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PART 1

PART 2

THE OYSTER DREDGING SONGS OF THE FIRTH OF FORTH

A SURVEY FROM PRINTED, MANUSCRIPT AND ORAL SOURCES

Francis Collinson*

References to the oyster-dredging songs of the Firth of Forth are found in both the first and second (New) Statistical Account of Scotland. In the (first) Statistical Account (1798) we find under Prestonpans the following:

There are at present ten oyster boats belonging to the Parish. Each boat requires five men. There are not, however, above twenty three regular fishermen. The others work occasionally on land or sea. A boat seldom returns with more than 4000 or 5000, often with fewer. The present price is 15s. per hundred. A hundred as sold by the fishers contains 33 warp equal to six score and twelve. The retail hundred contains only 30 warp. Four oysters make a warp. Three or four times in a season a boat sails with a cargo of them to the number of thirty thousand, sometimes forty thousand, to Newcastle. Oysters are found on a strong clay bottom, on rocks and stones. Sand is prejudicial to them. The fishers dredge from four to fifteen fathoms depth of water. When they drive the dredge, they begin the Oyster Song, which they sing till the dredge is hauled up.

The New Statistical Account (1845) gives the following:

Prestonpans. At the proper season of the year, the fishery of oysters forms the principal occupation of a large number of our sea-faring men. Long before dawn, in the bleakest season of the year, their dredging song may be heard afar off, and, except when the wind is very turbulent, their music, which is not disagreeable, appears to be an accompaniment of labours that are by no means unsuccessful.

A more detailed account of these songs is to be found in "Prestonpans and Vicinity" by Peter McNeill (Tranent 1902—probably privately printed). Peter McNeill was an antiquarian and local historian of Prestonpans and Tranent. He says:

Oyster scalps at Prestonpans lie directly opposite the town. They stretch from comparatively near the shore fully six miles

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out into the Firth of Forth, while from east to west they measure fully three miles. Markets long ago were Edinburgh and Glasgow, and later Newcastle, Hull, and London. The Prestonpans oysters became known as Pandores. Some say they derived the name from the fact of their being nearly as large as "pan-doors", meaning the doors of the salt-pans (i.e. at Prestonpans).[1]

The dredgers while at work, either clam or oyster fishing, sing songs which have a peculiar effect when borne over the waters. We have heard it in the early morning many times, fully two and a half miles inland. The men themselves . . . are very reticent in speaking of their singing. They scout the very idea however of the airs they use being of Norwegian extraction, as held by certain writers[2] and maintain that the airs they use are like to the songs they sing, real 'home made'; and this is how it is done. There is a recognised leader of song in every boat. He starts whatever air he pleases, and no matter what jumble of words comes first he always aims at turning them into lines that will jingle, the rest following, and keeping time most faithfully.

The following are samples picked up by the way:

"Who'll dreg a buckie?
I'll dreg a clam.
I'll dreg a buckie,
And I'll be lucky
And I'll no be lang."

Another sample of song secured is:

"Heave aho, and away we go,
What care we for calm and gale!
Aye take a dram, as lang as ye can,
And brandy's gude among het ale!

Heave aho and away we go,
Mag and Meg, and Jess and Jane,
Oh how they leuch when we get fish
But oh how they girn when we get nane.

Heave aho and away we go,
See them awaiting, on the green,
Big lots or wee lots, or nane ava',
Gin we dinna try we shall be seen!"

McNeill goes on to say:

Ever since these scalps were destroyed by over dredging, it has not paid to follow out this trade; consequently there has been little

done in that way for a great many years. A few are brought in occasionally when the dredgers are out seeking clams for bait, but the Pandore now is scarcely ever heard of.

An old dredger gave this other couple of verses, which had been repeated by his father when he was a boy:

"Lady Hyndford's lang tales—
Comin' doon the brae-o,
She gets a' the creamy milk,
We get a' the whey-o.

Ye ho, and away we go,
Revelling amidst the gale-o;
And if gude luck our lot should be,
We'll drink the milk o' the whale-o.

McNeill continues:

Lady Hyndford, a former proprietress of Prestongrange, who who was very kind to the fishermen, had been observed by the dredgers coming down the the brae towards Bankfoot before setting out one night, and they simply put her ladyship into their dredging song. This reference to the whale in the hindmost line was the public-house at Cuthill, which went by that name, and the milk of the whale, of course, was Thomson the innkeeper's whisky.

There does not appear to be any printed collection of Scots songs with music in which any of these oyster-dredging songs are set down as such, though, as will be seen at the end of this article, at least one of them may have found its way into print under a title which gives no direct clue of its origin.

In David Herd's *Ancient and Modern Scots Songs*, first printed in 1769, there appears "The Dreg Song" which must here be printed in full:

I rade to London yesterday
On a cruket hay-cock.
Hay-cock, quo' the seale to the eel,
Cock nae I my tail weel?
Tail weel, or if hare
Hunt the dog frae the deer,
Hunt the dog frae the deil-drum—
Kend ye nae John Young?

John Young and John Auld
Strove about the moniefald.
Jenny Jimp and Jenny Jeus

Bought a pair of jimp-deus
Wi' nineteen stand of feet;
Kend ye nae white breek?
White breek and steel-pike
Kiss't the lass behind the dyke,
And she whalpet a bairnie.
Hey hou, Harry, Harry,
Monie a boat, monie a ship!
Tell me a true note,
True note, true song!
I've dreg'd o'erlong,
O'er lang, o'er late!
Quo' the haddock to the scate,
Quo' the scate to the eel;
Cock nae I my tail weel?
Tail weel, and gin's better,
It's written in a letter.
Andrew Murray said to Meg;
How monie hens hae you wi' egg?
Steek the door and thraw the crook,
Grape you and I's look.
Put in your finger in her dock
And see gin she lais thereout.
She lais thereout days ane,
Sae dis he days twa,
Sae dis he days three,
Sae dis he days four;
Quo' the carl o' Aberdour.
Aberdour, Aberdeen,
Gray claith to the green,
Gray claith to the sands,
Trip it, trip it thro' the lands.
Thro' lands, or if hare
Hunt the dog frae the deer,
Hunt the deer frae the dog,
Waken, waken, Willie Tod!
Willie Tod, Willie Tay,
Clekit in the month of May
Month of May and Averile,
Good skill o' reasons,
Tentlins and fentlins,
Yeery, ory, alie!
Weel row'd five men,
As weel your ten.
The oysters are a gentle kin,
They winna tak unless you sing.
Come buy my oisters aff the bing,

To serve the shirreif and the king,
And the commons o' the land,
And the commons o' the sea,
Hey benedicite! and that's good Latin.

The title of *dreg-song* seems to have been given in Scotland to labour-songs in general, and in particular to those of the harvest field. In this connection it is worth quoting the note by William Hay, the publisher of Hans Hecht's *Songs from David Herd's Manuscripts* (London 1904). Hay supplied Hans Hecht with many of the notes in his book. He says:

"Dreg songs were the interminable delight of the harvest dinner-hour—especially among the Irishmen, who took a share in harvest operations before machinery took away the social jollity from the workers. I have heard an old man recite one of these long-blown medleys for three-quarters of an hour without a break. The more mixed the metaphor the more delight it gave. Any sing-song tune serves for the recital, if the cadences can be worked in. The "Dredging Song" of the fishermen is of a similar class, but is called by a different name. I have heard two men in different fishing villages give practically the same song word for word. It is more of the nature of a sailor's chantie." Hay.

Hay's remark that "the Dredging Song" of the fishermen is called by a different name (i.e. Oyster Song?) would seem to indicate that he considered the Dreg Song of the Herd MS above to have been of the general work-song class referred to, and not a dredging song of the oyster fishermen. Possibly the term dreg-song as used in this way for labour songs in general may have arisen from a confusion of the word "dreg" with "darg" the Scots word meaning a days work. Later evidence would seem to indicate that Hay was wrong in his supposition, though one must allow weight to his opinion in that he claims himself to have heard the oyster-dredging song proper recited by the fishermen.

Examining the internal evidence of Herd's Dreg-Song itself however the line "I've dreg'd o'er long" would seem to refer to actual dredging. The line "weel rowed five men" accords with the statement in the Statistical Account that each boat requires five men; while the two lines:

The oysters are a gentle kin,
They winna tak unless you sing

seem to be conclusive evidence that Herd's song was a dredging-song of the oyster-fishers.

This same song is also to be found among the manuscripts of Lady John Scott, the composer of *Annie Laurie*, who was, as we know, a keen collector of folksongs in her day. She had evidently tried to note down the tune from the singer, whom unfortunately she does not name or describe, but had given up before the song proceeded very far, probably because the task proved too difficult. The manuscript shows however that the song was still current orally in her lifetime. (She was born in 1810 and lived till 1900). There is no indication however of the date of the occasion on which she noted it down.

Admittedly the song might have been collected from the harvest field, like the dreg-songs mentioned by Hay; but Lady John Scott lived "just over the hill" so to speak, from Prestonpans—at Spottiswoode to the north-east of Lauder, and she had ample opportunity of hearing the song sung by the oyster fishermen of Prestonpans or Cockenzie.

Any attempt to reconstruct the tune from Lady Scott's notation can only be a conjectural task. What is worth noting however is the recurrence of the descending figure of the three notes E D C (mi, ray, doh) which we shall meet again presently.

Lady John Scott's version is practically identical with Herd's, though with some of the lines in Herd missing. Minor differences do exist however which are interesting. In Herd the seal says:

Cock nae I my tail weel?

Lady John Scott has:

'Hand na I my e'en weel?'

a much more expressive piece of Scots. Other differences are:

Herd: White breek and steel-pike.
Kiss't the lass behind the dyke.

Scott: Airn sword and steel Pike
kep't the road an' 'keep't the Dike.

Herd: Tail weel, and gins better.

Scott: E'en weel, lugs better.

Herd: Weel row'd five men.

Scott: Weil vowed fine man.

Herd: Month of May and Averile,
Good skill o' raisins.

Scott: Month o' May and Averile
Lang enuich for ae while.

Both versions include the important lines:

The oysters are a gentle kin,
They winna tak unless you sing.

These last two lines would at first sight seem to indicate some tradition or superstition that the oyster had to be sung to in order to get it into the net of the dredge. Inquiries among Scots folklore authorities as to the knowledge of such a superstition or tradition proved negative however.

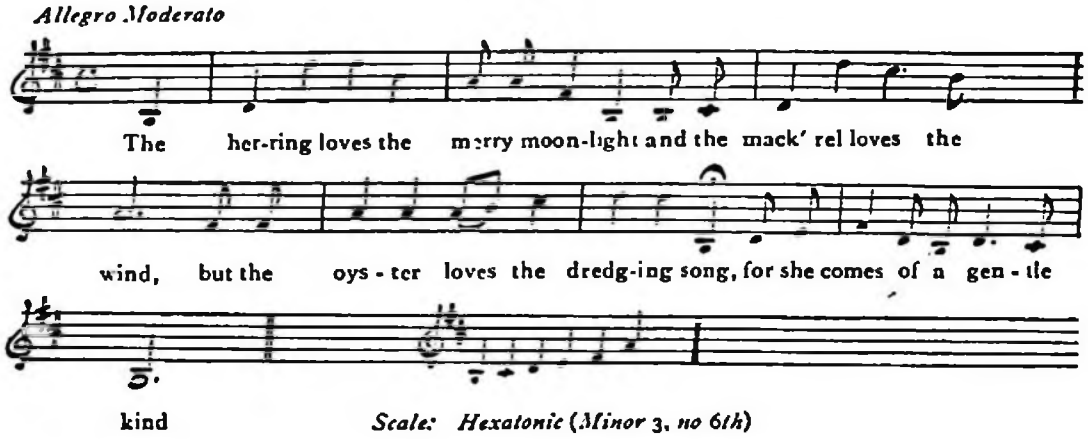
Sir Walter Scott used the same idea of singing to the oyster in "The Antiquary", in the lines which he puts into the mouth of Elspeth Mucklebakit (Chapter 40):

The herring loves the merry moonlight,
The mackerel loves the wind;
But the oyster loves the dredging-sang,
For they come of a gentle kind.

One might readily assume that he had borrowed the idea from Herd, for we know that he had his MS in his possession

THE HERRING

Recorded from Miss Margaret Eyre, at St. Briavels, Lydney, Glos. in 1958 by Francis Collinson



for a time. Unexpectedly however the writer's attention was drawn to the existence of these lines in the repertoire of a traditional singer and folksong collector, Miss Margaret Eyre, aged 92, living at St. Briavels in the Wye Valley, from whom in 1958 he recorded them. Miss Eyre said that she had learned the song at the age of twelve from two girls, older than herself, of the name of Levison Gower. She was then staying with her

uncle, who was the rector of Yalding in Kent. To the writer's question of whether the song had any additional verses, her reply was "There may well have been—I can't remember." All attempts to trace further verses however in any surviving MS of the Levison Gower family have so far met with no success; and the question of whether Scott wrote the lines himself or whether he borrowed them from an existing folksong must remain inconclusive. The tune is a striking one, and if one makes allowances for the circumstances of its transmission, it may well have been a traditional Scots folk air.

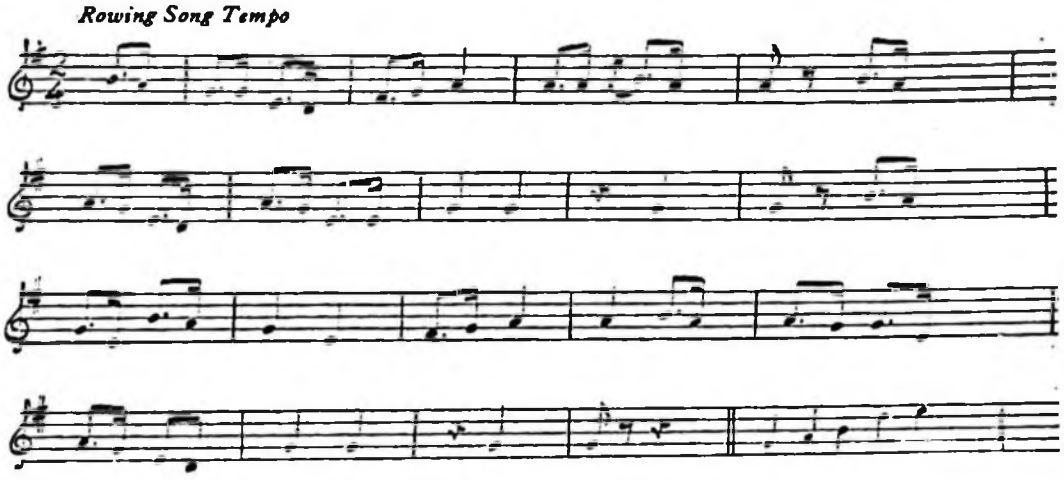
Among the phonograph recordings made by Mrs. Kennedy Fraser, now in the possession of Edinburgh University, there appear three items listed as (1) King of Cockenzie (informant or singer, Dickson); (2) Oyster Song (John Dickson Cockenzie) and (3) Newhaven Dredger's Oyster Song (sic) (No informant given). These were probably recorded by Mrs. Kennedy Fraser at Eyemouth in the summer of 1906 when, as she recounts in her autobiography, she went there to record Gaelic songs from the Hebridean girls who were there for the herring gutting.

The writer examined these recordings in 1954, when he found that (1) had perished completely and the recording was totally inaudible. With Nos. (2) and (3) the singing was so faint and the background noise so loud, that transcription could only be conjectural. The following is the writer's attempt to transcribe the second of the three items (K.F.2).

Mrs. Kennedy Fraser Recording No. 2 (K.F.2)

OYSTER SONG

(Melody reduced to basic form from complete recording)



Scale: pentatonic

Sung by John Dickson, Cockenzie

Transcribed by Francis Collinson

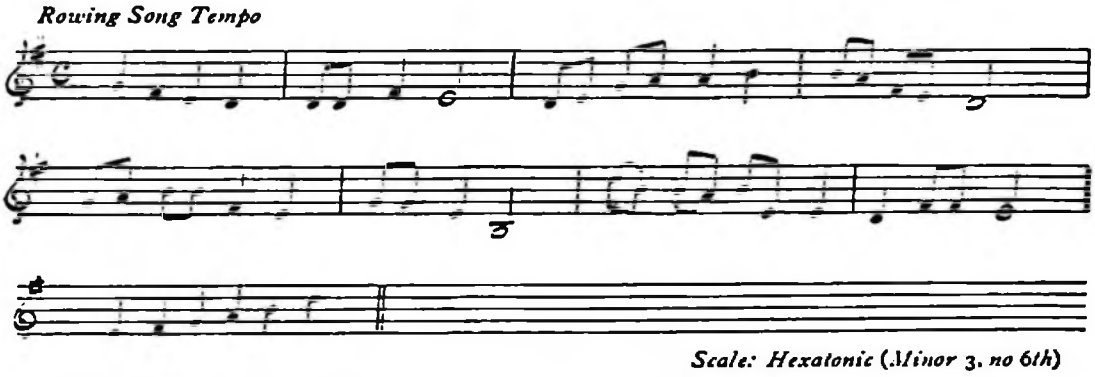
A few scraps of words could be heard. These are:

Hey we turn again and turn again. . . .
Five o'clock, five o'clock . . .
Here they come. . . .
Hey you're right; no, I'm nae! . . .

It is of interest to note the recurrence of the progression of the three notes mi, ray, doh (Cf. the first three notes of the transcription) for these are to be found also, as has been remarked, in the Lady John Scott example. It points to a possible relationship between the two airs, and to this figure as being characteristic of one of the Oyster Song tunes.

The third of the three Kennedy Fraser recordings (K.F.3) Newhaven dredger's Oyster Song, was not quite so indistinct as K.F.2., though even so, reconstruction of the melody can again only be conjectural. Here is the writer's solution:

Mrs. Kennedy Fraser Recording No. 3 (K.F.3)
NEWHAVEN DREDGER'S OYSTER SONG
(Melody reduced to basic form from complete recording)



Scale: Hexatonic (Minor 3, no 6th)

Singer's name not given — Transcribed by Francis Collinson

More word fragments could be heard in this recording, as follows:

Far away . . . for wages . . . full of meat(?) . . . bonny day . . . bonny day . . . Tuesday . . . day . . . week . . . on a wedding cake . . . Thursday. . . . There's a humble cottage in a wood . . . hanging ower the staircase. . . .

About the year 1920, Miss Isobel Dunlop noted down the tune of an oyster song at Port Seton. The following is a transcript of a recorded interview in which Miss Dunlop was interviewed by the writer and Mr. Nigel Tranter:

My father, who was born about 1860, remembered as a boy going down to Port Seton for his holidays and hearing some of the

fishermen going out dredging for oysters. Many years after, I happened to be buying fish at Port Seton from an old fish curer and asked him if he had ever come across the oyster dredging songs. He said he had known that his father had sung for the oysters. He couldn't remember the words, but he hummed a tune which I noted down.

The date of this notation by Miss Dunlop seems to have been 1920 or a year or two earlier. The tune can be identified with some certainty as basically the same tune as K.F.3 (Newhaven dredger's Oyster Song).

The subsequent history of the tune is rather interesting. Miss Dunlop showed her notation of the oyster song to Mrs. Kennedy Fraser, whom she knew, and who subsequently joined it to a set of words similar to one in McNeill's book (possibly an adaptation from this actual source). This was the song beginning "Who'll dreg a buckie-o" above. The song was found unpublished among her papers after her death by her sister Margaret Kennedy, who sent it to Mrs. Addison, the conductor of the Scottish Newhaven Fisherwomen's Choir, who included it in the choir's repertoire, still current today. There was no indication in Mrs. Kennedy Fraser's MS, which the writer has seen, either that it was an oyster dredging song or that it had any associations with Newhaven (the word *oyster* does not occur in it) and its return to its original port of origin by this fortuitous means seems to have been pure coincidence.

During the winter of 1959-60, the writer made a tour of inquiry in company with Nigel Tranter among the fishermen of the former oyster-fishing ports of the southern shore of the Firth of Forth. All informants questioned were agreed that the Oyster Song was a *rowing* song, used when the wind was unfavourable or insufficient to tow the dredge; and every informant except one, to be presently quoted, said that the words of the song were *always* improvised. They were said to be chanted by a song-leader among the boat's crew, who repeated his lines in chorus. The following are transcripts of relevant passages in recorded interviews with these informants: Tom Buchanan, (age late seventies) of Prestonpans, retired fisherman:

> There were only two men in the village that knew the Dreg Song (*sic*) at the hinder end, and that was Walsh and Cooper. They are dead long ago.

Mr. Donaldson of Cockenzie another retired fisherman of advanced age:

They (i.e. the oyster songs) were impromptu—just as they were working.

Mr. Robert Langlands of Fisherrow, aged 89, retired fisherman, said in a first non-recorded interview that the song often began with the line:

"Back again you shall be brought"

In explanation of this he said that the oyster boats were often manned by the young boys and the old men; and the line quoted meant that the boys would be brought back again in their old age to the oyster fishing when they were too old for the more strenuous deep-sea fishing—just as, at that time, they were too young for it.

On a second visit Mr. Langlands was not well enough to see or talk to strangers, but a friend of his, Mr. W. Halley of Fisherrow, mussel-gatherer and -salesman, agreed to put some further questions regarding the oyster song to him. Mr. Halley gave this account of the interview (recorded):

He (Mr Langlands) said that it was chanted as—"Dreg an oyster, dreg a clam;" and "if we pu' they would get her fu' " and "if they were too long" (i.e. in landing their catch) "you could only give them to 'Nicky Tom' (the Devil). The Dreg Song was generally just constructed by an imaginary thing that they saw such as a bird, and the followers (i.e. in the boat's crew) just chanted this or repeated what he said.

Mr. Halley then added on his own account that the tune was "just chanting"; and he himself chanted the following by way of demonstration. The tune was nondescript, and not worth quoting:

Solo: Dreg an oyster dreg a clam,
Chorus: Dreg an oyster dreg a clam,
Solo: And if we pu' we'll get her fu'.
There's a big bird in the fore
And if we pull on the oar
We'll be there long before.

Mr. Andrew Buchanan of Cairds Row Fisherrow, aged 84, retired fisherman, contributed the following specimen:

Solo: Then we'll begin again
Chorus: Then we'll begin again
Solo: With a morning song
Chorus: With a morning song.

Q. How long did one of these songs go on?

A.B. It went on for about twenty minutes.

Q. Just making up the words all the time?

A.B. Oh aye, whatever came into his head. They used to start at ten o'clock and chanted till four o'clock in the morning—never stopped. Lying in bed you would hear them miles away.

(Questioned as to whether he himself had ever taken part in the oyster fishing.)

A.B. I was at the clam fishing, but the oyster fishing was dropped before I started.

Q. But you were at the dredging?

A.B. I was at the dregs for the clams for a few years.

Referring to the song again he continued:

A.B. It was off old men—whatever he said I just followed suit—just repeated it. That's what the Dreg Song was, just a pickle nonsense and the rest followed suit.

Q. What sort of tune did they have for it?

A.B. Oh they didna' have any kind of tune—there was no certain tune for that.

He then chanted the following:

Solo: Betsy Millar,
Chorus: Betsy Millar,
Solo: Sell'd her sark
Drunk the siller.
Woe be till her!
Chorus: Woe be till her!

Mrs. Imrie of Prestonpans is the sole survivor of the family of John Dickson, the "King of Cockenzie" of the Kennedy Fraser recording. The writer played over to her a tape-recorded copy of the Kennedy Fraser phonograph recordings of the tunes. The following is a recorded interview with her:

Q. Were you able to recognise your father's voice?

Mrs I. Yes, definitely.

Q. Can you remember him ever singing that song?

Mrs I. Well I don't remember the words, but I know the tune. I was just a wee girl when I was sitting on his knee when he was singing that.

Q. Were there actual words for these songs or did he just make them up?

Mrs I. Definitely there was one traditional and one that they just made up themselves.

Q. He was known as the King of Cockenzie wasn't he?

Mrs I. As "King Dickson".He got that name because very often he was the most fortunate fisherman in the place.

It was the first of the two songs (K.F.2) in which Mrs. Imrie recognised her father's voice. She declared that K.F.3 was not sung by her father and that she did not know the tune.

John Donaldson (late) of Cockenzie was said by another informant (name not noted) to have recorded the Dreg-song in the 1930's for an American folksong collector not identified.

Another informant at Cockenzie, who wished to remain anonymous, contributed the following fragment as typical of the Dreg Song:

Solo: To work this morn,
Chorus: To work this morn,
Solo: I saw a ship,
Chorus: I saw a ship,
Solo: She's clad in sail,
Chorus: She's clad in sail.

Mrs. Morgan, one of the older members of the Musselburgh Fisherwomen's Choir recorded the following verse of a song to its own tune:

"Oysters, O oysters, O oysters cried he,
How many O' your oysters for a penny
Will you gie?
Sometimes there's yin,
And sometimes twa or three,
It's according tae the size o' the oysters."

This is a Scots version of "The Oyster Girl" a widely spread folksong throughout Great Britain, which the writer has collected in Kent.

Mr. George Wilson, skipper of the fishing boat *Gratitude* of Newhaven, and his two elder brothers were also interviewed. His eldest brother, who was mending nets on Newhaven quay when the writer questioned him, confirmed that the song often began with the words "Back again you shall be brought" with the same explanation given above. Mr. George Wilson himself recorded the following:

My father and his two brothers had a boat of their own, and they went to the oyster fishing, but that was practically before my time. I would be maybe two or three years old when the oysters were getting played out.

Mr. Wilson explained that though he had not heard the Dreg Song sung he had discussed it at some length with his brothers who both remembered the singing of it. They were themselves unwilling to record. He continued:

I've heard the term Dreg Song, and it seems to me that it took place while the men were rowing for lack of wind to draw the sails. The dredges are made to travel at about a 45° angle on the bottom of the sea. Now it takes a good amount of power to draw that dredge over the ground. If there wasn't sufficient wind the men had to row, and to keep time rowing they used this dredge song. The song was made up of anything that took the eye such as a mark on the shore—a sailing boat passing, or a man whose name would fit to a rhyme or anything like that, and that helped to pass the time away on the long day dredging oysters.

Q. Can you remember the kind of thing they would actually have sung?

G.W. The only thing that comes to my mind was:

Dreg a buckie, dreg a clam;
Fleming's ink works to the gas works—
Dodge your wheel and fill your creel.

I think it was going something like this when they were getting near time for taking the dredge on board. They would say now:

Now that's Score to The trees;
Off your bottom and bend your knees,
So—be—yes!
We'll take the dredge on board.

The Score is the downfall of the west edge of Edinburgh Castle; and the Trees are the trees at the west side of Granton Harbour. The Fleming's Ink Works and the Gasworks are in that vicinity too so the length of the dredge travelling over the ground would be between those two points.

Q. Then did one man sing it and the others join in?

G.W. Well they would all be looking about, and if they saw anything, another man would take up where a man left off, and that would continue the sequence and keep the oars going at the certain pace; because a dredge, when it is going along the ground is no use if it is jerked. It must go at a steady pace. The steadier the tow the more fish, because if the dredge was jerked it would lift it off the bottom and miss the ground.

Here we would seem to have the explanation of the tradition that one had to sing to the oyster to get it into the net. Without

a song the rowers could not row steadily enough; the dredge lifted, and the knife-edged bar along the bottom of the dredge (known to the fishermen by the uncompromising name of *the shite*) failed to cut the oyster from the sea bed.

That then completes the evidence. From all the foregoing it would seem that though the Oyster Song was usually improvised, there were several stereotyped, traditional versions, of which those in Peter McNeill's book may be accepted as specimens. It is obvious that the term "dreg song" was used by the fishermen quite as often and indeed more often than "oyster song", and that William Hay was wrong in saying that "the dredging song of the fishermen is called by a different name" (i.e. different to the name "dreg song").

It seems probable that the same tunes were used for both the traditional and the improvised words. The evidence seems to point to the K.F.2 tune, though it was recorded to words of the impromptu type, as being the prototype for the dreg song in Herd, as shown by the melodic characteristics of the tune noted by Lady John Scott and it also points to the song itself having been a fisherman's dredging song. The tune K.F.3 fits both the song in McNeill beginning "Who'll dreg a buckie-o" and the one beginning "Heave aho and away we go" and it is reasonably intelligent guesswork to say that it may have been used for both songs.

To return once more to Hans Hecht's book; Hecht himself follows Hay's note with the statement:

"Another dreg song, parodied by Burns in his 'Ken ye ought o' Captain Grose?' with a little more sense in it is in his Songs, II, 99."

This begins:

"Keep ye weel frae Sir John Malcolm
Igo and Ago,
If he's a wise man I mastak' him,
Iram Coram Dago.
Keep ye weel frae Sandy Don,
Igo and Ago,
He's ten times dafter than Sir John,
Iram Coram Dago.

To hear them of their travels talk etc.
To go to London's but a walk. etc.
I hae been at Amsterdam, etc.
Where I saw mony a braw madam, etc.

To see the wonders of the deep,
Wad gar a man baith wail and weep.
To see the Leviathans skip,
And wi' their tail ding o'er a ship.

Were ye e'er in Crail Town?
Did ye see Clark Dishington?
His wig was like a drouket hen,
And the tail o't hang down,
like a meikle maan lang draket gray goose-pen.

There are several interesting parallels between the words of this and of the Dreg Song of Herd's Ms. First, the use of (dog) Latin (Cf. the last line of the song in Herd); then the journey to London, and finally the sea images. Here again the inference in Hecht is that the song is a darg-song rather than a dredging song. But there was a Sir John Malcolm at Grange near Burntisland in Fifeshire in the seventeenth century. Clark Dishington came from a well-known family of land-owners on the north shore of the Forth (the name is found at a later date among the list of baillies of Newhaven). The tune (which appears first in print in Bremner's Reels, c. 1765), makes a superbly good rowing song, to which the pseudo Latin lines make a ready chorus.[3] The references to the various personalities are all grossly satirical (Cf. Andrew Murray in the song in Herd). Is it too fanciful to guess also that here is another of the dreg-songs of the oyster-fishers of the Forth?

NOTES

[1] To the writer it seems more probable that the name was given from a much exaggerated resemblance in size (and also, roughly speaking, in shape) to the body of the Pandore or Bandore, a species of lute (many of the airs in the Skene Manuscript are written for this instrument). Curiously enough the back of the instrument was sometimes ornamented by the carving of a large clam-shell. Cf. Hipkin and Gibb, *Musical Instruments* (London 1945), Plate IX.

[2] These references not found.

[3] The song in full is to be found in James Johnson, *The Scots Musical Museum*, new edition with notes by W. Stenhouse. 4 vols. Edinburgh 1853. It appears there as No. 455 under the title *Sir John Malcolm.*

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FOLK SONG AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

A STUDY OF THE REPERTOIRE OF NAN MACKINNON OF VATERSAY

James Ross*

Folklore collectors of all generations have been accustomed to regard themselves as rather late in entering the field and have tended to view what they collected as remnants of much more elaborate traditions. While the passage of time has proved such evaluations wrong more than once, that should not blind us to the fundamental changes which have taken place in the culture of the bearers of oral tradition, and that this century will undoubtedly see the end of oral transmission as an important element in the literary or musical heritage of a community. This assumption may seem strange in view of the fact that it is still possible, on the fringes of Gaelic Scotland, to hear the ballads of Ossian or the story of Cuchullain guarding the great bull of Cuailgne. Even in such communities, however, it is quite obvious that real transmission has ceased—that the singer and story-teller of tradition no longer have a specific function to perform in society. They are no longer called upon to perform, except to the collector with his acquired respect for oral antiquities. The audience of avid young listeners, which alone can perpetuate a tradition, is absent.

While we can judge from the cessation of transmission that the death of a great tradition is near, the end does not seem to be in the nature of a gradual decline. Beyond the middle of the twentieth century, it has been possible to record story-tellers who have provided texts as good as could be hoped for at any point in their history. A singer has emerged also, whose repertoire of over four hundred and fifty songs, delivered entirely from memory without the assistance of any form of script, reveals gifts which would be adjudged great at any stage in the development of the society.

Nan Eachainn Fhionnlaigh, as Nan MacKinnon is known in her own society, was born on the island of Barra in 1903.

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Her father Eachann Fhionnlaigh, was a native of Barra, and her mother, the source of almost her entire repertoire, had left her native Mingulay after her marriage, to settle in Barra. In 1910, after the crofter-fishermen of Mingulay and Barra had 'raided' the more sheltered and fertile island of Vatersay, Nan's parents crossed to that island also and staked their claim. Apart from a year or two on the mainland in service or in the herring industry, Nan has spent all her life since that time on Vatersay, and since the age of twenty-two she has been permanently settled there. Her return coincided with an intense increase of interest in her own tradition, and the beginning of the absorption of her mother's vast unwritten literature dates from this period.

The purpose of this paper, generally speaking, is to report on a major fieldwork project which has culminated in the recording from this singer of what is possibly the greatest individual repertoire ever to be collected. This traditional repertoire will be published in its entirety in the near future, and it will be done in such a way as to illuminate as far as possible the peculiar social environment in which it came into being. Gaelic songs did not exist simply for popular entertainment. While the gatherings in the popular *ceilidh* houses of the townships were undoubtedly important to the transmission of all kinds of folk traditions, this should not obscure the fact that songs were very closely integrated into the life of the community and were not reserved purely for leisure moments. A large number of songs were connected with communal activity of an occupational or ritualistic kind. Commenting on the widespread use of songs in physical employment, Johnson said "They accompany in the Highlands every action which can be done in equal time with an appropriated strain . . ." (Journey, 56). The great contribution of the communal cloth-waulking alone to a rich song tradition must not be understressed. The chants recited by young people while circuiting and entering a house on New Year's Eve and the charms and incantations which were used for the curing of illness are perhaps the best-known of the songs which we can say had a function of a ritualistic kind. Songs or mouth music tunes in this repertoire which are suggestive of other lesser known practices are *Tog air each i* (1177.4) sung in connection with a special kind of horse race, and *Faoda sibh éirigh* (581B1), the tune reserved for wakening a newly married couple. In short, the principle on which the preparation of the repertoire for publication is proceeding, is

that the songs of an individual or of a community cannot be considered in isolation from a multitude of environmental factors.

After the technical labour of transcription and translation has been completed, one is faced with the fundamental task of ordering the songs in groups, the members of which show some common characteristics of theme, function or structure. For the simple purpose of arriving at a satisfactory lay-out for publication, it has been decided to present the songs mainly in terms of one aspect of them, namely, their theme. The Cradle Song group is an exception to this general rule. Cradle Songs are, properly speaking, identified by their function, since their texts do not always indicate that they have been used in this way. It is interesting to trace in them, however, a marked continuity of theme in that those of them that have developed texts are usually laments for husband or lover, killed violently. Some of them also have supernatural associations in that they are sung in the context of a story with a fairy-lover theme, on account of an illicit liason between a human being and a fairy.

The *Puirt a Beul*, or Mouth Music Songs, are a special case. It is not easy to identify satisfactorily a song as a *port a beul* since there is no trustworthy criterion for distinguishing them. The Gaelic name *port* gives a good indication of their origin. The words "melody" or "tune" do not translate *port* adequately. It means properly a melody played on an instrument and the word would never be applied to the melody of a song. *Port a beul*, therefore, can only be adequately translated "instrumental tune from mouth". This suggests the instrumental origin of the genre although the popular use of the term today would include many songs that did not necessarily share this origin. We can take it, though, that their *raison d'etre* is melody and not a textual development of a theme. They are characterised by a verbal repetitiveness which is not normally found in other songs and in a number of cases their vocal content is meaningless. Many of them simply present a visual image of a ludicrous kind with no element of narrative: "The miller fell from the scaffolding and leapt among the plates" (1289B7). References to the dance occur frequently but always with the exaggeration of humour:

Dòmhall agus fidheall aige
Raghall agus pìob aige
's g' eil am boc is feadan aige
'g iarraidh dhol dha ruighle.[1] (1289B10)

Donald with a fiddle
Ronald with a pipe
and the billy goat with his chanter
wants to join the reel.

The actual description of any part of a dance is rare and the individual peculiarities of the participants seem to have been of more interest to the composer. The account of the manner in which Hugh Chisholm danced is interesting but we do not know whether it is meant to be an actual description:

Cóignear na dhéidh cóignear reimhe
agus cóignear air gach taobh dheth. (1171.6)

Five behind him, five in front of him
and five on each side.

These are themes in embryo; the repetition of an actual statement is almost always substituted for its further development. References to courtship occur also, sometimes in connection with the actual partnership of the dance and at other times with no dance association:

Rì a rù a nighean donn
robh thu (raoir) an cùl a ghàraidh (1158-5)

Ri a ru brown girl
were you last night behind the dyke.

Phrases such as this, repeated with minor verbal changes, and with the support of phrases of syllables, can form the verbal content of a *port a beul.*

Occasionally the texts are more detailed and in these cases the humorous and satirical tendencies are continued. A woman composes a *port* to an article of her underwear which has disappeared from a clothes line (1289B8). The subject of another is an unusually clad stranger who has visited the island (1289B7). The satirical tendency of the *port a beul* is exemplified by *Tha biodag aig Mac Thómais.*[2] This widely distributed little song suggests that the wearing of a dirk in public places implied some social rank, and that the subject Mac Thómais was not entitled to it (1189.7). The singer tells of a piper who played the melody in the presence of the subject and who paid for his temerity with his life. We get an interesting sidelight on the traditional significance of satire from her further information

that when Mac Thómais was brought to court for his crime he was not convicted because he was being satirised at the time.

It is not easy to gauge the extent to which the eighty or so *puirt a beul* in this collection had a specific function in that they were used to accompany dancing. This type of song is found throughout the Gaelic speaking area although today there is little trace of such a function. The singer believes that they were used for this purpose, one tune in particular *Feumaidh mi mo ghùn a dheanamh* being sung with the "Scotch Reel". We could assume, perhaps, that *puirt a beul* came into existence for the purpose of accompanying dances but as a song genre have outgrown and outlived their original function.

The most prominent theme in the whole repertoire is love. The large number of women's love songs is unusual and is undoubtedly due in part to the great extent to which songs were used in occupations which were almost exclusively the concern of women. There is a fundamental difference of a structural kind between women's love songs and love songs composed by men. The latter are usually in a quatrain stanza followed by a refrain which is also usually of four phrases, or on the other hand in an eight-lined stanza without any refrain at all. In the former, quatrain stanzas, except in late songs, are few, and the sung verse is frequently a single line followed by a syllabic refrain of varying degrees of complexity. The predominance of purely syllabic refrains in the women's songs and the great extent to which these refrains encroach upon the text seem to indicate communal performance, or even extempore composition in a responsive group.[3] The environment in which they acquired their peculiar structure and in which many of them probably came into existence was undoubtedly that of the communal cloth fulling or waulking, an industry which was traditionally the women's task. While this use of the songs does not account satisfactorily for the purely syllabic nature of the refrains, it does account for the varying relationship between chorus and text. The variety of refrains can be seen from one aspect as representing a scale of increasing vocal participation by the group, in many cases actually breaking into and altering the structure of the stanza.

The love songs of the waulking tradition are almost all early. They are difficult to date precisely and we can only say that they reflect the peculiar social circumstances of the era of the clan system before the social dichotomy of peasant and

landlord was established in the mid-eighteenth century. They are, on the whole, somewhat less subjective than the songs of the later period. There is a tendency to stress the qualities and graces of the young hero and the marked fondness for pedigree present in them is not as characteristic of the later songs. Indeed the aim of some of them might have been to praise the leader in terms of the ideals traditionally valued by the clan, thus following the encomiastic poets. In informal eulogies composed by women, love imagery could be expected and it is impossible to separate the love song from the eulogy with any certainty. In the song *Chunna mise mo leannan*[4] the singer moves from a statement that her lover has spurned her to a eulogy of the armed company of his clan of which he is a member:

Luchd nan calpannan troma
chùil donna cheum eutrom

Luchd nan claidhntean geur geala
chìte faileas na ghréin dhiubh (1163.2)

Stout-calved company
of brown hair and light step

. . . of sharp, white swords
reflecting the sun's light

Apart from the eulogistic phases in the flyting songs there is no proper sub-literary counterpart in this repertoire to the encomiastic eulogy to the patron so common in Celtic poetry. Despite the differences in form, however, there is a remarkable unity of values which suggests that the typically heroic ideals of the official poetry were not simply a prerogative of a ruling warrior class. In the impressive directness of the women's love songs from the early period we see clearly their popular conception of the hero. Finery in dress is frequently mentioned, as is his capacity to bear arms:

Dhut a thig na h-airm an òrdugh
gunna piostail bogha 's dòrlach
siunnsar caol 'sa thaobh air òradh . . . (1161.1)

The array of weapons well becomes you
gun, pistol, bow and quiver
slender whinger with gilt sides . . .[5]

We find the subject in various roles, as hunter, horseman, mariner, or simply as the arrayed and adorned stripling endowed at once with virile and with moral qualities. Sexual abstinence is praised:

Gruaidh dhearg ro cheathach 's ro uisge
ruigeadh tu 'm ball am biodh mise
leiginn sìnte sios ri 'm shlios thu
gad a leigeadh cha bu mhisde . . . (1081.1)

Red cheek through wind and rain
you would reach the place where I would be
I would let you lie by my side
and I would be none the worse for it . . .

On the other hand sexual prowess is also praised and the subject of one song is addressed as *Lùb ùr leis a lùb gach caile*, "vigorous youth to whom each girl submits". The obeisance to the hero is such that even the girl fallen in pregnancy does not complain if her seducer is no common lad but *sgoilear donn na Beurla*, "brown-haired scholar of English". The respect for learning implicit in this and in such lines as *leughadair an duilleig shoilleir* "reader of the bright page" is not rare in the tradition. Pedigree also receives the emphasis familiar in bardic poetry and in one song we find genealogical references to clans renowned for their resistance to established authority:

Gura car thu Mhac Dhùghaill
o thùr nan clach snaidhte

Gura car thu Mhac Dhòmhaill
a ròigheala bratach

'S gura car thu dh' Iarl Ìle
bhuinigeadh cìs as na bataill (1167.1)

You are kin to MacDougal
from the smooth-stoned tower

You are kin to MacDonald
of royal war banners

You are kin to the Earl of Islay
winner of tribute from battles

While these songs do not show the sustained and deliberate inflation of the subject's prowess that characterises all Gaelic

poetry of the era of patronage, whether bardic or post-bardic, they do show this remarkable similarity in values. Undoubtedly their frequent performance would tend to perpetuate ideals of a purely heroic kind and in this they would have a similar effect to the encomiastic poetry, always rejecting innovation and change and protecting the traditional social structure even where it came into conflict with established authority. The work of the Irish bards seemed evil to the Elizabethans seeking to extirpate the Gaelic civilisation of Ireland, and Spenser's strictures on those 'which are to them instead of poets'[6] would have been echoed by the Scots Parliament in their own desire to break the closed native society of the clan system. In successive pieces of legislation in the seventeenth century, the Scots Parliament sought to change conditions which the singers perpetuated by eulogy. They were combating deeply rooted values and moral principles which were very different from their own. The legislation limiting the importation of wine to the Highlands is very revealing in this respect. There had been much concern, and probably rightly, at the capacity of the chiefs for mammoth bouts of drinking and feast-giving, at which, it was maintained, much of the internecine strife originated. In the songs, addiction to drink is a virtue and Montrose's lieutenant, Alasdair MacDonald, is described eulogistically as *pòiteir* and *drongair*, words which we can only translate adequately today as "drunkard" or "sot". It is the communal binge, however, that is mentioned more frequently—feast-giving in which both the capacity to drink and the means to provide it are extolled:

> 'S e m' eudail mhór Mac ic Ailein
> pòiteir an fhion air gach cala
> ceannachadair fial nan galan
> mar dh' òladh càch phàigheadh Ailean. (1162.1)
>
> My great treasure is Clanranald
> drinker of wine in each harbour;
> generous buyer of gallons
> as others drink Alan pays . . .

In the woman's adulation of the lover one sees a conscious choice of attributes that are not simply those of the ideal provider or protector. Any capacity in the subject for agricultural industry is never mentioned, nor is fishing except when the prey is trout or salmon. We must not regard the phrase *creachadair nan sgeireag* "pillager of reefs" as implying anything

but the capacity to kill seals, or possibly the cormorant, while any reference to the eating of shellfish or seafish can actually be a term of abuse. Indeed, one might feel that the term "folk-song" is not entirely appropriate where such clearly defined restrictions of a class kind are found.

It is revealing, however, that these restrictions on personal attributes are not found throughout the repertoire. In their open acceptance of the struggle for survival, the later songs are perhaps more typically folksongs. In the fine version of the *Eriskay Love Lilt* (1158.3) we find sentiments which are unthinkable in the earlier songs, the lover saying "from the hard gravel I would take food for my love". The change is basically a social one, a fundamental re-orientation of attitudes within the community and not a question of a depressed class becoming belatedly vocal.

The total number of songs bearing on the relationship between the two sexes is very great. Over and above the 'straight' love songs there are songs by women complaining of seduction or rape and subsequent pregnancy. While there are elements of complaint in many of the love songs, usually involving unrequited love and subsequent desertion, the true complaints are principally concerned with the airing of a grievance. These include songs by women married to old men, complaints by women about slanderous accusations and about other women stealing their lovers, and a man's song complaining of a too youthful marriage.

The young wife complaining of the aged husband is a perennial theme in international folksong. In one song *Och a smeòrach nan craobh* the young wife addresses a thrush with her complaint of her husband's senility. As is usual in Gaelic songs of this type the failings of the old that are emphasised are their alleged desires for physical comfort and a full belly. This little song succinctly emphasises these closely canalised desires of the old husband and contrasts them with his sexual incapacity:

Nuair a theid mi chrò nan caorach
"aodach" as a seann duine

Nuair a theid mi chrò nan gobhar
"cobhar" as a seann duine

Nuair a thionndaidhs mi 'sa leabaidh
"och och" as a seann duine (1169.7)

When I go to the sheepfold
"clothing" says the old man

When I go to the goat pen
"cream" says the old man

And when I turn in bed
"alas" says the old man.

Pregnancy while unmarried was not always a cause for unremitting complaint and in one song it is possible for a man to reply to his former sweetheart who has been complaining about him:

. . . tha thu 'n còmhnuidh ga luaidh rium
gad a bhiodh tu bhuam torrach
b'e siod solair a b' uaisle . . . (1074.4)

. . . you often say
that a pregnancy from me
would be the noblest luxury

There are, however, a number of "rising belt" songs complaining of seduction and subsequent pregnancy without the background of a love affair:

Dh' fhiadhaich a maraich air bòrd mi
's rinn a ròġaire mo ghlacadh

Dh' fhiadhaich a sgiobair gu rùm mi
is shil mo shùilean gu frasach

'S nuair a thig mi far mo bhòidse
theid a maraich òg a bhaisteadh. (1086.1)

The sailor invited me on board
and the rogue seized me.

The captain invited me to his room
and my eyes showered tears.

And when I come from my voyage
the young mariner will be baptized.

Despite the rigorous discipline of the "sessionings" applied to both male and female, the songs testify to the frequency of transgression. One cannot help a slight feeling of sympathy for

the anonymous author of the "breach of promise" song. Undoubtedly having in mind the numerous deceptions and desertions of the day, the singer feels that he has a genuine grievance:

Chaidh mo dhìteadh air son gruagaich
chionn 's gun gheall mi uair a pòsadh.

Chaidh mo dhìteadh moch is feasgar
chionn's gun tug mi greis air gòraich. (1160.4)

I have been condemned for a girl
because I once promised to marry her.

I have been condemned morning and evening
because I sported for a while.

Also unique in the repertoire is the song of the man shackled in the "boot". His only crime, he claims, is lying with his own married wife. He made her pregnant while she was giving breast to the chief's child, thus presumably breaking some kind of fosterage contract. Indeed the only song among those which are principally concerned with expressing a deeply felt grievance which does not have an inter-sexual aspect is *Hi dhiurabh ó chan eil mi slàn.* This seems to be a complaint by a widow that Dómhnall Gorm, a chief of the MacDonalds of Sleat, has taken away all her sons for military service.

The economic aspect of marriage shows itself frequently in the songs of both men and women. Men stress the importance of personal qualities and their preferment of such to the fold of cattle:

Gum b' annsa banntrach Ghearrsabhaig
gun earradh ach a léine. (1169.5)

I would take the widow of Gearrsabhaig
with no wealth but her shirt.

In the women's love songs in the same mood we get *gheall thu mo phùsadh gun cheannach* "you promised to marry me without being bought" and:

'S aithne dhomh fhìn na chum bhuam thu
tainead mo chruidh laoigh air buailidh. (1177.3)

Well I know what kept you from me
the scarcity of my milk cattle in fold.

That the young woman felt keenly the strength of the economic pressures of marriage is obvious from a number of references. Parents and brothers often combined to persuade or bribe the girl to forsake her lover to take the man with the cattle whoever he might be:

Gheall mo mhathair fàinn òir dhomh
gheall m' athair buaile bhó dhomh
gad gheobhainn sin agus saoghal mór dheth
's mór gum b'annsa leam gaol an òigeir. (1289B14)

My mother promised me a golden ring
My father a fold of cattle
though I should get these with long life
I would choose the love of the youth.

The situation gave rise to a genre of composition purporting to give a conversation between a young woman and an aging suitor. In one early song the suitor presses his case eloquently enough but is met with a final speech in which he is completely dismissed:

's a bhodaich léith fuirich thall
's cur do chuid cruidh laoigh ri gleann
's cur do chaoraich bhàn a fang
's faigh bean eile theid nan ceann.

Nar mheala mi mi mo choileir[7]
m' usgraichean na bhràiste bhrollaich
mar eil mo chion aìr a sgoileir
leughadair nan duilleag soilleir. (1075.3)

Grey carle stay away
send your milk cattle to the pastures
put your white sheep in the fold
and find another woman to tend them.

May I never enjoy my collar
my jewels or my breast brooch
if I do not love the scholar
reader of the bright pages.

On the other hand, the young men sought or were persuaded to seek the woman with the substantial dowry, or perhaps a widow of no great youth but with the all important cattle. Inevitably there were regrets and the women were not

alone in bewailing the incapacities of an aging spouse. After his marriage to a cattle owner the refrain of one man's song goes:

Mar bhiodh an crodh cha ghabhainn thu
mar bhiodh an crodh cha b' fhiù thu
mar bhiodh an crodh 's na laoigh 'nan cois
cha laighinn-s' orra chùlu (1102.1)

Were it not for the cattle I would not take you
were it not for the cattle I would not care
were it not for the cattle with calves at foot
I would not lie behind you.

In such limited space it is not possible to give detailed comment on the numerous love songs in the collection. The imagery is very varied on the whole although certain features of composition tend to be repeated. The girl is usually praised in terms of her skills, her appearance, and her moral qualities. The respectable occupations for young women in the early songs seem to have been needlework and reading. Also in a society in which songs were involved to a great extent in the life of the people we can expect the frequent use of the image of the girl singing. The colour and form of the hair is mentioned as often in the men's songs as in the women's, but only in the latter do we find praise of shapely legs. The men are fond of stressing what they would do for their sweethearts:

Mharbhainn iasg air an t-sàile
fiadh air bhàrr nam beann fuara
coileach dubh air bharr géigeadh
's chan fhaicinn éis air mo ghruagaich. (1102.1)

I would kill fish on the sea
deer on the peaks of the cold hills
blackcock on branch tip
my love would not be in need.

They in their turn stress the sacrifices they would make to be with their chosen one, the distances they would travel and the conditions that they would be prepared to endure:

'S mi gu siùbhladh leat a fireach
fo shileadh na fuar-bheann. (1174.2)

. . . with you I would travel the moors
under the rain of cold mountains.

