.

Williams the coal master used me some days ago with so much impertinence that one of a less warm temper than I am possessed of ought to have caned him and the reason of this usage was because I would not allow him to cut Devots to cover three houses that he is building for his settlers, the Tenants of the Doll complained to me some weeks ago of Mr Williams inroaching upon them. Mr Gilchrist and I went to settle this matter and at that time I agreed that Mr Williams should have as many devots as would cover one house because he represent'd that the worke people could not worke if they had no place to cover them and from this indulgence he wanted to the country.

This is a nuisance that is too general all over the North and I am endeavouring every thing in my power to put a stop to it on this Estate and recommending to the Tenants to thatch with heather and to build the Walls of their houses with ston and clay, and such as complys with this I have promised that if they are removed from their possessions that they will be allowed for such bigings [belongings?] by the incoming tenant the value of them accompanied by two honest men to be mutually chosen by the Family and the Tenant, another advantage we will have if the Tenants will build houses after the manner is that the timber will be mostly of moss firr which will contribute greatly to the recovery of our ruined woods, and I am with great Esteem. Dear Sir, your most obliged and obed. humble Servt. James Sutherland.

Dunrobin 31 August 1767 MS.1485 f.95 ... Our Grieve here has told me that he desires to leave this Family as I have laid it down as a rule never to desire a Servant to stay who once offers to leave us. I think it is best to part in good ffrriendship with them. I have a very good man in mind who had the management of poor /sandy Gray's affairs in this country but I should imagine Mrs Gray will not part with him.... Our Stonehouse at Helmsdale, Brora and the little ferry want v. much to have the slates pointed and some other repairs about them. ... The fishings on the Naver, Helmsdale and Brora amount to twenty this season, which is no bad success as this season is looked on to be a bad one with most of the Rivers in the North.

Dunrobin 2 Oct. 1767 MS.1485 f.100 ...There was sent to Inness some days ago to be put on board the first ship from Leith, a Box directed for you containing two Potts of Muirfowl and 4 H'land Cheeses....

Dublin 26 Nov. 1767 MS.1485....Arrived here yesterday after a very disagreeable journey. I was detained in Pt. Patrick from the Thrs. afternoon till Sat. evening when we sailed in an open boat but did not arrive at Donachadie (?) till Sunday forenoon 10 o'clock. If I escaped fear I did not see sickness for we had a variety of wind and weather during that long dark night's passage.... I hope you will prevent Pointefield getting the better of me for if he prevails in his complaint it will be opening a door for others to hurt the Political interest of the Ffamily.

Dublin 17 Dec. 1767 MS.1485 f.105 ...The Commanding Officer of the 40th Regt who is in Garrison with us here has an officer in the North recruiting... [Duke of Atholl helping to release James from Army]... Wrote to Lord Geo. Sackville and had I not been determined to leave the Army what I have seen since I came here would make me sick of it....

26 Dec. 1767 - still in Dublin.

Dublin 12 Jan. 1768 MS.1485 ... Lord Geo. S's opinion about quitting the Army ... he advises me to sell if I can get it done, and as Lord George does not belong to the same shop as the Lord Lieut. I am working at present from my long acquaintance with some of his Excellency's family. If I am not allowed to sell, I shall find very little difficulty to get on the half pay and if that should happen I will receive £672 Stn. and five shillings a day. If I shall get £1500 Stn. which I would rather chuse because if at any time my friends was to get me anything I would lose my half pay and I never shall think of returning to the Army again once I leave it.

Dublin 26 Jan. 1768 MS.1485 f.113 ..If the wind proves fair for the packet this night, I mean to take my passage for London where I hope to meet you and will give you the history of my own affairs which are so settled that in all probability you will soon see me turnd into a ffarmer

London 9 Feb. 1768 MS.1485 f.114...I only received your letter of 21 Jan. this day.

Wemyss 14 April 1768

Dunrobin 26 April 1768 List of trees planted on the Dunrobin Estate in March 1768:

6000 Elm trees
1000 Plain
7000 Birch
400 Oak
1000 Ash
250,000 Fir plants in the new enclosure above Mellack [?]
1000 Beech
16,000 Thorns in hedges
80 large trees transplanted from Mags Burn

Dunrobin 24 May 1768. MS.1485 f.119/120
Dear Sir,

I wrote to you some time ago about the people who are expected from England to the North to search for Coal, but as you made me no return I take for granted that you do not approve of their having any encouragement to examine our coal here, the Salt Pans are at last arrived and they are now very much employd for putting? [them up].

The ffarm of Melach which lays between the Parks and Clayside is about fifty Bolls of rent it has been occupied by four Tenants for many years and there is not better land in the County but continues in a state of Nature one of the four Tenants died last year and the others labour his proportion for the benefit of two orphans, another of the Tenants is a very old man and in all probability will not live long. As I have obliged the People of this place to part with their Sheep on account of our planting I would wish to see this ffarm improved, not only for the reason of its becoming some time or other a part of the Mains, but to convince the people of the Parish that enclosing their farms and clearing them of stones is a certain method to thrive, and if you approve of the following plan I will set about it immediately.

I would run a dyke to divide Melach from Clayside and another dyke from the park No. east to the above dyke which would divide this ffarm into four enclosures, allways keeping in view that those dykes ran parallel with the owner of Dunrobin. I would build a ffarm house for two ffamilies, the walls to be of strong clay which is upon the ground both good and plenty and I would build them barns and byres of the same materials to be covered with heather, and this ffarm should be occupied by two Tenants only and all the augmentation I would propose for some years on this ffarm would be the interest of the money that the dykes and houses would amount to, if some method of this sort is not put in practice we never will get the better of the vile custom of living in mud and the nuisance of cutting green ground and there is more of this sort of work in this parish than in any parish of its extent in Scotland and example allone must make them alter and if it does it will create industry which can only make up for our poverty.

Now my Dear Sir I am to tell you that I have a project in hand in regard to my own hapiness which is **Matrimoney**. I am perfectly prepared against the various opinions that will pass on me on this occasion as I am satisfied I will get rid of a number of follis that I have followed too long, there are some particular ffrrends whoes aprobaton I would be happy to carry along with me in every action of my life and no person more than yours as I have the strongest sentiments of gratitude for your ffrriendship to me and your very warm attachment to my departed Patron. The young Lady that is to make me happy is a Daughter of Mr Baillie's all that has passed between her Father and me as yet was my informing him that I hoped I had made my way to the young Lady heart.

I shall be very anxious till I hear from you and the sentence you pronounce on my conduct, and I am with my respectfull compliments to Mrs Mackenzie, Dear Sir, your most obliged and most obedient humble servant,
James Sutherland.

London? 21 June 1768 MS.1485 f.123 ... Inclosed I send you the Rental of Killin which is the place I want to have a tack of to send my ... and young cattle to in the summer season. The small place is near the Loch of Brora and very well situated for ffishing and shooting both of which I am very fond off... here with Lord Geo. Sackville and he is of your opinion that it is better for me to retire on half pay than sell my Company.

Dunrobin 9 July 1768 ... I return you many thanks for your good wishes and I own honestly to you that Matrimoney has let me into secrets of happiness that I never knew before.

... I am extremely sorry for my worthy ffrind Guthrie being so much troubled with the Rheumatism, I know it from sad experience.. had a violent attach within the last 10 days,