A compositional technique found throughout Gaelic song is that of antithesis—the deliberate framing of contrasts to dramatise a situation.[8] Lines expressing negative statements lead on to a positive affirmation. While the technique is more usually found in laments it is also used in certain love songs, particularly those which complain of unrequited love and desertion. A girl addressing *Fhir a chinn duibh 's a mhuineil ghil* "Man of black hair and white chest" goes on to say:

'S òg a cheangail mi mo ghruag dhut
chan ann le stìom ghuirm na uaine
le deòir mo chinn ruith le m' ghruaidhean. (1177.3)

Young I was when I bound my hair for you
not with a band either blue or green
but with my head's tears running down my cheeks.

The unnaturalness of the state of separation is sometimes stressed by references to relationships among birds or animals. In a dialogue between a man and his former sweetheart who has married while he has been away on a long voyage, she speaks of the coming of the cuckoo in summer and of the mating of the birds in the fields:

. . . seinn ciùil air na beannan
's air bharru nan geugan
's ann bhios mise 's mo leannan
a dol a faidead o chéile. (1163.1)

. . . sounding music on the hills
and on the branch tips
while my lover and I
move further from each other.

And again in a song complaining of seduction, the girl sees the stag and the hind together and says:

Righ gur buidhe dhaibh péin sin
ach chan ionnan 's mar dh' éirich
dhomhsa 's Dhomhall mac Sheumais . . . (1182.3)

God it is their joy
but that is not how it befell me
with Donald son of James.

In view of the great number of songs with themes of an inter-sexual kind, it is surprising to find only one song of the

international *Pastourelle* type (RL 580B8). In this respect the repertoire is typical of Scottish Gaelic tradition as a whole and it is one of a few ways in which it differs fundamentally from Irish tradition.[9] Also, in the case of the Night Visit theme, allusions to the practice are commoner than the songs themselves. There is a version of a sung invitation by a married woman to her lover to enter the house. She says her husband is hunting in the deer forest and that her father is asleep with the blanket about his head. The isolation of young women in the shielings undoubtedly gave good opportunities for night visit activities and a number of references to courting have a sheiling background:

Ann am bothag a bharraich
leabaidh thana dhìth luachrach

Ann am bothag an t-sùgraidh
's e bu dùnadh dhi sguabag. (1173.4)

In the grass-thatched bothy
in the scanty bed of few rushes

In the bothy of love-making
closed only by a sheaf.

In discussing the women's love songs of the earlier period from their eulogistic aspect, we have been considering a sphere in which the theme of the oral and anonymous singer coincides with that of the bard, or "official" poet, showing a certain continuity of values.[10] While it is not the purpose of this paper, or indeed of the fuller editing of the repertoire, to compare the two traditions in any elaborate way, it is illuminating to look briefly at another aspect in which the themes coincide. The formal elegy is a well known literary type in Gaelic poetry and some orthodox pieces of this kind occur in the repertoire, composed on the death of members of the MacNeil clan and others. The place of the elegy, however, has been largely taken by the lament, which is quite different in purpose from the elegy.[11] The composition of a formal elegy when required was an important part of the function of the patronised poet and in the fulfilment of it he was undoubtedly harnessed by a diction shaped by centuries of bardic usage. It is difficult to get an image of the subject, any clear impression of character or personality or of the

nature of the bond between him and the poet. The good and the bad chief alike received their death songs, and the formal function of the elegiac poet is emphasised well by Mary MacLeod's poem on the death of the unpopular chief, Roderick MacLeod of Dunvegan:

> O root of heroes
> whelp of lions
> and grandson of two grandsires
> of most roisterous entertainment
> where was to be found on this side of Europe
> your equal in your way of life.[12]

In not being the fulfilment of a strictly defined function the lament is more spontaneous and genuine. It is not concerned with the elevation of the dead person; there is no preoccupation with his achievements in life or with any real or imagined influence he may have had on the society in which he lived. The references to material wealth and to social status so common in the elegiac poetry are absent from the lament, or they might occur, as in the lament for Seathan, in an oblique way and only to stress more emphatically the difference between life and death:

> Tha Seathan a steòmbar uachdrach
> gun òl cupa gun òl cuaicheadh
> gun òl fion far mhiosan uasal . . . (1082.1)
>
> Seathan is tonight in the upper chamber
> with no cup drinking, no bowl drinking
> with no wine drinking from noble dishes . . .

The lament always emphasises personal loss. We do not find in it the pre-occupation with "status" imagery which characterises the official panegyric and which leaves little room for emotional expression. In this way the orthodox *marbhrann* or "death-song" is very different from a lament such as that of the woman who loved the son of the Earl of Cluny:

> Mo chruit chiùil thu mo cheòl fìdhle
> mo chlàrsaichean nan teud binn thu
> mo bhuaile mhór na chrodh laoigh thu . . .
>
> Gura mise th' air mo chuaradh
> ma 's e 'n fhairge ghlas thug bhuam thu
> rocach na ròn an déidh do shuaineadh.

You were my crowd of music, my music of fiddles
my harps of melodious strings
my great fold of milk cattle . . .

Mine is the torment
if the grey sea has taken you
if seals' weeds twine you.

The lament in the early tradition is almost always a woman's song. Only rarely is it possible to identify the subject or to date the songs with any reasonable precision. Indeed it is highly unlikely that many of them ever were detailed texts embodying circumstances of time and place. They were more probably lyrics composed within the community in which the tragedy occurred and to which the details were already known. The circumstances that are mentioned in them were undoubtedly not rare in such a society, the harvest of *sgeinean fuara* "cold knives" and *blàr na ruaigeadh* "battle rout", the sudden engulfing of a boat at sea, or simply youth struck in its prime by disease. They rarely give us information of a particular kind which could provide us with evidence for identifying the subject. The typical lament is a woman's song bewailing the death of the man or men nearest to her:

Mo thigh mór an déidh a rùsgadh
's mo sheòmbar an déidh a spùilleadh
mo thriuir bhràithrean marbh 's a chùl-tigh
's fuil an cuim ro léine drùdhadh . . . (1075.2)

My great house roofless
my chamber pillaged
and my three brothers dead in the outhouse
their chests' blood seeping through their shirts.

The songs of the past two hundred years reflect some of the changing social conditions during that important period in Highland history. Those who enlisted in the newly formed Highland regiments made their own contribution to the song tradition, as did also those who joined the crews of the ocean going sailing vessels. In the later period problems of enclosure and land agitation appear. The herring industry was also important, not only in providing its own themes but in encouraging the dissemination of songs by providing an arena in which people from different Gaelic-speaking areas could associate for lengthy periods of time.

A minor but interesting group of songs reflects the attitude of a section of the community to the popular consumption of tea. There was much controversy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Scotland about the possible evil effects of the increasing use of tea. It was undoubtedly most expensive to buy and a luxury that only the rich could properly afford, but this was not the only argument used by those who condemned it. Sir John Sinclair in his *Analysis of the Statistical Account* claims that coarse black tea drunk hot could destroy the nervous system. Until the middle of the nineteenth century there were many people in public life, chiefly ministers and doctors, who claimed that the injudicious use of the drug could cause fainting fits and nervous disorders.

We find interesting references to these supposed debilitating effects of tea-drinking in verses about the choice of wives. A verse by a man in dispraise of Lowland women includes the lines:

> . . . gum b' annsa te bhòdhach
> a léine 's a còta
> na sgleòdag na mórchuis
> nachòladh ach tì. (1288 A9)
>
> I would choose the good looking one
> in shirt and coat
> before the haughty slut
> who only drinks tea.

A song addressed to a man who is about to choose a wife warns him about the kind of woman to avoid:

> Chan éirich i tràth
> cha tig e ri càil
> cadal fada 's e 's fheàrr le beudaig
> a phoit tì a bhi làn
> 's na h-aoibhlean fo màs
> 's i tarraing a bhlàiths mar dh' fheumadh. (1288A7)
>
> She will not rise early
> she does not take to it
> long sleep is the little gossip's choice
> the teapot to be full
> with the embers under it
> taking the warmth as it needs it.

While there is no praise of tea there is no dispraise of tobacco or snuff. We can imagine that in isolated areas supplies

would not always be readily available and that during the frequent periods of dearth the stranger would be readily solicited. The popular estimation of his character would probably depend on the willingness with which he shared his supply. It is significant that the strongest tradition which survives in the island about one of the famous collectors of the nineteenth century is that he was rather mean with his tobacco. The establishment of a craving which could only be periodically satisfied gave rise to songs and the refrain of one hopes for the arrival of "the man of great heart":

O phiob thombaca cur a mach do cheò
feuch a faic thu tighinn fear a chridhe mhóir
O phiob thombaca cur a mach do cheò.

Tombac' agus snaoisein
cha tig sinn as aonais
b' fhearr leam e na 'n t-aodach
nuair bu daoire chlòimh (1173.5)

O tobacco pipe send out your smoke
look to see if he comes—the man of great heart
O tobacco pipe send out your smoke.

Tobacco and snuff
we cannot do without it
I would prefer it to cloth
of the dearest wool.

Dearths of other kinds occurred too and there is the little song by a husband warning his wife not to give big bannocks to the guests (1176.5). Songs or tunes purporting to carry messages are not uncommon and in this case the singer pretends to be lulling a child as he advises his wife, in the presence of the guests, not to be too generous with the bread. The potato did much to alleviate the labour of grain growing in an unsuitable climate, and while it did nothing to raise the standard of living, it at least kept hunger at bay and allowed an increase in population. One song cursing hunger, blesses the potato as the chief means of repelling it (1288B4). It is a well known fact, however, that the non-immune potato was an unstable foundation for a population on the increase and people still speak of *a bhliadhna loth am buntàta* "the year the potato rotted" as the end of an epoch. An interesting song

from the time of the potato famine defies the captain of a relief ship which came to Barra, and who would only give provisions to those who would change to the Protestant faith (1288A12).

This period marked the peak of the population rise in many areas of the Highlands. The decline which began then has continued since. These migrations have coloured recent Gaelic song to a great extent. Even today when the average local poet is in light mood he composes humorously or libellously about local incidents, but if he feels that he must be serious he sings nostalgically about his homeland. The theme is also popular with more literate song writers who compose for a wider community than a township or parish. At the present day it is possible to listen to a public concert or to a broadcast of Gaelic songs and find that out of every three songs sung, two are concerned directly with the theme of homeland. In view of their great popularity in recent times, it is interesting to find that the number of homeland songs in this repertoire is very small.

The homeland theme undoubtedly took wide root as a result of a legitimate enough pre-occupation with social change. The sudden emergence of a materially underdeveloped community in the middle of the eighteenth century resulted in hardship and bewilderment. A social system based largely on personal attendance to the chief and easily mobilised manpower, did not have the resilience to face the economic penetration which followed the peace. A land too impoverished to bear it was encumbered with an increasing population, and from the bitterness of the inevitable migrations came a burst of song composition lamenting the disappearance of the crowded townships before the advance of *na caoraich mhóra* "the big sheep".

From a genre of song composition which originated in the actual vicissitudes of a community, the homeland theme developed into an obsession in which any wider poetic impulse tends to be submerged. Before the end of the Victorian period, when security of tenure for the crofter had already been established, the development of the theme had moved away from any reality of circumstance and had become a predilection for the essentially unreal—a lament for an idyllic life in the past that had never existed.

Neither the social upheaval of the migrations nor the quasi-literary song type it gave rise to are reflected to any great

extent in this repertoire. This may be due to the isolation of the community in which it came into being. Whereas in other parts of the Highlands the tensions between crofter and landlord impinged on everyday life, here, the struggle with the natural environment was primary.

The great importance of this feat of retention by Nan MacKinnon cannot be fully appreciated from a partial description such as this. Only the presentation of the repertoire in full will show its complexity of structure and theme and its value in the study of a community for which documentary sources are few.

It can be said in conclusion that Nan's importance as a bearer of tradition does not lie in her songs alone. During a period of a fortnight in June she recorded from memory over one thousand Gaelic proverbs, clearly illustrating the application of each one. This unique collection will form the subject of a separate study.

NOTES

[1] Gaelic texts will normally be given without punctuation. Translations will have punctuation where it is necessary to avoid ambiguity.

[2] While a substantial number of Nan's songs appear to be unique to her repertoire, variants of some are found in other areas and in printed sources. The examples are all drawn from Nan's repertoire, and it is outside the purpose of this paper to make textual comparisons between these and versions from other sources.

[3] Types of syllabic refrains found with women's songs generally have been discussed by the writer in "The Sub-literary Tradition in Gaelic Song Poetry I". *Eigse* 7: 217-39

[4] Since questions of structure are not discussed here, the syllabic refrains accompanying this and most of the other examples are not given.

[5] *Siunnsar* is taken here to be a corruption of *cuinnsear*, Gaelicisation of English "whinger".

[6] ". . . of a most notorious theif and wicked outlawe, which had lyved all his time of spoyles and robberies one of theire Bardes in his praise said, that he was none of those Idle milke-sopps that was brought vpp by the fyer syde, but that most of his dayes he spent in armes and valiant enterprises, that he did never eate his meate before he had wonne yt with his sworde, that he laye not slugginge all night in a Cabben vnder his mantle, but vsed comonlie to kepe others wakinge, to defende theire lyves, and did light his candle at the flame of theire howses . . ."[14] From *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, ed. W. L. Renwick (London 1934) 97. See also "The Statutes of Iona", particularly V and VIII, printed in *A Source Book of Scottish History*, ed. Dickinson, Donaldson, and Milne (Edinburgh 1954) 265-70.

[7] Duplication of a monosyllable in order to make up the requisite number of syllables is not unusual in a divided line of this kind.

[8] The compositional use of formulas is discussed by the writer in "Formulaic Composition in Gaelic Oral Literature" *Modern Philology* 57: 1-12.

[9] For a discussion of the Pastourelle in Irish tradition see Seán Ó Tuama; "An Pastourelle sa Ghaeilge". *Eigse* 8: 181-96.

[10] The term "bard" is usually reserved for a poet trained in syllabic versification, and cannot, strictly speaking, be applied to seventeenth century Scottish poets such as Iain Lom and Mary MacLeod. Metrical innovation does not, however, conceal an identity of purpose. The similar social function of the Scottish poets dictated a choice of theme that is in no important way different from that of the bards. When social function and not metrical form is being considered, a more extended use of the term is permissible.

[11] These remarks elaborate a previous discussion of some aspects of this subject in "The Sub-literary Tradition in Gaelic Song Poetry II". *Eigse* 8: 1-17.

[12] Translated from the text given by J. Carmichael Watson, *Gaelic Songs of Mary MacLeod* (Glasgow 1934) 54.

THE MUSICAL ASPECT OF THE SONGS OF NAN MACKINNON OF VATERSAY

Francis Collinson*

The singing of Nan Mackinnon has a strangeness about it even to the person with a wide experience of Gaelic folk-singing. One might say facilely of it that it is "out of this world". For once, however, the phrase would be justified, for it is the singing of a person who lives, and sings for her own amusement, within the confines of her immediate family circle, in the midst of a small island community which itself chooses to enjoy a withdrawn existence, and where visitors are not encouraged to intrude. Her singing, which is the legacy of her mother, has therefore probably preserved in a manner almost completely unspoiled by extraneous influences, the way of singing of that older island community in which her mother lived the greater part of her life—that of the now uninhabited island of Mingulay.

The actual vocal timbre of Nan Mackinnon's voice is of a narrow quality, though without the harshness which the description implies—indeed there is a soft, ruminative, reflective sound about it, as if she were singing to herself rather than to a listener. This shows itself not only in the actual sound of her voice, but in the tempo and rhythm of her songs, the outstanding characteristic of which is its unhurriedness. Like all good folk-singers, she lays as much importance on the proper emphasis and quantitive value of the words of a song as on the melody, singing a long note to a long vowel, even if it means adding what to the musician is an extra beat or more in the bar, or the robbing of the accepted duration of a succeeding note—a *tempo rubato* which is sometimes "more than *molto*", to use familiar musical terms. In a language which abounds in long vowel-sounds as does Gaelic, this characteristic becomes the more marked; and when to it is added a naturally leisurely mode of singing, the rhythm can become very elongated indeed. Yet the rhythm is there, though it is sometimes of an elusiveness that provides a stiff test for the transcriber.

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The tessitura of her voice gives the impression of being high in pitch; but this is found to be an illusion, probably arising out of the narrowness of the sound quality. The compass seldom exceeds D in the treble stave and low G or an occasional F below it; which is not, however, as low as is to be heard from the female voice in the neighbouring island of Barra.

Grace-notes abound in typical Hebridean patterns. These take the simple forms, most often of a single, sometimes of a double, and rarely, of a triple grace-note. The elaborate *melismata* of the singers of the more northerly end of the Long Island are absent.

A curious characteristic which may be noticed in her singing, and which is not unknown in the Hebrides, is that of cutting off abruptly the flow of sound at the end of a phrase by a sort of inverted *Coup de glotte*, that is, by a sudden sharp closing of the throat instead of, as normally, by the gentle cessation of the breath stream. With Nan Mackinnon, this has the effect of throwing the voice upwards in pitch as the sound ceases, generally to the interval of a third or fourth, in a kind of involuntary after-grace-note; a sound which the transcriber must note as a point of interest, but which, being intrusive, and extraneous to the melody, must be omitted from it in transcription for publication.

Strangely arresting, however, as is the actual singing of Nan Mackinnon in these respects, it is in her quite remarkable repertoire of traditional songs that the chief interest lies; for these embrace an almost complete cross-section of the whole Gaelic song-culture, and include examples of every song-type (except, curiously, the Ossianic lays) from great elegaic songs to the lightest of puirt-a-beul. Her singing of puirt-a-beul, which form a considerable section of her repertoire, is in complete contrast to the rubato manner of her other songs, for here she becomes intensely rhythmic. Most, though significantly not all, of her puirt-a-beul are found to be constructed on the bagpipe scale—significantly not all because it shows that puirt-a-beul are not necessarily just a putting of words to pipe-tunes, and that rhythmic vocal music in dance measure exists in its own right in Gaelic tradition. The several strains which go to make up the movements of her puirt-a-beul are often repeated quite a number of times, giving one to speculate on whether they may have borne any relationship to the repetitive routine of the dance for which they were sung.

The labour songs, mostly of the type used for the shrinking of the cloth, provide also their interest and problems. Although Nan Mackinnon knows and sings a considerable number of these, she states that she never took part in the actual communal task of waulking the cloth, but learnt the songs *qua* songs, from her mother. Again one finds in them unexpected rhythmic deviations from the regular beat of labour songs; and this again poses a question—do these point to older forms of the songs, existing perhaps before they were impressed into the service and adapted for the purpose of the waulking (of which there may also possibly be a hint in the early phonograph recordings of Mingulay singers made by Mrs Kennedy Fraser), or do these deviations merely take their source in Nan Mackinnon's own way of singing them? This is a question which must be left to the Gaelic scholar to answer.

Musicologically, the repertoire presents material for a complete study of Gaelic folk-music. In the scale foundation of the melodies, all the musical modes are to be found, including those rare in folk-song, the Phrygian and Lydian; the latter said by Cecil Sharp never to have been found by an English collector, i.e. in English folk-song. (It exists, however, within the scale of the Scottish Highland bagpipe.) The complete cycle of pentatonic modes are to be found; while of hexatonic scales, Nan Mackinnon's songs present so wide and varied a selection that they burst open the preconceived system for the classification of these scales worked out in the School of Scottish Studies, and have made necessary a wider system of classification. Of particular interest are some six or seven songs constructed on conjunct five-note scales, and two rare examples of a four-note scale, one conjunct and one gapped—perhaps again survivals of a more rudimentary stage of Gaelic folk-music.

To the singer of Gaelic folk-songs, Nan Mackinnon's songs are a potential enrichment. From all angles, the recording of her complete repertoire of more than four hundred and fifty songs must be accounted a major contribution to the study of Gaelic song.

ROBERT EDWARDS' COMMONPLACE BOOK AND SCOTS LITERARY TRADITION

Helena M. Shire*

In 1603 with the Union of the Crowns Scotland lost its royal court, whose presence had for ages been a focus for the cultivation of music and poetry, sacred and secular alike in Chapel Royal or Music of the Household, with courtly makar in residence and visiting minstrel or *seannachie*. For a knowledge of the cultivation of courtly music and poetry of Scotland continuing in the realm into the seventeenth century we must draw on the surviving family libraries, often in manuscript, of the great houses or on the extant documents of musical education in such institutions as the burgh "sang schuil". Some of these have been studied in a series of articles current in the *Transactions of the Edinburgh Bibliographical Society*—the music-books of the family of Forbes of Tolquhon, Forbes-Leith of Whitehaugh or the books of David and Andro Melvill that are linked with the Aberdeen Sang Schuil. The valuable and extensive collection of music-books in manuscript made by the Maules of Panmure and the Ramsays of Dalhousie is the next to be studied. These are the property of the Earl of Dalhousie who has generously placed them on loan to the National Library.

No. 11 of the Panmure Music Library is a commonplace-book of music and poetry planned and compiled by Robert Edwards (1617-1696). His life-records are noted in Hew Scott's *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanae* (Edinburgh 1925) Vol. 5, p. 367. He became Minister of Murroes Parish and may over a period of years have joined for music of devotion and recreation with the family of Maule of Panmure, who were his friends. A clergyman of wide musical culture, he cherished pre-Reformation polyphonic song and psalmody, part-song continental and Scottish as well as Scots ballad from oral tradition. He

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left us in his commonplace-book an extremely valuable record of several ages of music and song in Scotland and a key to the taste of an epoch.

In 1633, just at the time when Robert Edwards was compiling his commonplace-book of music and poetry, song and psalmody, a document was prepared, against King Charles' coming north, on the state of his Chapel Royal in Scotland. Music at its disposal was listed—"all sorts of English, French, Dutch, Spaynish, Latin, Italian and Old Scotch musick, vocall and instrumentall". This to a modern eye would clearly indicate art-song sacred and secular, part-writing (The resemblance in scope to Edwards' anthology is interesting). But a hundred years ago the reference to "Old Scotch musick" was understood very differently. William Dauney, who printed and discussed the document in his *Ancient Scotish Melodies* took it to mean "the old popular music of Scotland", in fact the *native air* (Dauney 1838: 159; on pp. 365-7 is printed "Information touching the Chappell-Royall of Scotland", signed E. Kellie). No art-music, no part-song of Scottish courtly provenance was envisaged. For many years afterwards opinion and even enquiry were firmly set in this direction.

New bearings in thought about song in Scotland date from the establishing of the existence of such a courtly repertory of song, the demonstration of its extent and of its nature, and the consequent discussion of a habit of courtly song-writing in Scotland during the sixteenth century. In the re-assembly of this repertory, from which a selection was published in *Music of Scotland 1500-1700* (Elliott and Shire 1957), Robert Edwards' anthology was a key document, as Dr. Elliott shows below (pp. 50-56). This holds true in general as in detail, for the words as much as for the music.

For knowledge of older Scots "lyric" poetry one had depended almost entirely on the summarising content of the great Bannatyne and Maitland Collections with the early Asloan Manuscript and the late, posthumous record of Montgomeric's writings in the Margaret Ker (the "Drummond") manuscript.[1] To these the critic or historian of literature would add the named list of songs, tales and dances from the *Complaynt of Scotland* of 1548 (Murray 1872) and the repertory of song drawn on for *travesti* in *The Gude and Godlie Ballatis* (Mitchell 1896-7). But when the evidence of the music-books was studied and adduced it became possible to demonstrate how many of these poems were songs, and in what traditions,

musical as well as literary, they had been composed and enjoyed.

It became evident, for instance—as I stated in a broadcast talk in 1954—how many of Bannatyne's "ballatis of luve . . . songis of luve" and "remeids of luve" were songs, and court songs, part-writing, at that. It was possible, too, to show the courtly nature of the originals of "Godlie" versions whether Scots, English or continental. Indeed it meant the restoration of certain ghost songs, recorded tenuously in these two song-list sources: "For lufe of one" (Cf. Shire 1954), "Rycht sore opprest" or "Alace that same sweit face" (Elliott and Shire 1957). For all of these we may draw on Robert Edwards' book. For "O lustie May" (Bannatyne CCLXXIX) it was now clear, from the traces of repeated phrases retained by the Bannatyne scribe, that he had known the piece with its music. Robert Edwards gives us, besides musical parts, a full verbal text and he indicates precisely how these repeated phrases are to be sung (The reader and singer may care to compare this favourite Franco-Scottish part-song as edited from collated sources in *Music of Scotland* with the version presented in *An Elizabethan Song Book* by W. H. Auden, C. Kallman and N. Greenberg, who do not take into account evidence as to provenance, style or meaning of the song [Auden etc. 1957: XII-XIII, 226-9]).

The dating by style of music, outlined by Dr. Elliott, helps us to separate out into different epochs the very large number of "lyrics" recorded by Bannatyne and the Maitlands, many of which are anonymous and without indications of age. Thanks largely to Robert Edwards' book we can envisage styles in song-writing under King James V, first with his English Queen Mother, Margaret Tudor, long-lived if only intermittently at court, then with his French consorts of whom the second, Marie de Lorraine, substantially outlived him. An Anglo-Scottish style of song was uncovered in, for instance, "Alas that same sueit face" a variant of whose words was known in England about 1535. Franco-Scottish style, well substantiated, we see in "Lantron of Lowe" (Bannatyne CCLXXXIX) and "Support" (Bannatyne CCLXXVII), the first by Steill, whom I take to be the King's favourite, George Steill, dead in 1540. The words of the second song are from a chanson of Marot "Secourez moy ma Dame par amours", 1530 (Grenier XXXX: 451). Against these known songs, poems similar in style and content can be studied.

Later, Franco-Scottish styles appear side by side with Scots-Tottelian. A wide-spread dance-song pattern throws new light on metres of Alexander Scott as well as on the "much cuttit and broken" stanzas devised by courtiers of King James VI. And we can see writing of the later "Castalian" poets moving towards association with the "tuneful air" as written by Campion. In tracing all these lines we are indebted, more fully than can be stated in this summary, to evidence from Robert Edwards' book.

I cite two instances only. With "Onlie to you in vorld that I loued best", the words by Scott hitherto evaluated in isolation are seen to be closely involved with an earlier lyric, of which Scott's poem is an "answer" or an "imitatio", an "overgoing" (Shire 1954: 46-52). Scott's making is involved, too, with the music, a French chanson that matches both pieces. Then "O Ladie Wenus heire complaine" supplies on the one hand the link between Scott's "Depairte" and the music to which it was enjoyed. On the other hand, taken with the "moralisation" that survives to its music, it lets us glimpse a Scots song in Venus service that was enjoyed at the mid-sixteenth-century—that may quite possibly have been the one used in Sir David Lindsay's *Thrie Estaitis* for the scene before Dame Sensuality's bower (discussed informally Shire 1959*b*: 10).

We depend largely on musical evidence from Robert Edwards' book in demonstrating how often Montgomerie's poems were songs, written to match music already existing or written in the expectation that the words would be matched with music or set as part-song. This consideration has brought a fuller understanding of the courtly tradition, musical as well as literary, in which he was working, and with it a pertinent assessment of his individual achievement in this field. Attention was drawn to his close association with James Lauder, musician of King James VI's court (Shire 1959*a*: 15-18). We no longer can believe that Montgomerie's lyrics travelled to England to be set there by madrigalist or composer of lute-song as was asserted by the German critic of 1913 (Bolle 1913). Movement indeed is seen to be the other way: we find in Scots music-books such as this the English song in "the Scots way of it".

There is no space here to review the many interesting literary questions raised by the instrumental music in the Edwards anthology, the pieces for cittern or keyboard (And now we do enter the realm of "old popular music of Scotland"). What words were sung, we wonder, to this early record of "The

lass of Petie's Mill"? How often do we find a broadside with a tune here in Scotland quite different in idiom from the one to which it was current in England? Contrariwise, to what tune did Edwards sing the verses "Vale fa hir doun by" which are without music in the manuscript? Along both these lines of enquiry we can from his pages glean new information about the *native air* in the earlier seventeenth century.

Of the verses inscribed without associated music some are fine poetry. Two short pieces and a ballad are printed in *Poems from Panmure House* (Shire 1960): "O Lord I am thy creature recreated", "Evin as the heart hurt in the chasse" and "The Sheath and the Knife" or "Leesome Brand". The most exciting are the ballad versions, obviously from oral tradition. There is a good "Little Musgrave". There are two unique texts. One, complete, is an important version of "Leesome Brand" or "The Sheath and the Knife", numbers 15 and 16 in Child's *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (Child 1956: I, 177-87). Its discovery means a reconsideration of a European ballad-tree and a re-assessment of versions of Child's No. 5, "Gil Brenton", with which extensive mingling of motifs is seen to have taken place. The second is fragmentary, a *chanson d'aventure* of two brothers, one lamenting like Poor Dissaware or the Lad of Lorne. Received apparently in eight-line stanzas, it is, I believe, recorded by Edwards while he was in two minds as to what its form should be—he is trying to impose on it a refrain-line, perhaps with associated music in mind.

One interesting item of music with the title "Sir Lamuel" is in the style of a sixteenth-century dance tune. It is very likely indeed that this entitling indicates that to the dance tune words were sung concerning Sir Lamuel, Sir Launfal of English romance and French *lai*. Indeed the music matches the stanza-form of the version composed by Thomas Chestre during the fourteenth century, as can be seen by the sample stanza here underlaid. We know from "Sir Lambewell" of the Percy Folio Manuscript that a long verse narrative in octo-syllabic couplets was current in Britain in the mid-seventeenth-century. A fragmentary text in the same metre was recorded in Scottish courtly circles of the reign of King James VI.[2] Robert Edwards' tune, the musical sections taken without repeats, will serve for the octosyllabic couplet form if an alternating refrain is added.[3] His "Sir Lamuel", then, may indicate a "romance" sung in the sixteenth century to an up-to-date dance tune or a verse narrative meeting a current piece

of dance music and remodelled "to its tune"—a process known to have marked the making of many a broad-side ballad. Was there once, sung to a dance-tune, a "ballad of Sir Lamuel" that has not survived?

Such is the value of Robert Edwards' Commonplace Book —both for the evidence it affords and for the questions it raises—that a full page-by-page account of its contents is in preparation, with the texts of all songs and ballads not known in print.[4] The interest for scholars is by no means exhausted. So many documents and source-books of early Scottish Music have come to light recently, flushed as it were by the publication of the central repertory, that a much extended series of concordances has been established and a fresh review is envisaged of earlier music of Scotland in all its variety.

NOTES

[1] These manuscripts have been edited for the Scottish Text Society, the relevant volumes being: Asloan MS. New Series 14 and 16; Bannatyne New Series 22, 23, and 26, Third Series 5; Maitland Folio New Series 7 and 20; Maitland Quarto New Series 9; Montgomerie's Poems First Series 9, 10, 11, and 59.

[2] In copy of Lydgate's "Troy Book" of Scottish ownership, Cambridge University Library MS Kk.5.30 f 11 (now bound at end of volume).

[3] A refrain, for example, as found in text 4 of No. 20 in *The Traditional Tunes of the Child Ballads* Vol. 1. Ed. Bertrand Harris Bronson, Princeton 1959.

[4] In a forthcoming volume for the Aberdeen University Studies Series.

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ROBERT EDWARDS' COMMONPLACE BOOK AND SCOTS MUSICAL HISTORY

Kenneth Elliott*

Robert Edwards' Commonplace-book contains 129 items of vocal and instrumental part-music, 14 only of which occur in complete transcription. There are in fact 241 separate entries of individual parts, comprising 131 cantus, 38 altus, 34 tenor, 25 bassus and 13 quintus parts, several of them recorded more than once. It is a varied collection of vocal and instrumental, sacred and secular, Scots, English and foreign music, as these tables show:

	items		items
songs	80	Scots (and possibly Scots)	77
psalms	37	English (and possibly English)	31
motets	3	French	6
consorts	9	Italian	15

Robert Edwards' manuscript presents a complete cross-section of the Scottish repertory of part-song. Early sixteenth-century songs *à* 3 in the English tradition are represented by *Alas that same sueit face* (MB 34)[1] whose only two surviving parts are recorded here. Traces of other songs from the same period and in the same tradition can be seen in *In sommer simliest and faire* (No. 78)[2] and *In pryll alon* (No. 83), both of which appear to be descant parts from three-voice polyphonic settings. More in the Josquin motet-like chanson form *à* 4 is *Lantron of lowe* (No. 82), also unique to this manuscript, whose text is preserved in the Bannatyne Manuscript, ascribed to Steill. Slightly later examples of the Claudin type of chanson, which seems to have been cultivated in Scotland, include *Support your servand* (MB 39), *Richt soir opprest* (MB 40) and a cantus part, unknown elsewhere, entitled *My loue his leaft me comfortles* (No. 60). The style and structure of this last piece suggest that it is related to the others: it begins with the characteristic rhythmic figure on a

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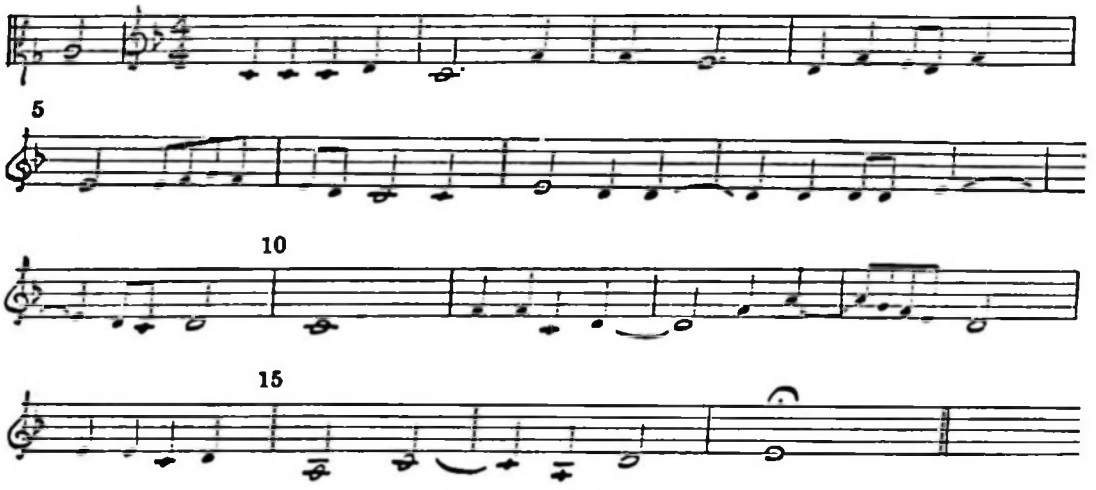
repeated note and the second and fifth of its five short, clearly-defined phrases are identical. Part-songs of the mid-century are well represented. *O Ladie Wenus heire complaine* (No. 33) is probably the title of the original song to whose music (MB 42)

IN SOMMER SIMLIEST AND FAIRE

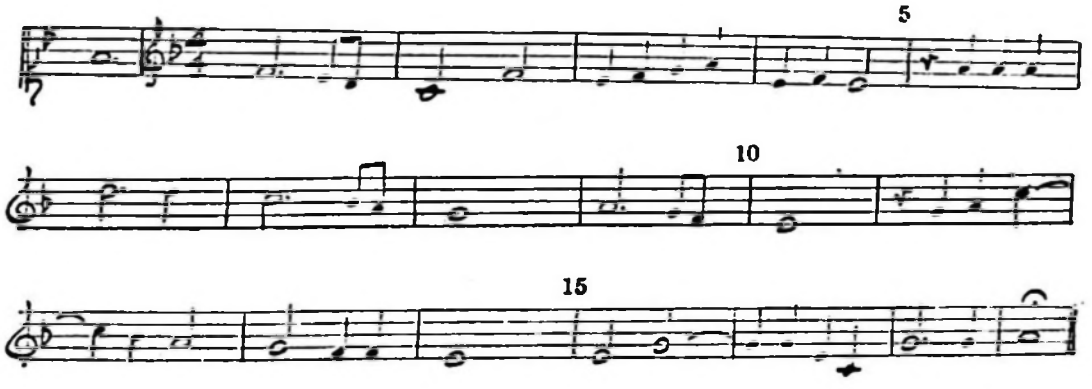
(No. 78)



The last D in bar 8 is a crotchet in the manuscript.

IN PRYLL ALON

(No. 83)

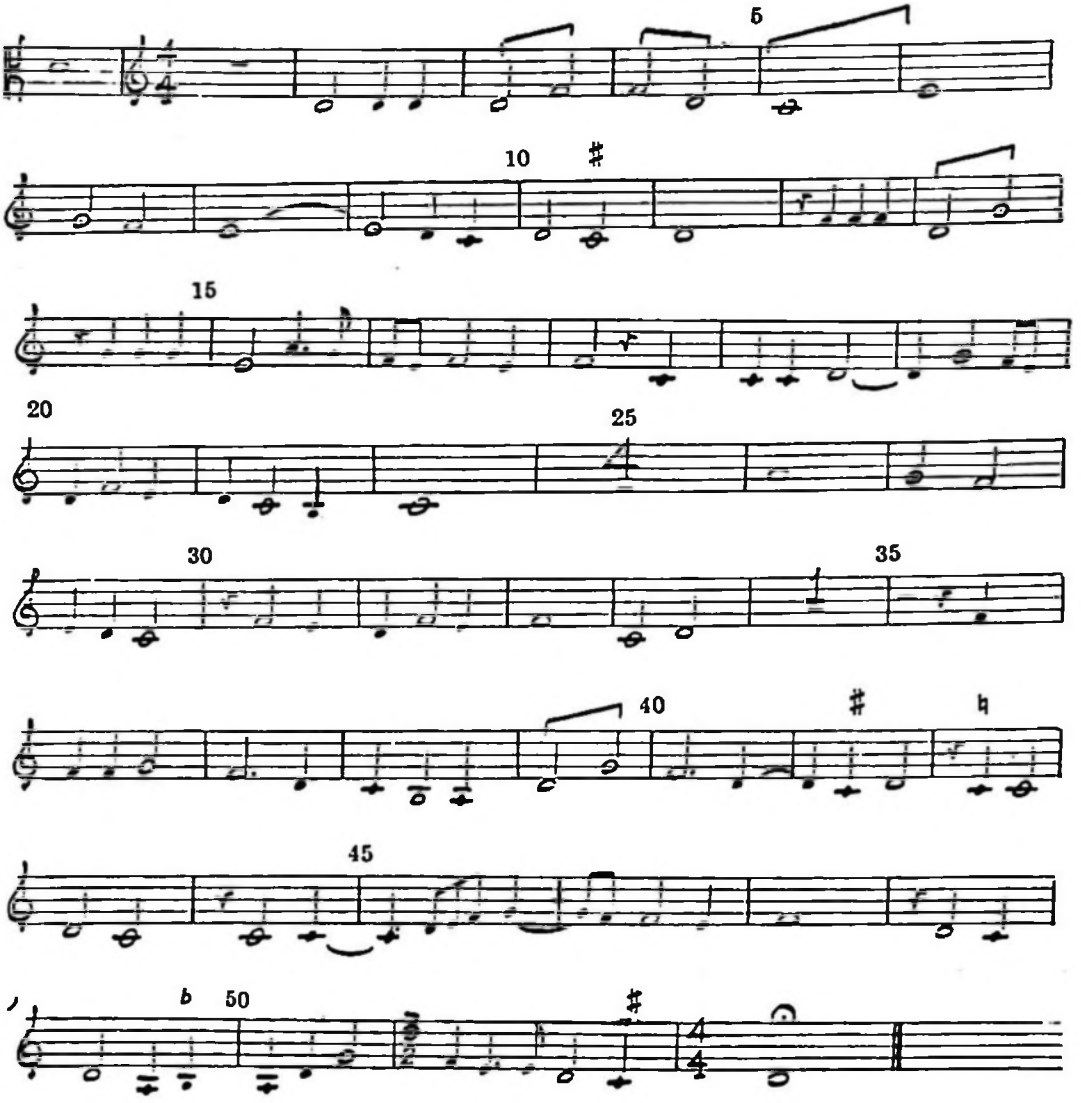


the words of Scott's "Lament of the Master of Erskine" (MB 42) were later fitted: this form of address is common in love poetry of earlier sixteenth-century Scotland and the words of this incipit certainly fit the music better than do those of Scott's poem. The setting of another poem by Scott, *Hence hairt* [*with*] *heir* [*that*] *most depairt* (No. 32), resembles the preceding song in

form and style, but it survives only in its cantus part: it appears to be a part-song, possibly of the mid-sixteenth century, composed in the rhythm of a galliard. Another song, *Intil a may morninge* (No. 15), is very similar in style and structure to

LANTRON OF LOWE

(No. 82)



The D in bar 9 is a minim in the manuscript. The tied Cs in bars 44-45 are rhythmically unusual but seem to be indicated. The manuscript has simply a dotted minim.

Woe worth the tyme (MB 33), which it precedes in the manuscript, and a version of its text was included in the *Gude and Godlie Ballatis* (*c.* 1550): the simple part-music is perhaps contemporary with that publication.

Late sixteenth-century part-songs such as *What mightie motion* (MB 56), and polyphonic "chansons" such as *In throu the windoes of myn ees* (MB 53), are also recorded: one of the former, whose tenor part is unique to Edwards' manuscript, is *Evin dead behold I breathe* (MB 55). Lute-songs include *Since that my siches* (MB 58), which is found only in this source. In style it seems to date from the early seventeenth century and is strongly reminiscent of Campian in his simplest vein. Another lute-song, possibly Scots, is found here with the title of the metrical version of Psalm 51, *O Lord consider my destres* (No. 35). The music, in the rhythm of a galliard, appears with a bassus part in Lady Anne Ker's Music-Book of about 1625: there it is matched with another text, "Slepe not in syne my deare my undifilde".

Broadsides and ballad-tunes are represented by cantus and tenor parts of what are very likely Scottish settings, for they are found only in Scottish sources. *Come Love, let's walk* (MB 64) is one, *Come sueit lowe leat sorowes ceass* (Nos. 56 and 95), the English ballad-tune known as "Barafostus Dream", is another. This latter appears to have had two different settings current in Scottish sources: one of the compilers who made the later additions to Thomas Wode's part-books recorded one *à* 4; Robert Edwards appears to have drawn on another, possibly *à* 3, for the tenor part that he engrossed in his manuscript. *Sir Lamuel* (No. 34) is possibly another such ballad-tune, and it is unique to the manuscript.

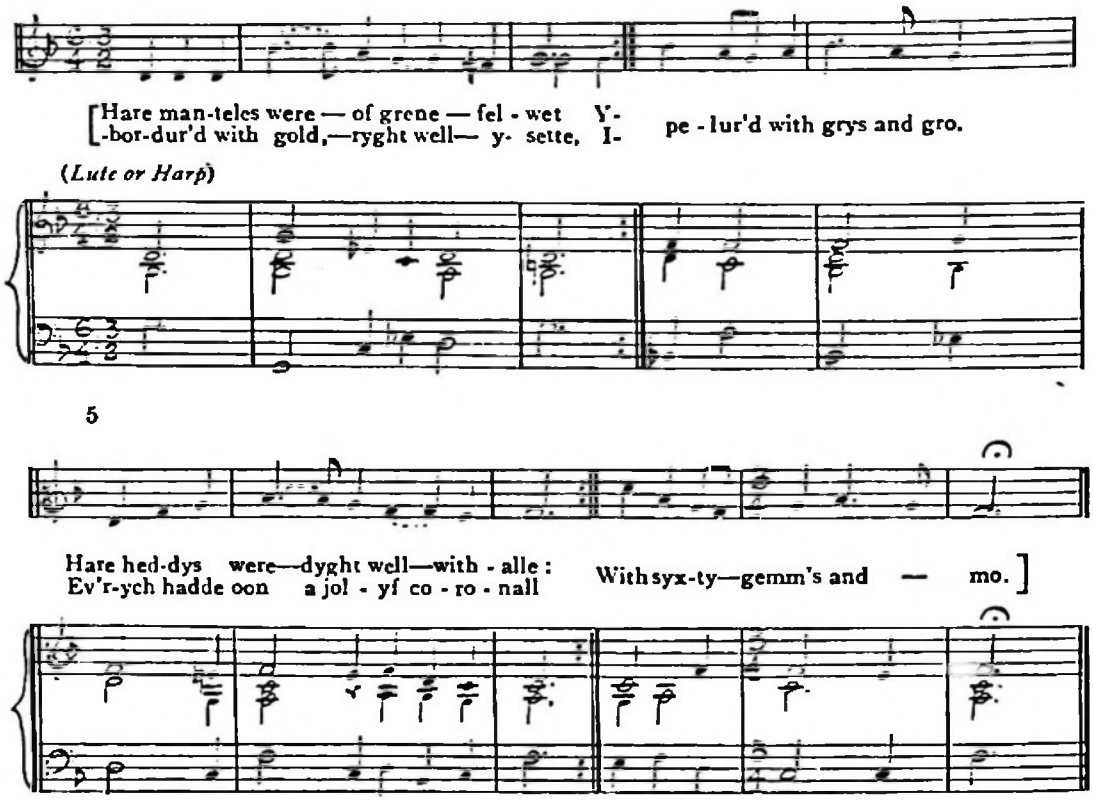
The English songs in the manuscript are almost as varied as the Scottish: the earliest one, Henry VIII's *Passe tyme uithe good companie* (No. 80), is not such a curious choice in the light of the taste for old music that Edwards and other seventeenth-century Scottish musical amateurs display in their anthologies. Later Tudor part-songs include *My song is lowe* (Nos. [126] and [127]), dating from about the third quarter of the century and only found in this and one other Scottish source. There are, surprisingly, no madrigals in the manuscript, either English or Italian. Two of Byrd's accompanied solo songs, some Dowland ayres, Jones and Campian lute-songs and a couple of Ravenscroft pieces complete the English repertory.

French chansons include Claudin's *Maudite soit* and *D'où vient cela*. Here, however, they go under the titles of *Onlie to you in uorld that I loued best* (No. 17) and *For loue of one* (Nos. 84 and 89), as popular French chansons were frequently matched with Scots lyrics and were known by their new titles. The original tenor of Lupi's *Susanne un jour* appears as No. 112, and the

cantus of Lasso's re-setting of it as No. 90, *Susanna faire*, presumably copied from *Musica Transalpina* of 1588. Italian songs are represented by Gastoldi's balletto *Viver lieto*, here described merely as "Ane Italian songe" (No. 79), and thirteen anonymous *villanelle à* 3 without title or text, one of which, *Fuggit' amore* by G. D. da Nola, first appeared in a Venetian publication of 1567.

SIR LAMUEL

(No. 34)



Repetition of bars 1-3 is indicated in the manuscript; bars 4-6 are repeated by analogy. A stanza of the English Romance of Sir Launfal (*Middle English Metrical Romances*, ed. W. H. French and C. B. Hale, New York 1930) is underlaid and an instrumental accompaniment has been reconstructed by the present writer.

Bassus parts of thirteen psalm-settings (ff. 35-38) and one psalm tune (No. 52) can be traced to the 1635 Scottish Psalter. Nos. 1-12, 38-50 and the parts on ff. 63-68, however, supply the cantus (i.e. the psalm tunes), quintus and altus parts of twelve settings of the Common Tunes that are unique to this manuscript. The only other group of Scottish psalm-settings that places the tune in the soprano register is the now fragmentary set of "The Common toones in 5 parts" noted some

time after 1633 at the end of Thomas Wode's part-books. Very likely the parts in Edwards' manuscript are taken from a similar set of Common Tunes arranged for five voices.

The nine consorts are probably all Scottish: they consist of a pavan by the court composer and envoy James Lauder (No. 68: MB 83), precisely dated 1584 in another manuscript[3], and a fantasy (No. 75) by John Black (*c.* 1520-87) of the Aberdeen song-school; a pavan and galliard (No. 65), possibly by Lauder, dedicated to Sir William Keith—very likely the fourth Earl Marischal of that name who died in 1581[4]; three pieces recorded only in Scottish manuscripts, comprising a short dance-like piece entitled *Wilson's fantasy* (Nos. 30 and 99: MB 85) and two settings of *Ut re mi* (Nos. [93*a*] and 100); and what appear to be re-workings found only in Scottish sources of Dowland's "Captain Piper" pavan and galliard (Nos. 61 and 62).

In addition to this part-music there are 21 items of cittern music and 20 of keyboard music, making a total of 170 musical items in the whole manuscript. Of the cittern pieces, 13 are Scottish and 8 English, and of the keyboard pieces, 11 are Scottish and 9 are English, although in both groups the Scottish pieces tend to be arrangements of native airs or folk-songs, and the English lute-songs, continuo-songs and ballad-tunes.

Perhaps the most interesting feature of the collection is the incidence of the extant Scottish repertory of part-music that it reveals. In the following table the songs can be seen to form relatively the most representative group in this category. Now the contents as a whole show a higher proportion of Scottish part-songs than do those of any other similar source. In this respect the only comparable collection is Forbes' *Songs and Fancies* (Aberdeen, 1662-82). Robert Edwards' Commonplace-book, however, supplies more unique parts and the 29 items recorded in it represent practically all the best songs in the repertory. These facts alone would make it one of the most important documents of early Scottish music.

	No. in extant repertory	No. in RE	unique to RE (or supplying unique parts)
Songs . .	83	29	10
Psalm-settings .	*c.* 200	37	13
Motets . .	22	2	—
Consorts . .	39	9	4

[1] The MB references are to the item number in *Music of Scotland 1500-1700* (Musica Britannica 15). London 1957.

[2] The No. references are to the item in the manuscript itself.

[3] The cantus (second copy) of Thomas Wode's part-books. This copy is in Edinburgh University Library, MS. Dk. 5. 14, p. 179.

[4] Cf. Sir J. Balfour Paul (ed.), *The Scots Peerage* 6 (Edinburgh 1909) 46.

THE ROLE OF SUB-LETTING IN THE CROFTING COMMUNITY

Alan Gailey*

North and west of the Caledonian Canal, and particularly west of the main Highland watershed, in the Hebrides and in Shetland lies the crofting region of Scotland. In this area of uninviting environment is preserved an agricultural community cast in the mould of a communally organised society dating from before 1800. There have been inevitable and necessary adjustments as ideals and standards have changed, but many elements in the crofting scene have their antecedents in the agricultural and social framework of clan society. Crofting is organised on a township basis, the township consisting of a number of crofts each of which has rights in a common grazing. The crofts are normally consolidated areas of arable with dwellings sited on the individual crofts, though in some cases a tight cluster of houses has maintained its site throughout the various changes which have taken place since the disintegration of the old open-field economy. The common grazing is operated on a system of shares, of which each croft has one or some multiple or fraction of one. The share is stated as a certain number of animals which the crofter has the right to graze on the common. This is known as the souming. In the great majority of cases the house, arable land, and grazing rights form indivisible elements of the croft.

The regulation of the common grazing is in the hands of a township committee, and all the work associated with the common, particularly work with the sheep, is the joint responsibility of the whole township. This calls for a degree of communal organisation, but only a pale shadow of that involved when the inbye land also was communally held and periodically reallocated among the tenants under the equalitarian principles of run-rig.

Prior to 1886 most crofters were tenants-at-will. The Crofters' Holdings (Scotland) Act, 1886, based on the work of

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the Napier Commission of 1884, gave security of tenure to the crofter as part of the process of recognising formally, for the first time, the existence of crofting as a way of life. Crofting law is such that the individual tenant virtually owns his land, and pays only a nominal rent. There is more than a grain of truth in the oft-repeated saying that the crofter enjoys the benefits, but bears none of the responsibilities of ownership. In such circumstances it is understandable that many crofting proprietors regard their estates as millstones round their necks.

It is not intended here to discuss the historical emergence of crofting, important though this is in explaining the average very small size of the individual holding. The purpose is to demonstrate one of the as yet unrecorded aspects of a framework of small-holdings which has become ossified in a pattern suited to nineteenth century requirements, but which has been projected into the changed social, and particularly demographic, circumstances of the mid-twentieth century.

Crofting is much more than a tenurial system—it is a way of life. In modern conditions the croft is usually too small to provide an adequate living for a family, or even to keep the head of the family fully occupied. Many crofts are minute, some in north Lewis consisting only of 3 acres of inbye land, not all of which is arable. By contrast there are units only just within the legal definition of having no more than 50 acres or a rent of under £50 per annum. Unfortunately these larger and viable units are the exception and not the rule. Consequently the "typical" crofting family will have possibly only one man of working age on the croft full-time, but one or more others in ancillary employment in the vicinity, such as local small industries, Forestry Commission work, or employment as bus drivers or postmen. Many crofting households have men working away from home semi-permanently; for instance, in 1957 one third of all the men in the island of Barra were at sea, the majority with merchant shipping companies. Such non-agricultural employment is not confined to the men; seasonal domestic work in hotels is common among the younger women, but nursing and teaching both recruit women from the crofting region in considerable numbers. Thus, in many crofting townships few of the 15-44 age group are resident. And yet such people often have no other home, in a permanent sense, than the croft. The resident population consists of the elderly and the very young, with barely sufficient

men and women of working age to maintain some semblance of activity in the community.

In circumstances such as these it is inevitable that many crofts are occupied only by a portion of the crofting families, while others will lie unoccupied though legally tenanted by families seeking a livelihood beyond the township. Almost always the basic cause of this is the small size of the crofts, but factors such as physical remoteness, and consequent social isolation on a district scale must not be disregarded, especially since two wars have shown many crofters something of life beyond the Highlands. Some crofts lie derelict temporarily for the croft is often kept for use on retiral, while the land is worked by a neighbour on a basis of unofficial sub-letting. Sub-letting also occurs where the tenant works full-time in the vicinity, or away from it, while his family live on the croft but do not work the land. If the croft house is occupied by an aged or widowed tenant the land is frequently sub-let to a neighbouring active crofter. The desire of tenants to take land from those willing to sub-let is easy to understand, especially where the crofts are very small. It is the purpose of this study to examine sub-letting, and its place in the modern crofting economy and society. The evidence is taken from detailed field examination of townships studied by the author as part of a wider project being carried out by the Geography Department of Glasgow University.[1] As such it is in the nature of a sample study, but it is considered that the townships here studied are representative of most of the social conditions to be met with in the crofting region. The townships concerned are in Barra and north Lewis in the Outer Hebrides, and in west Ardnamurchan on the mainland. In addition, reference is made to a recent unpublished study of part of north Skye by MacSween, and to the published study by Caird of the district of Park in south-east Lewis.

West Ardnamurchan is physically very isolated and although the land is potentially more valuable than in some other crofting districts (this is particularly true of some of the grazings), the physical isolation has entailed social stagnation if not regression. Since 1841 the population densities have declined from 23·1 persons per square mile to 16·1 in 1891, to 4·5 in 1959. For present purposes west Ardnamurchan may be taken to represent a crofting community which has stagnated to such an extent that there is no longer sufficient demand for land among the resident crofters to ensure that all crofts are

worked. The 28 crofts studied are in two townships, one large and one small; three of the crofts were totally derelict in 1959.

In Barra a single township of 34 crofts was studied. It lies on the west side of the island, which is more fertile than the east side, due to the presence of "machair" land based on shell sand. The arable land of the crofts is thus partly lime-rich machair along the coast, with behind it the more acid "black land", peaty and in need of constant drainage. These two are complementary and provide the area with a variety of land for both stock and crops. The township is representative of many where there is a keen demand for any land available and the land is fully, but not necessarily adequately, worked.

In north Lewis group A is a single large township of very narrow strip-crofts where there is relatively little sub-letting. The standard of husbandry is not high and little advantage is taken of facilities for improving the land. Tradition and the need to conform with majority patterns and decisions are both strongly rooted in the community. Here the township communal structure is a reality in every sense. Group B, again a single large township, ought more properly to be considered as two units, for each has a separate name and exists as a separate social entity. There is a single common grazing and grazings committee. By contrast with group A the crofts are well-worked and there is an air of progressiveness about the area. The demand for land here has been such that in one of the two groupings within the township, in the absence of sub-let crofts certain tenants have each in the past appropriated a few acres of common grazing, adjacent to their crofts, as croft extensions. Such a position is not theoretically possible without following a set procedure which has not in this case been adhered to, and consequently these extensions are not recognised in the rent roll and do not legally exist.

The areas studied are all different, varying from almost total stagnation at one extreme to a well-worked area where the tenants take advantage of all available grants for croft and grazing improvement at the other. The social position in Lewis is complicated by the presence of two groups of householders who are technically landless. Cottars are usually relatives of croft tenants who build a second dwelling on a croft, and who may work part, or all of the croft land. Squatters usually live in houses built on the edges of the common grazings. They are not legally recognised, and so live free of rents and rates. The squatters enjoy much greater freedom than cottars

and have often brought under cultivation parts of the common grazings round their dwellings. Cases are on record where individual squatters claim and work more land than legal croft tenants in the same township. None of these "non-crofting" categories have rights in the common grazings and so officially own no stock, yet some of them possess animals equivalent to the souming for a croft. Cottars exist sporadically throughout the crofting region but the squatter problem is concentrated in the northern part of the Outer Hebrides. In this study these two groups are not differentiated, and figures relating to them in the statistical tables appear in brackets.

In practice there is little social distinction between crofters, and cottars and squatters. In social units as small as the individual township there has been in the past considerable intermarriage and it has been normal for most marriages to be contracted within the parish, if not the township. It is thus understandable that there should often be close relationships between the land-holders and the landless. Some tenants have been reared in squatter households, and a tenant may have in the same township a brother or sister living as cottar or squatter. Mobility from the status of crofter to that of cottar or squatter, or in the opposite direction, is easily possible. Though cottars and squatters have no legal representation in the running of township affairs, in particular the regulation of the common grazings, it would be unusual for their opinions to be disregarded completely and they may well share in the grazing re-seeding schemes which have recently been instituted in some of the townships in north Lewis paradoxical though this may appear. Squatters will take land equally with crofters from those willing to sub-let their land, and in the same way some squatters sub-let the land they have appropriated from the grazings, either to crofters or to other squatters. The cottar and squatter problem is not a recent phenomenon in Lewis, indeed there is reason to believe that it is less pressing now than at the beginning of the century. In 1910, 24 of 36 listed cottars and squatters in groups A and B were noted as having a share in a croft in their respective townships, and 23 of these were also noted as paying up to half of the rent of the crofts they worked. (Crofters Commission 1911-12: 220-255.) It was also suggested that most of these squatters and cottars had come into existence in the townships after 1886 and that their appearance was a function of rising population, for Lewis did not attain its population maximum till 1911.

(a) The Land

From Table I some of the distinctions between the areas already noted are clear. The high percentage of sub-letting in Ardnamurchan is evident in contrast to the lower percentages recorded for Lewis, despite the fact that the Lewis crofts are much smaller. This is partly explained by the existence of the Harris tweed industry providing an ancillary occupation lacking in the other areas, operating to maintain a higher level of population than would otherwise be possible. The Lewis areas are also within easy reach of Stornoway, the largest urban centre of the crofting region which allows other employment possibilities.

TABLE I

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Ardnamurchan	28*	11	39	251	100	40	9	9
Barra	34	11	32	234	62	26	7	6
Lewis A	51 (17)	9 (5)	18 (29)	202 (32)	30 (9)	15 (30)	4 (2)	3 (2)
Lewis B	58 (5)	9	16	323 (15)	41	13	6 (3)	5

1. Total number of crofts.
2. Total number of sub-let crofts.
3. Percentage of total crofts sub-let.
4. Total area of inbye (acres).
5. Area of inbye sub-let (acres).
6. Percentage of inbye area sub-let.
7. Average size of crofts (acres).
8. Average size of sub-let crofts (acres).

* 3 crofts derelict.

By contrast, Ardnamurchan's nearest urban centre is Tobermory in Mull, the connection between the two being by motor-launch on a rather infrequent service and subject to the vagaries of the weather. The nearest mainland centre is Fort William, too far away to exert any significant influence in terms of employment. Apart from labouring jobs with the County Council the area is totally devoid of ancillary employment and consequently the population level has declined drastically within the past 60 years.

Apart from Ardnamurchan there is a tendency for the smaller crofts to be sub-let, suggesting that such are incapable of providing a sufficient base from which the crofter can work up an operative unit which involves taking land from others willing to sub-let their crofts. This is seen in the percentages of inbye area sub-let when compared with the percentages of total crofts sub-let.

(*b*) *The House*

From the examples studied, the house associated with a croft is of little importance in the causation of sub-letting. The exception occurs in tourist areas where crofters are allowed by law to sub-let their houses to tourists for a period in the summer. Some sub-let crofts have no house while on others it is ruinous due to age or long-continued absence of the tenant. There is no consistent regional pattern in this and the reasons for absenteeism are discussed later. The distinction between Barra and Ardnamurchan on the one hand, and Lewis on the other is clear in the remaining categories. Again the greater employment potentialities of Lewis, and the consequently more stable population position, mean that few houses

TABLE II

Houses on sub-let crofts

	1	2	3	4
Ardnamurchan .	1	6	0	3
Barra . .	4	4	0	3
Lewis A . .	1 (2)	1 (1)	1	5 (2)
Lewis B . .	4	0	0	5

1. No house.
2. House unoccupied.
3. House sub-let.
4. House occupied by part or all of tenant's family.

are unoccupied, and in the majority of the cases where the crofts are sub-let the houses are occupied by the tenants' families or relatives. The position is reversed in the less successfully worked areas of Barra and Ardnamurchan where proportionally more houses lie unoccupied.

(*c*) *Grazing rights*

The most important element of the croft in relation to sub-letting is the grazing rights. As noted, a souming and system of shares operates in each township, and in most cases a set of equivalences is stated to complement the souming, equating the different species of animals. As an example, in one of the townships studied, the souming is stated in the grazing regulations as 1 horse, 2 cows and their followers and 33 sheep and their followers per share, each croft having one share. Here the equivalence stands at 1 horse=2 cows=10 sheep.

This enables a crofter having no horse to balance his stock by carrying more cattle and/or sheep. Using the souming and the equivalence it is possible to evaluate the allowed and the actual stock per croft, or per township, counted in cow units (or any other stock units). Table III*a* has been worked out in this way while Table III*b*, which concerns the sheep stock

TABLE III*a*

Operative units which involve sub-letting. Stock carried (total stock) related to souming. Numbers of units.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Ardnamurchan	7	5	1	1	0	0
Barra . .	7	2	1	3	0	1
Lewis A .	13 (5)	3	3	3	1	3
Lewis B* .	10 (2)	3	4	2	1	0

1. Total number of units.
2. Number of units carrying less than half soum.
3. Number of units carrying half to three quarters soum.
4. Number of units carrying three quarters to full soum.
5. Number of units carrying one to one and a quarter times full soum.
6. Number of units carrying more than one and a quarter times full soum.

* One unit without any stock.

TABLE III*b*

Operative units which involve sub-letting. Sheep carried related to sheep souming. Numbers of units.

	1	2	3	4	5
Ardnamurchan	7	4	2	1	0
Barra . .	7	0	2	0	5
Lewis A . .	13 (5)	2	3	3	5
Lewis B* .	10 (2)	1	5	1	1

1. Total number of units.
2. Number of units carrying less than half sheep soum.
3. Number of units carrying half to full sheep soum.
4. Number of units carrying one to one and a half times full sheep soum.
5. Number of units carrying more than one and a half times full sheep soum.

* Two units without any sheep.

only, does not involve the use of equivalences. These tables refer only to units in the respective areas which involve sub-letting. In this way it is possible to arrive at some assessment of the potency of overstocking as a reason for the demand for sub-let crofts.

Including units which do not involve sub-letting, the areas studied are each under-stocked as a whole; in the case of

Ardnamurchan about half of the allowable stock is carried, and even here the larger of the two townships carries only 35 per cent of the souming. The level of sheep maintained is better than that of total stock, but is still below the allowed maximum. The Barra area is better all round with 75 per cent of the allowable stock carried, but there is a considerable excess of sheep with under-stocking in cattle. The position in the Lewis areas is rather similar to that in Barra, though relatively fewer sheep are kept.

Because squatters have no legal existence in the township organisation and cottars no rights in the common grazing, it is impossible to assess statistically the level of their stocking. Their animals have been included in the observations concerning the townships as a whole (supra). The very fact that such people do keep stock must be a good reason for their desire to get land wherever possible, enabling them to legalise their position with regard to their stock in the townships' eyes. A sub-let croft must carry with it its souming, and it is the souming which is attractive rather than the land in such cases. While this may satisfy the township as a community, such people remain technically non-agricultural for sub-letting without the consent of the proprietor is illegal. In this way the squatter or cottar working a sub-let croft is unable to claim cattle or sheep subsidies or to benefit from improvement grants or cropping grants for the land which he in fact works.

From the tables it is clear that most of the crofters are understocked though almost half carry their full sheep stock or more. In some cases crofters carry up to three times the number of sheep stipulated in the souming, compensated for by lack of other animals, particularly horses which are fast disappearing in face of competition from tractors. As the standard of croft and township fencing is now rapidly improving with the recent introduction of fencing grants, there would seem to be an increasing desire on the part of the individual crofter to feed his own stock on his own inbye land in winter, though the township regulations often still claim that the inbye land is open to all in winter—a remnant of run-rig practices. Clearly, the more nearly fully soumed a crofter is the more inbye land he will desire for winter feeding. This is especially true where an excess of sheep is carried for they are not housed in winter as cattle may be. The progressive crofter also wishes to use his own inbye at lambing time to ensure as high a lambing percentage as possible, for the common

grazings are often dangerous to the ewes at this period due to exposure and other physical factors. This becomes more important with recent progress in the fencing of individual crofts, leading to the decline of common usage of the arable area in winter. In the past, when the level of stock maintained was higher, over-stocking may have been of great importance in determining who would seek land on a sub-letting basis from his neighbours. Now, when under-stocking appears to be the norm, it would be easy to overstress this as a factor. Many depopulated and remote areas disregard their grazing regulations as being unrealistic in modern circumstances. Bad grazing management in the past has ensured that many townships are not now over-stocked with respect to the stated soumings. This is not to say that these grazings are not over-stocked with respect to their present capacity. Only now are grazing reseeding schemes being tackled, with government aid, in the crofting area and notably in north Lewis.

SUB-LETTING AND THE CROFTING POPULATION

While the physical characteristics of the crofts have some influence on sub-letting patterns, the most potent factors lie within the social milieu. Analysis of the ages and occupations of tenants sub-letting their crofts provides more likely answers. Sub-letting tenants are immediately divisible into those resident in and those absent from their home townships.

TABLE IV

Number of tenants who sub-let their crofts

	1	2	3
Ardnamurchan .	11	3	8
Barra . .	11	4	7
Lewis A . .	8 (5)	6 (2)	2 (3)
Lewis B . .	9	4	5

1. Total number of tenants who sub-let crofts.
2. Number resident.
3. Number absent.

Table IV shows that absenteeism is the most significant cause of sub-letting. Were it not for the existence of the weaving industry in Lewis crofts, the figures there would be more comparable with those of Barra and Ardnamurchan, where

two-thirds of the sub-letting tenants are absent from the townships. In almost every case examined the reason given for absenteeism is the small size of the crofts concerned, though this reason appears equally in areas of larger and smaller crofts. Some absentee tenants are the younger folk of a previous generation who have had to migrate in the past to find employment and have remained away in spite of having inherited the crofts. Such people look on their crofts as a safeguard against possible future unemployment and as a place to which to retire on a small financial outlay. Some absentee tenants are single men and women who take employment elsewhere, having left the croft as a residence on the death of their parents. Such a tie is easily maintained within the crofting framework while the present surreptitious system of sub-letting remains, but an active proprietor could insist on the croft being relinquished if he were able to prove bad husbandry. As long as the croft is sub-let this is difficult to prove for some use, however inadequate, is being made of the land.

Resident crofters who sub-let their land appear in two categories. There are in every township aged and widowed tenants who cultivate only a potato patch and possibly keep a single cow, or sub-let their land to a relative or neighbour in return for various services, most commonly for basic food requirements such as potatoes and milk. Such tenants are usually of pensionable age. Where tenants younger than this sub-let they normally follow a full-time occupation in the vicinity of the township and are between 45 and 64 years of age. Usual jobs are with the Post Office, Forestry Commission, County Councils on road-work, or with public transport operators. Some have independent businesses such as house-builders or decorators, and in Lewis full-time weavers.

It is more unusual for a resident tenant under 45 years of age to sub-let his croft, but when this does occur the reasons are identical with those above. More commonly the younger men work away from home till they are 40 to 45 years old when they return to take over the working of the croft from parents or relatives. Increasingly now, these men follow the trade they have learned while away from the crofting community and either work their land part-time or sub-let it. Many do not marry till relatively late in life when there is a prospect of settling down in the foreseeable future on the home croft as tenants, an important factor tending to bring about smaller families now than in the nineteenth and early twentieth

centuries in these areas. Inevitably this adds to the population problems of the crofting region. Such a pattern is partly a function of the multiplicity of small holdings, inherited from a period with very different living standards, and this in a community where the availability of land is an important social factor.

A minor cause of absenteeism is the existence of the multiple tenancy. This occurs where a single tenant falls heir to more than one croft, frequently in more than one township, either in his own right, or by marriage. In this way the total unit, regardless of any sub-letting arrangements contracted in addition, may be fragmented into pieces scattered over two or more townships, and the townships separated by as much as six or seven miles. The clerk of one of the township grazings committees in Barra held his office by virtue of being a tenant in that township. However, he resided on his wife's croft some miles to the south, one important reason being that his wife was post-mistress in her own township. Clearly the problems of operating such fragmented units are considerable and only one of the crofts can be occupied by the tenant's family, though he may have relatives on the other. Cases such as this are known as partial units with respect to any single township and appear thus in Table V. Partial units of this nature may also arise through sub-letting transactions which transcend township boundaries.

SUB-LETTING AND THE OPERATIVE UNIT

To quote Caird (Caird 1959: Table II, note 3), an operative unit is defined as "any unit, whether a legal croft or number of legal crofts owned and/or sub-let, or a cottar, . . . or squatter having stock. (Operative units may include crofts in other townships worked from the home (croft) . . .".) The application of this definition to sub-letting leads to the discussion of the causes for taking land from those willing to sub-let, and involves analysis of the families living off operative units.

In west Ardnamurchan and Barra half of all the operative units involve sub-letting arrangements and the number of operative units is only half the total number of crofts. Obviously sub-letting is very important here, the average size of the operative units which have increased their effective inbye area in this way being more than twice the average croft area. In north Lewis the operative units number three quarters of the total number of crofts, and only a third or less of these units

involve sub-letting. Here the average croft size and average operative unit size do not differ greatly for two reasons. Initially the croft is small and it is not always the case that a sub-let croft is transferred complete, and almost never so in the Lewis crofts studied. Thus a single sub-let croft may be split among as many as four different operative units. This means that the sub-let additions to operative units will not necessarily alter the croft size by very much (in Table V the areas are given only to the nearest acre). Also there is a tendency in Lewis for the smaller crofts to seek extra land through sub-letting and so bring their size up to the average. This is not the case everywhere, as suggested previously, for the smaller the croft the

TABLE V

Operative units

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Ardnamurchan .	28	14	1	7	20	9
Barra. . .	34	16	6	7	17	7
Lewis A . .	51 (17)	40 (15)	2	13 (5)	5 (3)	4 (2)
Lewis B . .	58 (5)	49 (5)	1	10 (2)	6 (5)	6 (3)

1. Total number of crofts.
2. Total number of operative units.
3. Number of partial operative units.
4. Number of operative units involving sub-letting.
5. Average size of operative units involving sub-letting (acres).
6. Average size of crofts (acres).

less likely is it to be able to provide a base from which to build up a workable unit. As cited in a different context, the tweed weaving industry is the stabiliser assisting to keep tenants of minute crofts in the area who would otherwise leave. It is in Lewis also that the splitting of the sub-let croft among a number of operative units reaches its peak, in association with a relatively higher level of population. Of the Ardnamurchan sub-let crofts studied, only one was divided in the transaction, while in the Lewis examples the majority were divided among at least two operators, some among three, and in two examples among four operators. The statistical assessment of sub-letting is consequently complex and necessarily incomplete. Added to these difficulties is the fact that sub-letting may vary from the transferring of the croft complete with its grazing rights at one extreme, to the separation of the basic elements of the croft at the other. Permission may be granted to one to graze a cow or

horse on the land, to another to cut hay off part of the land, to another to grow oats or potatoes on half an acre or so, and yet another may be allowed to take up the grazing rights in the common pasture. The transference of grazing rights, dissociated from the croft land, appears to be very infrequent, though its remaining unrecorded could be due to the difficulties of establishing the existence of what are essentially illegal practices among an understandably reticent population.

Tenants sub-letting their land receive payment in many different ways. There may be a simple cash exchange, and often the legal tenant bears only a tacitly agreed proportion of the total rent to cover his house which seldom comes under sub-letting arrangements. An absentee tenant often sub-lets to a

TABLE VI

The working of operative units in relation to employment

	1	2*a*	2*b*	3*a*	3*b*	3*c*
Ardnamurchan .	7	2	3	2	0	0
Barra . .	7	3	0	3	1	0
Lewis A . .	11 (5)	5(3)	3 (1)	2	0	1(1)
Lewis B . .	10 (2)	0	5 (2)	2	1	2

1. Number of operative units involving sub-letting.
2*a*. Units worked by a single operator with other employment.
2*b*. Units worked by a single operator without other employment.
3*a*. Units worked by two operators, one with other employment.
3*b*. Units worked by two operators, both with other employment.
3*c*. Units worked by two operators, neither with other employment.

neighbour in return for having his house and fences maintained. A resident tenant (particularly an elderly one) may be paid in kind, for instance potatoes, milk, the winning and drawing of peats. These are usually the commodities which the elderly or infirm tenant is unable to provide for himself, but which are needed to supplement a small pension.

Of the crofters operating units involving sub-letting, one third take no other employment, the unit supplying sufficient work to keep them fully occupied. Such crofters tend to be over 45 years old, and it is found that where an operator is under this age he usually has an ancillary occupation. Where there is more than one operator on a croft there is always a family relationship involved such as father and son, or brothers. Other relationships are possible for women must sometimes be classed as croft operators. Half of the operators working a

unit alone take another job, equally in all the areas under consideration. Where two operators are involved, in two thirds of the cases studied one, and occasionally both, take another job. Such occupations may be full-time such as van-driving for a local shop, or periodic such as acting as a ploughing contractor with one's own tractor. In less than a quarter of the cases neither take other employment, and this includes the partially disabled and the invalid.

Generally where regular employment is available it will be taken up but seldom are there sufficient jobs to go round. Occasional jobs, mainly labouring, for example on regional or township water schemes, or seasonal agricultural work on neighbouring farms make up the balance. Ardnamurchan has some seasonal salmon fishing which employs a few local men. Common regular jobs have been mentioned, many of them related to the provision of necessary services for the local community. Exceptional employment of each kind may be taken up as in Barra where some croft operators spend up to ten months a year at sea returning only for a period either at sowing or at harvest.

THE SIZE OF THE MINIMUM ECONOMIC UNIT

The study of the operative unit raises the problem of the size of the economic unit. There is no doubt that the majority of crofts are too small, and the practice of sub-letting, unofficial as it generally is, does give to the progressive crofter some opportunity to gain a livelihood from full-time croft work. In this context the average size of operative unit involving sub-letting is of interest, for it may be taken that the operators of such units represent the go-ahead elements in the township community, and their total holdings will approximate to economic units in the prevailing economy. In the Lewis areas studied where the percentage of crofts sub-let is small, on average the operative unit involving sub-letting is not significantly different in area from the size of the average croft. If the population decline which has been experienced since 1911 were to continue it is likely that more land would become available for sub-letting. Militating against this is the weaving industry, operating to keep people in the area who would otherwise leave. The prosperity of the weaving industry is dependent on an outside market, unfortunately subject to considerable fluctuations. In Ardnamurchan and Barra where the size of the average unit involving sub-letting is more than

twice the average croft size, sub-letting assumes a greater significance in the production of operative units. These, however, are not necessarily well-worked. Sub-letting is usually unofficial for seldom has the proprietor's permission been sought as crofting tenure requires. Thus no cropping or improvement grants are available to the operator in respect of the sub-let part of his unit. Therefore sub-let land is often taken only to provide extra inbye grazing and winter fodder in the form of natural (not sown) hay, and to allow the keeping of extra stock. Agriculturally, the sub-let crofts are not being properly utilised, drainage is neglected and fences fall into disrepair. If the process continues too long the land becomes derelict. Sub-let crofts may often be distinguished in the

TABLE VII. Park, Lewis
Occupations of males (15-64) *related to unit size*
Figures in brackets are percentages

1	2	3	4	5
0-5	14 (30)	27 (59)	5 (11)	46 (100)
5-10	19 (42)	22 (49)	4 (9)	45 (100)
10-15	14 (50)	12 (43)	2 (7)	28 (100)
over 15	7 (54)	3 (23)	3 (23)	13 (100)
Total	54 (41)	64 (48)	14 (11)	132 (100)

1. Size of operative units (acres).
2. Full-time croft work.
3. Croft work with regular employment.
4. Croft work with periodic employment.
5. Total (This table omits units operated by more than one person).

field by the facts that no green or white crops are grown on them, and their drainage is even worse than that of the remainder of the township. Herein lies the evil of sub-letting.

As Caird has shown in Park, the size of the operative unit, as distinct from the croft size, is relevant to the taking of ancillary employment. Table VII is taken from his study (Caird 1959—Table V).

These figures point clearly to the conclusion that the greater the size of the operative unit the greater is the possibility of that unit providing full-time work for the operator. Using these figures together with those in Table V, it is suggested that in the circumstances of crofting as it exists now the most satisfactory size of unit is one with about 15 acres of inbye land. This must not, of course, be dissociated from adequate grazing facilities, and there always remains the need for some

ancillary employment. This conclusion finds support in MacSween's study of Trotternish, north Skye, where he has divided the townships into "old" and "new", the distinction being that many of the "new" townships are of late nineteenth and early twentieth century origin as resettlements, having larger crofts, and larger common grazings than the "old" townships in which there has been continuity of small holder settlement since the mid-eighteenth century (MacSween 1959: 223-36, 249-50). In the "old" townships where the average croft size is only fractionally above 7 acres, 31 per cent of the crofts are sub-let or vacant, but this figure drops to 12 per cent in the "new" townships with an average croft size of 12 acres. Here also, the greater the size of the unit, the greater the possibility of it providing a viable existence for the operator.

The closest parallel to sub-letting as it exists in Highland Scotland appears to be in the practice of conacre letting in Ireland, recently studied for Northern Ireland by Forbes.[2] The reasons for conacre letting and for sub-letting appear to be identical. It is interesting to note that a size of about 15 acres is suggested for the minimum working unit in a marginal area in Northern Ireland, comparable with much of the crofting region. The basic difference between the two systems is that conacre letting is legal while the sub-letting of crofts (as it is done in the vast majority of cases without the consent of the proprietor) is illegal.

OFFICIAL ATTITUDES TO SUB-LETTING

The attitudes of proprietors and government bodies to the practice of sub-letting are interesting. Proprietors frequently regard their crofting estates as liabilities, for the crofter enjoys a virtually absolute security of tenure for a small rent. Technically it is possible for a crofter to be removed for inadequately working his land, but this is both difficult to prove and expensive to carry out. In practice most proprietors are content to turn a blind eye to sub-letting, if not occasionally actively to support it. This is very understandable where the proprietor is not deriving a considerable financial return from his crofting townships, and would prefer to see some use, however inadequate, being made of the unoccupied crofts, than have them lie totally derelict. Were there no sub-letting, the latter would be the case within the existing framework.

In the past official attitudes to sub-letting have been incomprehensible. As long ago as 1884, before the crofter

existed in the legal sense, sub-letting and its attendant evils had been recognised. (Napier Commission Report 1884: 43-44.) The Taylor Commission of 1954, on the recommendations of which the present Crofters Commission was set up in 1955, recognised and took evidence on the nature and wide extent of sub-letting in the crofting region, but shut its eyes to the practice. The discussion of sub-letting here ends with the remarkable statement, "We have considered whether these evils should not be remedied by bringing the law into line with the facts of the situation and making sub-letting lawful. We have come to the conclusion that in this respect no change should be made in the law and we think that the remedy lies rather in a stricter enforcement of the rules of good husbandry". (Taylor Commission Report 1954: Para. 183.) Failure to recognise the social aspects of the problem was implicit in this attitude.

The Report of the Crofters Commission for 1959 gives much more cause for hope for the future. The Commission adopts a sane attitude in noting that on some 2,000 registered crofts, "only about one third of the crofters concerned are fully and seriously cultivating their holdings". The Report continues "This does not justify any harsh judgement. Many crofters do not work their crofts because they are too small or the land too poor to reward labour as it is priced to-day. The crofter's decision in such cases to cut his losses and apply his labour elsewhere for a living wage is sensible and businesslike. In many cases the crofters are old or infirm . . ." (Crofters Commission 1960: Para 61*a*). The Commission has also recognised the problem from the landlord's viewpoint. The Report suggests that the Commission are at present underpowered to enable them to attempt any rationalisation of crofting agriculture. ". . . about two thirds of the 20,000 crofts are not being cultivated, or are under-cultivated, or have been informally turned over to neighbours for grazing. Given normal economic fluidity, much of the unwanted or unworked land would long since have passed legally into the hands of those who need and can work it; but security of tenure has frozen crofting agriculture in an out-dated pattern of minute units. The pressure of economic trends has indeed wrought much change, but it is all undercover. The problem is to unfreeze the system . . . to give . . . legal form to the changes . . . already accepted . . ." (Crofters Commission 1960: Para. 69).

An unfreezing process is envisaged without causing any

major social upheaval, allowing particularly the older people to live out their lives relatively undisturbed under conditions similar to those current. The major change sought by the Commission is "powers to sub-let crofts which are not worked in . . . a satisfactory manner". (Crofters Commission 1960: Para. 84.) The obvious advantage of legalising sub-letting lies in the fact that all crofts would thus qualify for the various agricultural grants and the quality of the inbye land could be maintained or improved. However, the problem of what constitutes adequate working of the croft remains.

This attitude, involving a complete reversal of previously held opinions, is to be commended. There will be inevitable opposition from those in the crofting community who are well content with existing conditions, and who would view compulsory sub-letting of unworked crofts as an infringement of what they have come to regard as their inalienable right to do what they will with land they rent under crofting tenure. This attitude is exemplified in the failure of an attempt to re-organise a crofting township in Wester Ross under the existing framework. After a considerable expenditure of resources by the Commission, the crofters concerned turned down a rationalisation of the present chaotic conditions in their area. (Crofters Commission 1960: Appendix IX.) Further schemes are in preparation, and already crofters in part of Sutherland are taking measures to protect their existing "rights". It remains to be seen if the Crofters Commission will, in fact, be granted the powers it seeks.

CONCLUSION

In present circumstances the practice of sub-letting is both inevitable and desirable. It is a function of minute holdings, inadequate employment opportunities, and an unbalanced population structure. Sub-letting fulfils an important social function, for were it removed completely there would undoubtedly be even heavier migration from the West Highlands and Islands than already exists. Not only for the sake of the people, but also for the good of the land involved, the practice needs legalising, but this must be part and parcel of the creation of much more stable social and economic conditions in the Highlands. Regional planning, and not County planning, is called for. It is encouraging to know that the problem is at least being faced up to by the Crofters Commission as this

body is one whose sphere of influence transcends county boundaries.

NOTES

[1] Glasgow University Geography Department Crofting Survey. Initiated 1956. Five seasons field study covering the Outer Hebrides on an individual croft basis, recording data on stock, crops, population and employment.

[2] The author is indebted to Miss Jean Forbes for access to, and permission to quote from a MS copy of the section on conacre, of the forthcoming "Land of Ulster: Land Utilisation Memoir".

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Barra was visited in September, 1957, and Lewis and Ardnamurchan during July/September 1959. The study could not have been made without the willing assistance of many crofters in these areas.

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SOME SHIELINGS IN NORTH SKYE

Malcolm MacSween* and Alan Gailey†

INTRODUCTORY

The two peninsulas of Trotternish and Vaternish in North Skye contain many ruined shieling sites. Many of the huts in these sites have developed mounds between three and eight feet in height but in contrast other hut remains are close to ground level. During a detailed examination of the peninsula of Vaternish in 1958[1], the opportunity arose to examine in detail one of these sites, and to carry out a trial excavation of one hut which had developed a mound three and a half feet high. In large part this study complements a detailed examination, already published, of the shielings of Trotternish, viewed in relation to the eighteenth century joint-farms (MacSween 1959: 75-88), see also Pl. I, figs. 1 and 2.

THE SITE OF THE EXCAVATED HUT

7th Series O.S. 1:63, 360, Sheet 24, Nat. Grid. Ref. 256626.

The hut excavated was in a group of ten (possibly eleven) separate shieling huts. The group is situated in the Abhainn a' Ghlinne valley on the east side of Vaternish. The valley is wide and developed in Tertiary basalts, the stream being divided into three distinct stages by two main breaks in slope at the edges of individual lava flows. The group is situated on the second and lower of these breaks where the stream is cutting back into the minor basalt escarpment. This provides a relatively dry site in an otherwise damp peaty valley floor. Within the same valley three other sites are found, each comprised of two huts. The first, at 254623, a third of a mile upstream from the major group, is on the upper break in slope in a position analogous to that of the main group.

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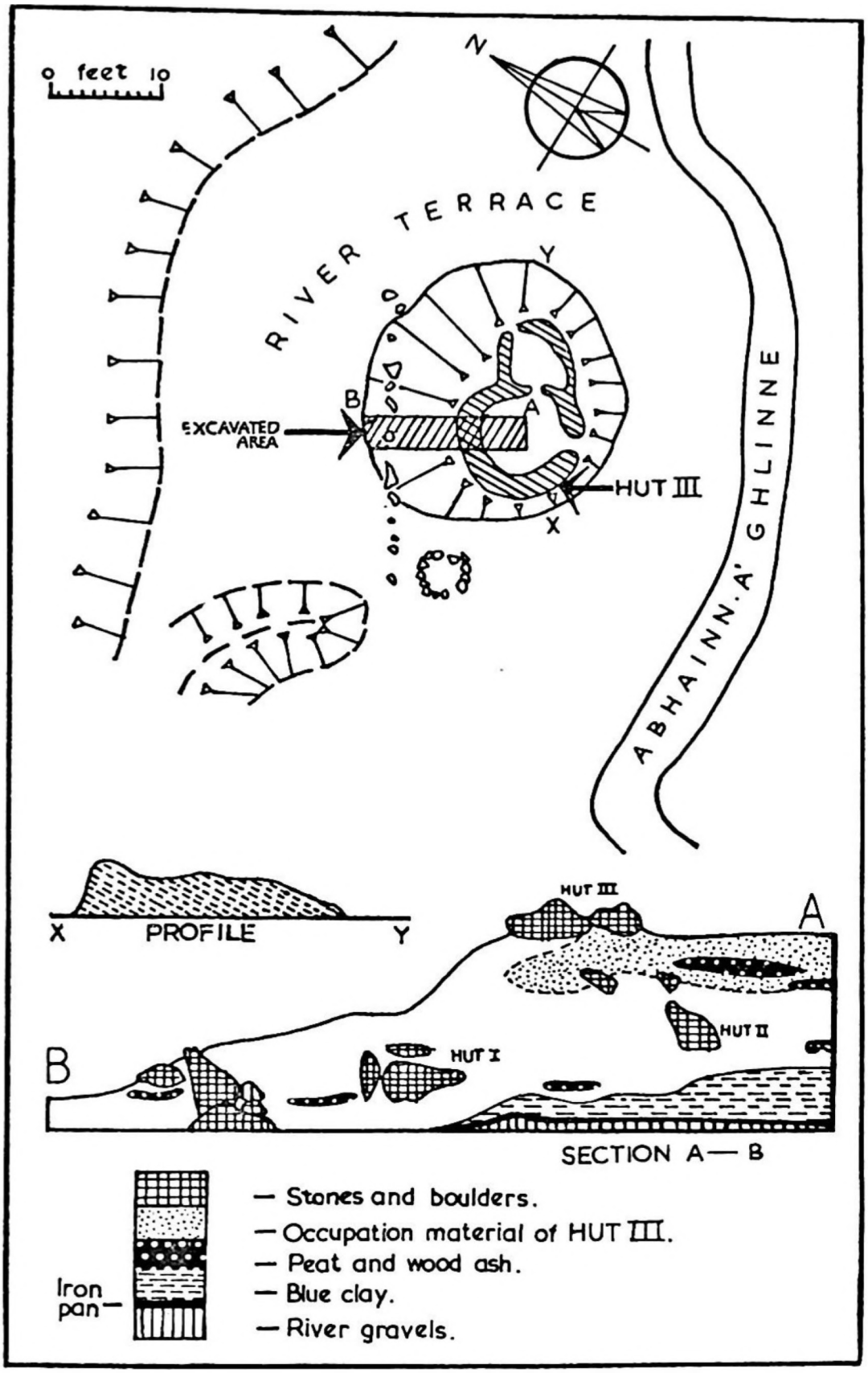
On this same escarpment, but on the tributary stream which joins the Abhainn a' Ghlinne on its north bank is the second group of two hut sites at 255629. The third group is a third of a mile downstream from the main group at 259627.

The huts are all of the usual Skye type of shieling as described elsewhere (MacSween 1959: 76-79) and nearly all of them are twin-chambered. All were partly stone built and are now badly tumbled. Many are now completely turf-covered. Most are circular or oval but some incorporate rectangular features. The diameter of the main chambers varies between eight and ten feet and the subsidiary chambers in some cases are as little as four feet across. Most of the hut remains are low-lying and close to the ground, but three of the huts in the main group, and both at 254623, had developed mounds between three and four feet in height. This development is similar in nature to, but smaller in scale than that typical of many of the huts in Trotternish.

The hut excavated had developed a mound three and a half feet high, on a terrace within an abandoned meander at the foot of the break of slope mentioned above. It is on the north bank of the stream. The site is subjected to flooding in winter and spring, but is quite dry in normal summer conditions. The terrace is fifty feet wide and the hut about centrally placed (see p. 79).

The hut consisted of two chambers, the larger seven feet internal diameter and the smaller four and a half to five feet across. The north wall of the latter is straight, otherwise the walls are curved and all well covered by turf. The latest hut, just described, is on the top of a mound three and a half feet high, and the entrance to the main chamber opened out on the steepest slope of the mound, facing south to the stream. The two chambers are connected by an internal entrance, and the smaller chamber has an independent entrance at its northeast corner, though this may be a secondary feature associated with the ultimate desertion of the hut. There is a secondary break in the north wall of the main chamber. At the foot of the mound on the north side are the remains of a section of straight stone walling, but there is no clear indication of its original purpose. Close to this at its west end, and again at the foot of the mound, are the basal stones of a small oval structure, three feet by four feet, but not covered by turf in the way that the remainder of the structures are covered.



Measured and sketched by A. Gailey (1958) and drawn for publication by Miss M. R. Holmes (1961)

FIG. 1.

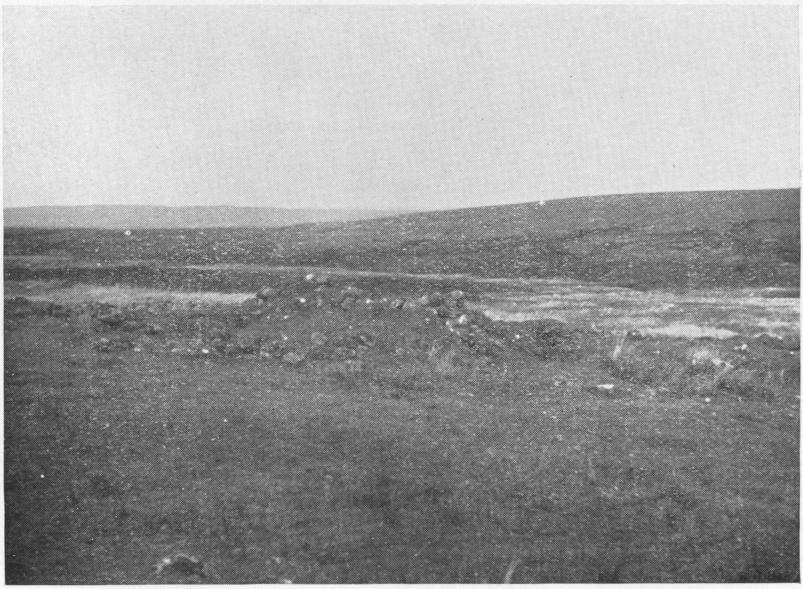


FIG. 2.
Shieling sites:—Trotternish, Isle of Skye, probably last used about 1860.
(*See* pp. 77-84).

EXCAVATION

A trench, three feet wide and fourteen feet long was driven into the north side of the mound, through the secondary break in the walling, and terminating at the centre of the main chamber. Apart from the concentrations of ash mentioned below, the occupation material throughout was poorly stratified, containing a high proportion of heather remains and peat and wood ash, together with some straw fragments.

At the top of the mound was hut III the hearth of which was found in the corner of the cutting at A. The hearth consisted only of a concentration of ash and was not stone-lined. Underneath and within hut III was found a portion of walling, clearly associated with which was a stone-edged hearth (one stone of which is seen in the section). The centre of this hearth was about two feet from the inner edge of the associated wall, and two sherds of "craggan" type pottery were found between hearth and wall at this level. Almost at the bottom of the section, and between the wall of hut III and the outer straight wall, was found the wall of a third and earliest hut, hut I. Two courses remained in situ with a third slipped down against the outer face (see section). Outside was a layer of ash three inches thick and level with the base of the wall.

The outer straight wall was evident from the surface, but only excavation gave any clear indication of its relatively massive nature. It was constructed of large boulders many of which were set on edge, there being clear evidence for at least two courses. Outside and half way up this wall was found a layer of peat and wood ash about a foot wide and two to three inches deep.

The natural deposit at the bottom of the section consisted of a sticky blue fluvial clay, up to one foot deep, below which was a well-developed iron-pan overlying river gravels and rotted basalt. Hut I had evidently been excavated into the edge of these clays, and a small patch of peat ash was found in a hollow in the clay on what presumably was the floor of the hut, as the section indicates.

INTERPRETATION

The site examined is typical of many in North Skye. Most of the Abhainn a' Ghlinne valley is bog-covered, with heather on the slightly steeper and drier slopes. Really dry ground is found only on the main breaks of slope and in the lower reaches

of the main stream where small riverine terraces have developed and here the shielings are found. The proximity to a stream and the lack of indications of cultivation are typical, one might say constant features. The mound is of moderate size when compared with some of the sites in Trotternish, but nevertheless impressive. Excavation suggests that the mound is entirely due to the successive re-occupation of the site, but the application of this conclusion to other sites needs further evidence. Here two phases of rebuilding, giving three major phases of occupation, are clear. The total duration of any one of these three could not be estimated on this site, but more extensive and careful excavation of a similar site might prove rewarding in this respect. Almost certainly annual re-occupation entailed some re-building but how many times this could occur without involving a major re-building operation, two of which are here indicated, is not clear.

Owing to the trial nature of the excavation, little of the detailed structure of the huts is known. The stone walling of huts II and III seems to have been only two courses high, but there were three courses, probably, in hut I giving a total height of about eighteen inches. Surface indications and the evidence from the excavation both suggest curvilinear two-chambered huts for all three phases. Almost certainly the stone walls were supplemented on their outer sides with sods (one of the authors has seen this in extant rectangular shieling huts in Ness, Lewis). It is impossible to suggest a total height for the walls. The macro-remains included in the occupation material suggest a heather-covered roof, and also some straw bedding in the interior. The lack of any wood in the occupation material probably means that, as in Lewis, roofing timbers were carried seasonally to the shieling, and removed again on return to the permanent settlement.

The precise purpose of the straight wall to the north of the hut mound is unknown. It may have been part of a small enclosure, used possibly for separating young animals from the flock or herd at milking time. The small oval structure at the foot of the mound may reasonably be associated with the latest phase of occupation but its purpose is unknown.

THE SHIELINGS OF NORTH SKYE

The North of Skye contains many examples of the type of shieling hut excavated in Vaternish. The adjacent and larger peninsula of Trotternish is probably richer in these remains

than is Vaternish itself (MacSween 1959:75), groups of up to thirty huts occurring in some of the western glens, for example in Glen Haultin and Glen Conon. Most commonly groups of four or five occur, these probably representing the shielings belonging to individual joint-farms or clachans. Most sites lie at a distance of two miles or more from the permanent settlements in Trotternish. No reliable evidence exists which can be said to link the group of shielings in Abhainn a' Ghlinne to any particular clachan, although several abandoned settlement sites lie within a radius of about three miles.

One of the constant features of these shieling groups is the utilisation of a dry site in an otherwise damp environment. The surface of these higher areas of moorland is frequently boggy. Favoured sites in the basalt country of North Skye are on the minor escarpments caused by the differential erosion of individual lava flows. Other sites are found where steep well-drained hill-slopes give way to the more gently-sloping valley bottoms, as in some of the west-facing glens in Trotternish, or again in Glen More in Mull, where the shieling huts are of the same general type as the Skye ones. The huts are normally in close proximity to a burn, for constant supplies of water were needed in the making of butter and cheese.

In the field the shielings are readily recognisable as bright green, often circular patches among the purple-brown swells of heather moorland. The better drainage of the sites, together with many generations of activity and consequently fertilisation by cattle and sheep, have brought about the establishment of a close sward of succulent green grass, in marked contrast to the tough heather and moor grasses.

As in the Vaternish example, the majority of the Trotternish huts are circular in form, usually consisting of two chambers connected by a narrow internal doorway. The purpose of the smaller of the two chambers appears to have been as a store-house for the milk and butter, products of the dairy industry which the shielings existed to serve. The larger of the chambers constituted the living quarters of those who accompanied the cattle from the clachans each summer. Furnishing and utensils were relatively simple (Moffat-Pender 1926; 25), and according to tradition the latter were manufactured almost exclusively of wood. In this respect, the discovery of pottery in the Vaternish hut is of particular interest. It is known that crude pottery, akin to the "craggan" ware of Lewis, was made in various parts

of the Highlands until a relatively recent date—in fact, one authority reports that it was manufactured at Uig, Trotternish probably within the present century (Curwen 1938: 281). It may be that such finds will provide dating evidence.

The system of transhumance represented by the Skye shielings is one which has long since disappeared. In North Skye, at least, the use of the shielings ceased so long ago as to leave few traces even in local tradition. It is fair to assume that the practice has not existed since 1850, except in isolated instances (MacSween 1959: 76), and probably not on a large scale since 1811; the latter date corresponds with the end of runrig in Trotternish, which was shortly followed by widespread evictions. These not only removed large numbers of tenants from the land but more seriously from the point of view of transhumance, removed extensive areas of hill pasture from crofting tenure. Associated with these developments went a considerable decrease in the cattle population of the region, a decrease well attested both in local tradition and in the findings of the various official commissions of the late nineteenth century. Certainly, the largest concentrations of shielings in Trotternish are to be found on land which, in 1880, formed the grazing land of the larger sheep-farms, although earlier, unquestionably, the common pastures of groups of joint-tenants or crofters. The conclusion to be drawn is that the intensive use of hill-ground, represented by the shieling system, had died out at a comparatively early date in North Skye—offering a vivid contrast to the Isle of Lewis.

The origins of the system certainly lie in the remote past (MacSween 1959: 86-7) and one of the objects of the trial excavation was to see whether it might be possible to obtain dating for shieling sites in this way. A great number of Trotternish shielings have developed mounds, presumably of ash and other occupation material. Those in the valley of the Rha are particularly noteworthy, the latest huts being built on mounds some eight feet above the level of the flood plain on which, apparently, the originals must have been constructed. Where meander scars had exposed sections of the mounds, they clearly consisted of material of the same type as found in Vaternish. Elsewhere, it has been suggested (MacSween 1959: 78) that the association of huts without mounds, with the others, may be due to a more intensive use of the hill pastures during the later phases of transhumance. This is one of the problems systematic excavation might be expected to solve.

With regard to the shielings at Abhainn a' Ghlinne itself, it seems safe to assume that they are of approximately the same age as their counterparts in Trotternish. The clachans at Unish, at the northern tip of Vaternish, were cleared to form a sheep-farm during the first quarter of the nineteenth century, and it is to these that this particular group of huts may be attributed most convincingly. There is a strong local tradition, verified by the local landowner, that the inhabitants of the rather barren Ascrib Islands a few miles off the coast were resettled on the mainland of Skye in the mid-nineteenth century on what were probably shieling sites some miles to the south of Abhainn a' Ghlinne, at a place called Forss a' Breithamh. If this be correct, it may indicate that the use of shielings was declining, if it had not already ceased at this time.

The excavation of similar structures in future may shed some light upon a rather neglected feature of old Highland life. This will be even more effective if linked with the exploration of the abandoned sites of the permanent settlements of the Highlands (Fairhurst 1960: 75). At the moment, techniques for this sort of work are in an experimental stage.

NOTE

[1] Glasgow University Geography Department, Field Excursion, September, 1958. The authors were associated with this Department and are indebted to Professor Miller for making this study possible, and also to Mr. Hamilton Thompson for his able assistance in the field.

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NOTES AND COMMENTS

A. NOTES ON SCOTTISH PLACE-NAMES

16. *The Interpretation of Name-changes*

Introduction

Human settlements, hills, rivers, islands, and other geographical features do not always preserve their names throughout the centuries. Old names are forgotten or replaced, new settlers, possibly speaking a different language, arrive and coin fresh ones, adapt, translate, or half translate old ones, in this way fitting them into their own general onomastic system. We know, for instance, that the older name of Port Charlotte in the island of Islay was Skiba, and that the Gaelic name of Campbeltown was, and still is, Kinloch(kerran). The present bilingual situation in Gaelic-speaking areas provides us with dozens of examples of this kind. If, then, similar changes could be traced to earlier historic or even prehistoric times, they would give us valuable guidance as to the interplay of linguistic strata in Scottish toponymy, at the same time serving as an effective test for any theories already advanced in connection with the chronological order of these strata, the development of morphological types, or the changing nature of the semantic aspect of our nomenclature. The advantages of such a double check are obvious, but the main danger which one has to guard against in the utilisation of these name-changes, is the circular argument in which a complete or partial change of name is used in evidence, both as the basis and as subsequent proof of a particular view. It is also to be borne in mind that individual names and name-changes, however interesting they may be in themselves, tell us very little unless seen in the wider framework and as part of a greater structured whole. It is the accumulative evidence interpreted from a comparative point of view which is of real value in toponymical research, and that not only in that aspect of it which this note is intended to cover.

Name-changes can be observed in several ways but particularly in documentary sources and in present usage. Sometimes an old document contains an earlier name of a certain feature; sometimes the replaced name can be inferred from an obvious part translation or the tautological addition of a new generic term synonymous with the older one; again,

sometimes the old name has become part of the new name, as is especially the case with river-names. There is, of course, no complete record of these changes, and any picture drawn up as a result of a study of the available evidence must necessarily remain very sketchy.

In this note, the listing of name-changes will be confined to names of water-courses. It will be by no means exhaustive as only such instances of change will be included which the present writer happened to come across in his research into Scottish river-nomenclature. This means that examples will be limited to the obvious and the accidental, and a more thorough and systematic investigation would probably reveal many more cases in point, particularly in the more recent linguistic strata. The most difficult category to establish, in this respect, is that of full translations from one language into another, as for example from Gaelic into English or from Norse into Gaelic; for it is not easy to decide whether one is dealing with, let us say, an English replica of a Gaelic name or with an English map-name which is a genuine new creation. Only current local usage and/or reference to earlier sources can help us here. The present list of names ascribed to this category below (III*a*) could, therefore, probably be considerably extended but it may also, on the other hand, contain names which do not belong here as there is no documentary evidence for their earlier Gaelic versions so that the latter must truthfully be described as plausible guesses. There is, however, no doubt that this category existed and still exists, as we have sufficient present-day evidence from bilingual communities in the Highlands and Islands to bear this out, and as it would be difficult to believe that conditions were substantially different in earlier phases of linguistic contact.

In the list which follows, detailed reference to the source of any particular information will, on the whole, not be made unless there is some special reason for it. It is merely intended to point out that name-changes do occur, to put a limited number of these on record, and to outline some of the possibilities to be reckoned with when Scottish water-courses change their names. In addition, there is to be a brief discussion of the linguistic significance of these changes. The classification will be according to the nature of the new name, with suitable subdivisions based on the language of the original name, if required. The large group of names which show a tautological addition of a hydronymic term, like *River Brora* SUT, *Avon*

Water LAN, *Calder Water* LAN, *Altessan Burn* ABD, or extended names like Allan*der* (*Water*) DNB, Calne*burne* BWK, de Blē-*burn* SH, Lugar *Water* AYR, *Auld*earn NAI, where the defining element is an old river-name, will not be included although their common occurrence must not go unmentioned in this context. They are, however, not "name-changes" proper but rather augmented versions of the original.

Material

(I) The primary stream-name is replaced by a name containing a place-name derived from the name of the water-course:

(*a*) The primary stream-name is a pre-Gaelic name:
*Alauna ROS >River Alness (Scot. *ness*).
*Calona SLK >Caddon Water (Old Engl. *denu*).
*Catona PER >Inverhadden Burn (Gael. *inbhir*).
*Labara BNF >Burn of Aberlour (Celt. *aber*).
*Labara PER >Lawers Burn (Engl. plural *-s*).
*Leuka AYR >Lugton Water (Old Engl. *tūn*).
*Tanara SLK >Glentanner Burn (Scot. [<Gael.] *glen*).

(*b*) The primary river-name is an early Gaelic suffixed name:
*Branág LAN >Legbranock Burn (? Gael. *leac*).
*Canaidh LAN >Candymill Burn (Engl. *mill*).
*Dubhaidh ABD >Burn of Glendui (Gael. *gleann*).
*Easaidh ROS >Allt Airdeasaidh (Gael. *àrd*).
*Fionnaidh ABD >Glenfenzie Burn (Gael. *gleann*).
*Fionnán PER >Inverinain Burn (Gael. *inbhir*).
*Gealaidh PER >Invergeldie Burn (Gael. *inbhir*).
*Gollaidh SUT >Glen Golly River (Gael. *gleann*).
*Lòchsaidh PER >Glen Lochsie Burn (Gael. *gleann*).
*Marcaidh INV >Glenmarkie Burn (Gael. *gleann*).
*Neanntaidh PER >Invernenty Burn (Gael. *inbhir*).
*Uaraidh ROS >Strathrory River (Gael. *srath*).
*Udalan ROS >Allt Gleann Udalain (Gael. *gleann*).

(*c*) The primary stream-name is an early Gaelic compound name:
*Calder INV >Aberchalder Burn (Celt. *aber*).
*Douglas DNB >Inveruglas Water (Gael. *inbhir*).
*Fender PER >Glenfender Burn (Gael. *gleann*).

(*d*) The primary stream-name is of Norse origin:

*Bera SH >Burn of Beradale (N. *dalr*).
*Borgá ROS >River Barvas or Abhainn Bharbhais (N. *oss*).
*Hrossá BTE >Glenrosa Water (Gael. *gleann*).
*Laxá ROS >River Laxdale (N. *dalr*).
*Laxá INV >Laxadale Burn (N. *dalr*).
*Laxá INV >Laxdale River (N. *dalr*).
*Sandá ARG >Glensanda River (Gael. *gleann*).
*Slika SH >Burn of Sligatu (N. *tó*).
*Snerta SH >Sneteratu-burn (N. *tó*).
?*þorpá ORK >Burn of Turbitail (N. *dalr*).
þyrsa SH >de Burn o' Trusli (N. *hl:ð*).

(*e*) The primary stream-name is an early Anglo-Scottish name:

*Hlȳde ROX >Liddel Water (Scot. *dale*).

(*f*) The primary stream-name is obscure:

*-ie INV >Inverie River (Gael. *inbhir*).
*Orth ABD >Water of Phillorth (Gael. *poll*).

II. The primary stream-name becomes the name of a human settlement and is replaced by a compound name containing it:

*Boyndie BNF >Burn of Boyndie.
*Carron BNF >Burn of Carron.
*Cruden ABD >Water of Cruden.
*Forrestburn LAN-WLO >Forrestburn Water.
*Tonburn ABD >Burn of Tonburn.

III. The primary stream-name is translated:

(*a*) completely:

Gael. Allt a' Choilich ABD >Engl. The Burn o' the Cock.
Gael. Allt na Dabhaich ABD >Engl. Burn of Vat.
Gael. Allt nan Albannach ROS >Engl. Scotsburn.
Gael. *Dubh Allt or *Féith Dhubh ABD >Engl. Blackburn.
Gael. Féith Dhearg ABD >Engl. Red Burn.

(*b*) partly:

Aldeclochy (1355) ABD >Clachie Burn.
Allt an Albanaigh AYR >Albany Burn.
Allt a' Choire Odhair ABD >Corour Burn.
Allt a' Mhuilinn LAN >Mullin Burn.

Allt an t-Slugain ABD >Sluggan Burn.
Allt an t-Sluichd Leith ABD >Burn of Slock Lee.
Allt Clach Mheann ABD >Burn of Clach Mheann.
Allt Glas Choille ABD >Claschoille Burn.
Allt na Ceabag ABD >Kebbuck (Burn).
Allt na Claise Móire ABD >Clashmore Burn.
Allt na Frithe INV >Free Burn.
Allt na h-Annaide PER >Annat Burn.
Allt na h-Annaide PER >Annaty Burn.
Allt na Tuilich ABD >Tullich Burn.
Allt Slochd Chaimbeil ABD >Burn of Slock Cammell.

IV. The primary stream-name is replaced by an etymologically completely unrelated new name:

p-Celt. †Alvan (*-uindā*) ABD >Gael. Cluny Water.
Scot. Burn of Peeno ORK >Scot. Burn of Oldman.
p-Celt. Calder MLO (cf. East, Mid-, and West Calder) >Scot. Linhouse Water (upper part Crosswood Burn).
p-Celt. *Calona BWK >Calneburne >Scot. Hazelly Burn.
Gael. *Carach BNF (with Invercharach) >Burn Treble.
Early Gael. †Condie (now place-name) PER >Engl. Chapel Burn.
Early Gael. *Duinnid ROS (with Inverinate) >Gael. An Leth-allt.
pre-Celtic Farrar (lower course of) INV >Engl. Beauly River.
Gael. *Garbh Allt (now place-name Garvald) ELO >Engl. Papana Water.
Gael. *Garbh Allt (now place-name Garvald) MLO >Engl. Hope Burn.
Early Gael. †Kelty (now place-name, also Keltybridge) FIF >Drumnagoil Burn.
p-Celt. *Peffer MLO >Scot. Braid Burn.
p-Celt. †Pefforyn ABD >Scot. Silver Burn (translation ?).
p-Celt. *Pefridh PER >Scot. Pow Water.
Gael. Queich PER >Scot. Alyth Burn.
Norse *Stjórn ROS (cf. Stornoway = Stjórnarvágr) >Engl. Bayhead River.
Early Gael. †Struie PER (now place-name) >Engl. Slateford Burn.

Discussion

These name-changes are interesting for various reasons, and perhaps we should look first at the languages which have played

a part in the creation of our Scottish river-nomenclature and which are therefore likely to have been involved in changes affecting stream-names. How far do the examples listed confirm or clash with our view of the linguistic stratification of Scottish hydronymy as we summarised it at the VIIth International Congress of Onomastic Sciences in Munich in 1958 (Nicolaisen 1961)? If we analyse the first main section with this question in mind we find that the development is from the pre-Celtic and Early Celtic to the Gaelic and English (class I*a*), from the early Gaelic to the later Gaelic and the English (classes I*b* and *c*) from the early Norse to the later Norse, the Gaelic and the English, depending on the geographical origin of the examples (class I*d*), and from the early English to the later English or Scots (class I*e*). The picture presented of the historical evolution of our Scottish river-nomenclature in this first of the above sections, is further filled in by examples from classes III and IV, and in group III the comparatively recent progress made by the incoming English language in formerly Gaelic-speaking parts of Scotland is clearly demonstrated (The fact that most of the examples in this group are from Aberdeenshire is of no distributional significance as it is due to the availability of the material from that county in a very sound publication [Alexander 1952]).

Not all parts of Scotland have come under the influence of the full range of languages brought to this country by the various waves of immigrants from south of the Border, across the North Sea and the Irish Sea, and so we must allow for regional differences. If we qualify our statement in this way, however, we can say that non-Gaelic Celtic names precede Gaelic ones, that Norse names in the Western Isles and in the adjacent mainland areas are always earlier than Gaelic names, and that English names are in all cases later than those of any other linguistic origin. These changes also reveal or confirm the necessity to differentiate between earlier and later hydronymic strata in the Gaelic part of our river-nomenclature, as well as in those of Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon origin.[1]

Not a single example points towards any development in the opposite direction, and the implications as to the chronological stratification of our river-names are therefore of the greatest value. In addition, these changes appear to indicate that linguistic borrowing in the sphere of names of water-courses must have taken place in both directions, i.e., from the substratum to the superstratum, and vice versa, and this process

must be envisaged in a period of linguistic contact when both the old and the new languages formed more or less equal adstrata. The weaker and the less influential the new language, the more chance there was that the old names were adapted and adopted by the newcomers, but when the incoming language became more powerful and dominant and the names belonging to the earlier linguistic stratum more and more meaningless, new names began to replace older ones, either with or without connection with the originals. Names of the type "Burn of —" in particular show how name patterns of the substratum language can serve as models for the linguistic superstratum, producing in this way a completely new name-type in the receiving language (cf. Nicolaisen 1959*a*), but it would be difficult to show a similar impact on the substratum of naming practices in the superstratum. This is certainly one field of research in which the formulation of hard and fast rules will be found to be most elusive.

Although our investigation is confined to names of water-courses there is very little doubt that its findings will also apply to names of other geographical features and of human settlements, possibly with slight modifications. A wider and more comprehensive examination of the whole question of name-changes might, however, throw considerably more light on such intricate problems as those of the relationship between Norse and Gaelic in the Western Isles, between Pictish and Gaelic in the North-East, and between p-Celtic and Gaelic in Central and Southern Scotland. An intriguing pointer in this respect is the fact that there is, for instance, not a single name in the above lists, especially in section I*d*, in which a Gaelic element qualifies a Norse generic term.

From a morphological point of view, the development is clearly from the uncompounded name to the composite one. Sections I*a*, *b* and *e* contain numerous examples illustrating this fact. It looks as if, once the principle of formation by suffixing had ceased to be applied, there must have been a tendency to bring names of the older type in line with the more modern practice of name-formation; and many of the new names can be explained in this way. When, in addition, the original division between stem and suffix had become less obvious in the older names and when these could no longer be analysed in terms of the current morphological pattern as units meaningful to the speaker, the temptation to assimilate them to the system in general use, as the defining elements of

new compounds, must have become very strong. Out of all the examples given in section I*a* above, only the two **Labara*-names were probably still understood by later Gaelic speakers (cf. Gaelic *labhar* "loud, noisy"), and to the modern non-Gaelic speaking Scot even these two have become just as meaningless as the other five original stream-names in that category. The more Gaelic recedes as a spoken language, the more names will share this fate, but it is significant that early Germanic names like Norse **Stjórn* in Stornoway (cf. Oftedal 1954: 392-3) and English **Hlȳde* in Liddel (see Ekwall 1928: 254) had to conform to a new morphological pattern in the same way, inside their own linguistic areas. These new morphological patterns of linguistic expression which do, of course, not only affect names, are most powerful once they have established themselves, but even if allowing for the incompleteness of the material listed above, it is still surprising that so many early names have survived the assimilating trends which come with new languages and naming habits. The names have consequently become, semantically meaningless and morphologically unanalysed, linguistic fossils on the modern map of Scotland, and it is the main task of scientific place-name research to discover their meaning and to analyse their formation and linguistic affinity (As the composite name is almost exclusively used in cases of modern naming, local inhabitants and also many of the publications on the subject are constantly trying to split an unintelligible name into two or more elements in order to arrive at a derivation; normally these elements are words belonging to the current language).

At this point it is worth mentioning that a parallel change in the semantic aspect of naming contributes to the morphological trend from the simple name to the composite one. It is difficult to say whether the semantic or the morphological innovations came first; on the whole it is probably more correct to say that these two changes frequently go together and are dependent on each other. Even the most casual examination of the above lists reveals a noticeable emphasis on references to the countryside surrounding the water-course, in the defining elements of the resulting nomenclature. In that respect, the new names differ very markedly from the earlier ones which predominantly refer to qualities of the water or of the water-course, themselves. It is difficult to say whether the above examples can form a fair basis for such a comparison, however, as older names which have gone out of use are naturally more

easily detected when they have become part of new ones, whereas full translations or replacement by unrelated names usually completely obscure older nomenclature. Nevertheless the conclusions drawn from the limited evidence of such name-changes is quite in keeping with the results of a detailed study of the semantic structure of all Scottish stream-names mentioned on the one-inch Ordnance Survey maps, which the present writer published in an earlier volume of this journal (Nicolaisen 1957).

The examples listed in group IV in which the new name is etymologically unconnected with the one it replaces, are further proof of this inclusion of totally new categories of meaning in the more recent strata of Scottish river-nomenclature. In early naming, the name of the water-course was regarded as the primary basis from which others were derived secondarily, like the name of the loch out of which it flows, the glen through which its course runs, the mountain which it passes, and the human settlement built at its mouth (Loch Tay—Glenlivet—Ben Nevis—Inverness would be representative of such derived names, and there are many more such instances in the various names serving as defining elements in group I above). The impression one gets from the later river-nomenclature is that the human settlement and the river-valley have become more important to the mind of the people creating and using geographical names, than the water-courses themselves, particularly in the case of smaller streams. The linguistic reaction to this attitude is that the burn is now no longer named after the colour of the water, the shape of the water-course, the nature of its bed, or the swiftness of its flow, but either after one of the two geographical units just mentioned—the settlement and the glen—or after some other geographical feature near its banks. The many new stream-names compounded with Gaelic *inbhir*, *gleann*, or with *dale*, etc. suggest this explanation, as they still contain the original name of the burn and bear witness to the older ways of naming. The most extreme case resulting from the application of this attitude is that of the stream which has no single name for its complete course but, from a naming point of view, is split up into various stretches which derive their names from different human settlements on its course as for instance *The Burn of Turbitail* in the Orkney island of Rousay which, as Marwick points out (1947: 92) is in its lower reaches "variously known as The Burn of Gue and The Burn of Vacquoy". Turbitail as well as Vacquoy and Gue are names

of houses near the stream; in the latter case these no longer exist. The category "Burn of —" itself represents a fairly late stratum resulting from linguistic contact with an earlier language (see Nicolaisen 1959*a*).

As far as the names in class I are concerned, it is quite obvious that at least part of the defining element—*Lug*ton, Glen*markie*, *Candy*mill, etc.—originally meant the stream itself; in the five names mentioned in section II, however, the knowledge that the place-names from which these water-courses derived their names, primarily denoted the water-courses in question themselves, seems to have been lost completely. Whereas this might be stated with some reservation as regards the first three examples—Burn of Boyndie, Burn of Carron, and Water of Cruden—in which the river-name and the identical place-name based on it may have been used side by side so that the new river-name might have been derived from either of them, the last two—Forrestburn Water and Burn of Tonburn—are apt illustrations of the more modern approach to naming. Scottish *burn* is, of course, quite well understood both in Aberdeenshire and on the Lanarkshire-West Lothian border, but as the place-names were regarded as primary, their original connotations were no longer evident, and the doubling of *-burn* by *Water* in one case (Forrestburn Water) and by *Burn* (sic) in the other (Burn of Tonburn) not recognised as such. As regards the latter, it may be of interest to note that another *Ton Burn* exists in the same county, but produced the opposite, i.e., "older" result so that we find Upper as well as Nether Glenton near its course. A well-known example of modern popular misinterpretation, on the other hand, is the name of the highest mountain in these islands, Ben Nevis, which is practically always taken to be the basis from which the river-name has been derived, whereas the truth seems to be that even in this case the name of the water-course came first (cf. Nicolaisen 1959*b*: 218). It might also be of value to pay particular attention to the outgoing names, and here the very high incidence of formations in *-aidh* is worth mentioning. It would, however, be rash to interpret this as a certain lack of power of survival in these names, and the reasons for their disappearance in favour of other names—like place-names containing them—can hardly be of a linguistic nature, but must surely depend a great deal on accident; replacing one name by another, be it connected or unconnected, belonging to the same language or a new one, can scarcely be a conscious process. In addition, the

material collected so far is far too scanty to allow any general comment in this respect. All that can be said is that the names of smaller water-courses not known to a large community are more likely to change than those of large rivers of national or regional importance.

There can, however, be no doubt as to the usefulness of the study of these name-changes, not only when confirming conclusions regarding the linguistic stratification of our nomenclature, but particularly when contributing something new to the study of the morphological and semantic structure of our names.

NOTE

[1] Here we must correct a statement which we made in the above-mentioned article where we said that formation by suffixing a special ending to a word-stem "is practically non-existent in names which have to be ascribed to Norse origin". It would have been more correct to stress the important fact that names of this type do occur in the Scandinavian hydronymy of Scotland and that these must belong to the very earliest names introduced to this country by Norse settlers. How far they can be used in the dating of these settlements themselves, is another question.

COUNTY ABBREVIATIONS

ABD	Aberdeenshire	MLO	Midlothian
ARG	Argyllshire	NAI	Nairnshire
AYR	Ayrshire	ORK	Orkney
BNF	Banffshire	PER	Perthshire
BTE	Buteshire	ROS	Ross-shire
BWK	Berwickshire	ROX	Roxburghshire
DNB	Dunbartonshire	SH	Shetland
ELO	East Lothian	SLK	Selkirkshire
FIF	Fife	SUT	Sutherland
INV	Inverness-shire	WLO	West Lothian
LAN	Lanarkshire		

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W. F. H. NICOLAISEN

B. NOTES ON COLLECTION AND RESEARCH

Introduction

This introduces a new regular feature in the journal: a series of notes gathered in the course of current work by members of the School of Scottish Studies. Though not always related directly to the main tasks in hand, they will to some extent reflect their range and variety.

It may be helpful to list here the subjects which the School is attempting to cover at present, and all of which are likely to be touched upon in these notes in future issues:

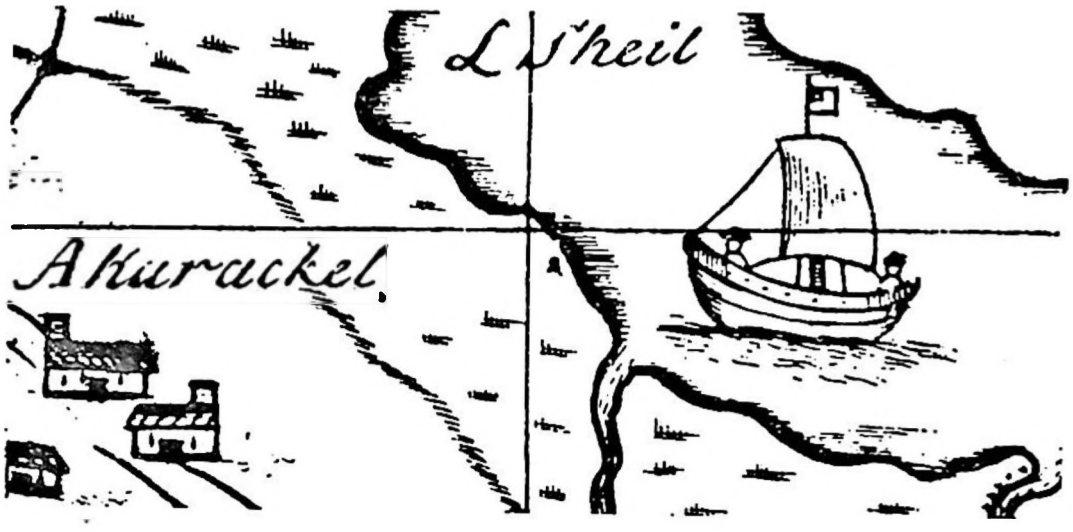
Scots folk-song texts, Gaelic song texts, folk-music research, the folk tale, custom and belief, material culture, the Scottish place-name survey, archiving and transcription of music and texts.

An Eighteenth-Century Representation of a Highland Boat

Surprisingly little detailed information seems to be available about the ships of the Western Clans, though they are frequently mentioned in contemporary literature and records. Allusions to "Highland boats" ("galleys" or "birlins") are often met with up to the time of the Rising of 1745, when many were destroyed, and factual descriptions or drawings of the later vessels might be expected. These should show whether the eighteenth-century use of the old terms implied the survival of old types of craft. The sixteen-oared, square-sailed vessel of Alexander MacDonald's long descriptive poem, *Birlinn Clann Raghnaill*, has been regarded as "a generalised type of galley", incorporating

antique poetic features in an eighteenth-century setting (Macleod 1933: 35-6).

Some fresh evidence bearing on this is provided by a contemporary and purely practical document, a large-scale engraved *Map of the Improved Moss, and Improveable Bay of Kintra drawn from a Plan of the Survey of Ardnamorchan by I. Cowley, London 1734* (National Library of Scotland, L. 232.a.2[11]). This happens to cover the area immediately west of Alexander MacDonald's home on the Moidart side of Loch Shiel, a point which enhances the interest of the map-maker's representation of what must have been a type of sailing-craft with which the poet was familiar (Fig.). In spite of the small scale of the

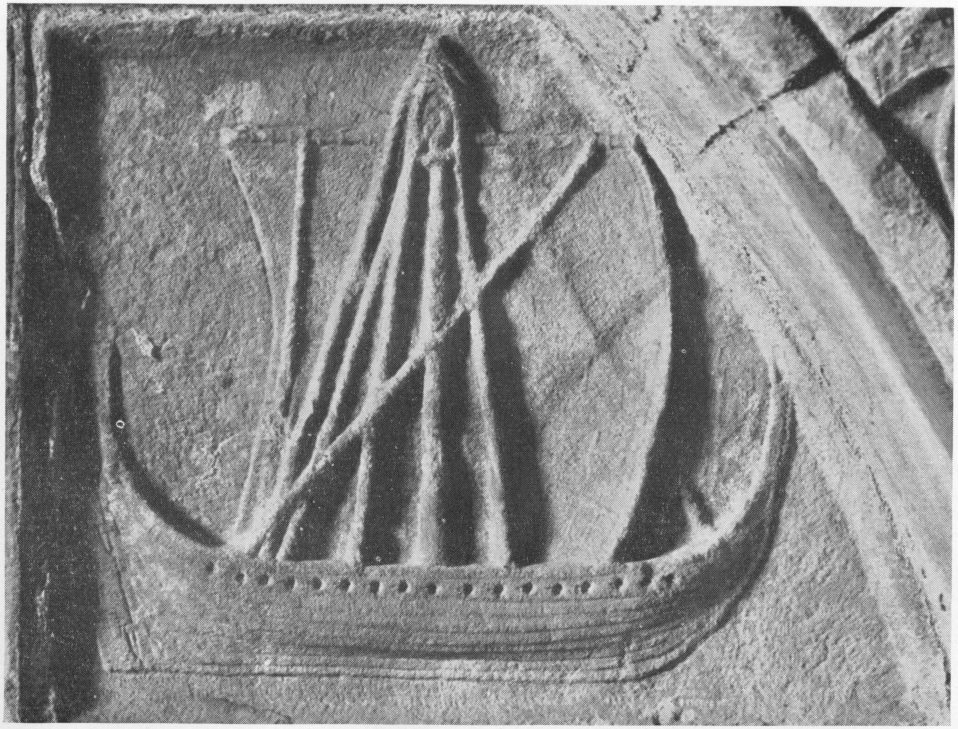


Detail from engraved map of Kintra, 1734.

drawing of the boat, the relationship of this square-sailed and "double-ended" craft to the "Viking" type of the mediaeval Highland carvings (Pl. II) is established by the row of oar-ports shown below the gunwale.

These Loch Shiel craft (two are figured on the map) differ convincingly from the merchantmen and boats depicted as serving the Strontian lead-mines on another map (Loch Sunart, 1733) in the same series, which evidently derives from an original survey of Ardnamurchan and Lochs Shiel and Sunart "lately made by Andrew Bearhope Gardiner to Sir Alex Murray of Stanhope Bart", the present whereabouts of which seems to be unknown. The Loch Shiel craft also differ from the East Coast fishing and other boats carefully depicted on several plans published by Adair in 1703, for instance that of Montrose dated 1693.

If the traditional oar-ports were a normal feature of the Highland boats of Loch Shiel of his day, it is curious that Mac



Carving of a Medieval Highland Galley (*see* p. 97). Detail from tomb of Alexander McLeod of Dunvegan, 1528, at Rodil, Harris. Enlarged from a photograph by the Royal Commission on Ancient Monuments (Scotland).

Mhaighstir Alasdair should repeatedly refer to the rowlocks of Clan Ranald's birlin. *Bac*, the word he used, is defined as "the space between the thole-pins", sometimes simply the thole-pin itself, but it may perhaps have had a rather different meaning in the past. Something of the sort may also lie behind a memory, possibly a little confused, of the remains of an old Loch Shiel boat which had belonged to one of the lairds of Glenaladale and is said to have "had special rowlocks to take the old fashioned flat-handled oars". (Wendy Wood, *Moidart and Morar* [1950], p. 102, calls the vessel Angus of Glenaladale's *An Dubh Lennan*). The oar-ports of the mediaeval, and probably later, Highland vessels had—like the Viking ships—a long slot aft of each port to allow the oar-blade to pass through from within the ship, a feature indicated in the Rodil carving (Pl. II), which is so valuable for its fine and well-preserved technical detail. Oar-ports survived also in some Norfolk crab-boats until our own day, seemingly because of their convenience for carrying the light boats up the steep shingle beach by means of the oars (Hornell 1946:120).

The Highland boats of the eighteenth century can hardly have been built for military purposes, at least after the '45. The Loch Shiel boat of the 1734 map seems to have carried at least a dozen oars (if the spacing of the oar-ports is reasonably accurate the total might have been sixteen oars, like Clan Ranald's birlin), so that fishing as a primary aim may be excluded. The fate of *An Dubh-Gleannach*, the boat of Captain Alexander MacDonald of Glenaladale, who died in 1815, is probably revealing in this respect. Her expeditions on Loch Shiel are commemorated in Alexander MacKinnon's *Ode*, but Mr. Alastair Cameron ("North Argyll") while describing her as a "pleasure craft", has also recorded the information that she was lost carrying stock and passengers from Eigg to the mainland (Cameron 1957: 4).

Some such mixture of business and pleasure, or display, must have been entirely characteristic of the boats of the Highland gentry, just as it was of the early yachts of the aristocracy elsewhere in the British Isles in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Thus it was natural that the Highland gentry gradually abandoned their native type in favour of the fashionable yacht, so that by 1802, when the still-surviving "Galley of the Marquis of Bute" was built at Tighnabruaich, she was simply an attractive yacht of the period.

However, even in the latter half of the eighteenth century

the generality of West Highland craft must have retained their purely local and traditional character. In the course of his Highland and Hebridean journeys covering the years 1760 to 1786, Professor John Walker found that "from the want of tradesmen at command, every family is obliged to apply to everything, and to supply its own necessities . . . [including] boats, with all their tackle. The boat has a Highland plaid for a sail; the running rigging is made of leather thongs and willow twigs; and a large stone and a heather rope serve for anchor and cable" (Walker 1808: II, 374-5). Still more primitive craft survived on some sea lochs and inland waters after the mid-eighteenth century. The son of the minister of Glenshiel on Loch Duich was familiar with dug-out canoes called *ammir* (cf. *amar*, "a trough") employed as river ferries and for salmon-spearing, evidently around the year 1760 (Bethune 1881: 179-180). People then living could remember the wicker "courich" used as ferries in that part of Wester Ross, and an actual example of one found under the rafters of a Speyside house at Mains of Advie is preserved in Elgin Museum (Hornell 1938: Pl. I in section 2, Fig. 2).

Clearly it should still be possible to assemble much interesting information from a variety of sources, including eighteenth-century documents and drawings—and perhaps even from oral tradition—on the obscure but fascinating subject of the traditional boats of the Highlands.

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ILLUSTRATION

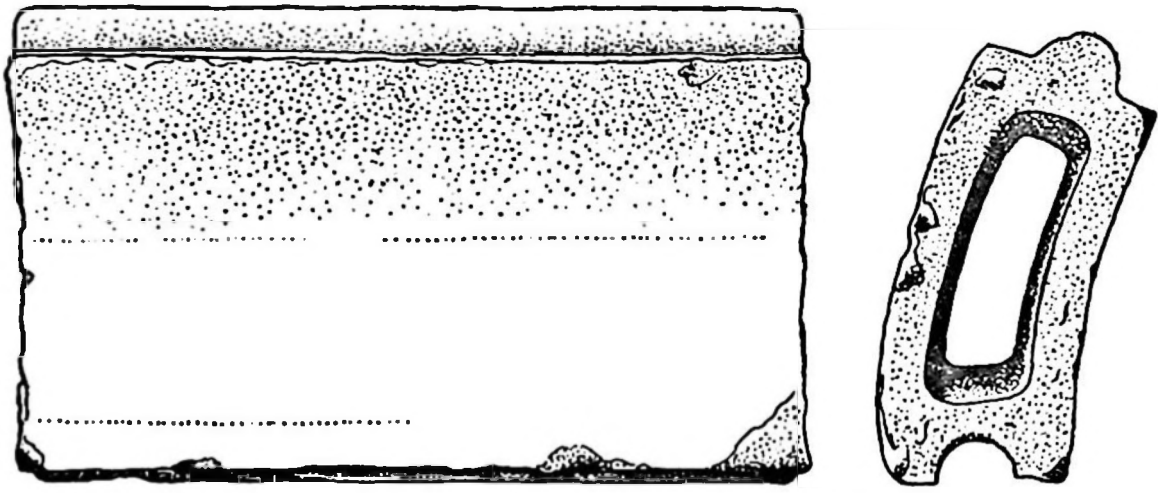
Photograph (Pl. II): *Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland—the Outer Hebrides, Skye and Small Isles* (1928), fig. 88; enlargement reproduced with the permission of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office.

B. R. S. MEGAW

Folk-song from a Tile

At the beginning of February 1955 I got word from the novelist Neil McCallum that he had been shown a most singular "brick" by its owner, Mr. Douglas Mickel, of the Edinburgh firm of building contractors, MacTaggart and Mickel. This object, which had been found on a building site in Corstorphine several years earlier, had what appeared to be a verse of a song or a poem written on it.

I took an early opportunity of calling on Mr. Mickel at his office in North St. Andrew St., and proceeded to examine the singing brick. It turned out to be a segmental interlocking



Side-view and end-view of the tile which measures 9″ × 5½″ overall and is from 2″ to 2¼″ thick.

drain-tile, strawberry-red in colour, and hollow; its dimensions were 9 in. by 6 in. by 2½ in. What made it remarkable was the fact that it bore, scratched on its face, eight lines of what appeared to be a folk-song. They were in quite a stylish copybook hand, and read as follows (Pl. III):

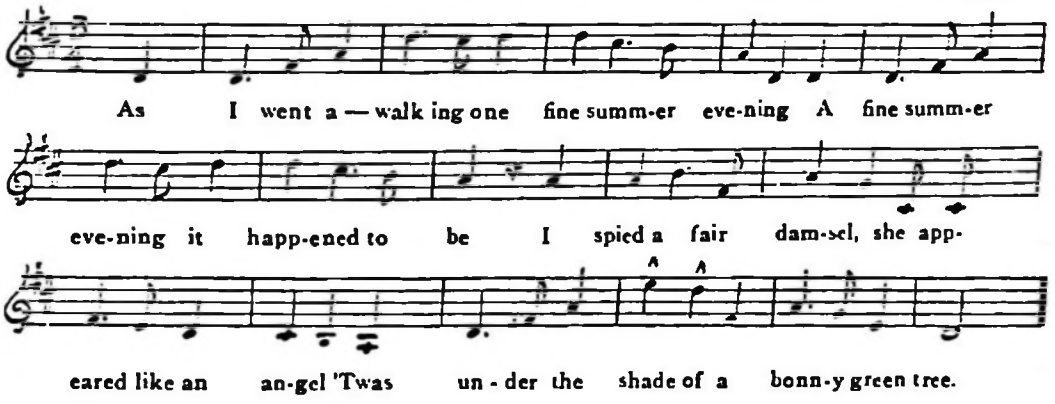
m
As I was a walking one fine Sumers evening
one fine summers evening it happened to be
There I spied a damsel she appeared like an an
gel
and she sat neath the shade of a bonny green
tree
I stepped up unto her as I seemed to veiw her
and said my pretty maid will you no marr
y me
Ill make you a lady of high rank and houner
If you share me the half of your bonny
green tree

I asked Mr. Mickel what he knew of the brick's history, and he told me that it had been found on a building site at Broomhall Avenue, Corstorphine, not long before the start of World War II. It had formed part of the wall of a culvert, conduit or aqueduct carrying a stream across a field on what had once been Broomhouse Farm. He thought it might be over a hundred years old. I asked him if he could hazard an opinion as to where the brick had been made, and he said that, judging by the clay, it might have come from a kiln in the Prestonpans area. The words on the tile had obviously been scratched in the soft clay with the point of a nail or knife before it was fired.

[The Director of the Wemyss Development Company kindly informs us that a tile of this "extruded" form used to be produced in Fife for lining circular well-shafts. The Corstorphine example could not be older than the nineteenth century.—Ed.]

THE BONNY GREEN TREE

Mrs Helen Wason, Prestonpans, February 1955



At my request, the poet Alan Riddell, who was at that time a reporter on the *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*, came along to Mr. Mickel's office with a photographer, and an illustrated story appeared in the *Dispatch* on 3rd February 1955. Two days later, a letter from Prestonpans appeared in the correspondence columns of the same newspaper; Mrs Helen Wason, wife of a miner, had written in to say that she knew the whole song, which she had learned from her mother. Her version of the text was included in the letter. On receipt of it, I wrote at once, inviting Mrs. Wason to come to the School of Scottish Studies and record the song; I also paid her a visit, and prospected for

more material. About a week after her letter was published, she recorded her version in the School. It goes as follows.

As I went a-walking one fine summer evening,
A fine summer evening it happened to be,
I spied a fair damsel, she appeared like an angel,
'Twas under the shade o' a bonny green tree.

I steppèd up to her, 'twas only to view her.
I said, my kind maiden, you've sair wounded me.
I'll make you a lady of high rank and honour
If you'll shelter me under your bonny green tree.

O I'm not a lady of high rank or honour,
I'm but a poor girl of a lowly degree;
Your friends and relations would all look down on me
If you were to marry a poor girl like me.

What do I care for my friends or relations,
My friends and relations have nothing to do with me.
I'll make you a lady of high rank and honour
If you'll shelter me under your bonny green tree.

All you young maidens, from me take a warning:
Ne'er go into young men's company,
For all that they want is to spoil your charàcter,
And then they will leave you, as my love left me.

(There are one or two minor discrepancies between this version, which is transcribed from her singing, and the text which she sent in to the *Dispatch*).

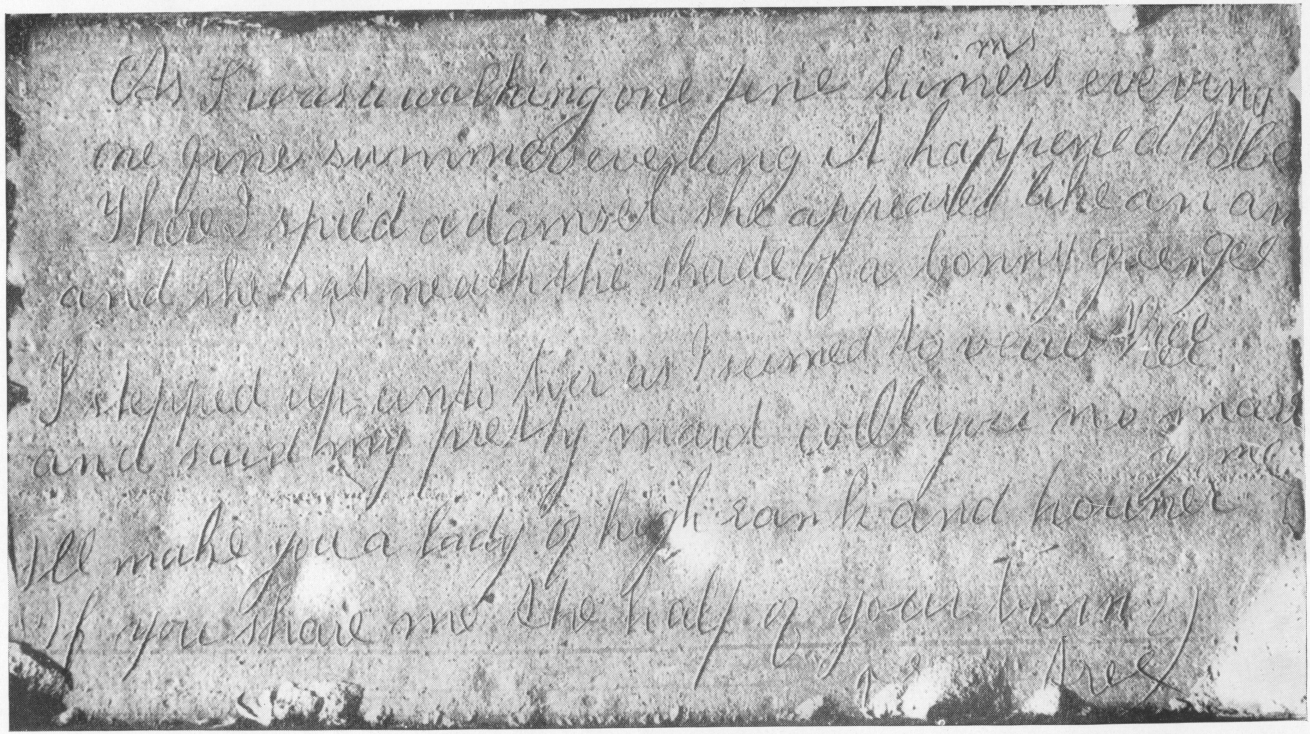
Mrs. Wason told me that she had first heard the song more than 50 years before from her mother, who came from Fisherrow, and was of fisher stock.

Not long after Mrs. Wason's visit, I received the following letter (which accompanied yet another text of "The Bonny Green Tree"):

17th Febr Mr Henderson

Dear Sir I enclose the full part of the song I noticed in the Dispatch it's 65 years past since I used to sing it at the Dances in Ashkirk. Another played the Fiddle to me, I've given you the words

I enclose another old one if you think it worth while to accept only from memory have none in Print But excuse me if you care to call on me sometime I could talk better than writing much at my Age, trust I am not too ready at saying so much, only it is some one



Folk-song from a tile. For details *see* p. 100.

PLATE III

like you I would like to have a talk with on years gone bye, my memory is so clear trusting you will excuse me my address added

Your M. Simpson

The writer was Mrs. Mary Simpson, a native of Nemphlar, Lanarkshire; at that time, she was 86 years of age. Here is her version, just as she wrote it:

As I went awalking yae fine Summers Evening,
Yae fine Summers evening it happened to be,
I espied a wee lass she appeared like an Angel,
She sat under the shade of a bonnie green tree,

I stepped up to her as I seemed to view her
And said my wee lassie will ye marry me
I'll mak ye a Lady o high rich and honour,
A Lady you'll be of a high high Dgree—
Your friends and relations would frown upon you
if you was to marry a poor girl like me,

My Friends and relations I hae got but few—
My friends and relations care nothing for me.
Your a poor girl and I a rich boy
tomorrow we'll wed My Bride ye shall be

It's doon on the green grass he sat doon beside me
He made a vow to marry me but when he arose
He shook hands and pairted and told me
to look for one of my own degree (He *was fallse*)

last verse
Come all ye pretty fair Maids
I pray take a warning, ne'er trust
a young man of ony Degree
for all that they want is the spoil on your Character,
And then they will leave you
As my love left me—

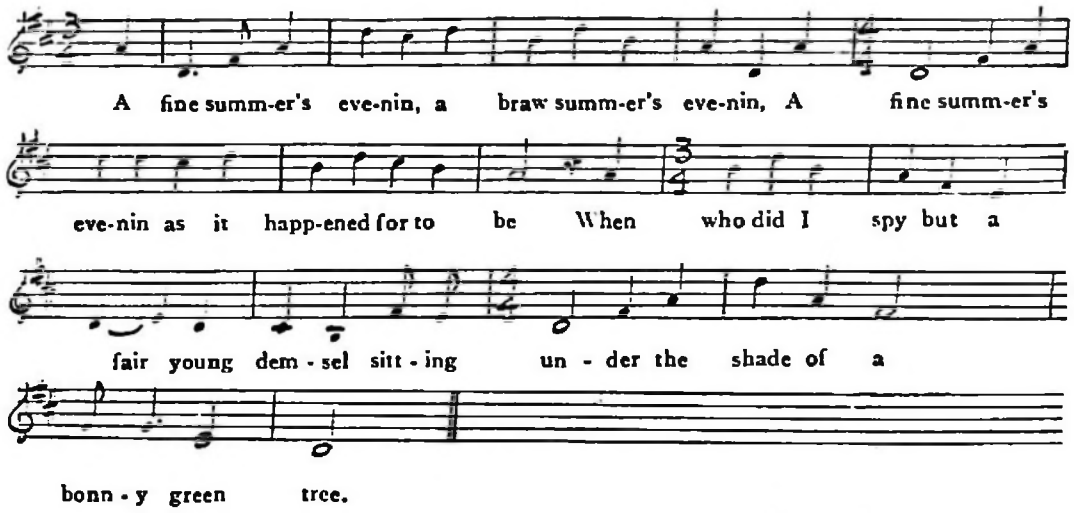
The other song Mrs. Simpson enclosed was a folk version of Auld Lang Syne. She appended these words to it:

PS its to be all Scotsh—
as *I am. Scotsh*

I called on Mrs. Simpson, who lived in Dunedin St., Edinburgh, and found her a delightful old lady. She had a

number of songs, most of which she had learned when fee'd as a servant girl at Ashkirk; "The Bonny Green Tree" was one of these. Unfortunately, her memory was failing, and she was never able to recall the tune properly; I attempted to record it several times, but without success. The following year, however, I was lucky enough to stumble on yet another version while camped in the berryfields of Blairgowrie; it was sung by 67-year-old Mrs. Margaret Stewart, a Banff tinker,

Mrs Margaret Stewart, Banff, August 1956



and seemed closely related to Mrs. Simpson's version. Here are the two final verses:

She sat now down, and he sat down beside her;
That's the very place that he vowed tae marry me.
But when he approached me, he found me a virgin—
Sayin', tomorrow we'll get married—but your bride I'll never be.

Come all you fair maids, O come and take a warning;
Don't pay any heed whit any young man they do say,
For when they get the wills o' you, it's then they will leave you—
O it's then they will leave you, as my love left me.

Mrs. Stewart learned this version from her grandmother, who came from Wick. However, she was very emphatic that the "bonny green tree" of the song was located in Macduff.

I am indebted to Mr. W. Turner Berry, ex-Librarian of the Printing Library of St. Bride, Bride Lane, Fleet St., London, for information concerning a song sheet *The Shady Green Tree, A New Song*, which was lent to the Arts Council exhibition of

street literature in 1954 by John Cheney, Esq., Banbury. The text, as it appears on this song sheet, is as follows:

As I was walking one midsummer morning
Down by a shady green tree
There did I behold a beautiful virgin
Sitting all under the shady green tree.
I stepped up to her and said, my dear jewel
You are the first girl that ever wounded me.
You will not want for gold or silver
If you will set your mind on me.

She said, kind sir, you are better deserving
I am a poor girl of low degree.
Besides your parents will always be scolding
So in my station contented I'll be.
Talk not of friends or any relations
As have no portion at all to give me;
As I am a young man, and you are a virgin
Married tomorrow to you I shall be.

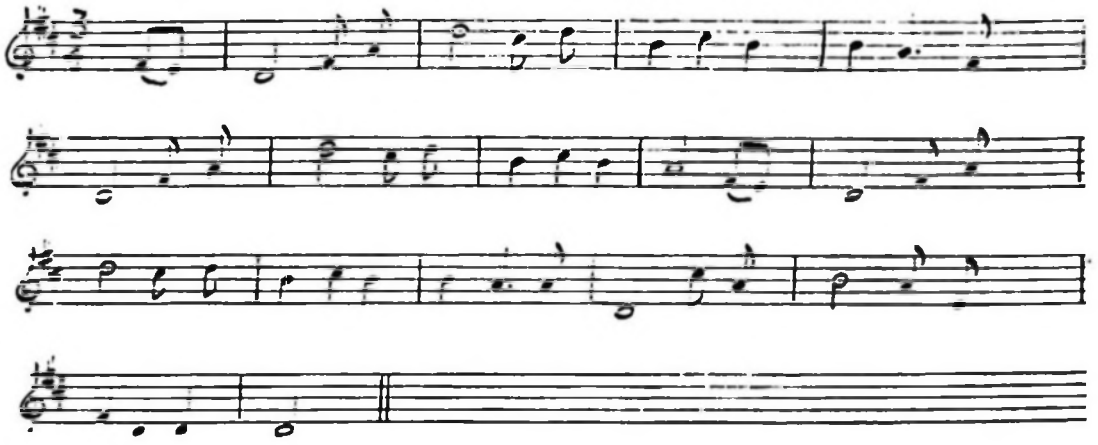
She sat herself down, I sat myself by her,
There did I rifle her beautiful charms.
With sweet melting kisses and fond embraces
We slept together in each other's arms.
The space of three hours all in the green grove
All under the shady green tree.
And when I awaked, I found her no virgin:
Married to you I never shall be.

She said, kind sir, you are my undoing.
Can you, O can you so cruel be?
How can I pass any more for a virgin
Since you have had your will of me.
Come all pretty maidens now take warning
Never trust a man in any degree,
For when they've enjoyed the fruits of your garden,
Then they will leave you, as he has done me.

In a letter, Mr. Turner Berry states: "I'm afraid there is no way of tracing the printer or place, but after comparing paper and type with many other songs in our possession, some of which are dated, I would guess that the date of printing was circa 1790. . . . The item in question is called a 'new song', but so are many others, and I would guess that this statement means very little". Examination of the song sheet text and of the text inscribed on the tile suggests that both are variants of a song that has had time to develop along more than one line.

In conclusion I should add that the song has also been recorded in Ireland. It was collected by Sam Henry from James Carmichael, 32 Waring St., Ballymena, under the title "Under the Shade of the Bonny Green Tree", and is No. 794 in the Henry collection. The tune and the last three verses

UNDER THE SHADE OF A BONNY GREEN TREE



of that version are here added as envoi (I am indebted for the information to Mr. Ivor A. Crawley, City Librarian of Belfast):

The laddie sat down, and she sat down beside him;
He swore and he promised that married they'd be;
But when he arose his mind it was altered:
And he said, "If I marry, my bride you won't be."

"Now I may go; I may go broken-hearted;
Ill bodes the day that I sat on his knee:
My first and my last was a false hearted lover,
Under the shade of a bonny green tree.

"Come all ye young lassies, pray now take a warning,
And ne'er court a young man above your degree;
For love is a blossom that quickly will wither,
And you will be left as my lover left me."

HAMISH HENDERSON

A Traditional Song from Skye

Dh'éirich mi moch maduinn earraich
Maduinn dhuanaidh fhuarraidh fhearra
Ghabh mi suas ri gual' a' bheannain
Shuidh mi air cnoc is leig mi m'anail
Dh'amhairc mi bhuam fad mo sheallaidh
Chunnaig mi long 'sa' Chaol Chanach
Is i a' strì ri sgrìoban geala
Is i a' siorruith dh'ionnsaigh cala

Chuala mo chluas fuaim a daraich
Fuaim a cuid seòl is iad a' crathadh
Chunnaig mo shùil i dol fairis
Socrachadh sìos anns a' ghaineamh
Lùb mi mo ghlùn, dh'iarr mi sìth dhaibh
Sìth do dh'Eoghainn, sìth do dh'Ailein
An dà bhràthair tàmh biodh agaibh.

The refrain *ó hó hi rí éile chalainn ó hó hi rí* is sung after each half line.

I arose early on a spring morning
A wild, chill, ugly morning
I made my way up by the shoulder of the hill
I sat on a height and rested.
I looked away as far as I could see
I noticed a ship in the Kyle of Canna
Thrusting against the white furrows,
Ever running on towards harbour.
My ear heard the noise of her oak
The noise of her sails shaking.
My eye saw her turning over,
Settling down in the sand.
I bent my knee, I asked peace for them—
Peace for Ewen, peace for Allan,
The two brothers: may you have rest.

This song concerning the loss of a ship belongs to the genre of "vocable refrain" songs. One of the most fascinating traditions in Scottish Gaelic literature, it is also one of the most neglected: anthologists and collectors of the past, affected no doubt by the prominence that formal panegyric verse enjoyed in Gaelic society, have tended to ignore these utterances of private emotion which nevertheless enshrine some of the best poetry in the language. Most of the songs, including this one, are anonymous. It is interesting to note too that a great number were apparently composed by women.

That so many have survived in current oral tradition is in a large measure due to the fact that they became occupation-songs used to lighten the labour of shrinking or waulking the newly-woven tweed. Gaelic songs with distinctive refrains composed of semantically meaningless (but aesthetically significant) syllables are thus often known as *òrain-luaidh* or "waulking-songs". But it is reasonably certain that their origins are to be sought elsewhere, and that even earlier than the seventeenth century (during which they flourished strongly)

the tradition was already a developed one. From internal evidence one can date some compositions fairly accurately; with others it is impossible to know within a century or more—for the text printed here one might hazard a guess at the early seventeenth century.

The opening line of the song employs a well-known convention of the tradition, reminiscent of the "May morning" openings of medieval poetry. The theme—that of loss at sea—constantly recurs in these songs, not surprisingly since the majority of them are Hebridean. In this one it is the terse, restrained, economical manner in which the incident is related that is so very arresting.

The song was noted down in Skye in 1947 from the dictation of Neil MacInnes (1862-1950) and has not been collected anywhere else. The only details known of the disaster are those to be found in the text.

JOHN MACINNES

A Story from Vatersay

This is a synopsis of a story told in Gaelic by Miss Nan MacKinnon of Vatersay. I first heard it in the summer of 1956, and it was subsequently recorded for the School of Scottish Studies.[1] It succinctly demonstrates the remarkable continuity of tradition in the Celtic world.

A Barra man was going to bury the three heads of his sons who had been slain. He was carrying the heads in a sack. As he passed a standing stone in the Cliait district, one of the heads spoke and made prophetic statements. One of these was to make known the way in which the deaths should be avenged. The father was to go to a certain township in the island, where he would find a man whose daughter was pregnant to the son whose head was speaking. She herself would give birth to a son, and he would avenge the deaths of the three brothers. The father did as the head advised and in due course the son was born. One day, when the boy was about fourteen years old, he was assisting at a fanking of sheep. The murderer of his father and uncles was present also. This man asked the boy to go to the well and get some water for him to drink. The lad did this, but on his return deliberately let the cup fall so that it broke. The murderer then went to drink directly from the well. The boy followed him and as he bent down to drink, drew a short sword which he had concealed in his sleeve and decapitated the murderer. The head was left in the well.

Apart from being a good story, this tale is of unusual interest for the following reasons. It contains a reference to the Celtic belief that the "tête coupée" has prophetic powers, and is capable of speech and movement after it has been separated from the body, stemming no doubt from an earlier belief that the head was the focal point of being, the habitation of the soul.[2] The standing stone in Cliait is noteworthy, because it plays an important part in the story, the head seemingly being stimulated to speech as the stone is approached. We are familiar with such a situation in certain of the early Irish tales, where a severed head is placed on a stone pillar, and then demonstrates its continued, independent existence. Celtic iconography provides numerous examples of "têtes coupées" set on, or carved in one with, stone pillars.

Of especial interest perhaps, is the connection of a head with a well. When the boy sets out to kill his father's murderer, he tricks him into approaching a well. He does not simply stab the guilty man. He decapitates him, and in true Celtic fashion, he places or leaves the head in the well. Last summer, when re-visiting Chesters Museum on Hadrian's Wall in Northumberland, I was interested to note that one of the objects recovered from the votive hoard in Coventina's Well at Carrawburgh was a human head, stained green, but with the skull still quite intact. Welsh tradition knows of several wells where the traditional guardian is supposed to have been a human cranium, and early Irish legends likewise make frequent references to the placing of illustrious or infamous heads in wells, whereby the water is magically affected in some way or other.

In this little tale then, told by a comparatively young woman in the Outer Hebrides in such recent times, we see the persistence, in oral form, of two early Celtic elements of belief. In the belief in the prophetic powers of the severed head, and in the custom of placing a "tête coupée" in a well, we have two motifs which have a long history in Celtic oral tradition, and which can trace their direct ancestry to beliefs which, in the Celtic Iron Age, formed elements in a widespread and complex religious tradition.

NOTES

[1] Recorded for the School of Scottish Studies by James Ross (Rl. No. XXX).

[2] The Celtic cult of the human head is described by the writer in P.S.A.S. 91 (1957-8) 10-43.

ANNE ROSS

A Tidal Fish Pound

Maritime ethnology has on the whole, been little studied hitherto, and this is especially true in Scotland. When one considers that the sea as a potential source of nourishment is some four times as rewarding as comparable areas of land it seems particularly unfortunate that in an environment so proximate to the sea as that of this country, such a subject should be thus neglected. Fishing has been the basis, clearly, of local economy in much of Scotland from the mesolithic period until the present and as man's exploitation of the sea's resources is still virtually at the "hunter-fisher" stage, there is a high degree of conservatism causing the retention of much archaic technology, either still in evidence, or at least surviving in oral tradition.

In contrast to the more active "hunting" techniques of deep-sea fishing, inshore waters lend themselves to passive trapping methods, ideally suited to a farming-fishing economy as demanding minimal expenditure of time. The basic form of sea trap is that employing the natural mechanism of the tide: the fish pound, *caraidh* (*Cairidh*-Dwelly), croy, or garth. As the *Scottish National Dictionary* has it, the croy is "a sort of fold of semi-circular form made on the sea beach for catching fish. When the sea flows the fish come over it, and are left there in consequence of its receding". These tidal traps made of rough stone walling, wattle, stakes, and perhaps combinations of these materials, appear to have been widely distributed around the Scottish coastline. In the Highlands they have been in use within living memory and in sheltered waters their remains are still quite well defined. See, for instance, Plate VIII, fig. 2, which is from a recent photograph taken at Airds Bay, Appin, by Mr. John Junor of Edinburgh who informs us that the structure is still known locally as "the old fish-trap".

There is a wealth of detail that needs to be added to the basic outline above. Questions to be considered include: the characteristic location of the traps, the types of fish concerned (there seems to have been some degree of specialisation), variation in measurement and design, the operation and allocation of catch, a specialised terminology and the relationship of Scottish forms to European parallels. Documentary evidence and place-names can also be significant, the latter especially on exposed coasts where physical traces have vanished possible examples being names like *Camusnacarnian* (locally *Camusnancaraidhean*) in Wester Ross, *Camus na Cairidh*

FIG. 1.—Nailsmiths outside a smithy at St. Ninians, Stirlingshire, *c.* 1930. (*See* p. 119).

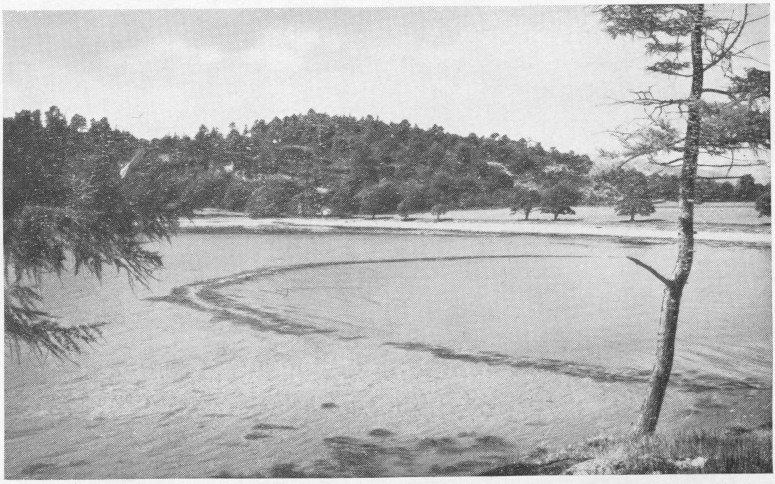


FIG. 2.—A tidal fish pond at Airds Bay, Appin (*see* p. 110).

in Muck, and *Croy Bay*, another name for Culzean Bay in Ayrshire.

Owing to its primitive nature and yet recent use, fuller details of Scottish tidal trapping could augment in a most interesting way the sparsely documented economic history of our coastal regions from an early period in prehistory.

IAIN A. CRAWFORD

A Symposium on Place-Name Research

When, early in 1960, the School of Scottish Studies invited British, Irish and Scandinavian scholars to attend a "Symposium on the Scope and Methods of Place-Name Research", it was hoped that a gathering of this kind would achieve two main aims: Firstly, closer liaison amongst the various organisations, institutions and individual scholars engaged in place-name research in Britain and Ireland; secondly, personal contact between younger and more experienced scholars, with particular benefit to the former. A similar symposium held in September 1959 on the subject of British Ethnographic Research had already shown that the frank and friendly atmosphere which is possible at a meeting of a small group of scholars confronted with the same kind of problems in closely allied fields of research, greatly facilitates the exchange of opinions and information.

The Symposium took place from October 5th-8th, 1960, and at it the following organisations and institutions were represented: The English Place-Name Society, the Place-Name Commission of the Irish Ordnance Survey, the School of Celtic Studies in the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, the Ulster Place-Name Society, the Scottish Record Office in H.M. General Register House Edinburgh, and the Place-Name Survey of the School of Scottish Studies. In addition, special invitations had been sent to Dr. Per Hovda, Head of Norsk Stadnamnarkivet Oslo, and to Mr. Melville Richards, Head of the Department of Celtic in the University of Liverpool, and a number of Scottish scholars actively concerned with place-name research attended the various sessions.

As the meeting was the first of its kind ever to be held in these islands, the papers read were designed to give as much technical information as possible about the history and the day-to-day organisation of the various archives and institutes, in order to acquaint scholars in charge of similar projects with the background, aims, working methods and financial problems

of other undertakings in this very specialised field of research. It was envisaged that, on the one hand, this might help younger archives to avoid pitfalls discovered and successfully negotiated by older organisations, and that, on the other, it might encourage less experienced colleagues to pursue their research even when faced with great difficulties, or stimulate those who work on their own and are without support from any official society or survey.

During the seven sessions of the Symposium the following papers were read and discussed: Prof. A. H. Smith, "The Work of the English Place-Name Society"; Dr. Per Hovda, "The Norsk Stadnamnarkiv Oslo"; Mr. Melville Richards, "Place-Name Research in Wales"; Mr. Liam Price, "The Place-Name Survey of the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies"; Mr. Éamonn de hÓir, "The Work of the Irish Place-Name Commission"; Miss Deirdre Morton, "The Ulster Place-Name Society"; Dr. W. F. H. Nicolaisen, "The Scottish Place-Name Survey"; Dr. A. B. Taylor, "Early Scottish Maps and Place-Name Research".

At the end of many fruitful and constructive discussions, the members appointed an interim committee, consisting of Prof. Smith and Dr. Nicolaisen, to investigate the possibilities of closer co-operation amongst the various organisations they represented, and subsequently to prepare a memorandum which may be submitted for consideration and comment to the organisations concerned.

A report on this gathering must not end without mentioning especially the contribution made to it by Dr. Per Hovda of Oslo whose visit had been made possible by a generous grant from the Northern Scholars Committee. It was of particular value to all present at these sessions to hear about the work of the Scandinavian place-name archives which have so much greater experience in this field of study than any institution in these islands.

W. F. H. NICOLAISEN

C. OTHER NOTES

A Note on William Bald's plan of Ardnamurchan and Sunart, 1807

An interesting example of an early nineteenth-century plan of a West Highlands estate has recently come to light in the

Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland's office in Oban. The peninsular estate of Ardnamurchan and Sunart in northern Argyll was surveyed in 1806 and 1807 by William Bald who compiled the map to accompany a Valuation of the estate for the proprietor, Sir James Milles Riddell, Bt. The ms. of the Valuation is still extant, and in it, the Assessor, Alexander Low of Woodend, remarks on the present situation of each land holding, and adds suggestions for future changes. From the map and Valuation, Sir James hoped to proceed with some of the agricultural improvements in land distribution and husbandry which had previously spread over the Lowlands, and had already penetrated the southern fringes of the Highlands and Islands. These documents together present a finely-drawn portrait of one of many similar West Highland estates which were at this time undergoing, or about to enter, a period of transition. This change was from the old order of large tacks and unlotted runrig townships (with periodic or fixed strips) to the new one of large grazing farms and lotted townships. There was usually a corresponding redistribution of settlement from clustered clachans to linear or dispersed patterns of buildings.

On a scale of 5·35 inches to one mile, the whole plan measures twelve feet from north to south, and seven and a half from west to east. It has, however, been divided into sections, each mounted on cloth and folded. The state of preservation is remarkably good, considering both its age and its chequered history after the estate passed from the hands of the bankrupt Sir James in 1848. One of the present proprietors of Sunart is the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland in whose possession the map, Valuation and various other estate documents now lie and to whom we are indebted for their permission to reproduce sections of the map (Pl. IV and V).

Cartographically, the map presents a very pleasing appearance, whilst retaining accuracy of detail. Even now, after a century and a half, the multi-coloured washes indicating the boundaries and improved lands of different holdings, still provide a colourful fringe to the rather sombre grey tones of the rest of this rocky and mountainous peninsula. Black ink has been used only sparingly, except in lettering, figuring, delimitation of boundaries and tree symbols. Pictorial effect derives chiefly from the extremely skilful use of the paint-brush with various shades and tones of water colour. The physical appearance of the higher areas, forming unimproved pasture

land, is graphically illustrated. Summits of the highest hills and ridges, in a light grey, are made the more prominent by the use of very much darker tones simulating hill-shading, for the breaks of slope below. Brush-strokes, rather like hachures, indicate degree of slope. In this way too, the sides of gulleys are emphasised. The rivers themselves, and other water features are drawn and coloured in blue. Superb cliff representation enhances the long and indented coastline.

But the greatest detail and variety of interest are to be found in those areas used by man for cultivation, pasture or mining. The boundary of each farm or township is given a specific colour which is repeated in the plots of improved ground within the holding. Each patch is allocated a number and acreage, and these are listed in an accompanying key. Beside each entry in the key, the annotation "arable-spade", "arable-plough", "pasture", or "planting" is recorded. It is perhaps unfortunate that the first three of these categories of land utilisation are not usually coloured separately on the map. Some of the patches of cultivated land are outlined in red, which may represent a dyke or enclosure, but this is not clear. Three of the four main elements comprising the West Highland landscape of the time are depicted:

(i) the large tacks and grazing farms rented usually by one tenant. Occasionally these may be worked by groups of sub-tenants or cottars living in clusters or clachans on the farm.
(ii) the townships of joint tenants with undifferentiated holdings held in runrig (with periodic or fixed strips), and living in clachans.
(iii) the townships of tenants living on individually lotted holdings resulting in dispersed settlements.

The fourth element, found sporadically elsewhere in the West Highlands and Islands, that of the planned estate village, is missing in this peninsula.

The large tacks and grazing farms comprised less of the total area at that time than in many West Highland estates. In Ardnamurchan, the western part of the peninsula, only four such holdings are shown, but Sunart to the east has a higher proportion of large sheep walks along the more inaccessible southern shores of Loch Shiel. The improved land on these holdings is usually grouped into fair-sized fields, but only a few of these are enclosed. Farm buildings are not

infrequently surrounded by the then recently introduced woodlands and plantations.

The unlotted townships comprise most of the area depicted on the map. Each contains two categories of land, improved arable and pasture, and unimproved rough grazing, both usually held in common (see Pls. IV and V). Due to the highly irregular nature of the peninsula, the arable land is often to be seen scattered in small patches, capable of cultivation only by spade. Settlements are clustered closely together near the greatest area of arable land, water supply, or kelp-producing shore. One's eye is quickly drawn to these clachans on the map, each building being coloured in red.

There was only one lotted township in the whole peninsula in 1807, that of Ardnastang, though in the Valuation, the Assessor points to many townships which could well be lotted to provide fewer tenants with a better living from the land. In Ardnastang at the mouth of the Strontian valley, each tenant's several contiguous plots are allocated the same number, (unlike the serially numbered patches in the unlotted townships) and arable and pasture land is separately distinguished. Already at this time, dwellings are built on each individual holding.

The two other features of human occupation depicted are the lead mines and the roads. The various tracts of land and the major lead veins therein, leased to different mining companies, are accurately marked. Roads to the mines, and to most of the townships, often more numerous than those of today, are drawn and coloured in red.

The map and Valuation together provide a valuable impression of the extent of improved land, and of the distribution of settlement in Ardnamurchan and Sunart before the main clearances for farms and shooting forests, and redistribution of land holdings and people took place. The greatest changes have occurred in the former unlotted townships. In some cases, the improved land was lotted out into individual holdings in the nineteenth or even the twentieth centuries. These holdings were often rectangular in form, stretching upwards from the valley-bottom or sea-shore (e.g. Anaheilt, Fig. 2). Population moved on to the individual holdings, and a linear or dispersed pattern of settlement replaced the old cluster. In other cases, where greater variation in quality of land occurred, the runrig holdings became fixed, and each holding still consists at the present day of several non-adjacent

strips of land, with buildings set up on one of the plots. Such is the township of Kilmory (Pl. IV). Similar scattered strip holdings occur in Ockle (Ochkill, Pl. IV), but the old clustered form of settlement has remained. The only other clachan remaining is that of Achnaha in Ardnamurchan, in which township the 60-odd strips belonging to each tenant were reallocated into individual holdings during the First World War.

In other cases, the former townships were cleared of population and stock to make way for large sheep walks, and they remain as hill farms today (e.g. Swordlechorrach, Swordlemore and Swordlehuel in Fig. 1 are now one farm, Swordle. Another element, characteristic of much of the West Highland area after the late nineteenth century, was added to the Sunart landscape after World War I, when the two large farms of Ranachan and Drimnatorran were broken up and each resettled as four small holdings for returning ex-servicemen.

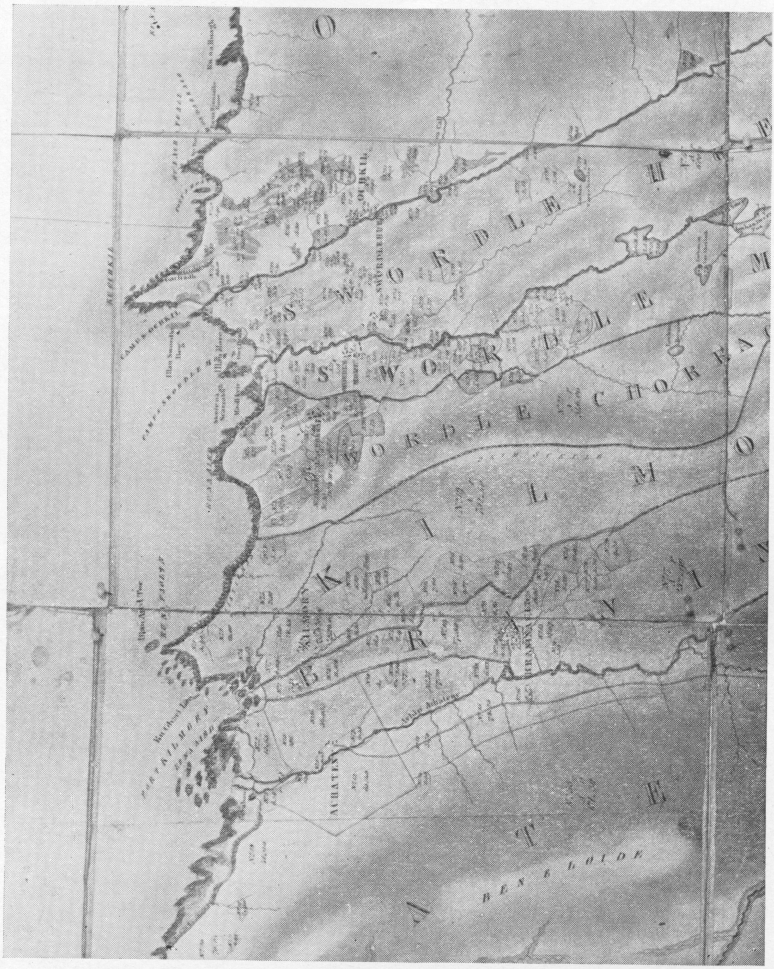
But whether lotted or cleared, the traces of the old order of unlotted townships and clusters of buildings remain now in the extensive green patches showing the abandoned rigs of old lazy-beds and ploughed areas, and in the clusters of ruined buildings to be seen on almost every holding. The only other major change has been the twentieth century spread of afforestation, especially in Sunart.

Unfortunately, a complete understanding of the material presented by the map and Valuation is not yet possible. At the time of writing, no rental of the estate corresponding to the Valuation has been found. If this were discovered, the precise numbers of tenants, and perhaps even of cottars and their families, might be known for each holding, and the value of the documents greatly enhanced. Nor is a later map showing the actual lotting known to the author. Despite this lack, however, the map and Valuation together provide a good basis on which to construct the story of subsequent land and population changes from estate documents and Census records.

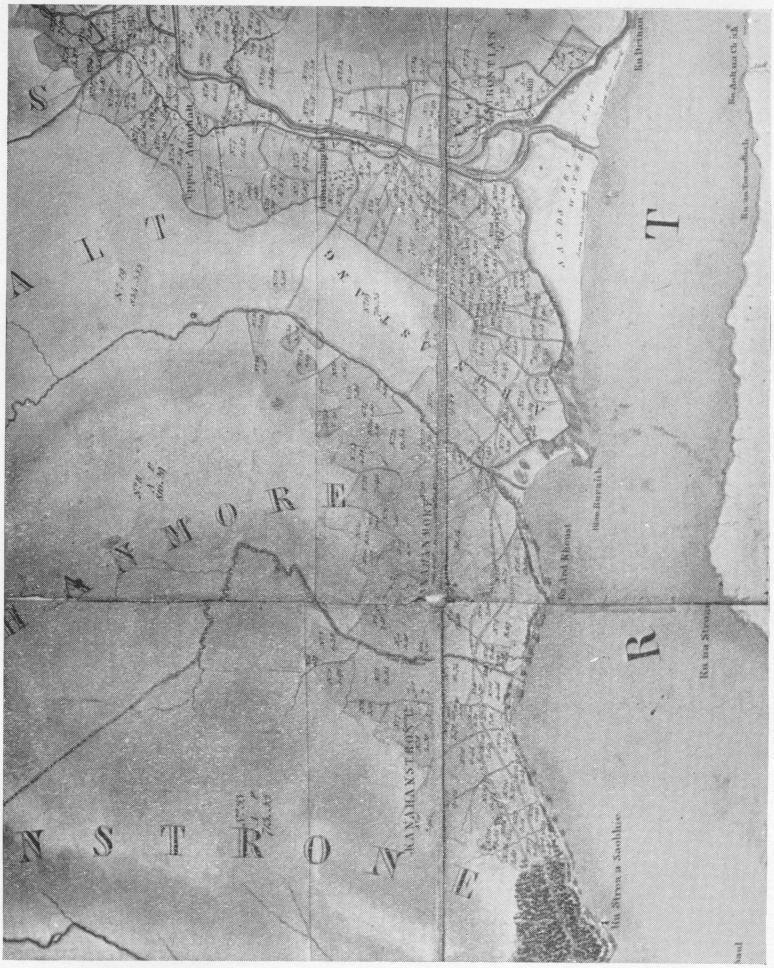
ILLUSTRATIONS

Pl. IV. This part of the map shows, from west to east:

(1) Achateny, a large farm in 1807, and still so today.
(2) Branault, lotted after 1807 into four holdings. Now one farm.
(3) Kilmory, at that time an unlotted township with clachan. Now a lotted township of strip crofts and linear dispersed settlement.
(4) Swordlechorrach, Swordlemore, and Swordlehuel, all then unlotted townships, and now one farm, with buildings based on Swordlemore.
(5) Ochkill, now lotted township of scattered strip crofts; settlement in original cluster.



A section of William Bald's plan of Ardnamurchan and Sunart, 1807. For details *see* p. 116.



A further section of William Bald's plan of Ardnamurchan and Sunart, 1807.
For details *see* p. 117.

Pl. V. This part of the map shows, from west to east:

(1) Part of a "plantation".
(2) Ranachanstrone and Ranachanmore unlotted townships later cleared into one sheep farm, and resettled in 1924 as four small holdings with dispersed settlement.
(3) Ardnastang, in 1807, the only township with lotted holdings in Ardnamurchan and Sunart: linear dispersed settlement.
(4) Anaheilt unlotted township, now rectangular holdings from valley bottom upwards, and with dispersed linear settlement.
(5) Strontian "village" containing, Factor's residence, Inn etc.

MARGARET C. STORRIE

A Note on the Making of Nails by Hand

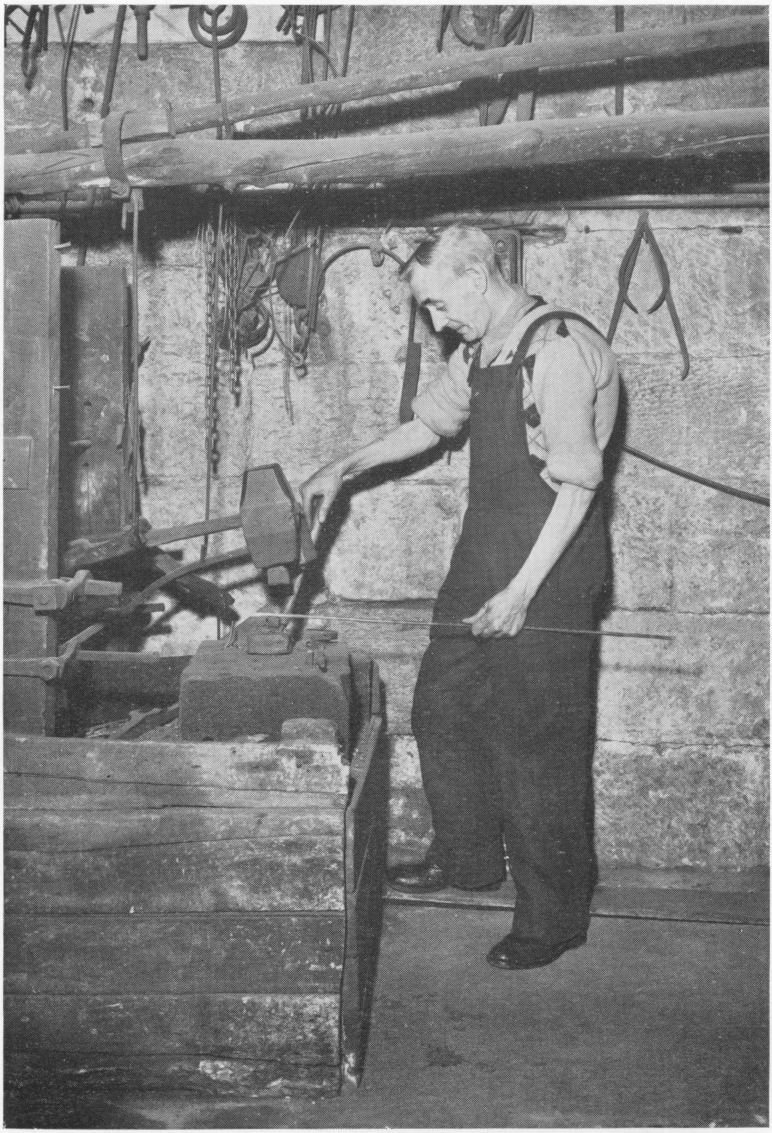
Nailmaking evidently has a long history in Stirlingshire, as a payment for slating-nails to a smith in Bannockburn is on record in 1633 (M. of W. Accts. II: 359). In 1770 William Cadell, one of the original partners of Carron Company, introduced nailmakers from England, and Carron, Camelon, St. Ninians, Kilsyth and Kirkcaldy are subsequently recorded as nail-making centres (Cadell 1913: 164). In 1796 four masters were employing about a hundred and thirteen hands in St. Ninians parish, the daily output per man being from a thousand to twelve hundred nails and the wages low (Stat. Acct. 1796: 394). By 1841 the number of hands had decreased to two hundred; the same figure for output is given, and the wages from 8s. to 9s. per week (N.S.A. 1845: 332). Rather more details are available for Camelon at the same date, the minister of Falkirk parish recording (N.S.A. 1845: 18) that there were then two nail manufactories in that village, employing about two hundred and fifty men and boys. The employers provided houses and workshops, and the rods from which the nails were made, while the men found their own coal and turned in the finished product. They worked a ten-hour day, five or five-and-a-half days a week; a man working alone was paid from 9s. to 14s. per week, and one with a boy or boys working under him proportionately more. A cottage industry of this kind, dependent on substantial capitalist employers and centralised marketing, remained in existence in Stirlingshire until the beginning of the second World War; it was then fundamentally re-organised by Messrs. J. & W. Somerville Ltd., who transferred all the work to a modern factory at Lennoxtown.

Notwithstanding the change thus effected, many of the traditions of the "cottage" phase of the industry are still alive

at Lennoxtown, and Messrs. Somerville also possess some interesting old pieces of equipment. The School of Scottish Studies is most grateful to Mr. J. B. Webster, the managing director, and to his staff, for the information that they were so good as to supply, and also for the opportunity that they gave to its representative of interviewing Mr. James Squair, the last of "cottage" nailmakers, and of seeing him demonstrate the use of the forge and "oliver" (*infra*). The School is also indebted to the Ancient Monuments Commissioners for copies of their photographs of the oliver.

The oliver is a kind of work-bench, equipped with a pair of treadle-operated hammers and specialised for the making of nails or other small products, such as can-ears, which are formed from iron rods. It is understood to take its name from its inventor, a former nail-maker of St. Ninians, who is said to have had to barricade his smithy to preserve the secret of the machine that gave him such high production. It is placed close to the forge, so that the operator, standing between, can attend to his bellows, fire and irons when facing one way and be in a position to use the oliver on turning about. The machine has a massive cubical pedestal, from each of the two rear corners of which there rises a solid wooden upright. These uprights support two transverse iron bars which are free to turn on their axes, and each of them carries one of the hammers mounted on a short radial shaft. Partial rotation of the bars thus brings the hammers down to strike or raises them to their upright position, which is rather above "three o'clock". The downward stroke is effected by the depression of the treadle, which is conveniently placed to the smith's right foot and can be connected with either of the hammers; after their stroke the hammers are raised by the upward pull of long, springy larch-poles, mounted above the smith's head and having their small ends connected with the hammer-shafts by means of rods. The mechanism is unquestionably crude, but by manipulating his treadle against the pull of the larch-pole the smith can regulate the force of his blows with great nicety. In the oliver seen at Lennoxtown, one hammer has a 15 lb. head and the other is lighter. If it is desired to use the hammer that is not attached to the treadle, it can be brought down by a blow from the smith's clenched fist.

On the bench, below the hammers, there rests an iron block containing twelve square sockets, into which can be fitted small specialised anvils, called "jacks", as required for



"Oliver" machine and operator, Lennoxtown, Stirlingshire, 1958.
(*See* p. 118).

Making a "hold-fast" at the "oliver".
(*See* p. 118).

FIG. 1.—Nailsmiths outside a smithy at St. Ninians, Stirlingshire, *c.* 1930. (*See* p. 119).

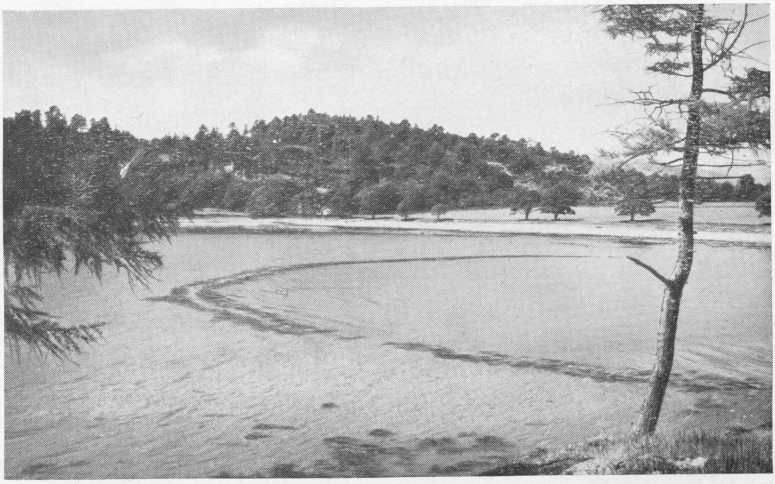


FIG. 2.—A tidal fish pond at Airds Bay, Appin (*see* p. 110).

various products. A demonstration was given in the manufacture not of nails but of can-ears, of which Mr. Squair has made as many as 20 gross in a week. For these, three jacks were used—one, a small block under the 15 lb. hammer, on which the white-hot end of a slender rod was given the shape of a can-ear; a second, consisting of a short length of horizontal rod round which the hook was formed with an ordinary hammer; and a third, which carried an upturned cutting edge on which the ear was severed from its rod by a blow from the lighter hammer, struck in this case with the fist. The rivet-holes in the can-ears were made with another machine of venerable appearance, a manual punch operated by a quick-action screw.

In conclusion, a word must be said about the old nailmakers' houses. Typically a nailmaker's cottage was distinguished by the presence of an extra room at one end; this was the smithy or workshop, and it was entered both from the adjoining room of the cottage, by a door in the partition, and also from outside by a separate entrance. Several of these cottages are known still to exist in and near St. Ninians, and some of them were visited on the strength of information received at Lennoxtown; but all were found to have been "improved" and considerably altered, and their constructional details were often obscured by harling, with the result that it was impossible, in most cases, to identify the distinguishing features. At Chartershall, however, the row of cottages by the southern end of the bridge still shows quite clear traces of the original arrangement, according to information supplied by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland.

ILLUSTRATIONS

The two photographs on Plates VI and VII are Crown copyright and are here reproduced by permission of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland.

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1845 *The New Statistical Account of Scotland.* Vol. 8 (Stirlingshire). Edinburgh.

STAT. ACCT.
1796 *The Statistical Account of Scotland.* Ed. by Sir John Sinclair. Vol. 18. Edinburgh.

ANGUS GRAHAM

Book Review

Folk-lore of Tayside. By Colin Gibson. A Dundee Museum and Art Gallery Publication. 1959(?). 3s. 6d.

This is an attractively produced book with a good number of black and white illustrations, mainly of local scenes, photographs of rooms in the Angus Folk Museum on the covers, and line drawings of bygone or obsolescent articles from the same place on the first and last leaves. The reading matter takes the form of a miscellany of short notes on local folk-lore or rather folk-life, ranging at random over legends and superstitions, proverbs and weather-lore, place-names, aspects of social life and material culture, and touching also, rather superficially, on archæology.

Though a popular work, in a "readers' digest" style, it nevertheless provides a quantity of useful information of various kinds. It is of interest, for example, to learn that stone cheese presses, normally associated with the North-East of Scotland, come as far south as Glen Clova. If anyone wants to see or study clay-built houses with thatched roofs, or bee-boles, or holy wells, this book tells him where to find them.

Unfortunately the information is not always accurate. On page 37, for example, the appliance on which the writer says "rosity-sticks" are burned seems really to be a bannock-brander, used for baking, which he may be confusing with the so-called "kelchan", a barred contrivance for drying slivers of "rosity" wood in the smoke of the fire, or the "peer-man", a stand with a spike or cleft to hold the lighted stick. A student of place-names might not always agree with the writer's etymologies, though the interest shown in them, and particularly in the collection of field-names, is of value for arousing the enthusiasm of others. There is, however, as much need for accuracy in books of this popular nature as in any other.

The Folk-lore of Tayside is a readable guide which stimulates the reader's interest in the area, and refers him also to the Museums and books dealing with folk-lore and folk-life which, along with the countryside itself and its traditions, have been the sources of the writer's inspiration.

ALEXANDER FENTON

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NOTES AND COMMENTS

MARRIAGE AND THE ELEMENTARY FAMILY AMONG THE SCOTTISH TINKERS

Farnham Rehfisch

In the first part of this paper I shall discuss the institution of Tinker marriage as it existed in the past. This will be followed by an analysis of marital unions to-day and will include those factors affecting the choice of a mate and the rights and obligations stemming from the contracting of a marriage. Finally I shall conclude with a brief description of the developmental cycle of the elementary family.

For the purposes of this essay we define Tinkerdom as being a socio-cultural minority group, membership being granted only to those persons having at least one Tinker parent. A further qualification is necessary, namely that the individual concerned must identify himself with the group, otherwise he will not be considered a member. This dictum is necessary since a few persons with genealogical claims to affiliation have nevertheless sundered their ties with their fellows and become merged into the mass society. The Tinkers do not form a corporate group [2] but the fact that they share certain socio-cultural features including values and norms of behaviour, as well as having a consciousness of kind adds weight to the argument that they are more than a mere congerie of persons lumped together by outsiders. "Flatties"[3] have a tendency to group all nomads into the Tinker category, but this from the Tinker point of view is not acceptable, since as mentioned above they have rules defining those qualifying for membership and these are abided by very strictly. A few "Flatties" have adopted their way of life, and interact almost exclusively with members of the group, but nonetheless they are considered to be outsiders.

It is not my intention here to sketch out the history of the Tinkers in Scotland for two reasons. The first is that it has already been done quite creditably,[4] and the second that most historical data available are irrelevant to our theme. From time to time note will be taken of such information when it casts some

light on either marriage or the organisation of the elementary family. It should however be noted that Tinkers have been living in Scotland for many centuries. The date on which they disassociated themselves from other vagrants is unknown. The first fully authoritative document noting the presence of Gypsies in Scotland is dated July, 1505 (McRitchie 1894: 29). The relationship between Tinkers and Gypsies in the past is difficult to determine, but it is clear that many of the references to Scottish Gypsies in the literature do in fact refer to the group that are here called Tinkers. Scotland seems to have sheltered few real Gypsies in the past as well as at the present, probably for the reason given by McRitchie (1894: 19) "When they (the Gypsies) came they found an already existing caste of nomadic, magic working tinkers, pedlars, ballad singers, mountebanks, etc . . ., and either left or became affiliated with them". The implication of such a statement is that Tinkers or like groups existed in Scotland since before the beginning of the sixteenth century. There seems to be a substantial amount of evidence to back this contention, but since it is irrelevant to our subject there is no need to go into details here.

Most of the Tinkers in the past were nomadic, having no fixed place of residence. To-day this is no longer true, since the overwhelming majority have an abode to which they retire during the late Autumn, Winter and early Spring months. Their homes are usually in the slums of large cities, or in deteriorated cottages and sheds in the country or villages. The choice of domicile is largely dictated by their poverty and inability to pay high rents, and by the prejudice that landlords, as members of the "flattie" majority, have against Tinkers. Consequently decent housing is refused them. Some informants have obtained comfortable County Council Flats while a few have bought their own houses.

To attempt to estimate with any degree of accuracy the number of Tinkers to be found in Scotland is virtually impossible since the National Census does not differentiate them from the rest of the Scots. Censuses of the Tinker population were taken in 1895 and 1917,[5] but the results are of doubtful validity for reasons which I cannot enter into here. Spence (1955) using the National Census figures for 1951 estimates the number at about fourteen thousand, but includes vagrants and others with no fixed place of residence, who should not be considered as members of the group; he excludes those Tinkers who have become sedentary or semi-sedentary and should be

included. Vallée (1955: 12-13) makes no attempt to estimate their numbers while Donaldson (1956) writes that she believes the total to be from three to four thousand. It is not clear whether she is referring to those who are permanently nomadic or not. Her figure is probably reasonably accurate if she includes only the nomads, but our own very rough estimate is that there are from twenty to forty thousand Tinkers in all of Scotland, including nomads, semi-sedentary and permanently fixed persons who identify themselves and are accepted as members of the Tinker minority. Until further demographic work is done, no figure can be given which can be claimed to have any degree of real accuracy.

In this paper the terms "Marriage" and "Divorce" are used in the same way as the Tinkers do, that is without reference to the legality of either these unions or their dissolution. If a distinction must be made between either a marriage or divorce lawfully recognised and one not recognised by the state, the adjective "Legal" will be used to qualify the former type, i.e. "legal marriage", or "legal divorce".

I shall often be levelling criticisms against what has been written about these people in the past. It is my impression that much of the literature dealing with Tinkers as well as Gypsies is far from being reliable. The Tinkers meet enquiries from strangers either with stony silence, or with imaginative answers. Investigators in the past have often delved into the most intimate aspects of their lives without hesitation. In view of the suspicion with which Tinkers hold most "Flatties" it is not surprising that they often do their best to mislead the investigator. Also we must not forget that they are often rewarded for being willing to give information and they believe, quite rightly in most cases, that the more sensational their story the greater will be their recompense. The only way that one can avoid being misled is first to become well acquainted with them, and then and only then, begin one's investigation. Whenever possible one should check what has been said by observation. This can only be done if one lives on very close terms with them. Both my wife and I were told that this would entail many hardships and unpleasantness, but this is not true. Information dealing with the past can of course not be checked by observation, but if one has established good "rapport" with one's informants it is not likely that they will try to mislead. Nevertheless cross-checking by use of other informants is recommended.

Marriage in the Past

The first step in founding a family is taken when a marriage is contracted. The literature dealing with the Tinkers is full of descriptions of marriage rites performed by members of the group. Fittis (1881: 516), quoting Hall, says that a Tinker performing a marriage ceremony took a glass, broke it and said that, as it was impossible to put the glass together, so no man should tear the couple apart. Jamieson (1956: 183) cites an article from a newspaper which reports that Tinker marriages were conducted by a king, who mixed a handful of oatmeal and beremeal. Then he turned to the couple with the mixture and said: "Let them who can part this part you." Simson (1865: 260-1) describes in somewhat more detail a form of marriage ceremony. A wooden bowl is passed to the bride who urinates into it, and then handed to the groom for the same purpose. After this the "priest" takes some earth and mixes them all together. He hands the concoction to the bride and groom and tells them to separate the ingredients if they can. The couple are then ordered to hold hands over the bowl and in the "Gipsy language" the "priest" proclaims them man and wife. This ceremony was described to Simson by a "Gipsy" who claimed to have been married in this way (1865: 263). Another informant told him that the father of the groom had to sleep with the bride's mother for three or four nights before the marriage (1865: 264). McRitchie (1884: II, 285) and others state that jumping over the broomstick or tongs is popularly associated with Tinker marriages. All our informants claimed that no such ceremonies had ever been performed, or had been done for show purposes only. Tales of this kind are often spun to outsiders in the hope that the teller will be handsomely rewarded. It is also not improbable that ceremonies of this kind were carried out in front of a "Flattie" audience again in the hope of collecting money. But it is unlikely that the Tinkers attributed any significance to such rituals. McCormick (1907: 397), one of the most reliable authorities on the group, says that they go through but little ceremony at the time of a marriage, usually merely taking each other's word. Most authorities agree that in the past few Tinkers were married either in a church or Registry Office, but Crofton (1910: 290) found a recorded instance of a Tinker marriage having taken place in a church as early as 1749 at Dull; and Miller (1891-2: 61) records that a marriage ceremony had taken place in a cave near Rosemarkie and the English

marriage service had been read by an old Tinker. On the subject of church or Registry Office marriages most informants agreed that these were extremely rare in the past.

Informants told me that a couple who wished to marry would often leave the camp or other residence of their parents' without any ceremony being performed and upon their return would be treated as a married couple. In some cases the consent of both sets of parents would be asked, but this was usually no more than a mere formality since—if refused—the two would elope and present their kin with a "fait accompli" upon their return. I was told of one case where the bride was severely beaten by her father for running off in this way, but was nevertheless allowed to remain with her husband. The selection of a spouse was left entirely up to the individual and neither kinsmen nor anyone else ever attempted to arrange marriages for a third party.

If the pair asked permission before going off on their own, it was said to be the duty of their kin to supply them with the objects necessary to set up a camp. The basic requirements were a "float", a tent, bedding, cooking equipment and crockery, as well as any tools necessary for the carrying out of the husband's profession, if any. Finally and of greatest importance, a horse or other draft animal to pull the "float". The obligation to supply these articles did not fall exclusively on either the bride or groom's elementary family. By this is meant that the husband's kin were not expected to supply some specific objects and the wife's group others. Each supplied what it could. If the wife's family had or was in a position to obtain an extra horse and "float" they would do so, whereas if the groom's group were fortunate enough to have spare ones they would provide them. No attempt was made to balance out the value of the articles given by the two parties, nor did one lose status vis-à-vis the other if they were not able to provide so much as their counterparts. In the case of the bride's and groom's elementary families not being able to provide either any, or all, of the necessities, calls would be made on more distant kin. Usually close kin would be approached first, not merely because of the closeness of their genealogical ties but also because closer social ties would in all probability have been maintained with them and they therefore would be more likely to help. However, if one heard that a more distant kinsman or even a non-kinsman with whom social ties were maintained was known to be able to render material assistance

in such cases, they would be asked to do so, and would not refuse. To the best of my knowledge no proposed marriage was ever postponed because of the inability to obtain the necessary equipment for the pair to set up as an independent household. Children of poor parents sometimes set off on a life of their own with no more than a bit of torn canvas to sleep under, a blanket or two and a pot to cook in. Sometimes an old broken-down pram was added to carry their household effects.

In the case of elopements the parents of the pair would provide the necessities, as mentioned above, upon their return. The two would leave with their own possessions and perhaps a few things "borrowed" from their relatives.

The period during which the newly-weds would stay away varied from about a week to several months. Having the right household effects, if able to make a reasonable amount of money on their own, they might stay away for a considerable period of time. If, however, they had little, and their commercial enterprises were not prospering, the "honeymoon" might be brief.

Upon their return they would be recognised for the first time as husband and wife. A celebration would be held for them. Kinsmen who were in the neighbourhood as well as friends would be invited and welcomed. Food and drink would be provided by both sets of kinsfolk as well as being brought by those attending the feast. The duration of the celebration was almost entirely governed by the amount of food and drink available. Some lasted for only an afternoon and evening, while others went on for several days.

The young pair might now set off on a tour, to visit the camps of their relatives and friends who had not attended the celebration. Though not compulsory this was frequently done. There was no set order in which the visits should be made, rather it was a matter of convenience. If it was easier to see a distant cousin before a sibling, the latter had no justification for feeling hurt if this order was adopted. Nor did the bride's family have priority over that of the groom or vice versa. The couple might be offered gifts in cash or kind by those they visited, but only if the host's economic circumstances warranted such largesse.

In the case of a Tinker marrying a "Flattie" the procedure was practically the same, except that almost invariably the couple eloped. In spite of McCormick's statement to the

contrary (1907: 415), it is my impression that such unions were and still are common. Most informants had at least one "Flattie" grandparent if not more. That this is no recent phenomenon is shown both by the genealogies collected during the research and also from the literature. McRitchie (1894: 2) quotes the minister of Borthwick who said, in 1839, that in Midlothian the Tinkers or Gypsies had intermarried frequently with the local folk. Simson (1865: 9) makes the same comment and finally an anonymous author describing the Tinkers in the North of Scotland says that they often marry country girls who then take to the road (Anon. 1891-2: 128). Elopement was necessary since the kin of the "Flattie" would not condone such a union and often the Tinker's, too, would not approve. Upon the return of the pair they would be accepted into the Tinker group but not by the house-dwellers. Ties with the latter were severed. The majority of such out-group marriages were with persons of the very poor working class, and the pair adopted the Tinker way of life. This last was to be expected since the kin and friends of the "Flattie" who had so demeaned him-, or herself, by marrying a Tinker would consider him or her outside the pale, and he or she would become an outcast.

From what has been said above it is clear that marriages were the concern of the bride and groom alone, and that the interference of others was seldom tolerated. There was no ritual to solemnise most weddings since the act of living publicly together and leaving the group was considered enough to change the status of the two from single to married persons. Informants said that sometimes marriage rites were celebrated in a church, but these would take place only after the couple had been living together for some time, and the reason for undergoing such a marriage was often that money could be collected from the local house-dwellers.

Monogamy appears to have been the rule though we find mention of some polygynous Tinkers in the literature. Simson (1865: 200) mentions that one Jack Johnstone had several wives, as did certain chiefs of certain other bands. McCormick (1907: 84) states that Billy Marshall and his gang had polygynous habits and that Billy had as many as seven wives at one time (1907: 269). In both of these cases the reference was to the past, that is to say the authors were told that polygyny used to be an acceptable form of marriage, but was no longer so at the time of their enquiry. An even earlier report on Tinker

marriage practices is given by Sir George McKenzie (1669:148) who says: "The Tinkers are in effect vile persons, who are seldom if ever lawfully married", (by this he probably means that they were not wed in church or chapel) "there is an absurd custom amongst Tinkers to live promiscuously and use one another's wives as concubines". Andrew Lang (1908: 130) using McKenzie's statement, attempted to argue that this practice which he compared to the institution of Pirauru found among some Australian aborigines, might be a survival of group marriage or merely sexual license. No other reference to this institution is to be found in the literature and the present day Tinkers say that they know nothing about it. A single case of a plural marriage was reported to me, and this of a man with two wives one settled in a large city and the other living in a small village, but spending much of the year on the road with her own kinsmen. Apparently the husband divided his time between them. I met neither the husband nor the wives and hence no detailed investigation of the unions was possible. While the case was reported by a very good informant and confirmed by another, others said that they knew the individuals concerned and denied that the man was married to both. They argued that the second, the town dwelling woman was not a wife, but merely a concubine and that the relationship was a temporary one. In any case it appears that if polygynous marriages were allowed in the past they were infrequent and today they are almost, if not completely, unknown.

Those who have written about the Tinkers in the past have often stressed the fact that for the most part marriages were of long duration. In all the descriptions of the marital ceremonies it is stated that no person should try and break a marriage. While, as mentioned above, it is doubtful that these so-called marriage rites had any real significance the ideal that unions should be permanent arrangements is nonetheless expressed in them. McCallum (Report 1895: 49) while being otherwise highly critical of the Tinkers says that couples remain together for a long time. Other authorities have made the same statement. Our informants argued that in the past divorce was very uncommon and that most unions were for life. Though this was the ideal, some genealogical and other data lead me to believe that it was not always lived up to. But unfortunately the information on this subject is so sparse that it is impossible to come to any definite conclusion on the stability of Tinker marriages in the past.

According to the information collected during my investigation, no more ritual was necessary for a divorce than for a marriage. Simson (1865: 137 and 270-1) says that Tinkers divorce over a sacrificed horse and this has been repeated by other writers. McCormick (1907: 282-3) however doubts that this practice existed. When enquiries were made about this rite, informants roared with laughter, saying that a horse was far too valuable to be killed on such occasions. Rather, I was told, if one or both spouses wished to separate they would merely begin to live apart, this act being enough to signify a divorce. In most cases the reason for taking such action was that one of the spouses had become enamoured of another. He or she would then set up a camp with the latter, the result being not only a divorce, but a new marriage. If the deserted spouse was the husband, he might attempt to take his wife back by force. If her lover was not strong enough himself, or did not have enough supporters to fend off the first husband, he would lose his newly acquired wife to her husband and himself receive a beating. The runaway wife in a case of this kind would be soundly thrashed. However if she were determined to leave her spouse, further attempts would be made. A deserted wife might attack her ex-husband or his newly acquired wife, but it would be unlikely that she could make him return to her. Some cases were recorded of an abandoned spouse instigating her kinsmen to beat the husband but no instances of his being made to return to her were cited by informants.

Marriage To-day

Having discussed Tinker marriages in the past we can now turn our attention to present day marriages with only occasional references to the past.

No clear patterns of courtship were discovered. In some cases young persons indulge in pre-marital intercourse. While some parents disapprove of this, others do not. However girls are warned against being promiscuous, and instances were reported to us of girls being whipped by either their mother or father, usually the former, for being too loose with their favours. In the past, according to some informants, girls were expected to be virgins at the time of their first marriage, but this is apparently no longer the case. Simson's contention (1865: 257 and 261) that girls should be virgins at such a time, and that they were made to pass a test to establish the fact, seems to bear out what I was told. Young girls are not closely watched

by their parents to-day and it is more or less taken for granted that they will have had some sexual experience before marriage.

Marriages often take place at a relatively early age. A boy of twenty and a girl of sixteen or seventeen are said to be old enough to wed. Cases have been recorded of the bridegroom being sixteen and his mate fifteen or less, but such instances are becoming very rare. Permanent celibacy is considered abnormal. Two male informants, one about thirty-five and the other thirty-four, were single. The older of the two said that he would never marry, since he wished to look after his mother. It is doubtful that this is the real reason since his mother is a very capable middle-aged woman and quite able to care for herself; she makes a much larger contribution towards the maintenance of the household than does her son. His friends said that he was too lazy to take care of a wife and family and had never shown any interest in girls. The other is the son of a very jealous mother who completely dominates him. On one occasion when he was slightly intoxicated we discussed his problems. Emboldened by drink, he said that he was anxious to get married and was looking for a potential spouse, even though his mother complained bitterly every time that he was seen with an eligible girl. The two bachelors were quite frequently subjects of conversation among the Tinkers, the majority expressing their belief that they were "crazy" not to get married and found a family.

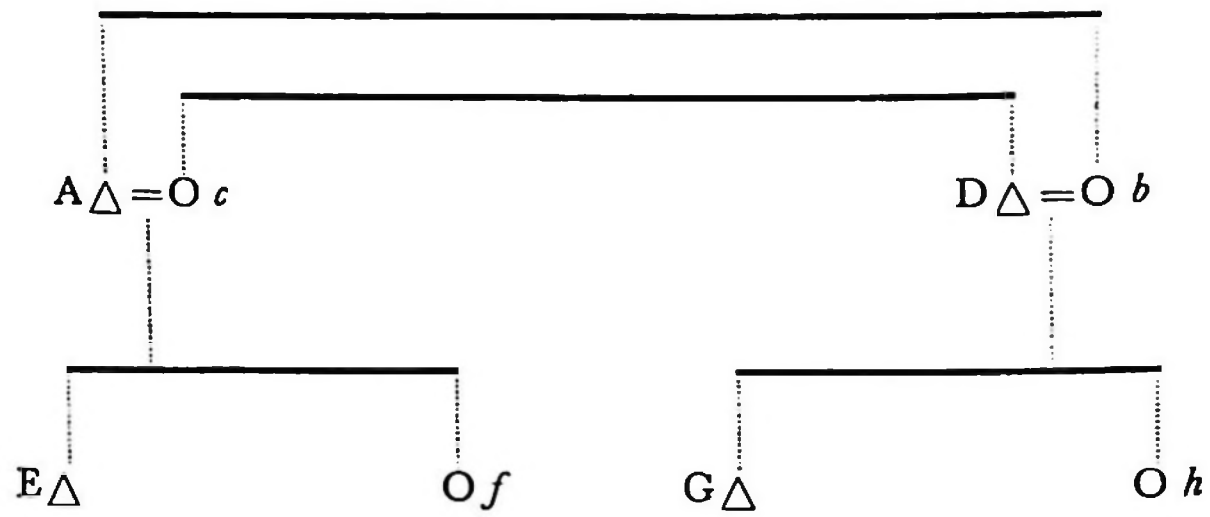
Parents and other kinsfolk continue to-day, as a general rule, not to exert any influence on an individual's choice of a mate. Now as in the past, often the permission of parents is asked, but this is a mere formality since they will hesitate to interfere for fear that the two will elope. During the period of research the son of one of my best informants who was just eighteen announced that he wanted to marry a sixteen year old girl in four weeks' time. The two sets of parents were opposed, arguing that the two were too young to know their own minds. Nevertheless no attempt was made to block the marriage and the ceremony was held in the Registrar's Office three and a half weeks after the young man had announced his plans. The kinsfolk of both were present and a celebration was held afterwards. In another case, the parents refused their consent and the wedding was postponed. The bride's parents were very much opposed inasmuch as they said that her boy-friend was a drunkard and a wastrel, and that they would refuse their permission until their daughter reached the age of twenty-one.

On her twenty-first birthday she reminded them of their promise to agree to her union and they continued trying to have it postponed. The result was that the two eloped. Faced with the "fait accompli" when we last saw the parents they were arranging a legal marriage. This case is unusual since the parents were able to block the wedding for a long period. Partly this was a result of the fact that the solidarity of the elementary family of the bride was very great. Also her parents were very wealthy according to Tinker standards and therefore the groom did not press the girl too much since he hoped to obtain some financial aid from his father-in-law, were he not to appear to be flaunting his wishes too brazenly.

In many cases to-day, as in the past, conjugal life begins without the parents of either of the pair being informed. Two of our friends were married on New Year's eve in Blairgowrie some years ago. Both families lived in the same town. They arranged in secret for the local minister to unite them and when their parents came home from the local cinema they were informed of the event . . . Apparently no animosity was felt by anyone. The two had followed the traditional pattern, but used a relatively new idiom by having their union sanctified by the minister at the outset.

There is a definite increase in the number of legal marriages among the Tinkers. The two World Wars and the introduction of the Welfare State have played major roles in stimulating this trend. During the two wars quite a number of Tinkers were taken into the Armed Forces. It was very much easier for wives to collect family allowances and other government-granted help if they were able to show documents proving a legal marriage to a serviceman. This was often essential since many of those who were in charge of the distribution of such benefits were very much prejudiced against members of the group and went to great lengths to avoid satisfying their just claims. During the Second World War many Tinkers regularised their marital status. One, who had been living with his wife for twenty-four years and had had seven children by her, married in 1940 when he thought that he might be called up for military service. Other informants were also married at this time. To-day many marry legally since they are well aware that obtaining National Assistance, National Insurance, Family Allowance and other like grants will be facilitated. Within the group itself no distinction is made between those who are legally married and those who are not. Legal marriage cannot

be considered a symbol of social status. It might be possible to use it as an indication of the degree of acculturation to the *mores* of the larger society, but I have too little data to affirm this categorically. It would have been difficult in the extreme to determine how many of my informants were legally married and how many were not. Direct enquiries would have been deemed in the worst possible taste, and would have led either to lies or refusals to answer. Nevertheless some data on the subject were obtained by indirect means. Not infrequently I was told, always in the strictest confidence, that "so and so" were not legally married. While it would be possible to tabulate this data, it is not worthwhile doing so since it would give a



In this diagram a triangle is used to represent a male and a circle a female. The horizontal lines link siblings and the symbol = means marriage. A and b are siblings as well as c and D. A and c, and D and b are married couples. E and f are the children of A and c, while G and h are the offspring of D and b.

distorted view. The reason being that individuals often told me that persons with whom they were angry at the time were not "really married", but they would not make the reciprocal comment that a person had been wed according to the law of the land. It would, of course, have been very undiplomatic to check these allegations. The fact that the subject was considered to be worthy of gossip seems to imply that our previous statement that the Tinkers made no distinction between the two types of marriage is false. However, it must be remembered, informants assumed that I shared the normal "Flattie" values, that is believed living together outside of wedlock was a sin and by saying their enemy was not really married, they hoped he would fall in my esteem.

The Tinkers, unlike the majority of the Scottish population, do not deprecate close kin marriages, quite the contrary.

Many instances of unions between first cousins as well as double cousins were recorded and many informants told us that such marriages were better, for reasons to be discussed below, than marriages outside of the kin group. No distinction is made between cross and parallel cousins. The diagram opposite shows what is meant by "double cousins".

In the diagram E and *f* are double cousins of G and *h* since their tie is both through their mother and father. My records show that marriages between such categories of kin were and still are common, though perhaps less so to-day than in the past. The factors which favour this type of union are clear.

The first is a structural one. Tinker local groups are primarily composed of close kinsmen, usually a number of families whose heads are either siblings or the offspring of siblings. Feuds between local groups are common and not infrequently of long standing. Feuds between individuals spread to include the local group of the original antagonists. It is essential that the sense of solidarity of the local unit be strong and that pressures from outside do not weaken it. If E or G were to marry outsiders they would become intimately involved with an outside group, and if the members of the latter group or of one allied to them were to become embroiled in a feud with their own, their allegiance might be divided, and that of their spouses certainly would be. This then would weaken the feeling of solidarity within the group and make them less able to resist outside aggression. Or, in other words, such marriages play an important role in strengthening the local unit.

It is true that from the individual's and the local group's point of view exogamous marriages would tend to increase the number of their ties and add to the number of their alliances, but only on infrequent occasions would the husband's and the wife's groups be in a position to support each other. They would rarely, if ever, travel side by side since, as we have said, those who remain together are siblings or offspring of siblings. Hence in case of urgent need the affinal group would be of no help, being far away. One can say then that first cousin or double cousin marriages while minimising the size and number of linked groups, in fact strengthen the ties within the local and most essential structural groups. These unions are used as a means of reinforcing and perpetuating close ties within them.

Another factor tending to make local groups endogamous

is that most Tinkers, contrary to the common belief, are wont to confine their wanderings to fairly restricted areas, which were previously occupied by their ancestors. Hence most contacts would be with close kin, and adolescents arriving at a marriageable age would be acquainted mainly with those living in the same areas as themselves. Relationships between groupings inhabiting an area are for the most part of two kinds: kinship or feuding. It is unlikely that young people of feuding groups would fall in love, partly because they would have few occasions to meet informally and secondly because they would have been told since childhood of the evilness of the enemy group and therefore would probably not wish to associate with them. The fact that two groups have a hereditary feud does not mean that they fight whenever they meet, but rather that they try and avoid each other and, when possible, attempt to bring harm to the opposing group. Even to-day when the Tinkers are forced to settle on large campsites or live within the same neighbourhood as an enemy group, they are constantly on the alert, lest the latter group should attempt to do them some injury. Fights sometimes break out.

To-day such close kin marriages seem to be somewhat less frequent than in the past. There are a number of reasons for this. First and foremost this change stems from the fact that to-day the need of an individual for supporters is less great than in the past. Whereas in as late a period as just before the Second World War the police had a tendency to ignore fighting between members of the group, to-day this is not so often true. Members of the police force in both Aberdeenshire and Perthshire have told me that until very recently they would not interfere in Tinkers' battles unless these were in a very public place and risked injury to other peoples' lives and property. To-day the police intervene whenever possible, therefore fighting is less common and no such imperative need is felt for having strong and reliable supporters nearby at all times.

Another reason for the change is that in the past the Tinkers rarely, if ever, turned to organs of the government to obtain justice: hence they needed a strong united group to support them. The police and law courts were avoided and it was almost unthinkable for a Tinker to appeal to them in a dispute with a fellow Tinker. There have been exceptions to this rule, one as early as in 1671 when the Shaws charged a group of Faws and Grays with robbery (Anonymous 1927: 70), but

these were few and far between. Even to-day there is a reluctance to turn to the state in order to gain protection and a redress of wrongs, but such occasions occur with greater frequency. One of my informants, for example, charged a fellow Tinker with stealing the battery of his car. The accused was convicted and sent to jail. The plaintiff felt guilty about his action, but in conversation attempted to justify it by saying that the thief was giving a bad name to the group as a whole by his behaviour and hence it was best that he be punished and perhaps reform.

Still a further reason for change in this respect is that resulting from the greater mobility of Tinkers to-day. As mentioned above, in the past the area in which a group would travel was small; to-day with the adoption of motor cars and the difficulty found in making a living, they tend to travel more widely. Therefore the contacts of a younger Tinker are no longer limited to kinsmen and enemy groups. He has a larger group of acquaintances from which to choose a spouse.

Another significant change to be found to-day in the pattern of marriage is the increase in the number of unions with "Flatties". We mentioned earlier that such unions have always taken place, but the incidence seems to be increasing by leaps and bounds. Many informants who had settled in Aberdeen had chosen to wed "Flatties". Those who, while single, have accepted jobs in the fishing and other industries, where most of their co-workers are "Flatties", have often married into this group. Those who refuse to adopt the attitude of the larger society towards stable employment, that is do not take up steady jobs but continue in the same occupations as their fathers, tend to find fellow group members as spouses. In the less anonymous environment of the small towns and villages unions between "Flatties" and Tinkers are very much less common. In one such settlement two Tinkers, one a male and the other a female, had married outside the group, but this was considered unusual and had some serious repercussions which cannot be gone into here.

The attitude of members towards "Flattie"-Tinker marriages varies enormously. The more conservative element believe such unions to be bad, it often being said that it is very difficult for the couple to get along well together because of their differences in background. Others said that it was a good thing to marry out, giving as a reason that if this were done with great frequency the Tinker group would die out and their

descendants would not suffer from the widespread anti-Tinker prejudice.

Marriage is the first step taken by a young couple in founding an elementary family of their own, that is to say their family of procreation. This new social unit is expected to be independent. In the past they were given their own tent and necessary household equipment and, though often living in the camp of one or both sets of parents, they nonetheless formed an independent production and consumption unit. To-day the ideal is for them to obtain an abode of their own, though this is often impossible due to the housing shortage as well as their economic condition. Residence may have to be taken up with either the bride's or groom's parents. It is said to be better for them to move in with the bride's family since a woman has more duties within the house and, in the performance of these, she is thrown into constant contact with the other residents. Less friction is likely to arise if she lives with her own relatives than with her in-laws. However, as many Tinker families live in extremely crowded conditions this is not always possible and not infrequently the newly married pair must move into the groom's family's house. Conflict does not always arise in cases of this sort, but observation leads me to believe that on the whole uxorilocal settlement is more satisfactory than virilocal.

The individual statuses of the newly-weds are considerably changed by marriage. Previously they were subordinates in their family of orientation and under the authority of their parents. For example, if an unmarried man works with his father at any of the numerous jobs that Tinkers perform, the father would take the lion's share of the profits, allowing only a small part to his unmarried son or sons. If after marriage the association continues, the profits are divided more or less equally between the two. This partly results from the father's recognition of his son's new responsibilities, but also of his having reached adult status. Even more marked is the case of a girl working alongside her mother in hawking, begging, collecting rags, etc. While unmarried the girl has no claim to the profits, but when she has a husband, her share is equal to that of her mother. Of course before marriage both son's and daughter's needs will be taken care of, out of the income of the parental elementary family, thus their monetary wants are not so great; once married this is no longer the case.

Before discussing in some detail the allocation of roles

within the Tinker elementary family I shall briefly mention some of the rights and obligations of spouses arising out of their marriage, since these have no small effect on the interaction between husband and wife and hence on the total role system.

A husband has exclusive sexual rights in respect of his wife. A woman is expected to remain faithful to her spouse as long as she is married. A wife may be beaten by her husband if found to have a lover and none will interfere since it is considered to be a just punishment for an infraction of the rules.

A husband has equally the right to expect that his wife will prepare food for him, except when she is menstruating or immediately after childbirth. Many informants said that a woman should not cook for men during her menstrual periods, but not all agreed. In the past this was a universally held belief and a woman who ignored the proscription was punished and in some cases divorced. The length of time after childbirth during which a woman is forbidden to cook for men is not clearly defined. McCormick (1907: 297) was told by informants that a young mother could not cook for several weeks after having given birth to a child. The period given by informants varied from one week to forty days. The reasons for these prohibitions is not clear. Usually informants merely said that at these times women were not "clean" but it was not possible to discover what was believed to be the result if the rules were broken.

Women are expected to look after the house or camp. From limited observation it appears as if it is usually the task of the wife to put up the tent and prepare the bedding.

A wife should equally make a contribution towards the running expenses of the household. "Flatties" often say that Tinker men do not work and that they rely on their women's labour for support. I was not infrequently told by outsiders that one of the marriage stipulations was that the wife must alone undertake to maintain her husband and family (See also Crofton 1910: 289). This is not true. The discussion of the man's obligations towards his wife and family will show the falsity of this allegation. Nonetheless a wife is expected to bring money into the group and to the best of my knowledge only the wife of one of my informants did no remunerative work, and this partly because the husband's income was quite high; he was unusual in not wanting her to indulge in the usual economic activities of the Tinker women. Other men, as rich or richer

than this man, allowed their wives to work when they wished, and all seemed anxious to do so.

Both men and women appear to be extremely fond of children; it is said to be the duty of a wife to bear offspring, the more the better. One of the more common reasons for divorce is childlessness. If a couple are unable to bear children and cannot find one or more to adopt, they will probably separate each finding a new spouse, with the hope that children will result from the new unions.

A wife may expect that her husband will be faithful to her, but she will be unable to marshall much sympathy should he on rare occasions be known to have relations with other women. I have heard of women leaving their husbands on this account, but in most cases this was only after they had been betrayed many a time.

A husband is expected to help his wife with household expenses if she is not able to provide all herself. In the past he provided and maintained the tent, horses and float. To-day the husband is responsible for the purchase and maintenance of a car as well as camping equipment. His income is also spent on recreation and he often pays the rent. While this division of financial responsibility between husband and wife is the usual one, quite frequently if one of the two partners have not been successful in their ventures the other will come to his aid. For example wives who have had a good week will often help their husbands with the rent, if the latter has not done so well, and vice versa.

The husband is also his wife's protector. In view of the strong prejudice held by outsiders it is perhaps surprising that attempts are often made by "Flattie" males to molest Tinker women in camps. A man must be constantly on his guard, especially at night against such foul play. During the time when my wife and I were camping out with members of the group, there were at least three occasions on which strangers came into the camp in the evening and left only when they saw men emerging from the tents.

A full discussion of the division of labour would require an exhaustive description of the various types of occupations that members of the group follow. For reasons of space this is not possible here,[6] so a few general statements relevant to this subject will be made.

In all societies there is a fixed division of labour along the lines of sex and age. This division usually is such that it plays

an important part in reinforcing the unity of the elementary family by making the roles of both males and females complementary. In our own society for example the man is, generally speaking, expected to earn the money needed to maintain his family of procreation, while the woman looks after the home and takes care of the children. If one of the adults of the family is lost to it through death or divorce the group is imperilled. Among Tinkers the division of labour too contributes to strengthening the ties of the elementary family, but to a lesser degree than in many other groups. This is because the wife not only plays the housekeeping role, but also is expected to contribute to the maintenance of the group. The overwhelming majority do outside work for money. A few in Aberdeen have regular jobs, but none in Blairgowrie. Those who do not have steady employment go out hawking, begging, doing temporary farm work, etc. The man too earns money, but unlike the case in our society the family is not entirely dependent upon his earnings. Without a wife and mother the elementary family finds it difficult to survive, but it can do so without too much difficulty without the support of the husband if it does not include a great many children.

While the ideal is for the husband to be the head of the household, his spouse often plays the dominant role. Males are often said to be irresponsible: this is why the wives sometimes assume authority. This often occurs when the family is ambitious and wishes to improve its economic position. Almost all Tinkers in Blairgowrie who have managed to save enough money to invest capital in berry-fields have done so as a result of making the wife treasurer of the family. Males are reported not to be able to save anything, and observation seems to bear this out. They love to entertain their friends and often spend considerable amounts doing so. Whereas women, as a general rule, seem to be more careful about financial matters. Perhaps this is because, as children, girls are given more responsibility than their brothers. Girls from about six onwards are put in charge of their younger siblings. When a bit older they are quite often made responsible for the cooking of the family's meals, this either when their mother is out working, having her menstrual periods, or with a new-born infant. A son might also be allotted these chores but only if there were no girl of the right age to perform them. The standards set for him would not be so high as those for a girl. Girls are expected to help their mothers more in their outside work than sons their

fathers. Daughters are made to feel that they have an important part to play in the maintenance of their own family group at a much earlier age than their brothers: a sense of responsibility is drummed into them which is not so much the case with boys.

Men are often aware of the predominant role played by their wives in the context of the nuclear family. Unwilling to admit it to others, one often hears a group of men, when no women are present, boasting about the authority that they exercise over their wives and families. This as well as other signs of hostility towards members of the opposite sex are often manifested. These are, I believe, symbolic of their feeling of insecurity. Men often say that women are frivolous, spend-thrifts and willing to break up their marriages at the slightest provocation. They will ascribe these characteristics to the female sex but exclude their own spouses. Neither my wife nor I being trained psychologists, I am unable to do more than merely mention these facts.

I now propose to sketch some of the stages through which the elementary family passes from the time of its birth to its eventual extinction. There is a normal developmental cycle through which families pass, the changes being brought about by birth, marriage, divorce and death of its members.

The first important event in the life of the nuclear family after its inception is the birth of a child. Births often take place in isolated camps, without the help of trained midwives or doctors. In Aberdeen a tendency for some of the Tinkers to have their children in the hospital was noted, but this is a very recent development. In the past and still to-day most mothers are delivered by older women. I was told that for her first pregnancy the wife will prefer to go to the camp or house of her mother if this is possible, and in most cases the child will be born among his mother's relatives, which is often the practice for subsequent births as well. No specifically Tinker ritual is performed on this occasion.

Members of the group like to have their children baptised and often go to great lengths to have this ritual carried out. Many ministers and priests refuse to baptise Tinker children while others are not amenable to performing the rite unless one or both parents are members of their church. Since very few of the group belong to a congregation, it is rather difficult for them to have their children baptised. This is not a new phenomenon. It is reported by the author of an anonymous article that the minister of Yetholm told him that the Tinkers

took all their children across the border to be baptised as the Scottish Church would not receive them because of their "heathen" origin (Anonymous 1861: 70). Simson says that the Lochgellie Tinkers had their children baptised but when the clergy refused they did it themselves; he adds that there was much feasting and drinking on this occasion (1865: 183). Bailie Smith (Daranes 1934: 202) is quoted as writing that they believed it unlucky to have an unbaptised child and put themselves to the trouble to attend church to qualify as sponsors. The baptism was followed by great festivities. If the minister refused, he continues, they did it themselves.[7] Informants told me that unless a child was baptised it would not grow well. The ritual is looked upon more as a magical than a religious one. In most cases it is not seen to be one which affiliates the child with a church. Often to-day they must travel quite far to find a priest or minister who is willing, but I have not heard of any member of the group performing the rite for a child. My suggestion that this might have happened in the past was laughed to scorn. To-day rarely do festivities follow the event, though some said that this was the custom in the past.

The coming of a child is important to the marriage since it tends to strengthen the union. Previously the marriage was looked upon at least to a certain degree as a trial. As mentioned above childlessness is a very common cause of separation. As more and more children are born the bond becomes tighter. One reason for this is that the economic needs of the family are greater and contributions from both parents are necessary to maintain it. A woman can in fact support one or two children by herself, but this is almost impossible for her to do when they become more numerous. As the number of children multiply one or more of them will be handed over to either the mother's or the father's parents or both to look after. At first I thought that this was done to free the wife of some of her burdens, but this is not the main reason. Grandparents are normally anxious and eager to rear at least one of their grandsons if it is at all possible. Tinkers will say that these quasi-adoptions take place so that the children will be able to provide assistance for the aged pair, but this is not a fully satisfactory explanation for two reasons. Firstly it is usually boys who are given and they are much less useful than girls, and secondly the child is only slightly over a year when handed over. In fact the answer given me by several grandparents to explain this custom seems to me to be the most probable reason, i.e. that a family without

children is a sadly deprived group and that they alone bring gaiety. Especially when old, one needs to have youngsters around to avoid loneliness and to retain "joie de vivre".

It is not only persons of the grandparental generation who love children. All the Tinkers I met seemed to be extremely fond of them and wanted to have as many as possible. When my wife and I made new acquaintances almost the first question asked of us was "How long have you been married? . . ." Once we had told them, they followed by inquiring: "How many children have you? . . ."; and when we answered "None!" they would almost invariably express what appeared to be heartfelt sympathy and concern.

Large families appear to have been the rule in the past. Many informants have seven, eight or even more siblings. In Aberdeen two women still living were said to have each borne twenty children; in one case eighteen survived, and in the other sixteen lived to become adults. To-day the majority still hope to have large families. I failed to discover any who resorted to contraceptive practices, but if any do they are obviously a small minority. Most informants said that they wished to have at least six. This attitude towards progeniture is shown by the reaction of parents towards a daughter bearing an illegitimate child. Single girls do on occasion bring forth children and neither the mother nor child bears any lasting stigma. Fathers and/or mothers have been known to beat their daughters when they learn that they have become pregnant, but for the most part the news is taken calmly. No attempt is made, nor is it necessary in order to save the reputation of the girl, to arrange a speedy marriage. If the father is known he will not be pressed to marry the young woman nor will he have any claims or obligations towards the child, unless of course he marries its mother. Illegitimate children are usually brought up by their maternal grandparents, though in a number of recorded instances the eventual husband of the mother will insist that they join the elementary family as a full member.

With but one exception all the writers who have dealt with the problem of the Tinkers have noted the extreme affection felt by parents towards their offspring. The Reverend McCallum (Report 1895: 216-17), the exception, said that Tinker children are often ill-used and parents neglect their duty towards them. Others, including the Chief Constable of Perthshire (Report 1895: 210), Simson (1865: 359) disagree. McCormick (1909-10: 233) quotes a Medical Officer of Health: "Tinkers are most

attentive and kind to their children, and an object lesson to many others". Elsewhere McCormick (1907: 347-8) writes that he was much impressed by the kindness of women towards their children. The representative of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children in Perthshire told me that he very much approved of the way the Tinkers treated their children. The trouble that he and his society had with the group arose when the parents were too poor to feed and clothe their offspring properly, but he hastened to add that he had encountered several cases of parents going hungry so that their children would have enough. Problems might arise also if the parents are alcoholics. Public opinion to the contrary, there are few alcoholics among the Tinkers. Some do become inebriated from time to time, but I doubt that if statistics were available they would show that the Tinkers drink more than the average Scotsman. Not a few of them are teetotallers.

The Tinkers believe in bringing up their children in a very permissive way. They are very critical of the "Flatties" who, they say, are harsh and frequently resort to corporal punishment. This sanction is rarely practised by members of the group. On one occasion a mother whipped her son who was about twelve years old with a belt, after he had been misbehaving atrociously for a very long time, and refused categorically to do what he was told. While the onlookers did not interfere, most were critical of the mother's action, even though they agreed that the boy had been acting in a most unpleasant manner. On another occasion I was present when an aggravated father spanked his seven year old son, again after much provocation. These were the only two occasions when such actions were taken in my presence even though many is the time when children acted in a way that would have resulted in swift and serious punishment in the average "Flattie" household. Let me give an example of what I mean. One afternoon my wife and I went out to visit the camp of one of our friends. He was busily at work making a wooden dashboard for a lorry that he had just bought and was hoping to sell that evening. After carefully cutting the wood into the proper shape he entered the cab of the lorry to make some final measurements. A group of children including his own came by, began to play with the dashboard and broke it . . . Our friend rushed out of the lorry and shouted at them . . . He quickly calmed down and set about making another one, a task which occupied him fully for about forty-five minutes.

When nearly completed he laid it down again, walked away a few yards and again it was broken by the children. Again he shouted at them and then began making still a third. This time he was more careful and the children did not have the opportunity to play with, and break it. After the children had spoiled his work for the second time we asked him why he did not punish them and his answer was that they were only "bairns", and did not know any better. We often saw youngsters disobeying their parents and only rarely did the latter do more than merely shout at them. A casual observer might be misled into thinking that the Tinkers are harsh disciplinarians were he to listen to and believe their threats. A camp often echoes to the cry of: "I'll skelp youze", "I'll kill you", or "Wait till I get my hands on youze", but threats are rarely carried out!

Vallée (1955) writes that the concepts of shame and approval are employed to a far greater extent than those of good and evil among the Tinkers, and that their offspring are reproved in terms of how others will react to their behaviour. When a stranger, that is a "Flattie" is on the scene, children are told to be on their best behaviour, and if one misbehaves such statements as "What will the gentleman think of you" will be heard. But if only Tinkers, or others they know very well are present, the shame sanction is not brought into play.

The young are not only allowed much freedom but they are well treated in other respects. If money is short the bairns must be well-fed even though the parents are forced perhaps to go on short rations. Most parents are far more concerned with seeing to it that their offspring are warmly clad than they are about themselves. Some families take what are little less than heroic measures to make sure that their children are kept clean. One family forced to move without sound reason to a damp and marshy area by the police, being evicted from all the drier sites they had found, would change the clothes of their young infants at least three times a day in an effort to keep them tidy.

The Tinkers have a very selective attitude towards the education of children. They deem it an advantage to learn to read and write and to have some notions of basic arithmetic. The rest of what is taught is said to be useless. Only two informants said that they hoped to send their offspring to school beyond the statutory school-leaving age, and many complained that the government had just lengthened the period of compulsory attendance in Scotland by one year. The exceptions were one mother of a thirteen year old girl

who had been doing very well in class; she hoped that her daughter would enter the University and eventually become a school teacher. The father of the girl and the rest of the members of her elementary family seemed to be agreeable to such a proposal but not overly enthusiastic. The second exception was again a mother who hoped that her four and a half year old son would one day become a physician. Her spouse showed no interest in the mother's dreams. All informants who had attended school stayed no longer than was necessary according to the law, and many had been able to avoid its strictures. Typical of the young people's attitude was a girl who in three months was to reach the age at which she could legally leave school: she said that the day before her birthday would be the last on which she would attend, not one day more.

Even before the period of schooling is over Tinker children can make important contributions to the family economy. The law allows the children of nomads the privilege of attending school only half as frequently as those of settled persons. That is to say that they only need to be recorded as having two hundred attendances a year, the morning and afternoon sessions being recorded as one each. The result being that they go only approximately one hundred days a year instead of the normal two hundred. Almost all informants claimed this right for their children, and when not in school these often assisted parents in their economic pursuits.

The elementary family begins to shrink in size as the children reach marriageable age. It has already been said that upon marriage, ideally, a person leaves his family of orientation and sets up his own independent family of procreation. Later on accretions to the group in the form of grandchildren will tend to increase its size until its final disappearance.

The nuclear family may disappear in either of two ways. Divorce leads automatically to its extinction. There are no clear cut rules regulating the allocation of children in such cases. To the best of my knowledge none of my informants had ever resorted to the courts in order to obtain a legal divorce even if legally married, which would of course have resulted in the courts deciding upon the problems of the guardianship of the offspring of the pair. Small infants almost always remain with their mothers, while older children may either be divided up between the two or be allowed to choose for themselves. It is more common for boys to remain with their fathers, and for girls to follow their mothers. The eventual result is that in

most cases such children will be brought up by their grandparents, girls by those of their maternal, and boys by those of their paternal line.

Death of one of the spouses also results in the disappearance of the nuclear family. The widow or widower retains control of the children. If young enough, he or she will remarry after six months' time or more. The six months' period is one of mourning, and should a marriage take place before the time has elapsed criticism would ensue, but no attempt would be made to postpone the union.

The spouse alone has claims on the deceased's property unless a will has been left, but since wills are virtually never made by Tinkers, according to their own customs no other person can put in a claim on the estate of the deceased. A husband alone also inherits his wife's property. Unlike the Gypsies who are reported to burn all, or most of the property of the dead person, this is a very rare occurrence among the Tinkers. Vessey-Fitzgerald (1944: 101) states that the Scots Tinkers do not make extensive sacrifices at funerals, but sometimes burn the clothes of the dead (See also Pringle 1817: 57). Informants have told me that in the past clothes as well as other belongings of the dead person might be destroyed, but that this custom was dying out. If the clothes were in good enough condition they would be sold. No member of the family would wish to keep and wear them. A few years ago a family in Aberdeen burnt the horse-drawn cart of a man who had just died. This was regarded as an acceptable practice by members of the group, but considered foolish by virtually all.

In this paper the aim has been to describe the institution of Tinker marriage as well as the organisation of the elementary family. Due to limitations of space it has not been possible to deal with the structural implications of many of their practices or to attempt a preliminary analysis of the Tinker social structure. A paper dealing with this subject is being prepared.

It appears from this paper that, in spite of the fact that fantastic *mores* are attributed to the Tinkers, their customs are in no way extraordinary. Rather we find that in many respects they seem to differ but little from those of the working class Scots. It would be interesting to compare the institutions and customs of the two groups but this is not possible for two reasons: 1. the study carried out by the author was limited to the Tinker population; 2. little systematic research has been done on the Scottish working class.

NOTES

[1] It is only with much hesitation that I use the term Tinker in this essay since members of the group are extremely sensitive about it and dislike it. Ultimately I decided to adopt it only because its referent is widely known and hence will cause less difficulty for the reader than any other term which might have been chosen. The members of the group should realise that it is written here with none of the usual pejorative connotations.

The data on which this paper is based were gathered during approximately eight months of field-work in Perthshire and Aberdeenshire. The research was financed by the School of Scottish Studies, Edinburgh, and supervised by Dr. K. Little. I wish to express my sincere thanks to both as well as to Hamish Henderson Esq. who facilitated entry into Tinker society; to my wife who did much of the research, and finally to the Tinkers with whom my wife and I spent a most pleasant period. Their hospitality and kindness knew no bounds.

[2] I use the term "corporate group" in the same way as does Radcliffe-Brown when he says: "A group may be spoken of as 'corporate' when it possesses any one of a certain number of characters: if its members, or its adult male members, or a considerable proportion of them come together occasionally to carry out some collective action, for example, the performance of rites; if it has a chief or council who are regarded as acting as the representatives of the group as a whole; if it possesses or controls property which is collective—" (Radcliffe-Brown 1950:41).

[3] "Flatties" is a cant word used to refer to most non-Tinkers.

[4] The best history of the Tinkers is to be found in McRitchie (1894). Simson is far less satisfactory and reliable. McCormick (1907) is a fair source for historical information. Other publications, too numerous to list here, contribute to a greater or lesser degree to our knowledge of the history of this group.

[5] The census of 1895 is included in "The Report etc. . . .", 1895; the 1917 enumeration is "Report etc. . . .", 1918.

[6] A paper on this subject is being prepared for publication.

[7] For a discussion of the validity of lay baptism, see Hooker n.d.:251.

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POPULATION CHANGES IN NORTH-EAST SCOTLAND 1696-1951

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Introduction

North of the Highland Line there are to be found not only mountains and glens, swift rivers and placid lakes, but also extensive lowlands penetrating within the last outposts of the Highlands. Sometimes narrow, sometimes broad, they possess distinctive characteristics occasioned by an admixture of Highland and Lowland landscapes, coupled with a rather different historical development to the lands farther south. Of these Lowlands, the North-East region extending, for the purposes of this study, from the Dee to the Spey is both large and economically important. Fringed on the north and east by a fruitful sea and bounded on the west and south by sparsely populated districts, the area comprises the whole of Aberdeenshire and those parts of Banffshire and Kincardineshire which have an orientation towards the North East corner.

The Highland and Upland Rim gives an assymetric scheme of relief, emphasised by the fact that the two main entrances to the region lie in the extreme south-east and north-east corners, the former guarded by the regional focus, Aberdeen. Because of the regional variation in structure and erosional history, a fundamental pattern of Highlands, Upland basins and Lowlands has emerged; a framework which is made up of such geographical factors as slope, altitude, drainage, climate and soils, which always influence, in greater or lesser degree, the population.

Within this basic framework, however, there is another pattern which is just as important, though in many places not so obvious. This pattern consists of valley and divide, or interfluve, with varying degrees of amplitude of relief according to the regional situation. Other patterns are contained within this sub-framework—floodable plains in the valleys and variations in soils on the valley slopes arranged primarily in linear belts but with, of course, many local variations. This detailed pattern is the work of the rivers, the Dee, Don, Ythan, Ugie, Deveron and Isla which, together with their tributaries,

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Cullen
Fordyce
Boyndie
Banff
Gamrie
Pitsligo
Fraserburgh
Aberdour
Rathven
Deskford
Tyrie
Rathen
Lonmay
Bellie
Ordiquhill
Alvah
King Edward
Crimond
Strichen
St Fergus
Grange
Keith
Mornoch
Forglen
New Deer
Monquhitter
Rothiemay
Turriff
Boharm
Inverkeithny
Botriphnie
Cairnie
Old Deer
Longside
Peterhead
Glass
Huntly
Forgue
Auchterless
Fyvie
Methlick
Mortlach
Drumblade
Cruden
Gartly
Culsalmond
Insch
Rayne
Tarves
Ellon
Slains
Old Meldrum
Logie Buchan
Cabrach
Rhynie
Kennethmont
Daviot
Auchindoir and Kearn
Clatt
Leslie
Premnay
Oyne
Chapel of Garioch
Bourtie
Udny
Foveran
Tullynessle and Forbes
Inverurie
Keithall and Kinkell
Glenbuchat
Keig
Kemnay
Fintray
New Belhelvie
Kildrummy
Monymusk
Machar
Alford
Kintore
Towie
Leochel-Cushnie
Tough
Cluny
Dyce
Old Machar
Kinellar
Newhills
Strathdon
Logie Coldstone
Tarland
Midmar
Skene
Aberdeen
Lumphanan
Echt
Peterculter
Coull
Kincardine O'Neill
Drumoak
Nigg
Aboyne and Glentanar
Banchory Ternan
Maryculter
Glenmuick Tullich and Glengairn
Banchory Devenick
Crathie and Braemar
Birse
Durris
Strachan
NORTH EAST SCOTLAND
PARISHES
15 Miles

FIG. 1

traverse the region before emptying into the sea. Here another linear pattern occurs, the junction of land and sea, the convergence and superimposition of two contrasting environments. Nevertheless, the contrast visible here is simply an over-emphasis of the contrasts which are to be found between each of the landward patterns.

In relation to these environmental features the population of the North East has always been distributed, but at each period the inhabitants have tended to look upon the environment with different ways of life in view. The viewpoint taken at each period has been bound up with the contemporary traditions and stage of technological development. Consequently, in the early period, certain portions of the environment were more attractive than others. Agriculture, once based fundamentally on soil exhausting processes, needed the most fertile soils if it was to succeed at all, and the population was distributed primarily in relation to good soil areas, which are usually found as part of the valley pattern or in basin situations. At the same time knowledge of river and water control was scanty, so little permanent use could be made of the "haughlands" or flood plains. The fundamental geographical factors of slope and altitude were also important and led to the greatest development of the population on the lowlands, where there was the added attraction of a coastal strip bordering a sea well stocked with fish, a sea which also permitted easy, if somewhat dangerous, communication in contrast to the difficulties of movement inland.

With progress in agriculture, in industrial and fishing techniques, there has been a progressive redistribution of the population, which utilised environmental features formerly neglected or deserted. Thus more components of the fundamental geographical pattern came into use. There was, for instance, a movement to use the patterns higher up and lower down the valley sides, leading to the colonisation of the wastelands on the interfluves, and a more harmonious adaptation to the "bottomlands", permitted by increasing knowledge of drainage and flood protection. Nevertheless, limits were set to this outward spread of the population by slopes which were too steep to plough; by ground which was too high to permit the successful ripening of crops or too wet to cultivate even with the new drainage techniques; and more recently by distance from shopping centres, higher education and entertainment facilities; by remoteness from happenings in the region in

general or by the low standard of living which could be obtained in the marginal lands. This indicates that although some of the geographical factors have only a relative value—factors such as soil acidity, wetness and dryness, which can be changed with new techniques—other factors such as slope, altitude, climate and position have a permanent value and determine to a very great extent the population distribution. Within the North East region, it is on the Lowlands that the geographical factors have had primarily relative values. In the Highlands and Uplands the permanent geographical factors have been most important and influenced most considerably the demographic change.

This demographic change taking place in relation to the physical environment has been caused by a great many factors. Some of these were physical factors, such as the climatic vagaries of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries which led to famine, deaths and migrations. Other changes were the result of advances in technology and communications, as when water power became extensively used for manufacture by localised rather than cottage industries, or when advances in the knowledge of working stone permitted the exploitation of the granite resources of the North East, at first near the sea and later, with improved transport and communications, farther inland. New methods of travel led to the wider dissemination of the products needed for agricultural improvement, permitted the development of cattle rearing which has given the region a reputation and farming prosperity, and also brought a realisation of different standards of living to people living on marginal and ultra-marginal land. Each of these changes has led to redistribution, growth and decay of the population.

While these changes were, in many cases, "impersonal", other changes also occurred which were the work of the lairds and landowners which had profound effects on population movements in the earlier periods. The improving landlords and village erectors of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were just as much factors in population change as births and deaths and since many of these landowners had strong political connections, as at the time of the Jacobite Rebellions, changes in politics, in the ebb and flow of the affairs of Scotland in particular, and the British Isles and the world in general, have helped to cause changes in North-East Scotland and the distribution of its folk.

No investigation of this kind can be completely

comprehensive. Selection of fact and data is essential if the main issues are not to be obscured. Similarly, no one cause may be held responsible for population change and, though this work concentrates on cause and effect within the framework of geographical discipline, the complete picture can only be acquired through study in all the social sciences.

Source Material

The absence of reliable population data makes it impossible to begin a connected survey of change before the end of the seventeenth century, when the Poll Tax Returns for 1696 afford a datum point. An earlier Poll Tax had been unsuccessfully imposed in 1693, and the Scots Parliament imposed a new Tax in 1695 to augment existing sources of revenue. The Returns, which apart from Aberdeenshire and Renfrewshire are available for only a few parishes of Scotland, give a detailed account of the name, status, place of residence and occupation of every person who was above the age of sixteen and not a burden on the parish. The absence of these Returns for Banffshire and Kincardineshire means that there are no figures available for parts of these counties included within the region until 1755, when Webster's population estimates may be used. From these beginnings the changes in the population of the North East will be examined at intervals of roughly fifty years. It will be seen that certain districts tended to show the same features of population change, and these areas will be examined to see whether "population" regions may be discovered, and the physical, economic and other factors which may have helped in their unity.

The first population figures which are sufficiently detailed and complete to permit their use as a starting point for a population survey are those contained within the 1696 Poll Tax Returns. Since the population enumerated in the Poll Book only includes persons above the age of sixteen not dependent on charity, the figures have to be adjusted to obtain an estimate of the total population. The method of obtaining this estimate is linked with that employed by Webster in his census of 1743-1755. Since the clergy engaged in the Webster census only counted examinable persons over the age of six—the age varied between six and nine in some parishes—Webster added two-ninths part of the examinable persons to represent the number of children.[1] The Poll Tax Returns, however, only include the adult population above the

age of sixteen, so the factor was increased to one third to account for the increased number of children and paupers. The figures are also probably low since the Returns were made in a period of great famines at the end of the seventeenth century when there was undoubtedly a high mortality rate of old and young. The age groups in between would also have been adversely affected by the food shortages. No claim can therefore be made for great accuracy in the population figures for either 1696 or 1755.

After Webster's census, population statistics are generally scarce. Some returns were, however, collected by the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge between 1755 and 1791, but these are not complete for the whole region. Similarly some of the Ministers in the Old Statistical Account (O.S.A.) include figures for 1775, and for the parish of Kinellar in Aberdeenshire the number of "souls" in the parish is given for each year from 1758 to 1791, except for the years 1788-9 when the minister was indisposed and unable to go through the parish.

At the end of the eighteenth century population statistics become more frequent. The Old Statistical Account, for instance, gives the population of the parishes together with suggestions as to the factors of population change between 1755 and the closing years of the century. Shortly afterwards, in 1801, largely as a result of the writings of Malthus in 1798, the first official census was taken which confirmed the findings of earlier returns. The first detailed census was not taken, however, till 1841 and it is not until 1851 that it is possible to give details of population movements. The earlier statistics are really more accurate than the above would indicate since the bulk of the population was rural which made for a more accurate enumeration by the ministers in Webster's census and the O.S.A., and by the schoolmasters who sent the count for the first official decennial census to London in 1801.

The use of these figures as a base for the investigation of population change is restricted in places by changes in the boundaries of the areas to which they refer. In some cases, as when two parishes were united, e.g. the parishes of Dumbennan and Kinnoir united into the modern parish of Huntly in 1727, there is no break in the continuity, but some parishes were broken up into two parishes without any indication in the earlier returns of the population of each. The most extensive boundary changes occurred in 1890 when an attempt was made

to reconcile the administrative arrangements of parishes and counties by incorporating detached portions into the neighbouring unit. The parish of Tarland in the Howe of Cromar had, for example, a detached portion in the Highland parish of Strathdon. After the boundary changes in 1890, the detached portion in Strathdon became a part of that parish, while to the section of Tarland parish in Cromar was added a part of Migvie parish, which itself had been in two parts. These boundary changes account for the sharp breaks in the population graphs and also for the choice of 1891 as one of the years for study rather than 1901. The break is especially evident in the parishes of Banchory-Devenick and Nigg which contained a portion of the suburban population of Aberdeen and Torry respectively.

The cartograms indicate the demographic changes in the North East; they have been constructed using certain key years on which to base the calculations. These form periods which correspond as closely as possible to the fundamental changes which have occurred in the historical development of the region.

The Pattern of Population Change

The period from 1696 to 1755 (Fig. 2)

The first half of the eighteenth century was marked by a widespread increase in the population of Aberdeenshire, and it is to be expected that the included parts of Banffshire and Kincardineshire would have shown a similar increase had data been available. This increase was in part a recovery from the effects of the high mortality rate of the Seven Ill Years from 1693 to 1700 and appears to have taken place in spite of the recurrent famines, as in 1740-41, which occurred during the eighteenth century. Since agricultural improvements were practically non-existent at this time in the North East, except in the Monymusk Basin and on one or two farms of the improving landlords, the causes of the increase cannot be ascribed to changes in agriculture. Home industries, especially the woollen industry, were important and may have attracted population and given an economic basis for natural population increase, while the fact that a number of new fishing villages were erected at this time seems to indicate that the fishing was attractive, though not so important as it was to be later with the advent of the herring fishing.

Although there was an increase in population in the whole

of Aberdeenshire, except in three parishes along the Highland border and the parish of Logie Buchan astride the Ythan estuary, the increase was far from uniform (see Fig. 2, which is a cartogram showing percentage increase or decrease in population on a parish basis). The greatest increase occurred in the industrial suburbs of Aberdeen along the lower Don where, from early in the century, textiles were being manufactured using the abundant water power available from the rejuvenated river. The parish of Newhills increased in population from 310 to 959, representing a percentage change of over

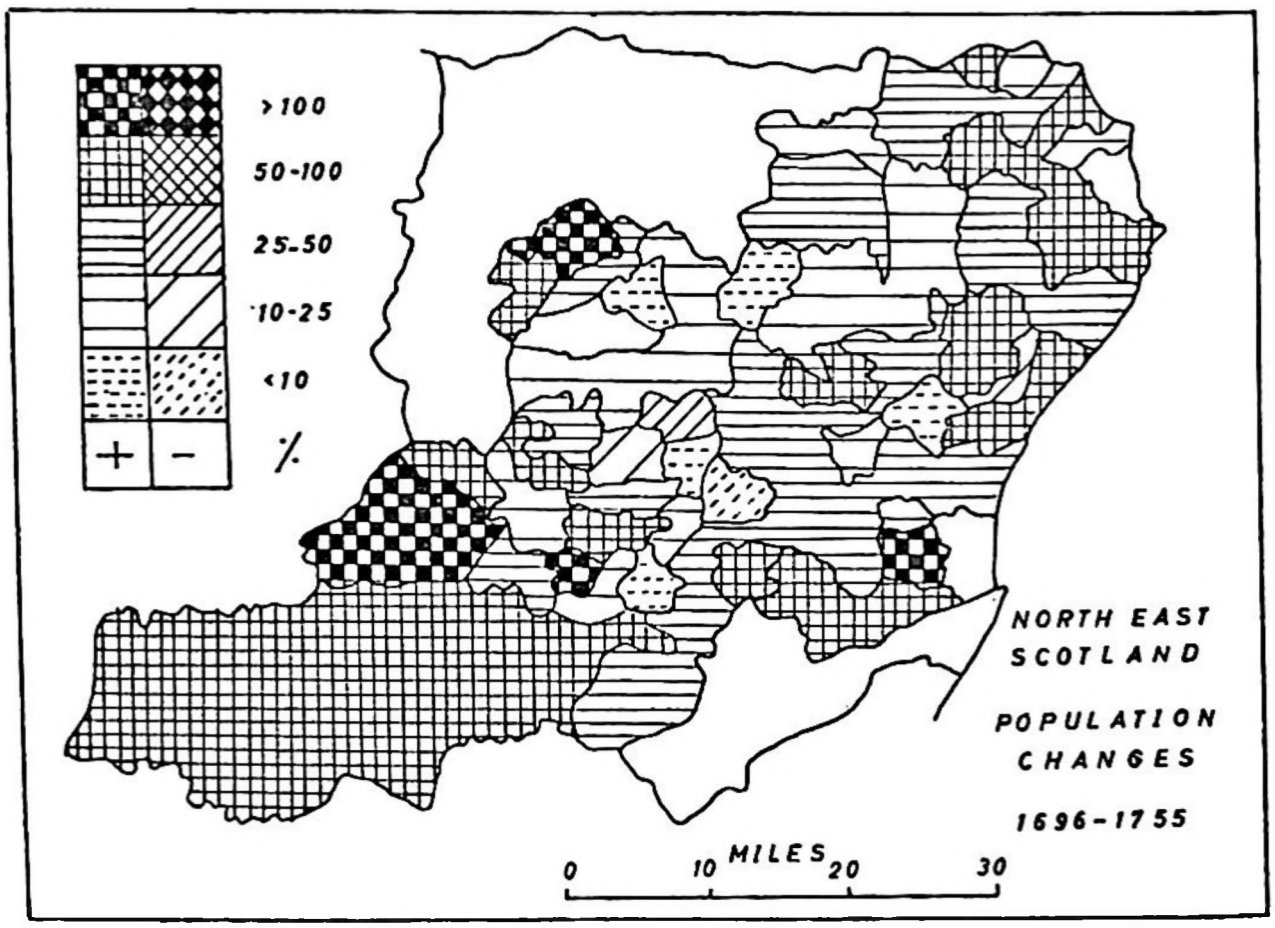


FIG. 2

200. Elsewhere the areas with an increase from 50 per cent to 100 per cent had usually strath or coastal situations. The parish of Ellon which lies astride the lower Ythan showed an increase of nearly 58 per cent, while the population of Strichen, in the strath of the North Ugie, increased by nearly 95 per cent. Similarly, the parishes of lower Deeside had increases ranging from 58 to 66 per cent. Coastal parishes tended to show a high increase also. The parishes of Foveran, with the then flourishing seaport of Newburgh, Slains with the fishing and smuggling village of Collieston, and Pitsligo which contains the fishing town of Rosehearty all increased by over 50 per cent. The fishing, at this time mainly white fishing, seems to have been

prosperous since records indicate the foundation of a number of fishing villages along the Moray Firth Coast. Salmon fishing must also have helped to attract population to the coastal and river parishes.

The remainder of the Lowlands was characterised by two broad belts of population increase. The more easterly belt, extending from Aberdour, west of Fraserburgh, to Kincardine O'Neil on Deeside showed increases varying from 25 to 50 per cent, while to the west lay another belt with increases of less than 25 per cent. This belt was interrupted by the higher increase of the famine districts of Monquhitter and Turiff. Only two Lowland parishes showed a decrease. The parish of Logie Buchan declined by over 15 per cent, while in the shadow of Bennachie the parish of Monymusk showed a population decline of 5 per cent. This decline may be merely the result of imperfection of data or it may possibly have resulted from the early improvements in the district with some rearrangement of population.

The changes in the Highland border zone, where no two parishes altered by the same amount, varied considerably. The smallest increase was on the eastern flank of the Alford Basin, where the parish of Keig increased by only 7 per cent. It was in the Alford Basin, however, that there was an actual decline, though here the changes may be more apparent than real as a result of changes in parish boundaries. Nevertheless two parishes contiguous to the parish of Tullynessle but over the Correen Hills-Bennachie watershed decreased by about 30 per cent in the same period. As might be expected the greatest increase was in the southern part of the Alford Basin with the largest extent of fertile, easily cultivated ground. The northern part of the Alford area increased by about 32 per cent, while Leochel Cushnie showed a high increase with over 75 per cent. This area is adjacent to the high increase parish of Tarland in the Howe of Cromar, where the combination of fertile clay loam soils of the old lake flat, easily cultivated because of the lack of stones, the southern aspect, and the fact that it was a centre of the woollen stocking industry led to an increase of over 100 per cent. Other very high increase areas in the western parts of Aberdeenshire, such as Cairnie parish, one of the very few with abundant supplies of lime, may have had their main increase in the second quarter of the eighteenth century, but even among the Highland straths and glens there was high increase also.

The Highland area, in fact, generally showed a high increase during the first half of the eighteenth century. Strathdon had a population increase of over 100 per cent. Upper Deeside increased by 67 per cent, while the glens of the Gairn and the Muick had an increase of about 55 per cent. The increase of population in the Highlands was generally greater during this period than at any period since. The causes of population increase in the Aberdeenshire Highlands at this time are not definitely known. It is suggested that cattle rearing, the summer grazing of cattle and sheep of which traces may be found in the form of sheiling foundations on the flat surfaces above the river Quoich and the hosiery industry, together with certain nefarious pursuits such as distilling and cattle thieving, may have assisted in the increase of population. The military posts established at Braemar and Corgarff may have accounted for a tributary population to the stations. In the Birse district on the south side of the Dee the population increased partly through colonisation of the Forest of Glen Birse which was settled from 1724. In the case of the parishes of Crathie and Braemar, which include the cul-de-sac of Upper Deeside, the population in 1755 was greater than before or since (Fig. 2), a distinction shared with the parish of Cairnie in the extreme north-west of the county.

The period 1696 to 1755 was thus, for the major part of the North East, a time of increasing population in an era when agricultural improvements, and hence the ability of the land to support a dense population, were in their infancy. In some measure the changes must be regarded as a high natural increase—a recovery from the famine conditions and the generally unsettled state of the country in the seventeenth century. The changes which followed in the second half of the eighteenth century were caused primarily by economic changes under the stimulus of food shortages. They have been more fully recorded and a more detailed view of cause and result in relation to the physical environment may be obtained.

The period 1755-1801 (*Fig.* 3)

Compared with the frequent high increase shown in the early part of the eighteenth century, the second half of the century is distinguished primarily by the fact that the majority of parishes show a decline in population, a decline which is common over the whole region except under certain environmental conditions. The change pattern now becomes far

more irregular; one parish may differ very considerably from its neighbours, which would seem to indicate that purely local conditions were of great importance amongst which must be mentioned the human factor. Landowners approached the problem of agricultural improvement in different ways with consequent demographic repercussions.

There are indications that for some parishes there was not a steady decline from 1755 to 1801. In fact the population increase which was very evident in the first half of the century seems to have continued as late as 1770 and 1775. According to the ministers in the O.S.A., the turning point was probably the years of famine in 1782-3 after which a decline took place. The figures given by the S.P.C.K. tend to support this. Strathdon had a population of 2000 in 1770, an increase of 250 over Webster's figure, but the number declined to 1524 at the time of the O.S.A. The parish of Glass was said to have had a much larger population in the years before 1782, while the accompanying figures for the parish of Skene show a similar change; 1755 1,251 persons; 1777 1,306; 1787 1,256; 1791 1,233; and 1801 1,140. On the population change map this is indicated by a slight decline over the period which masks the population fluctuation.

The pattern of population change on the Lowlands shows a response to economic changes. In the north-east of Buchan a compact group of parishes all continued the increase which they had shown in the first half of the century. The majority increased by between 10 per cent and 25 per cent but the famine parish of Monquhitter showed an increase of 47 per cent. The parishes making up this group have many similarities; they contained a high proportion of wasteland on the higher parts away from the rivers, land which was rapidly coming under the attack of the colonising crofter and the improving farmer; they contained moss in plenty for use as fuel and lime from the calcareous schists was available on the spot, or sea shell sand from close by was available for agricultural improvements. This group of parishes corresponds closely with the parishes which, in the O.S.A., were recorded as being ahead in agricultural improvements. Meanwhile the formation of new villages in the Ugie Basin and on the higher land of Buchan had attracted a number of immigrants who were to participate in the village linen industries. In Monquhitter, for instance, the population was said to have increased partly by the practice of dividing large farms to accommodate small tenants, partly

by reclamation of the wasteland, but principally by the establishment of the village of Cuminestown by Cumine of Auchry in 1763 and Garmond shortly afterwards. Cuminestown was also an important centre of the Aberdeenshire linen industry, one of the reasons for its foundation being to participate in this thriving manufacture. As another example, the increase in the population of the parish of Strichen is ascribed to the establishment of Mormond Village in 1764. A number of coastal parishes also showed an increase, especially those which contained fishing villages. The coastal tract from the R. Deveron to Troup Head had a considerable population increase, the increase being put down to the thriving state of the fishing villages as well as to the break up of farms into smaller units and the attack on the wasteland by the crofters. The successful prosecution of the fishing also led to a large increase in the parish populations of Peterhead and Fraserburgh.

South of the north Buchan colonisation village and fishing area was a group of parishes which all decreased by amounts up to 37 per cent. The causes of the decline were varied. In some parishes such as Bourtie and Keithall, the reasons given included the amalgamation of farms and the prohibition of sub-letting, while in others scarcity of peat for fuel was given as the principal reason for the decline. This was the case in the two parishes above and also on the Insch and Garioch Lowland. These two factors in the decline, it will be noted, were the opposite of those operating to the north. The attraction of Aberdeen was also stronger in these southern parishes.

In lower Deeside, areas of increased population were confined to the north side of the river and were mainly in the Peterculter district where a paper mill had been established in the middle of the eighteenth century. Apart from Banchory Devenick where colonisation was taking place on the mossy wastes of the Kincardineshire Plateau, the parishes on the south side of the river showed a general decline with lack of fuel and the attraction of the manufacturing and commercial centre of Aberdeen causing the emigration. Even the southern shores of the Dee estuary showed a decline. Two of the causes given were the result of the close association of the inhabitants with the sea. There had been a considerable drain of men to the fleet in the various wars of the eighteenth century and an increasing turn to a seafaring life by many of the small farmers. At the same time the cutting of peats for the fires of Aberdeen had to be stopped owing to the exhaustion of the peat mosses.

Even the feuing of new ground was not sufficient to offset the decline nor the beginnings of the granite industry on the south bank of the Dee near Torry.

Farther north along the coast in Belhelvie parish, the causes of the decline were peculiar to the parish. A great part had been taken over by the York Building Company after the forfeiture of the lands by the Earl of Panmure for his part in the rising of 1715. On this land particularly exhausting soil management was practised. Short leases encouraged the tenants to take as many crops of oats from the soil as possible and this together with the practice of paring and burning the peaty ground quickly exhausted the soil. It was not until 1782 that an improvement took place when the estate changed hands.

Conditions in the Banffshire strath and coastal districts were varied. The coastal parishes all showed an increase as did the parish of Keith. The causes of the increase along the coastal slope were the result of the rise in the fishing towns, but in the case of Keith parish the increase was caused mainly by the influx of crofters to the wasteland since the flax spinning and dressing industry of the villages was on the decline. It was in "a very unprosperous condition, so much so that many flax dressers have been dismissed by the employers and with their families have left the place".[2] The other parishes, however, showed a decline for which the amalgamation of farms and the lack of fuel were held responsible. The parish of Cairnie which had shown such a great increase in the first half of the century also declined slightly, notwithstanding the prosperous nature of the lime trade which was centred in the parish. The lowland of Strathbogie, however, showed an increase, especially in the northern portion. This was partly as a result of the growth of Huntly which commands the northern end of the corridor routeway. The population of Huntly town and parish was said to have "increased within these fifty years in so much that, where all round it for some distance was barren heath, swamp, or marsh, there is now scarcely one uncultivated spot to be seen".[3] To the south, however, the population on the dry, sandy, outwash soils of the Kildrummy district had decreased, a feature shared by most of the Highland and Highland border areas.

Within the Highland zone in fact only one parish showed a significant increase in population. The causes of the increase in the glens and strath of the parish of Birse were the lime

works and illicit distillation. The population increased "through the facilities by which families were maintained among the hills by its profits".[4] As the distillation was controlled so the population later declined. This district was, however, exceptional. The lime trade and distillation were not so important in the parishes of the Alford Basin and its neighbourhood. The southern part of the Vale of Alford showed a population decrease of about 26 per cent, while the parishes on the eastern rim decreased by a lesser amount. The cause of the decrease in the parish of Keig was ascribed to the increase in the trade and manufactures of Aberdeen which proved an inducement to the population affected by crop failures in 1782-83. This reason was also put forward for the decline in Leochel Cushnie parish.

The effects of the scarcity occasioned by the poor harvests of the 1780's appear, as one might expect, to have been most important in the poorer and harsher Highland valleys and glens. The high basin of the Cabrach decreased in population by between 25 and 50 per cent and this was attributed to the poor harvests. It was said, for instance, that "the number of inhabitants had decreased by about 200 since 1782 and 1783; at which period the householders or crofters were driven in quest of subsistence to other countries and towns where manufactures were carried on".[5] Similar reasons are given for the depopulation of the parish of Mortlach to the north-west. Meanwhile Upper Deeside and Strathdon showed either decrease or insignificant increase.

Thus many areas of the North East showed considerable depopulation by the end of this period. In some cases it was the result of changes in agricultural management as when small farms were amalgamated into larger units, or when subtenants were forbidden because of scarcity of fuel in the inland districts and the rapid exhaustion of the peat mosses. The amalgamation had been stimulated partly by the effect of years of scarcity, which led to considerable emigration from the higher western districts. The attractions of the more highly paid manufacturing employment available in Aberdeen also drew off considerable numbers from the inland districts, especially from Deeside and from the country to the west and north-west of Inverurie. To offset this decrease there was an increase in other parts of the region, especially in the north of Buchan, in the fishing villages and the manufacturing centres, especially Aberdeen. The population of the County of Aberdeen,

in fact, increased from 116,836 in 1755 to 122,921 in 1792 at the time of the O.S.A. This general increase was the result of many causes including one mentioned by Sinclair in his Analysis. He notes that an important factor was the decreasing mortality resulting from the increasing use of vaccination against the smallpox which had been noted by many of the parish ministers. In the parish of Birse, for instance, it was said that "innoculation is practised a little with success; sensible people do not seem averse to it",[6] but there was

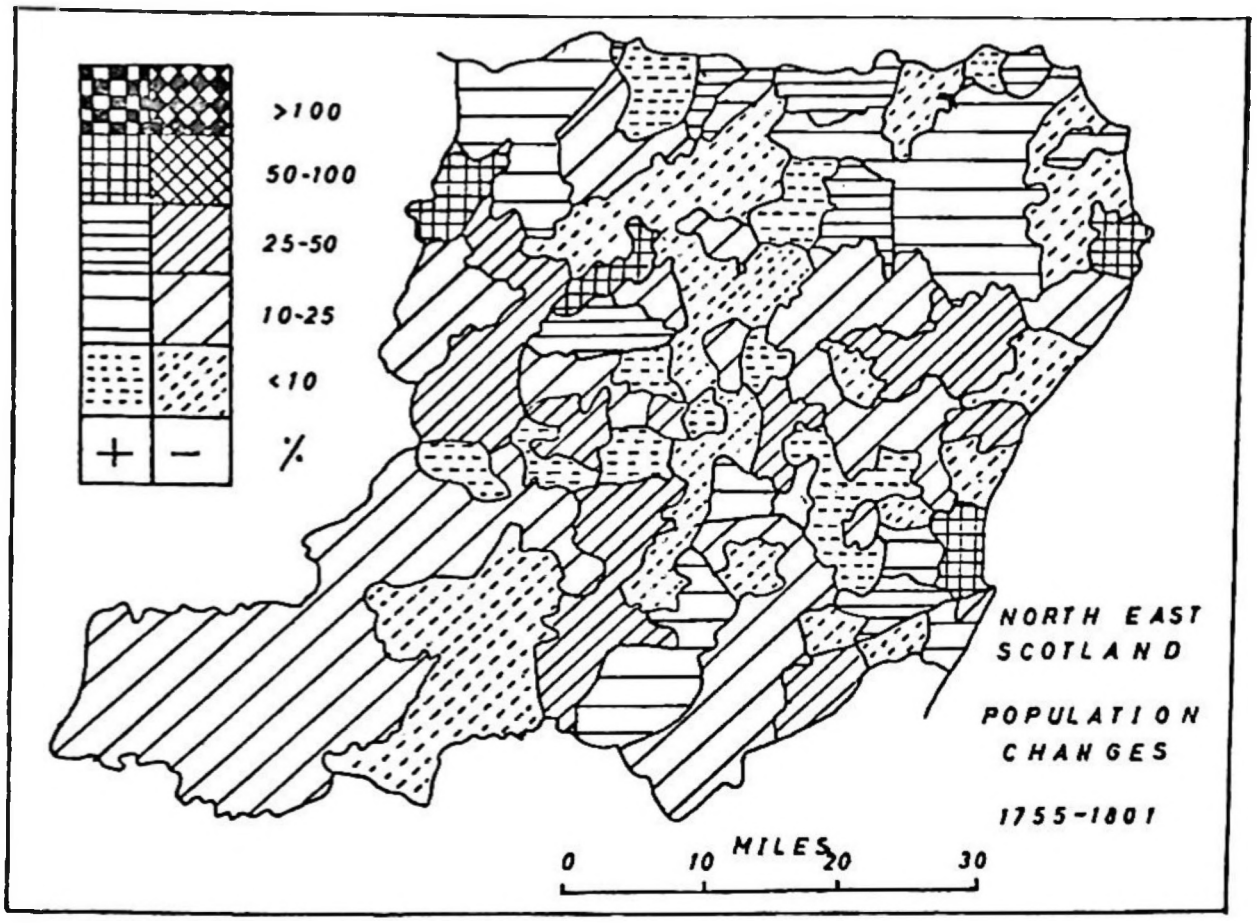


FIG. 3

considerable variation in acceptance of the new technique. In the eastern part of the Alford Basin, people were strongly against innoculation for the smallpox.

The agricultural improvements were, therefore, not the cause of widespread depopulation. A comparison of a map showing the most improved parishes at the time of the O.S.A. and the population change cartogram for this period indicates that the increase took place in parishes which were among the most improved in the region. Nevertheless, where there was little waste ground for new cultivation, as a result perhaps of long settlement in good soil districts, there appears to have been a decrease or only a slight increase. The changes in this period are complex; individual parishes differed

considerably from their neighbours in the same geographical environment indicating that non-geographical factors influence population change.

The period 1801-1851 (*Fig.* 4)

The first half of the nineteenth century shows many profound changes in the state of the population of the North East compared with the eighteenth century. Whereas many districts had shown a significant decline in the last fifty years, the present period was one of almost universal increase. Many of the parishes showed an increase of between 50 and 100 per cent, though it will be shown that some of the rural parishes which had shown great increase earlier were now increasing at a lower rate. In this period new factors came into operation. Apart from the agricultural changes there was also a great development in communications with the turnpike roads, the coaches, the Aberdeen-Inverurie canal and the introduction of the steamship, which gave a great impetus to the cattle trade with the south.

The pattern of change on the Buchan Lowland was almost entirely one of increase though it varied in amount. Apart from the parishes of Peterhead and Fraserburgh, where the great increase was the result of the rise in importance of the herring fishing and other local causes, and apart from the parish of Inverurie where the town began to grow rapidly after the opening of the canal to Port Elphinstone in 1805, the other area of high increase was that of Tyrie parish. Here the population had increased principally as a result of the erection of the village of New Pitsligo at the end of the eighteenth century. A high increase was similarly shown in the parish of Longside where a village had been erected in 1801. After a mere thirty years, however, the population of this village became almost stationary with the closing down of the woollen mill in 1828. Longside forms one of the group of parishes which had shown a decline in the second part of the eighteenth century. Along with the others in the group, it now showed a greater increase compared with those which had increased in population earlier. The cause of the increase was very much the same in both cases, though stimulated by the communication improvements effected by the turnpike roads which often required a temporary influx of labour to build them. The reasons for increase given in the New Statistical Account (N.S.A.) were often concerned with the reclamation of the wasteland and settlement by crofters.

The increase in the population of Fyvie, for instance, a parish which contained a great deal of wasteland in the watershed areas, was said to be the result of reclamation and the increase in new crofting settlements. The increase in the lower Ythan district was also ascribed to crofting development, though the village of Ellon was also enlarged in the same period.

These factors were common to a great deal of Buchan Lowland though, along the coast, the lucrative state of the herring fishing led to an increase in population in some parishes and a

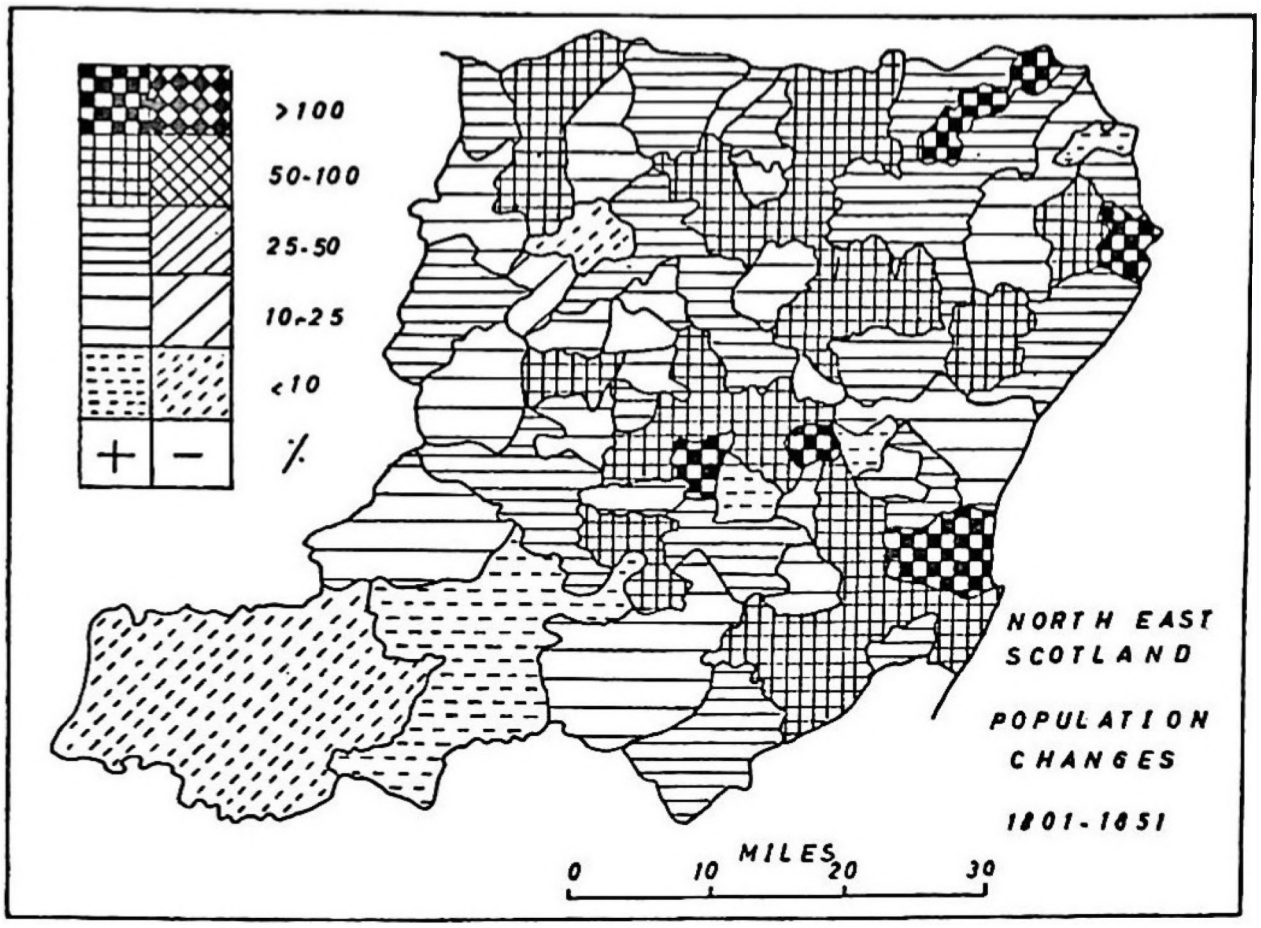


FIG. 4

decline in others. Some of the fisherfolk from Rattray moved south along the coast to Peterhead, while in the case of Pitsligo, it was said that "the increase in population may be ascribed in great measure to the more extensive prosecution of the herring fishing, which, until thirty years ago, had never been attempted on this coast".[7] Similar features may be noted along the coast of Banffshire, but there was also an increase in the inland districts of the coastal plateau. Here the cause of increase was no longer the importance of the linen industry which had steadily declined after the end of the eighteenth century. The emphasis was now on the improvement and colonisation of the waste ground, the attack on the "drearier districts". This led to population increase as in the parish of Boharm where

there was a development of cottages along the new lines of road and on the waste ground. The Hill of Aultmore, north of Keith, continued to be attacked by the crofters' plough, especially alongside the new turnpike road from Cullen to the Isla valley by way of the valley of the Burn of Deskford.

Population increased also in the valley of Strathbogie, especially on the low watershed between the Don and Deveron drainage systems, where the village of Lumsden was founded. The increase continued along the Insch and Garioch Lowland, where the group of parishes which had earlier shown such fluctuation and divergence now showed an increase ranging between 50 and 100 per cent. The causes of the substantial increase in this long settled district were linked, among other things, with the development of the Aberdeen-Inverurie canal which now allowed the importation of lime and other materials necessary for improvement and the export of produce. For various reasons the parishes of Deeside and Donside showed a similar high increase. Granite working led to an influx of people though, as in the case of Dyce, fluctuations in the demand for granite were often reflected in the population figures. In Newhills and Aberdeen the increase was the result of expanding manufactures, commercial activities and fishing, while in the suburban parish of Peterculter the growth of population was largely the result of the increasing prosperity of the paper mill and the reclamation of the higher valley slopes away from the River Dee. At this time, also, there was an increasing number of summer residents attracted by the river scenery, the southern exposure and the close proximity to Aberdeen.

There was also a well marked increase in the population of the basins of the Western Uplands, where agriculture was extended as improvements were commenced at the turn of the century. This was particularly marked in the north-east of the Alford Basin where crofts were established on the upper slopes of the hills and patches of reclaimed land began to extend fingerlike into the moorland. The Highland zone, however, was beginning to show a decrease at the time of the N.S.A. though in 1851 Strathdon still had a greater population than at the beginning of the century. The decrease in the glens of Deeside away from centres such as Ballater was the result to a great extent of the suppression of the illicit distillation which had helped to support numbers of Highland folk. This was also true of Strathdon and Birse where it led to a considerable

amount of emigration. Harvest failures also led to an exodus. The decline in the population of Upper Deeside continued, a decline which had been evident since 1755. This was, no doubt, partly the result of the remoteness of the district, together with a certain amount of eviction of tenants to make way for sheep.

Extension of agriculture seems to have been the main cause of population increase in the rural districts of North East Scotland during the first half of the nineteenth century. New techniques, new crops, the encouragement of crofters, the high prices obtainable for agricultural produce and fewer harvest failures in the Lowlands seem to have stimulated the growth of the population, while the increase in the herring fishing caused a rapid growth of the fisher populations around the coast. Nevertheless by the end of this period a great many areas had passed the population peak and were beginning to decline. In some parishes a number of leases ran out in 1841; numerous small farms were incorporated into larger units and, since by this time most of the available land had been reclaimed, depopulation of even fertile lowland areas began to occur.

The Period 1851-1891 (*Fig.* 5)

The second half of the nineteenth century shows many changes compared with the period just discussed. In place of generally high increase, the theme is now one of moderate increase, relative stagnation or decline. New factors had come into operation: the advent of the railway to the North East, the evergrowing steamship trade and, with this improvement in communications, the development of the granite industry in inland districts. The fishing industry was prosperous but agriculture was to suffer a setback as prices fell and the "Dismal Eighties" followed a long period of agricultural expansion.

In the Lowlands, apart from the fishing villages, the maximum increase did not exceed 25 per cent except under certain circumstances. The agricultural areas mainly increased by less than this amount and in some districts, there was a decline by up to 25 per cent. This decline had begun in some parts of the Lowlands as early as 1841 when the cycle of changes in farm size had turned full circle and amalgamation became common, as it had been in the latter part of the eighteenth century. In the Huntly area, for instance, it was said that "at the last letting in 1841, the system was adopted of throwing many of the smaller farms into one",[2] while in an

adjacent parish, Cairnie, the crofter system was much discouraged and the large farm system advocated. The effect was to reduce the number of people living in the area. Thus the parish of Cairnie, by 1891, showed a further decline of 7 per cent over the 1851 figures and in other agricultural districts the decline was even more marked. Although some districts showed a moderate increase, especially those along the route of the Aberdeen-Fraserburgh railway, other areas increased by less than 10 per cent or even lost population. This was

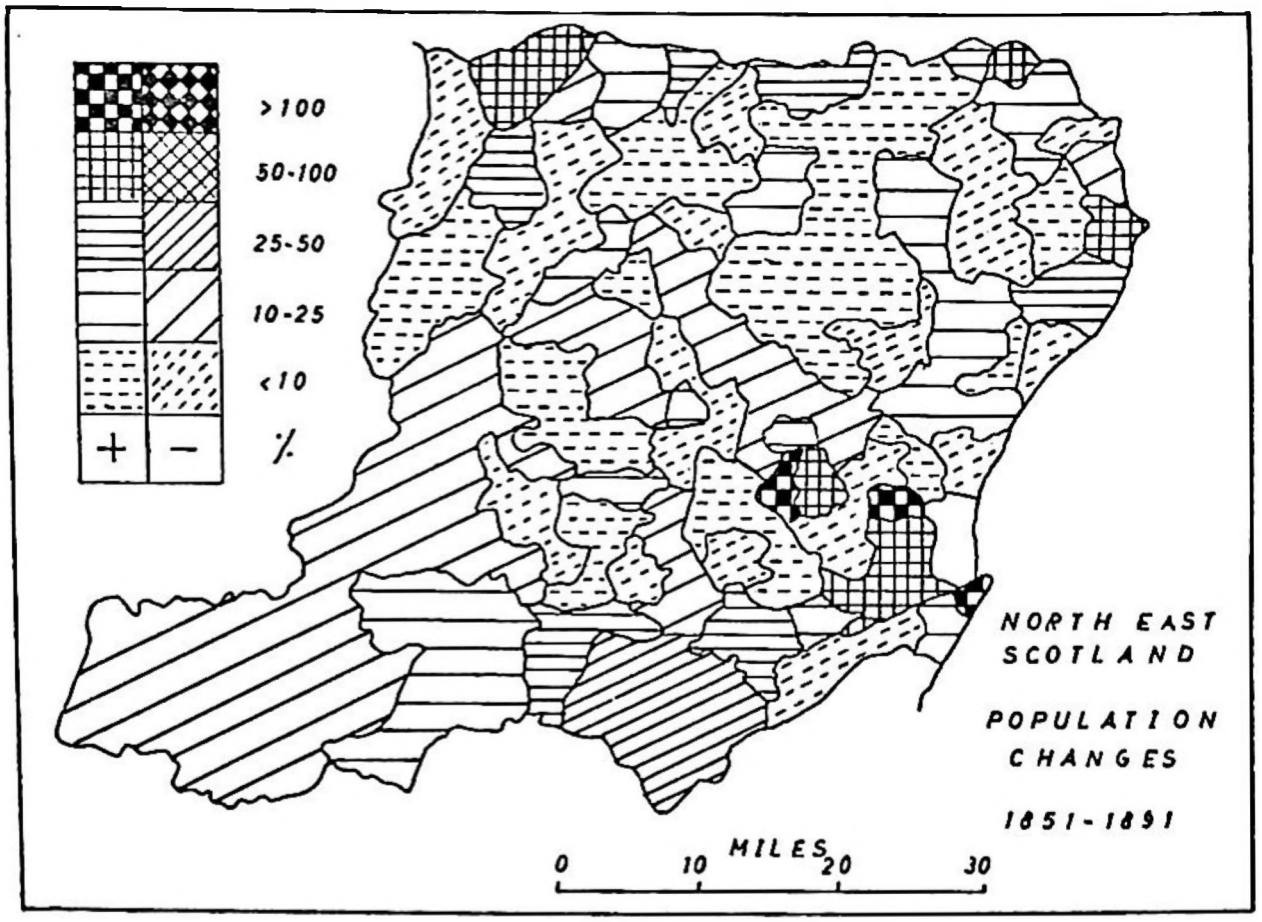


FIG. 5

especially true of a belt of country extending north-west from Inverurie, including such parishes as Chapel of Garioch, Rayne and Forgue. The late eighteenth and early nineteenth century villages do not appear to have retained their population, because their main reason for existence had disappeared with the loss of function as rural industrial centres.

Nevertheless there were centres of increase in the Lowlands. These were notably the coastal areas, especially those which contained harbours capable of coping with the increasing size of vessels. In some cases, harbours were rebuilt or newly erected. Thus most of the Banffshire coastal villages showed a substantial increase; the population of Rathven parish, which contains such fishing towns as Buckie and Portknockie increased

by nearly 70 per cent. In 1851 Buckie had a population of only 2,500 people: by 1891 it had risen to 5,849. The population of Findochty increased from about 450 to 1,148 in the same period. Farther east Macduff increased from 2,527 to 3,722 while a small centre, Gardenstown, increased by about 700 persons in the forty year period. The population of Fraserburgh almost doubled, while that of Peterhead almost trebled, though accompanied by a decrease in the neighbouring rural areas.

Inland, the greatest increase in the population took place in the granite working districts of the Lowlands, especially at Kemnay, where the arrival of the railway permitted the exploitation of the light coloured granite of the district on a scale which far surpassed any earlier working: the population as a result increased by 164 per cent, while that of the parish of Dyce, where granite was worked on the slopes of Tyrebagger Hill, showed an increase of 184 per cent.

The rural areas of the Western Uplands and Highlands all show either decrease or almost stable population in this period. The main areas of substantial decrease were in the most remote districts, especially those of Upper Deeside and Strathdon, while the parish of Glenmuick, Tullich and Glengairn would have shown a decrease of like amount had it not been for the increasing importance of Ballater as a holiday and tourist resort. The population of this parish as a whole decreased by 315 persons in the period, in which time Ballater had increased by 500 persons, which represents a decline in the glens and the Dee valley of about 200. In Strathdon, where there was no parallel to Ballater, there was a decrease of about 22 per cent, but the greatest decline was found in the glens on the north side of the Mounth. In the parish of Birse, which had earlier supported a considerable population by illicit distillation and other practices, there was a decline of almost 30 per cent, while the neighbouring parish of Strachan, which includes the basin of the Feugh, showed a decrease of just over 30 per cent.

Although the reasons for the decline varied from district to district, it is possible to see regional causes for the decrease in the rural population. While the crofts were, in some areas, being amalgamated into larger farms, those that remained were often uneconomic unless the land was very good and near a suitable market for the sale of the produce of the croft. There was not sufficient work to maintain a man and his dependents without doing casual labour on neighbouring farms. Such crofts had been kept going earlier by the activities

of the women, by the knitting of stockings, by the linen industry, or by the men who burnt lime where deposits were available. The cessation of most of these activities tended to cause a decline in the crofting population once the peak of high agricultural prices was passed. The railways which, during their construction, often caused temporary increases in population, also tended to bring greater realisation of the poor standard of living obtainable on the marginal land which is present in quantity away from the river valleys. The railway was helping to increase the importance of the North East fisheries and the cattle trade by opening up nation wide markets and employing members of the rural population; yet it drained away some of the people to whom it brought amenities and trade. At the same time the increase in size of the southern towns had seen the creation of police forces necessary to maintain law and order, which offered a further outlet for young men from rural districts. The manufacturing industries were offering urban amenities and higher wages than could be obtained in the rural areas. Whatever the fundamental causes of population change, the result was very often migration away from the rural areas of the North East.

The Period 1891-1951 (Figs. 6 and 7)

The dominant note in the change pattern over the period 1891-1951 is one of almost universal decline, which far surpasses the decline in the second half of the nineteenth century. New techniques had come into the region in the interim and two world wars had helped to redistribute the population of the area. The advent of the steam trawler, which profoundly affected the fortunes of the coastal districts, was followed in about twenty years by the omnibus, which has both maintained life in the rural areas and also helped the exodus of the rural population. These factors, coupled with agricultural depression and other factors common throughout the whole country, have co-operated in depriving the North East of many of its rural inhabitants.

In the eastern half of the Lowlands the population decreased from 1891 to 1931 by between 10 and 25 per cent. The western and north-western lowland areas which include districts of poor opportunity, such as the Banffshire Plateau, or better endowed districts such as Strathbogie and the Insch and Garioch Lowland, generally declined by between 25 and 50 per cent. On the coastal strip the changes in fishing methods

are also reflected in the population changes. The growing emphasis on concentration, as a result of the special needs of coal-fired trawlers and drifters, led to the migration of fisher folk from the small creeks to such centres as Buckie in the north-west, to Peterhead and Fraserburgh in the north-east, and to Aberdeen. These larger centres, however, show a more moderate increase than during the earlier periods and the population of Peterhead parish actually declined between 1911 and 1931 and showed only a small increase between 1931 and 1951. The granite industry which, between 1851 and 1891,

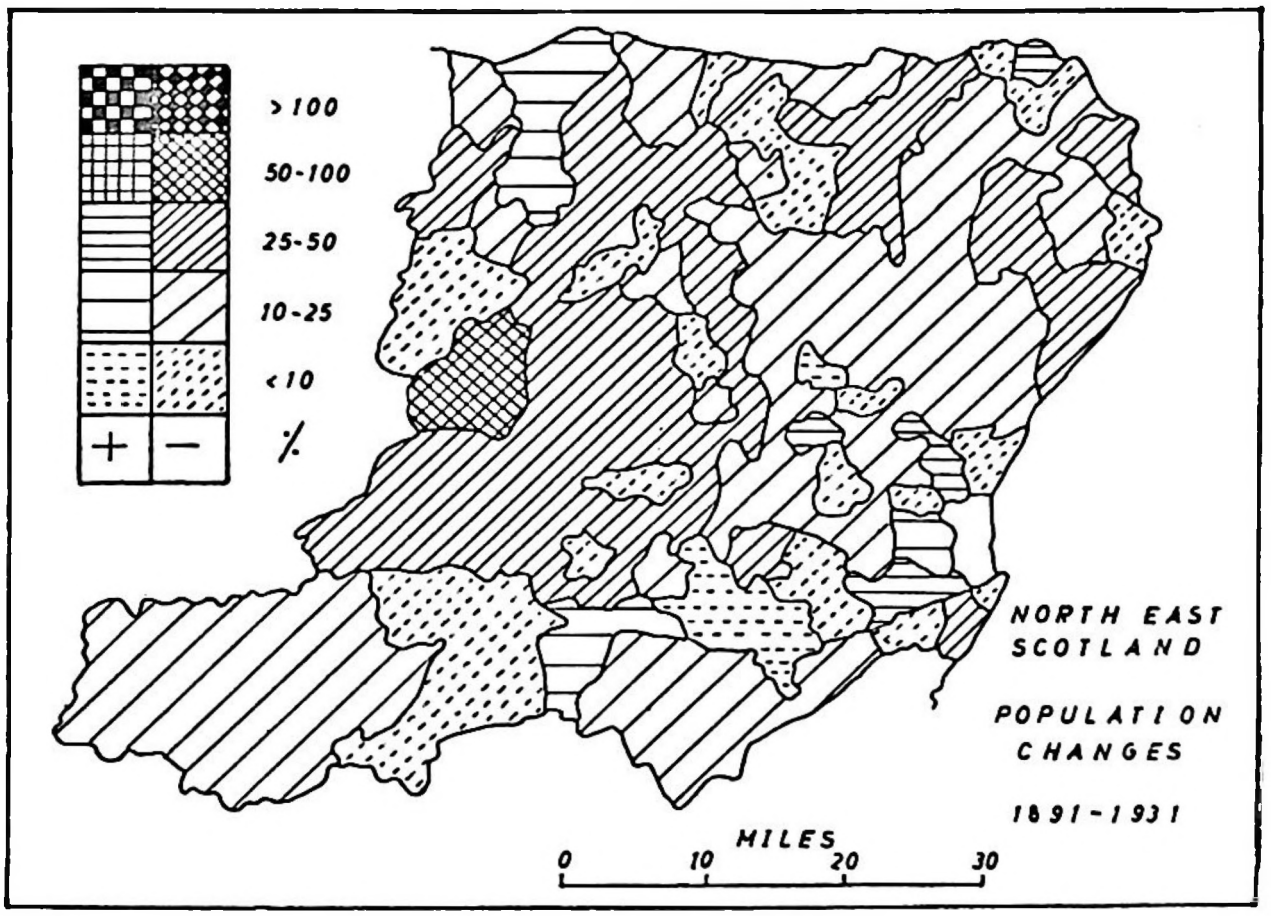


FIG. 6

had led to such a high increase in the vicinity of the quarries, was now past its most prosperous period and these districts shared in the general decline to 1931. Even the manufacturing districts of Lower Donside show only moderate increase, except where there is an extension of the suburban influence of Aberdeen. There has continued, as a result of intensive suburban bus services, an increase in the lower Deeside dormitory districts on the north side of the river.

The remoter districts of the Western Uplands and the Highlands generally show a decline of between 25 and 50 per cent up to 1931, and continued decrease from 1931 to 1951. There are, however, exceptions to this generalisation. The

parish of Alford shows a lesser decrease occasioned by the function of Alford village as a centre for retired people and river fishing resort. This feature has been shared by Deeside villages such as Torphins and Tarland, while from 1931 to 1951 even the most western parish of Crathie and Braemar increased slightly in population. The high and remote basin of the Cabrach, however, shows a large decline while the glens near Ballater continue to show a slight decline.

During this last period of population change, the motor bus has carried on and increased the functions of the railway

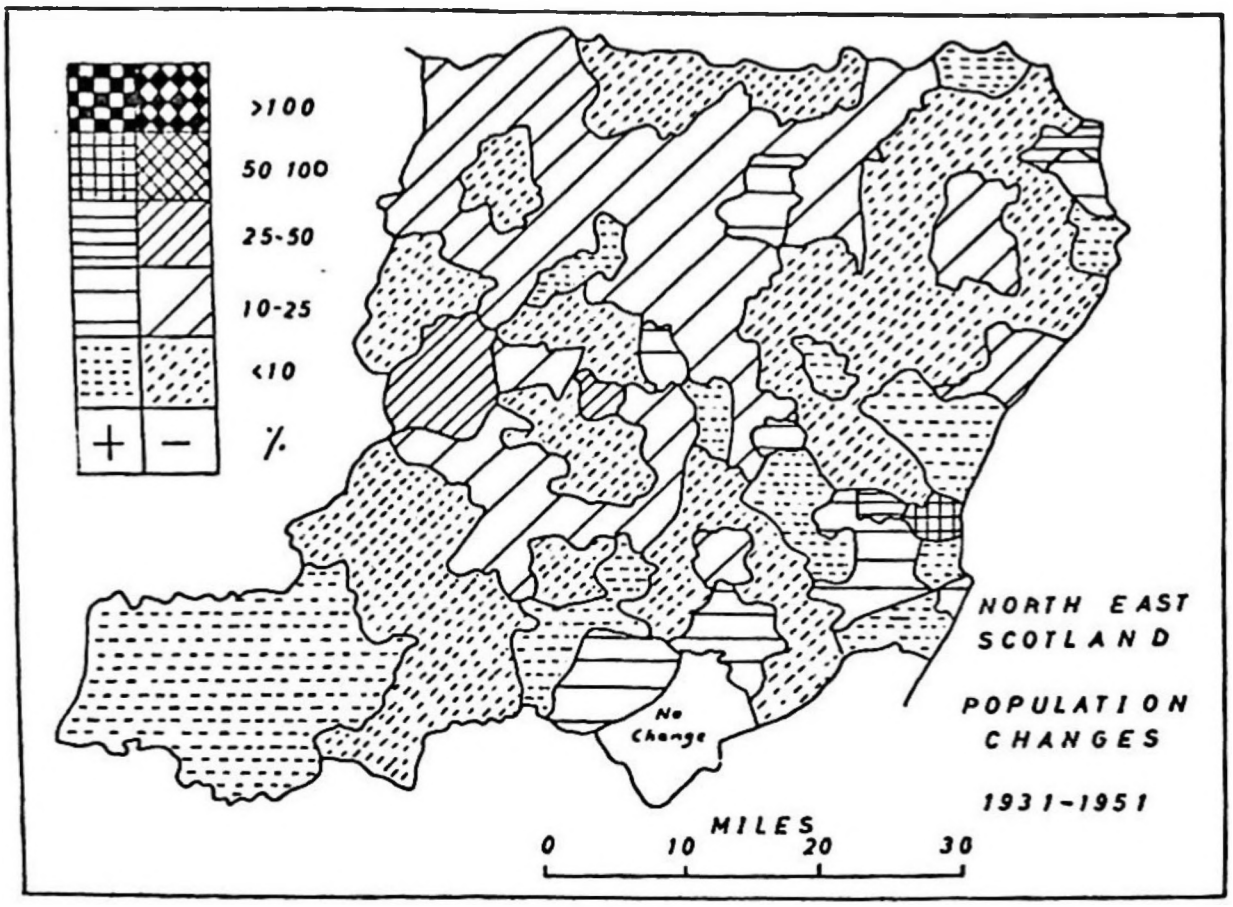


FIG. 7

as a population factor. In some places, the reinstatement of a centre on a main bus route helped to retain or increase population as at Kincardine O'Neil, which had suffered an eclipse when the Deeside Railway made the northerly loop to include the Basin of Lumphanan. In other districts it put the rural population within easy reach of the larger market centres such as Aberdeen, which attracts people from a great distance for shopping, farming and entertainment facilities. In districts such as Strathdon, the school bus has helped to retain population who would normally have moved because of the lack of facilities in the immediate neighbourhood for secondary school education for the children. It has facilitated long distance

travel at cheap rates leading, for instance, to people living in Stonehaven but working in Aberdeen. Many come in daily from Inverurie and Ellon, while some make a daily journey from Peterhead or Strichen. The concentration of the fishing in Aberdeen led to a movement of fisherfolk from Stonehaven, Newtonhill, Portlethen, etc., to Aberdeen followed by a reverse movement of people in all varieties of occupations who travel in and out each day. The motor bus has thus carried on and extended the function of the railway as a passenger-carrying agency.

Nevertheless this ease of movement to the larger centres and more frequent journeys by the rural population has led to a greater realisation than ever before of the amenities enjoyed by the urban dweller. The inhabitants of the high glens, or the crofters in treeless windswept Buchan compare their physical and social environment most unfavourably with that of the town—the shopping, schooling, entertainment and housing facilities, not to mention the wage rates, are poor compared with those offered to the urban dweller. This applies especially to the younger people many of whom, for various reasons, have gained a knowledge of conditions outwith Scotland, while to the older people the rural environment remains part of their life and philosophy. Nevertheless they are well acquainted with the urban centres of the region; for a long period they have moved to swell the populations of such centres as Aberdeen and Peterhead, Inverurie, Turriff and Huntly. The population changes in these towns have differed considerably from the rural changes and it is necessary to examine the development of these larger centres as far as population statistics will permit.

Urban Population Changes

To attempt to investigate population change in the towns of the North East is made difficult by the paucity of population statistics. Some figures are available for the Burghs but they are not generally available till 1841 and, even after this date, the position is complicated by changes in the various administrative units. In most cases it is possible to furnish data for the nucleated settlements in Aberdeenshire for 1696, but there is a big gap from this date to the end of the eighteenth century. The first figures for the Burghs commence in the census of 1821 or that of 1841. However, with these defects of material in mind, it is possible to indicate in general how the

population in some of the nucleated settlements of the North East has changed.

The bulk of the smaller towns remained the same size during the eighteenth century, many being little larger than villages. The Royal Burgh of Inverurie, for instance, had a population in 1696 of about 237 which had increased to 400 at the end of the eighteenth century. After this date progress was rapid and by 1900 the population had increased to over 3,000 as a result of improved communications which included the erection of a bridge over the Don, the canal from Aberdeen and later the railway. The latter had an important effect on later development since it was chosen by the Great North of Scotland Railway as the site of the railway repair works. By 1931 the population had increased to just over 4,500, and by 1951 to just over 5,000. Its neighbour, Kintore, situated on dissected fluvioglacial terraces like Inverurie, lacked the benefits of the other Royal Burgh and had a very slow increase in population. In 1696 the population was about 160, which had only risen to 228 at the time of the O.S.A. Thereafter the population rose slowly till 1911 after which there was a decrease to 1931 followed by an increase to 1951. Farther north, Oldmeldrum, which had a greater population than Inverurie in 1696, also had a greater population at the end of the eighteenth century, during which time it served as a headquarters of the stocking industry. Lacking the paper, railway and milling industries, it rose to a maximum of 1,579 in 1851 and thereafter declined to 1931 when the population numbered only 980. It rose, however, to 1,103 by 1951. Similarly, Turriff, with a population of about 250 in 1696, showed a rise in the nineteenth century, reached a first maximum in 1911, with decline to 1931, then later higher maximum in 1951. The rise was slow throughout though more marked than that of Kintore or Oldmeldrum.

Huntly, at the northern end of the Strathbogie routeway where routes gather to cross the watershed between the Deveron and Isla, differs from the towns already discussed because the rise in population in the eighteenth century was more marked, the result of its association with the linen industry. The population of about 200 in 1696 had risen to 1,700 in 1793. The increased population continued during the nineteenth century, in accordance with its important focus of routes and market facilities, but in some decades the rate of increase was very low, as between 1871 and 1881. An early maximum was reached in 1911, followed by decline. In 1951 the population of the

town was still less than it was in 1911. Keith, the most important inland settlement in Banffshire, owes some of its importance to its position as a route centre and market, where roads converge from the Banffshire Highlands along the Isla, from the Lowlands of Moray through the Mulbean Gap and from the fishing towns. This town, or village agglomeration, which had grown steadily throughout the eighteenth century, increased in population with the erection of the planned villages of New Keith (1,000 persons in 1793), Newmill and Fife Keith. This increase, based mainly on the linen industry, came to an end in 1831 when there were 2,332 persons in the village group. Thereafter, there was a sharp decline to 1841, when the linen trade finally petered out, followed by an increase to 1901 with later decline and more recent recovery, though the 1901 maximum was not exceeded in 1951.

The changes in the populations of the fisher towns are quite different. Together with Aberdeen, they show the most marked increase of all the urban settlements. The population of Buckie, for instance, rose steadily throughout the nineteenth century to a maximum in 1911 but declined to 1951. The small harbours of the Banffshire coast showed an almost stable or declining population in the nineteenth century as the population tended to move to larger harbours. Buckie, for instance, collected some of the population of neighbouring centres such as Portknockie and Findochty. The population of Banff, however, declined after the peak in 1881, as the harbour became unsuitable for the increasing size of vessels, and as the Deveron mouth silted up on its western side. In comparison, Macduff on the eastern side of the estuary showed a greater increase in the latter part of the nineteenth century, though here also decline followed after 1891.

In contrast to these settlements, Peterhead, Fraserburgh and Aberdeen had a much greater increase. Apart from Aberdeen, Fraserburgh was the largest settlement in the North East in 1696 with a population of about 400. It had a slow increase throughout the eighteenth century rising to about 1,000 in 1793. The enhanced rate of interest at the end of the century, occasioned by the increasing importance of the fishing, was continued in the nineteenth century, as, under the stimulus of whaling and herring fishing, the town grew in size, new harbours were erected and the settlement advanced in an atmosphere of prosperity. The maximum population, 10,574 persons, was reached just before the 1914-1918 war

and the depression in the fishing industry which followed is reflected by a decrease in the population. Even in 1951 the population was only 10,444 notwithstanding the establishment in the town of engineering and other industries.

For Peterhead and Aberdeen, figures are available which fill in the gaps which have been present in the statistics for the other urban settlements. There are figures for Peterhead at frequent intervals from the date when the town was first feued out in 1593. The population estimate for this date was approximately 56, constructed from the known number of feuars, 14, and allowing four to each family. In 1696, almost a century later, the population had risen to about 370, to 900 in 1727, about 950 in 1734, 1,266 in 1764, 1,518 in 1769, and by the time of the O.S.A. had risen to 2,550. Between this date and the end of the century there was a further increase of about 600. Fishing and trading was not the only reason for the increase in population. Peterhead was foremost among the smuggling towns of the North East; it was engaged in weaving and, during the latter part of the eighteenth century, gained some importance as a spa and holiday resort. This latter function was short lived. Henceforward the inhabitants gave increasing attention to, first, the whaling, and, later, the herring fishing; in fact, herring fishing practically supported the town during the nineteenth century based on the markets which had been built up earlier when attention was primarily focused on the export of dried cod. Apart from minor fluctuations, there was a great increase throughout the nineteenth century with roughly the same pattern of change as Fraserburgh. The population in 1951 was still less than in 1911.

Meanwhile, the first city of the region, Aberdeen, has shown a steady increase in population during the last two hundred and fifty years. Figures for the period before 1696, however, indicate that there was a downward fluctuation in the middle of the seventeenth century caused by an outbreak of plague. The population had declined from 8,750 in 1643 to about 5,100 at the time of the Poll Tax Returns. Thereafter a marked increase took place. By 1708 the population had risen to 5,556 and had trebled by the middle of the eighteenth century. The increase continued to be rapid as the town began to draw off the rural population, attracted by the higher wages and amenities offered by its expanding manufactures and trade, an increase which has continued throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, until it has become the largest city north of the Highland line.

Analysis of the Change Pattern

From a study of these cartograms of percentage change, it will be seen that certain parts of the region tend to show the same demographic characteristics, which may be often also related to the environmental regions and the ancient territorial divisions of the North East. From population graphs, but with modifications where it is felt that the presence of large settlements obscures the pattern of rural population change, has been constructed the map which makes a tentative division of the North East into its regional demographic types (Fig. 8). It

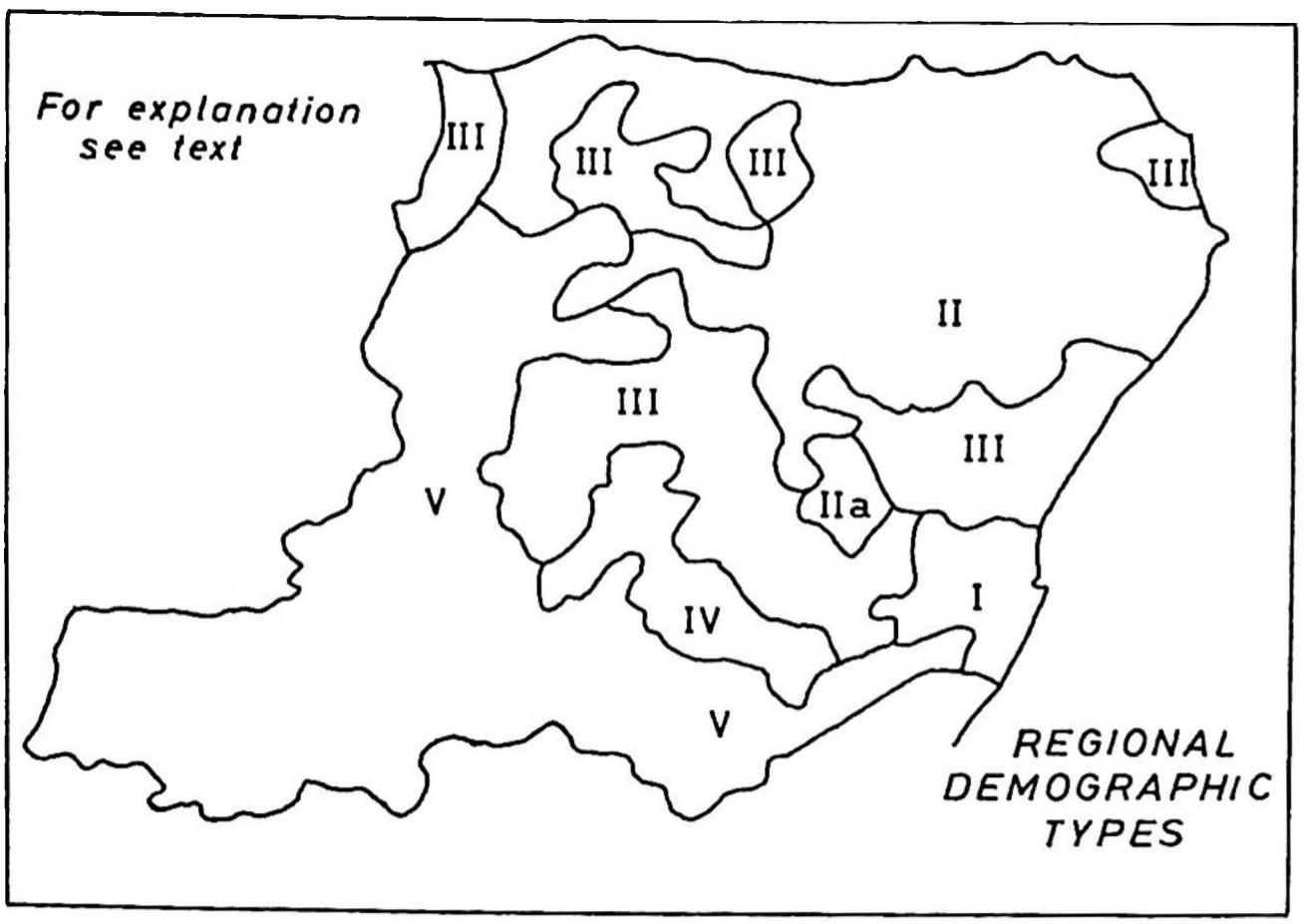


FIG. 8

will be seen that there are five main types with some minor variations.

Type I. High rate of increase, often continuous from 1696 to 1951.

Type II.

(*a*) High rate of increase but with fluctuations. In some cases there was a big increase from 1696 to the end of the nineteenth century, in others there was a decline in the latter part of the eighteenth century, but the later pattern was almost the same.

(*b*) High rate of increase with some decline in this century.

Type III. Moderate or variable increase but no marked increase over the 1696 or 1755 levels.

Type IV. Periods of high but variable increase with recent decline.

Type V. Variable decline from the early periods to recent times. The "depopulation" type.

Each of these demographic types may be associated with specific areas. Type I includes the City of Aberdeen and the surrounding district, where there has been a high rate of increase in the town itself and the immediate neighbourhood has grown along with it. The increase is based on the varying fortunes of trade, manufactures, fishing, the granite industry and its development as the focus of the region, supplying entertainment, market, commercial and financial facilities for the North East and even farther afield. Type II(*a*) includes a great deal of the Buchan Lowland and the coastal districts of the Moray Firth. In some cases, the increase is based on fishing with some trading and commercial interests, but the inland districts owe their increase at such a high rate to the colonisation of waste-land by the crofters, the erection of the planned villages with rural manufactures, and the gentle slopes which facilitated agriculture once techniques were available for improving the soil by manures and fertilisers. Type II(*b*) shows somewhat similar characteristics to Type II(*a*) but the increase came later and was associated primarily with the development of the granite industry, the influence of railway communications and proximity to Aberdeen. Type III is less compact, occurs in different parts of the region, and is best exemplified by the Insch and Garioch Lowland. It is a land which has been long and permanently settled, as have most of the other areas belonging to this type. In each, the amount of land available for agricultural occupation was almost all in use at the time this survey begins and, in many cases, the land was supporting almost as great a population at the end of the seventeenth or middle of the eighteenth centuries as at the present day. They are areas of almost static population yet fertile with gentle slopes and extensive valley development. They stand in contrast to Type II which has seen such a high rate of population increase. These are the districts which usually lacked the village development of the period 1750-1850 and the local manufactures, apart from the stocking industry. They have been continuously agricultural regions with few other interests. Type IV comprises

MIGRATION FROM ABERDEENSHIRE BY RESIDENCE

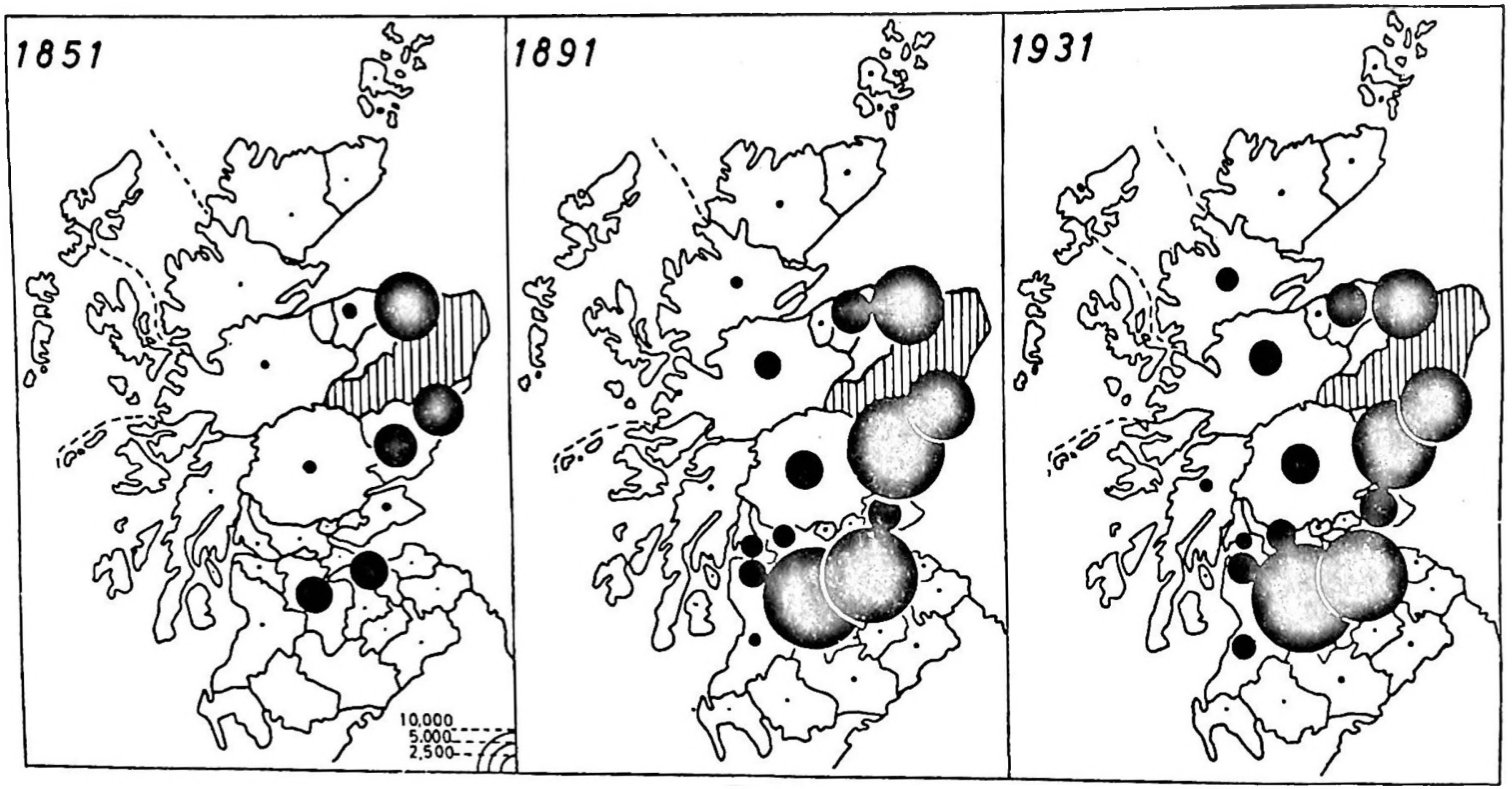


FIG. 9

the basin areas of the Western Uplands and Deeside, such as the Alford Basin, the Howe of Cromar and the Basin of Lumphanan. It differs from Type III in having higher rates of change and, apart from agricultural interests, has shown changes which are the result of a local immigration of retired people into the villages as well as holiday makers. It includes villages which have played an important part in population change, villages such as Alford, Tarland, Torphins, Lumphanan and Banchory. Type V is the "depopulation" type which includes most of the Highland zone of the region—the Banffshire Hills, the Grampians and the glens of the Mounth. In many cases, the maximum population was reached in 1755, while for Upper Deeside the population in 1931 was less than in 1696. These are the remote districts of the North East which now offer little attraction for permanent residents, though in some cases there was a late nineteenth century increase with the development of holiday resorts and the tourist industry.

The correspondence between the areas covered by these regional demographic types and the fundamental Lowland, Upland and Highland zones of the North East is plainly marked. In each case the population development has proceeded differently in the different environments. It is clear that, during the early periods, population in the rural districts was sustained not only by the produce of the land. There were often subsidiary occupations which brought in money and enabled the area to support a denser population than soil resources would have permitted. With the removal of these items of additional income, the more marginal areas became over-populated and a progressive redistribution has followed. Many of the people have migrated within the region, but in addition there has been a southward migration, as Fig. 9 indicates. The migration from the North East has not been confined to destinations in Scotland or even the British Isles, however; there has been also a major flow of emigration particularly to India, S. E. Asia, and the New World.

NOTES

[1] Macdonald, D. F., *Scotland's Shifting Population 1750-1850*. Glasgow. 1937.
[2] O.S.A. Keith: Vol. V, No. 29, p. 419.
[3] O.S.A. Huntly: Vol. XI, No. 39, p. 472.
[4] N.S.A. Birse: Vol. XII, p. 793.
[5] O.S.A. Cabrach: Vol. VII, No. 36, p. 367.
[6] O.S.A. Birse: Vol. IX, No. 8, p. 106.
[7] N.S.A. Pitsligo: Vol. XII, p. 398.
[8] N.S.A. Huntly: Vol. XII, p. 1041.

THE FAIR ISLE FISHING-MARKS

Jerry Eunson

In off-shore fishing it is essential for the fishermen to fix and find again the particular spot or ground which fish are known to frequent, and to avoid similarly those areas of the sea in which a good catch is unlikely. Frequently, shifting by a few yards in any direction can make or spoil the catch, and for this reason prominent geographical features on the shore are used to determine the exact position of the boat. In moving the boat into the desired position two sets of two such landmarks are employed—very often rocks, cliffs, promontories, but also clearly visible buildings like a church or a schoolhouse—each set being brought into an internal relationship, i.e. one feature being in line with, in front of, above, or below the other. In this way the boat can be moved away from the shore along one line, established by such a relationship, till the correct position on the other line has been found, and the point in which these two lines meet or cross, indicates the intended position above a certain fishing ground.

This method and such fishing-marks are, of course, made use of wherever off-shore fishing takes place, but it was felt that it might be desirable to bring together in one place as comprehensive a collection as possible of *all* the fishing-marks used by one fishing community in one particular locality. Obviously a fairly small island lends itself better to such a project than a larger one or an extensive mainland coast, and so the author has undertaken to collect and arrange on the pages which follow, the fishing-marks of Fair Isle between Shetland and Orkney. The actual term employed in Fair Isle is "Fishing Hands" rather than fishing-marks, and this term will be used throughout the article.

Necessarily, a great number of names of coastal features and of other landmarks in the island will be mentioned as part of the fishing-hands in question, but there will be no attempt to analyse or etymologise these, unless this is essential for the understanding of the directions given. It will also be noted that, in many cases, only two of the four features involved are actually mentioned whereas the other two are taken to be understood. This is due to the fact that many coastal features can only be seen or made use of, in relationship

to one feature and not to any other so that it would be superfluous to name this one landmark again and again, as confusion is impossible. A case in point is, for instance, "Head o' Yisness an' da Burrian", which stands for "the Head of Yisness past the North Gavel of Buness, and the Burrian rock past the Sheep Rock", but there are many more.

The spelling of the place-names and dialect words which occur in conjunction with the fishing-hands, tries to convey the local pronunciation of these words although absolute unambiguity is not possible in every single instance.

It is hoped that Mr. Eunson's collection of fishing-marks from Fair Isle will stimulate the interest in, and the bringing together of, similar collections from other parts and fishing communities of Scotland, for a comparative study of the methods employed and the terms used should be most enlightening.

EDITOR

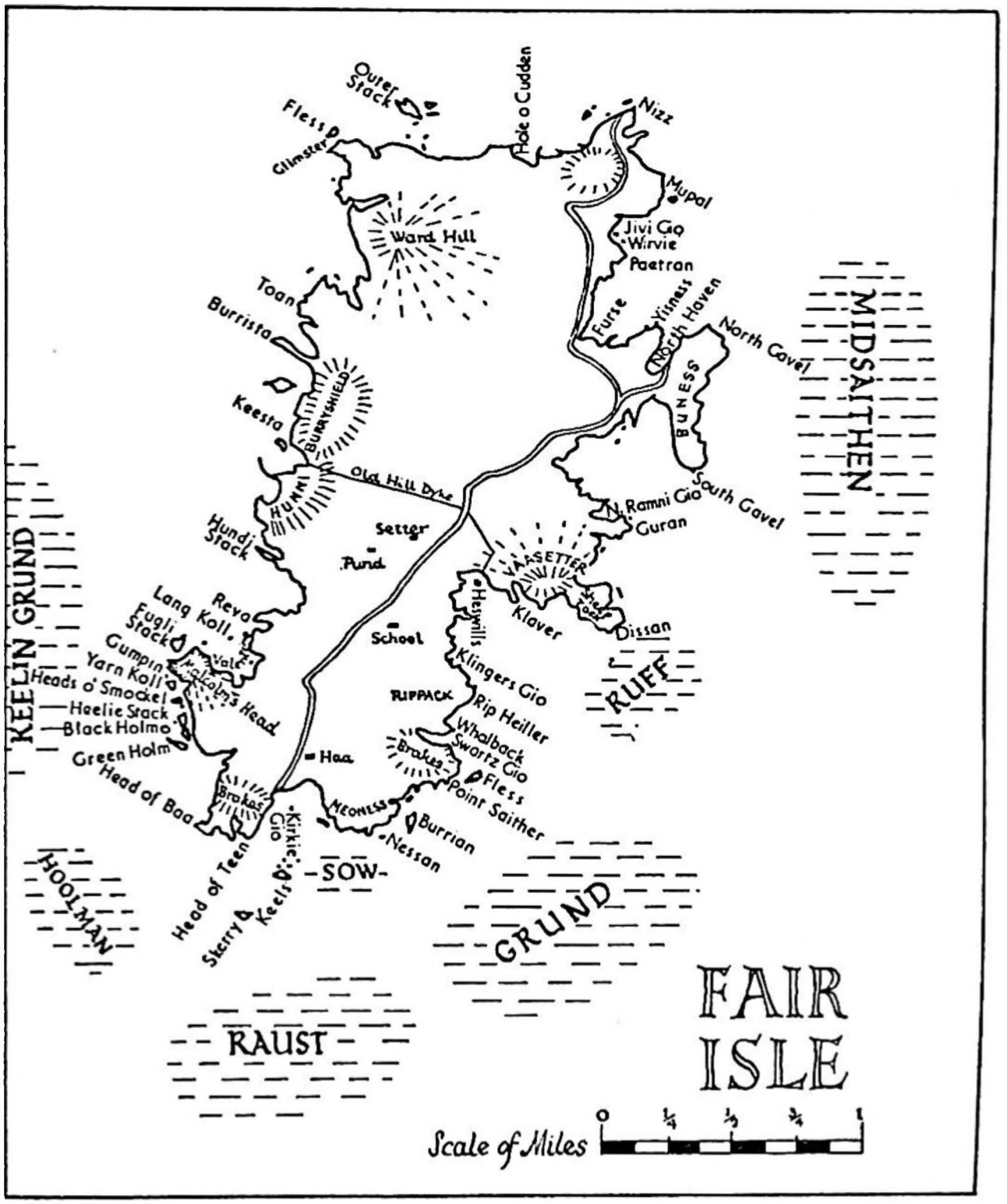
When I commenced collecting the Fair Isle Place names, I concentrated on the Coast and Inland names. However, some of the Fishing Ground names, remembered from childhood, often cropped up and after a few visits to the Isle my list of sea-fishing names seemed quite impressive. Some of the younger men had lists of the fishing grounds collected from fathers and grandfathers, other names were coaxed from the recesses of the minds of some of the older men.

By the beginning of World War II, the fishing being so spasmodic, many of the sea names were really only remembered. Long before then they should all have been collected and it says a lot for the local men that they remembered so many. Fishing was their main occupation at one time, but new and more intense fishing methods by trawlers exhausted the local fishing banks. For these reasons, I decided the most important thing was to collect, as soon as possible, all names connected with fishing.

No doubt there are names which have been lost but from those collected it can be seen that every little corner of the ocean round the Fair Isle shores, where fish was found, had been carefully recorded in the minds of the fishermen, be it sandy bottom or rocky boulder-strewn area. Each place had a name, which was derived from a mark or marks on shore; from the type of sea bottom or from the kind of eddy or tide in this part of the sea. Sometimes the place was named after a fisherman who either first tried it or who made it his favourite

spot. In every case the particular spot for fishing at sea was found by landmarks.

In Shetland the name used for this is *Meeds* or *Meeths*



The fishing-grounds of Fair Isle and the most important geographical features used as fishing-marks. For reasons of space the following have had to be omitted: the Sheep Rock to Klaver area: Engan Ru, Komon Gro, Ho Buxton, Da Whilse, Rowan Heilor, Rowan Wheetha, and Rowan Ru.

but on Fair Isle we called our fishing bearings *Fishing Hands*. It takes two bearings to fix an exact spot at sea and these were our *hands*. The fishermen could not do much without hands,

and their sea hands . . . Point A past or over point B and X over Y . . . gave them an exact fix.

To the local men the fishing "hands" are easy of utterance, the speed of speech would make many of the names unintelligible to the stranger. "Dissan aest afore an' da hol' o' Huggie Stoor" is Dissan (the outer corner of the bulky Sheep Rock) showing past the outer east side of the Burrian rock as the East hand and the Hole of Huggie Stoor, at the back of Malcolm's Head, showing past the Black Holm as the West hand, two exact lines viewed from the sea, and at that spot the men fished.

That is the basis of all sea hands whether for fishing or navigation. "Hands" or bearings were used for safety when passing certain points and for entering small bays and gios. Glimster is a bearing still used when the Fair Isle mail boat *Good Shepherd* makes the weekly run between Fair Isle and Sumburgh, Shetland. In a small rowing boat, "Glimster dipping" (disappearing), I have heard it said, is half-ways to Shetland (10 miles), but perhaps 7 miles would be nearer the distance.

"Skerry doon" (down) is just one more interesting piece of navigational knowledge. This was the Skerry off the south end of the Isle just disappearing when at sea in a small boat and was reckoned about 6 miles. This distance guide was used a lot in the old days when boats were out bartering with passing ships.

The bearings for some of the fishing grounds vary with the different men and this being so, their publication will probably give rise to further discussion and it may stimulate a further awakening in this very interesting subject. Other fishing communities in the islands would be able to compare the names with those used in their districts.

It is very important to impress on the reader the small area often covered by one set of "hands". "Lying on a quern's e'e" was a phrase sometimes used, which denoted that fish were lying in a very small area. When the fish were found to be more scattered, it was said they were "No' lying on a quern's e'e".

The boat could fish on one "hand" and open up a series of "hands" on the other side of the Isle. One example of this is the list of fishing "hands" connected with *Gumpin*, a rock on the west side. The boat can continue "on Gumpin" and, going in a

southerly direction, open up Dissan and Gumpin a Skut, then on

Engan Ru and Gumpin a Skut
Komon Gro and Gumpin a Skut
Kuppan and Gumpin a Skut
Ho Buxton and Gumpin a Skut
Da Whilse and Gumpin a Skut
Rowan Heilor and Gumpin a Skut
Rowan Wheetha and Gumpin a Skut
Rowan Ru and Gumpin a Skut and on to the
Point o' Klaver and Gumpin a Skut

It may be thought that some of the fishing "hands" encroached on each other and that is quite possible. Quoting the *Fless* and the various "hands" connected with that rock, we have "Over the Fless"; "through the Sneck of the Fless" (the *sneck*—small dip); "up to the inside of the Fless" and "the Sound of the Fless", the boat just moving round in a small area.

There are a few points which figure frequently in the fishing hands, mainly prominent rocks and headlands; names such as Buness, Sheep Rock, Burrian, Skerry, Black Holm, Gumpin, Fugli Stack and Outer Stack.

Some of the fishing spots are close inshore, the majority lie between 1 and 3 miles, and the farthest distance for fishing, apart from when the boats went in search of the saithe, was no more than 6 miles.

Time of tide was the most important element in fishing. Tide and weather were never far from the thoughts of a Fair Isle fisherman.

"The first of the flüd" (flood) was a popular time. During the slack tide (slow running) it was easier to keep the boat on the required position. Fish, like all other life would feed at the best opportunity, consequently they became less lethargic and would hunt for food when currents and eddies started to flow.

I have listed the fishing "hands" round with the sun, starting from an East-South-East direction, finishing at East. First of all giving the North hand and then the South hand and, as the boat comes round into a southerly position, the East followed by the West hand. On the west side it becomes the South and then the North hand and so on till we have circumnavigated the Isle. Some of the "hands" are grouped under Fishing Banks. These have names and the spots within these

banks are sometimes also named. Here we had names like Tongan, Rive Haige and Hifdi Kliv. In every case there must be two "hands" to fix the exact spot.

Some shore names assume a different name at sea. The Point of *Shaldi Kliv* on shore is known as *Knockhammar* when out fishing. Viewed from the sea this point appears imposing and bulky.

The fisherman soon became acquainted with the type of sea-bed from what came up on the hooks. Shallow spots were discovered when the line suddenly got caught on the bottom. When the lines came up badly buckled, it usually meant that they had been caught up in a swift flowing eddy or current. Treacherous sea-bed which could mean loss of fishing-lines, swift dangerous currents on the surface and weather-lore, the old fishermen on Fair Isle had to be in command of the lot.

I have attempted to give an analysis of the various features found in the Fair Isle fishing hands, their mental pictures by which the men could return year after year to the same spots in the ocean. It is important to reiterate that the naming of these spots would have been a very gradual process. The old fishermen would never have believed that these directions on which their livelihood depended so much would at a later date be collected and studied at high schools and universities. They have become part of the social history of our country and are just as important as the history of battles and kings and queens.

MIDSAITHEN

East-South-East to South-East from the Isle. Middle of the saithe fishing ground (The North part of Midsaithen is known as "Da Hill Rod"; the very narrow fishing area reminded the fishermen of the rough road to the peat hill).

"*Head o' Yisness an' Da Burrian*"

i.e. the Head of Yisness past the North Gavel of Buness and the Burrian rock past the Sheep Rock.

"*Da Black Rivvick an' Stromsheiller*"

i.e. the Black Rivvick, Gio of Furse, past the North Gavel and Stromsheiller past the Sheep Rock.

"*Sooth Ressens Gio an' Stromsheiller*"

i.e. South Ressens Gio past the North Gavel and the South hand (as before).

"Da Runnick o' Ressens Gio an' Da Stack o' Whalback"

i.e. the narrow gully or cleft in the cliffs at North Ressens Gio past the North Gavel and the Stack of Whalback (at the south corner of the Rippack), past the Sheep Rock.

"Da White o' Paetran and Rip Heiller"

i.e. a white mark in the cliffs at Paetran past the North Gavel and Rip Heiller past the Sheep Rock.

"Wirvie Beach an' Da Hoose a' Heed"

i.e. the beach of Wirvie Gio past the North Gavel and the House on the top of Malcolm's Head past the Sheep Rock.

"Jivi Gio an' Da New School"

i.e. Jivi Gio past the North Gavel and the New School (built 1870) past the Sheep Rock.

INYER

This piece of ling fishing ground, "half-roads" to Mid-saithen. Perhaps it was the inner fishing ground.

Da Twa Rivvicks an' Peerie Rip Heiller an' Da West Dyke Ower Ramni Gio

i.e. two rivvicks out past Jivi Gio past the North Gavel and Rip Heiller past the Sheep Rock and the west end of the hill dyke seen over North Ramni Gio. (It is unusual to be supplied with two South hands.)

RUFF

Inshore fishing ground.

"Da Skult o' Guran an' Da Hoose a' Heed"

i.e. headland of Guran past the Sheep Rock and the old house on the top of Malcolm's Head over Muckle Rip Heiller.

"Da Skult o' Guran an' Knockhammer"

i.e. the north hand (as before) and Knockhammer past the Sheep Rock.

"Da Man o' Skarvalie and Da Daek End"

i.e. the man o' Skarvalie (Buness) past Blue Gio and the Dyke end (the old turf dyke at Heswills) past the Sheep Rock. The "man" of Skarvalie is only seen from the sea and is formed by a cleft in the rocks casting a shadow, resembling the shape of a man.

"*Da Skult o' Güran and Falls Allen (or Falls Helm)*"

i.e. the Head of Güran past the Sheep Rock and the high North side of Gunniwirk (the South end of the high land of Burrayshield) over the old Hill dyke at Heswills.

Falls Helm: appears to be a sea term.

BIGHT OF HESWILLS

Heswills is the gio from which this area derives its name.

"*Da Tail o' Buness an' Meoness up ta Burrian*"

i.e. the tail of Buness past the Sheep Rock and Faeryland, he east end of Meoness up to the inside of the Burrian.

"*Face o' Keiman and Meoness up ta Burrian*"

i.e. the Green lye of North Klingers Gio past the Rippack and the South hand (as before).

"*Da New School an' Meoness up ta Burrian*"

i.e. the New School past the Rippack and the South hand (as before).

BURRIAN AND FLESS GROUNDS

Inshore fishings out from these rocks.

"*Da Stack o' Heswills an' Da Muckle Keel*"

i.e. the Stack of Heswills past the Rippack and the Muckle Keel past the Burrian.

"*Wart o' Burrayshield an' Da Skerry*"

i.e. the south top of Burrayshield past the Rippack and the Skerry past the Burrian.

"*Skuran afore Yisness an' Engan Ru*"

i.e. Skuran (near Jivi Gio) past Yisness (seen through the North and South Havens) and Engan Ru, the reddish cliffs at the South side of the Sheep Rock, past the South Corner of thc Rock.

"*Skuran afore Yisness an' Da Store*"

i.e. North hand (as before) and the Old Store, at Mid Gio, past Meoness.

"*Mupal afore Da Gavel an' Da Kirk*"

i.e. Point of Mupal past the North Gavel and the Old Kirk (now only parts of the walls standing) at Kirkie Gio, past Meoness.

"*Mupal a Kumlin an' Da Store*"

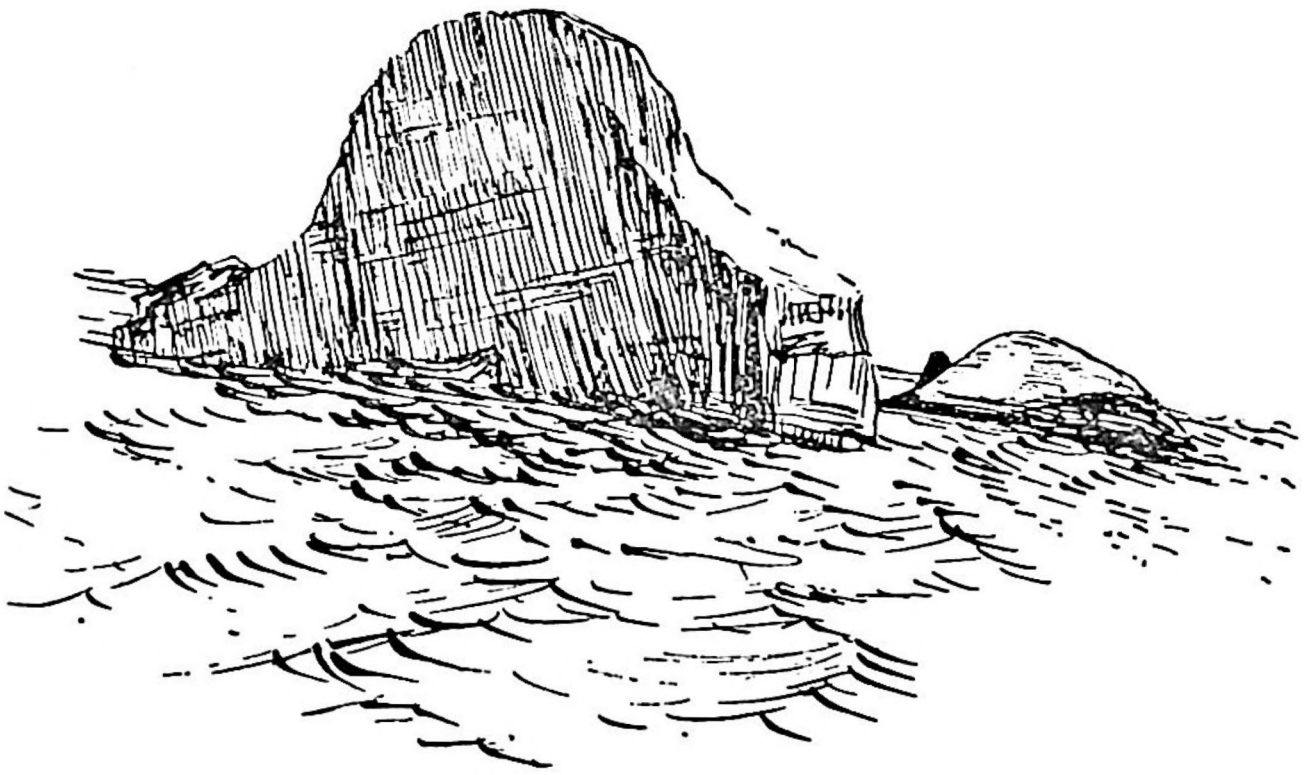
i.e. Point of Mupal over Da Kumlin, Buness and the Old Store past Meoness.

"*Mupal afore Blue Gio*"

i.e. Point of Mupal past the top edge of Blue Gio, South Buness and the South hand (as before).

"*Mupal up ta Buness*"

i.e. Point of Mupal up to the inside of Buness (seen through the Havens) and the South hand (as before).



Steen a' E'e, or Steeny E'e

"*Mupal afore Yisness an' Da Black Holm on Da Skult o' Teen*"

i.e. Mupal in front of the Head of Yisness and seen through the Havens and the Black Holm over the top corner of the Head of Teen.

"*Mupal Afore Yisness an' Da Holm on Tap a' Keel*"

i.e. Mupal (—) and the Black Holm over the Keels.

"*Steeny E'e an' Ro Skerry*"

i.e. the top of the Stack in the North Haven showing over Buness (inner end) and past the Sheep Rock like an eye, and Ro Skerry or Skarfy Stack past Meoness.

"*Tail o' Buness an' Gumpin afore Da Green Holm*"

i.e. Tail of Buness past the Sheep Rock and Gumpin, a rock behind Malcolm's Head, in front of the outer edge of the Green Holm.

THE GRUND

"*Da Valentines*"

i.e. Tae Gavel afore tidder (the one Gavel of Buness in front of the other) and the Valentine (North side of Malcolm's Head) over the grey stone at the top of Swartz Gio.

"*Rivvicks o' Buness an' Da Daek a' Heed*"

i.e. Rivvicks near the South Gavel of Buness past the Sheep Rock and Malcolm's Head dyke over the Burrian.

"*Da Rivvicks an' Ro Skerry*"

i.e. the North hand (as before) and Ro Skerry past Meoness.

"*Glip o' Nessan an' Da Holm in Da Skult o' Teen*"

i.e. a V-shaped opening (O.N. *glup*—throat; U- or V-shaped) between the tail or Ness and the Rivvicks of Buness past the Sheep Rock and the Black Holm over the Head of Teen.

"*Tail o' Buness an' Da Gait o' Stensie Gio*"

i.e. the tail of Buness past the Sheep Rock and the V-shaped opening at the top of the Gait of Stensie Gio over the Burrian.

"*Stack o' Heswills an' Da Noosts*"

i.e. the Stack in the East side of Heswills past the Rippack and the Noosts at Udie Gio past Meoness.

BROCKA

"*Skio o' Buness an' Skio A' Brakes o' Leogh*"

i.e. the height of Buness past the Sheep Rock and the height of the brakes of Leogh past Meoness.

SAID TONGAN

"*Da Red Mark at Skripton an' Da Kirk*"

also given as

"*Da Red Mark at Skripton an' Da Point o' Hunni*"

i.e. the red mark in the cliffs (about 30 feet up from the sea) at Skripton in the Sneck of the Fless and the Old Kirk

past Meoness or the same North hand and the South point of Hunni over the Burrian.

HIFDI KLIV

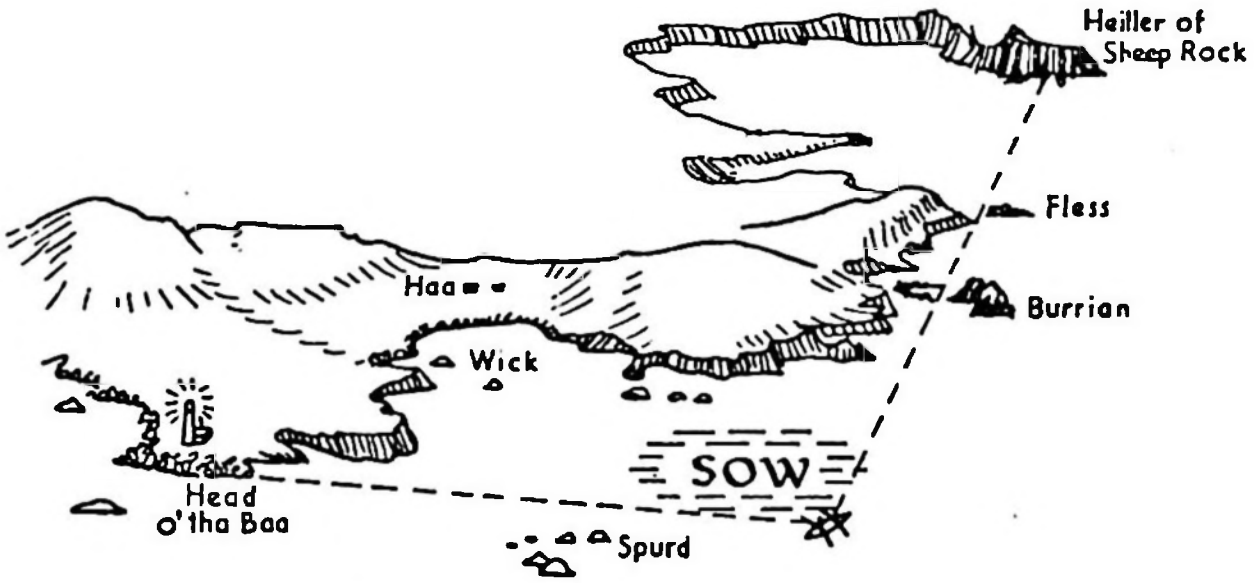
"Klaver an' Da Gait o' Stensie Gio"

i.e. the hole of Klaver through the Sound of the Fless and the V-shaped top of the Gait of Stensie Gio past Meoness.

SINNIE SKERRIES

"Klaver an' Da Ness o' tha High Holm"

i.e. Klaver through the Sound of the Fless and the Ness (the inner face or height) of the High Holm out past the Keels.



Heiller E'e an' da Hand o' da Sow

"Hole a' Klaver an' Da Holm a' Skult a' Teen"

i.e. Hole of Klaver up to the inside of the Fless and the Black Holm over the Head of Teen.

"Klaver an' Da Holm a' Skult a' Teen"

i.e. the edge of Klaver up to the inside of the Fless and the South hand (as before).

"Klaver a' Soond an' Gumpin a' Soond"

i.e. the same North hand, but this time in the middle of the Sound of the Fless and Gumpin through the Sound of the Holm (behind Malcolm's Head).

SOW

Inshore fishing ground for piltocks with a handline, just outside the South Harbour entrance, running from the back of Meoness up to the Keels and Skerry.

"Heiller E'e an' Da Hand o' Da Sow"

i.e. the Heiller of the Sheep Rock appearing between the shore land of the Brakes of Busta and inside the Burrian, like an "eye" (black in the whiter foreground) and The Spurd (rock just inside the Keels) along the Head of the Baa.

DA POOL O' O STACK

"Da Wheeth a' Burrian an' Da Haa o' Gaila"

i.e. the white mark on the West corner of the Burrian past the East corner of Meoness and the Old Haa past the West side of Meoness.

GUMPIN GRUND

"Rivvicks o' Buness and Gumpin ower Da Holm"

i.e. the Rivvicks of Buness past the Sheep Rock and the top of Gumpin over the Black Holm.

AUDIN

"Hole o' Klaver an' Yarn Koll"

i.e. the Hole of Klaver past the Fless and the Head of Yarn Koll on the outside of the Keels.

RAUST

Half to three miles S. to S.W. from the Isle. Halibut ground, formerly good cod ground. The shallowest part, only 7 fathoms is called the SHAULD and has strong tides, the deepest part is known as the HAFF.

"North Brae o' Buness and Gumpin Afore"

i.e. North Brae (Skio) o' Buness past the Sheep Rock and Gumpin afore the Green Holm (up to the outside of the Green Holm).

"Buness End—Tail o' Buness an' Luistemil"

3 ml. out.

i.e. the Tail of Buness past the Sheep Rock and Luistemil, the light showing between Gumpin and the outer side of Black Holm.

"Gumpin a Skut"

(As mentioned in the introduction)

"*Gumpin a Kriv*"

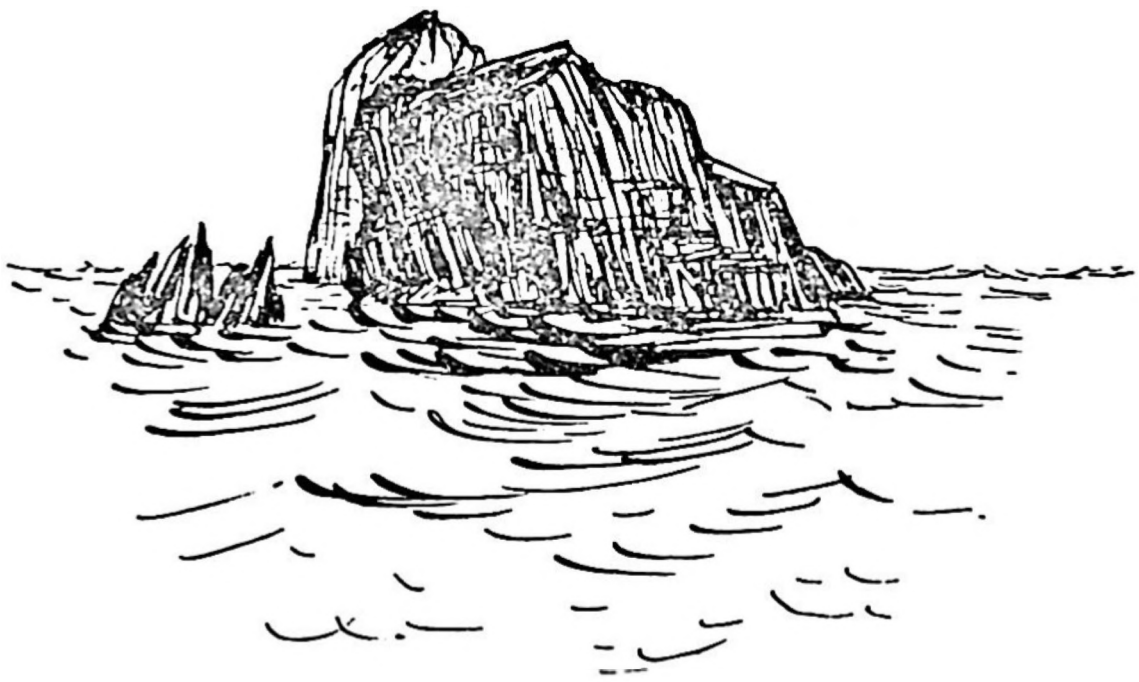
i.e. Gumpin between the Black Holm and the Kriv rock and the usual set of East hands.

EAST ROGANS

The East red bearing.

"*Edge O' Klaver an' Gumpin High on the Nap of the Holm*"

i.e. Edge of Klaver past Point Saither and Gumpin high on the Nap of the Black Holm. *Rogans*: as a fishing hand represents a vein or an extended ridge of any colour differing from the surrounding cliffs.



Gumpin A Skut

WEST ROGANS

The West red bearings.

"*Rowan Ru an' Gumpin Neat in the Nap of the Holm*"

i.e. Rowan Ru past Point Saither and Gumpin neat in the Nap of the Black Holm.

"*Rowan Ru an' Gumpin afore Da Green Holm*"

i.e. Rowan Ru past the outside of the Burrian and Gumpin outside the Green Holm.

"*Engan Ru an' Huggie Little*"

i.e. Engan Ru past the outside of the Burrian and Huggie Little, at back of Malcolm's Head past the outside of the Black Holm.

PILIE BANKS

"*Edge o' Klaver an' Gumpin a Nap a Holm*"

i.e. the outer edge of Shaldi Kliv past Point Saither and Gumpin in the Nap of the Black Holm.

HOXTA

"*Ho Buxton an' Da Heads o' Smockel aff a Bit*"

i.e. the heights above Buxton past the Burrian and the Heads of Smockel, back of Malcolm's Head well opened up outside the Black Holm.

RIVE GLIPPE

"*Engan Ru an' Glip a Toan*"

i.e. Engan Ru past Point Saither and Glip a Toan, back of Malcolm's Head, along the outside of the Black Holm.

RIVE HAIGE

"*Dissan aest afore an' Da Hol' o' Huggie Stoor*"

i.e. Dissan past the east, outside of the Burrian, and the Hole of Huggie Stoor on the outside of the Black Holm.

"*Wast Wyes o' Da Skerry*"

i.e. The Burrian on the Tail of the Skerry and Codlin Gully (a white or yellowish mark on Yarn Koll) on the outside of the Black Holm.

HANDS FOR DA HAFF

"*Da Burrian an' Da Apron o' Heelie Stack*"

i.e. the Burrian (as before) and a conical shaped part of Heelie Stack out past the Black Holm.

"*Sley Heiller an' Da Mill*"

i.e. the mill (now only the site) at Whilligirt past the Black Head and Sley Heiller past the outside of the Black Holm.

HOOLMAN

"*Head o' Nessan an' Codlin Gully*"

i.e. the Head of Nessan seen past Head of Teen and Codlin Gully, Yarn Koll.

"*Out past Hoolman*"

i.e. Burrian a Skerry (inside the Skerry) and the Tail o' Dronger the North West corner of the Isle showing.

AFORE URAN

"*Da Head o' Nessan an' Red Codlin Ru*"

i.e. the Head of Nessan (as before) and Red Codlin Ru (Red rocks) past Fugli Stack.

"*Da Head o' Nessan an' Black Codlin Riven*"

i.e. the Head of Nessan (as before) and Black Codlin Riven (Black rocks) past Fugli Stack.

THE STACK—FUGLI STACK

"*Da Blett o' Duggie Gio an' Da Heelicks o' Reva*"

i.e. a green lye in the cliffs at Duggie Gio past Gumpin and the heelicks at South Reva past Fugli Stack.

SKURAN

"*Da Skios o' Da Brakes an' Da Black Rivvick o' Hundi Stack*"

i.e. the site of the former skios at the Brakes of Leogh past the Black Holm and the Black Rivvick at Hundi Stack past the outside of Fugli Stack.

Skur: a name given to fishing grounds close inshore.

"*Da Skios o' Da Brakes an' Da Wheeth o' Keesta*"

i.e. The Skios (as before) and the white mark in the cliff at Keesta, past Fugli Stack.

TOAN

"*Da Skios o' Da Brakes an' Da Face o' Toan*"

i.e. the Skios (as before) and the Face of Toan past Fugli Stack.

"*Da Horn o' Da Holm an' Da Heelicks o' Reva*"

i.e. the Horn (the prominent West corner) of the Black Holm and the Heelicks of Reva. (The Horn of the Holm is only seen from the North west side.)

KEELIN' GRUND

Keeling is an old name for cod.

"*Da Haa an' Da Pund*"

i.e. the Haa House along the Holms and the Pund House through the Sound of Fugli Stack.

"*Da Muckle Keel an' Da Sheep Craig past North Reva*"

i.e. the Big Keel in the slack of Uran and the face of the Sheep Rock up to the north side of North Reva.

"*Da Muckle Keel an' Da Muckle E'e o' Reva*"

i.e. the Big Keel along the outer west corner of the Kletts and the North Hole of Reva past Fugli Stack. (The eye disappeared when a large area of cliff "fell afore" at the beginning of the twentieth century.)

"*Da Peerie Keel an' Lang Koll*"

i.e. the Small Keel over the outer west corner of the Kletts and the Lang Koll past Fugli Stack.

"*Da Muckle Keel in the Slack an' Da Sheep Craig up ta Hunni*"

i.e. the Big Keel in the slack of Uran and the face of the Sheep Rock along the south corner of Hunni.

WEST BANK

i.e. Vaasetter up to Malcolm's Head and proceeding North along the West side of the Isle.

"*Cudden an' Da Skerry*"

i.e. Hole of Cudden out past the Outer Stack and the Skerry out past the Black Holm.

POOLS O' DA SANDS

Sandy fishing spots or pools out from Hunni.

DA STOO

A fishing spot off the Stoo of Burrista.

"*Da Valentine an' Da Tail o' Buness*"

i.e. the Valentine in the North side of Malcolm's Head past Keesta and the Tail of Buness past Mupal. The West hand stretches from the Valentine east to the Riggin' of the Head (the highest part), and the East hand from the tail to the whole of Buness.

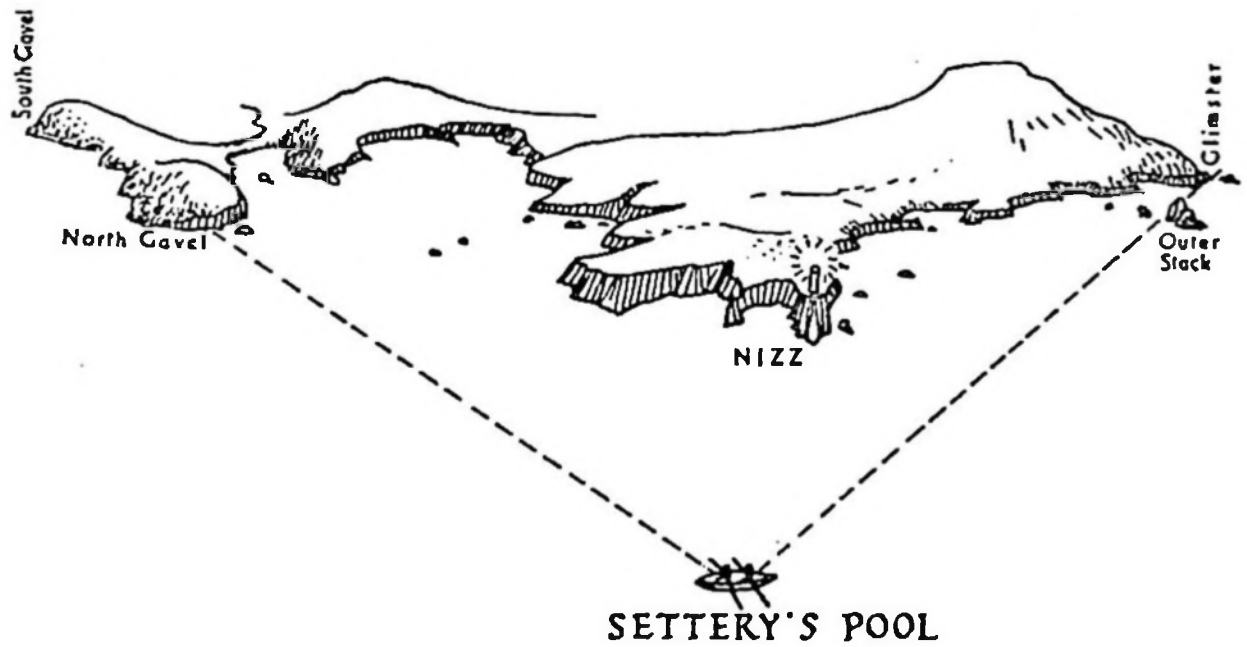
OOLIE'S GRUND

North from the Isle, about 3 miles. Named after Oliver Smith who stayed on Fair Isle early in the nineteenth century.

WESTER POOL

"*Da Shudder o' Glimster an' Da Skio o' Buness*"

i.e. the Shoulder (corner) of Glimster, the Northerly point of the Isle down near the sea, up to the Outer Stack and the Skio of Buness past Mupal.



Settery's Pool, north from Fair Isle

EASTER POOL

"*Glimster an' Da Sheep Rock*"

i.e. Glimster (as before) and the Sheep Rock up to the inside of Buness.

SETTERY'S POOL

Named after a fisherman who stayed at Setter.

"*Glimster and tae Gavel afore Tidder*"

i.e. Glimster (as before) and the North Gavel of Buness almost in line with the South Gavel of Buness.

"*Dissan an' Da Graves*"

i.e. Glimster (as before) or perhaps between the Outer and Inner Stacks and Dissan, the outer point of the Sheep Rock over the Graves (over the New Lighthouse pier and Store at North Haven). Behind the Store, at the Neck of Buness, there are several old Dutch Graves, not marked, where Dutchmen from ships wrecked in the North Haven were buried.

"*Lanorder*"

i.e. the Burrian afore da Ruff (outer edge of the Sheep Rock) and the Outer Stack afore da Nizz (past the Nizz, the North-easterly point of Fair Isle. (Probably the north end of the fishing grounds.)

KENABY'S GRUND

A fishing spot worked by Stewart Wilson of Kenaby croft.

"*Rip Heiller an' Da Stack*"

i.e. Muckle Rip Heiller past the Sheep Rock and the Outer Stack (as before).

"*Da Krook o' Klingers Gio an' Da Stack*"

i.e. Klingers Gio past the Sheep Rock and the Outer Stack (as before).

So now we are back on the east coast, a few miles out past where we started. It is difficult to assess how many names have been lost. Several will have assumed a more English content. The mere publication of the foregoing will probably help to produce more old names.

I feel that there still remain many interesting items and stories about the sea, the land and the people, waiting to be collected, and even at the time of writing, correspondence with some of the men in Fair Isle is producing additional material. Even in a small community like this, there is still much to be collected in this respect.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

It is impossible to thank everyone who helped. The whole business has given rise to discussion and argument during my annual holiday in Shetland. Foremost amongst my Fair Isle helpers I place

Tom and Willie Stout of Hool,
Jerry Stout of Busta,
James Wilson, Schooltown,
Douglas Stout, now in New Zealand,
Uncle Willie at Leogh and my Father in Lerwick,
Alex Stout and his brother George for explaining some of the contours as seen from the sea,
and James Stout, Midway, for his sketches of the Fishing Hands. These sketches were prepared for publication by Miss M. R. Holmes of the School of Scottish Studies Edinburgh.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

A. NOTES ON SCOTTISH PLACE-NAMES

17. *Sike* and *Strand*

The three words occurring most frequently on the map of Scotland as part of non-Celtic and non-Scandinavian stream-names are *burn*, *water* and *river*. Their usage depends almost entirely on the size of the stream to which they apply and hardly at all on the geographical area in which they occur. Compared with these three words, the occurrence of other generic terms of similar origin is numerically insignificant and in most cases clearly localised. They all refer to very small water-courses.

It is their comparative unimportance and localised usage, however, which calls for special study by the place-name scholar and lexicographer. The kind of generic term which would fall into this category is represented by elements like *lake*, *latch*, *linn*, *runner*, *sike*, *spout*, *stark*, *strand*, *stream*, and others, and this short note is to be devoted to a more detailed analysis of two of these, i.e. *sike* and *strand*. Their choice is in the main prompted by the fact that they are practically synonymous in meaning, as is borne out by a Royal Charter of May 31st, 1565, in which an earlier grant of land made in the vicinity of Culross in Fife in April 1560 is confirmed. It contains a reference to a ". . . . canalem, vulgariter *ane strand* vel *a syk* . . ." (Register of the Great Seal 1565: ch. 1632), and it is obvious that these two terms are here taken to be interchangeable as applied to a channel of water, probably a natural one but possibly one made by man.

This convenient starting point and link is by no means the earliest recorded instance of either of these two terms. In the twelfth century the Latinised forms "*sicus* and *siketus* are used in the Melrose chartulary to denote small streams" (Williamson 1943:277) and about 1160-5 the accusative *sicum* occurs in a grant of land made by Malcolm IV to Newbattle Abbey in the Dalkeith area (Barrow 1960:258). In the *Liber de Dryburgh* we find in 1425 what seems to be the earliest written record of the vernacular form of the word, *the syke*, in an instrument of perambulation concerning the marches between Redpath and Bemersyde in Berwickshire. In the following century the first instance of *strand* appears in a very different context, for in Henry's *Wallace IX*, l. 975, we read of "a litill strand . . . that ran hym by" (Moir 1889:266).

From the more recent though yet unpublished material of

the Scottish National Dictionary we get a better idea of the meaning and localisation of these two dialect words. One explanation again links the two by saying that "the designation of the smallest rill of water is a *syke*, or a *well-strand*, if from a spring-well" (Peebles 1802). The meaning of *sike* is also said to be "a small stream in boggy land" (Berwick 1809) or "a small rill" (Dumfries 1894), or indicated in such comparisons as "some ravine or syke" (Dumfries 1834), "yon syke or cleuch" (Selkirk 1933), and "a 'syke' or cleft in the hillside" (Dumfries 1952). In the same area, especially in the counties of Selkirk, Roxburgh, and Dumfries, the Linguistic Survey of Scotland has collected instances of the modern usage of *sike* in the meaning of "a ditch along the road", and this usage extends into Cumberland and Northumberland. Unfortunately, comparable collections are not available for the meaning "a small water-course".

Written sources show this to be the principal meaning of the other word, *strand*, in the south, with such pointers as "to the meadow well strand" (Peebles 1815), "a bourn or strand" (Galloway 1823), and "a wee hill burn" (Dumfries 1957). In the north, on the other hand, the meaning "gutter", although not completely absent from the south, predominates, and our word appears in several dialectal variants.

This very localised usage of both *sike* and *strand* is emphasised by their occurrence in Scottish river-nomenclature in which their geographical distribution is even more limited, showing patterns which are practically mutually exclusive. The 43 hydronymic examples of *sike* recorded on the one-inch maps of Scotland are all situated in the counties of Selkirk, Roxburgh and Dumfries (plus one in Lanarkshire). These small burns ultimately feed the Kirtle Water, the Esk, the Liddel, the Teviot, the Ettrick and the Yarrow, and although closer scrutiny of maps of a larger scale reveals isolated instances in the drainage areas of the Annan and even the Nith, their very strong concentration in the neighbourhood of these half dozen rivers is certainly worthy of note. Here are a few of them exemplifying the type of element which qualifies *sike*: *Back Sike* (Dumfries), *Clark's Sike* (Roxburgh), *Glendow Sike* (Dumfries), *Hillshaw Sike* (Lanark), *Kiln Sike* (Roxburgh), *March Sike* (Selkirk and Dumfries), *White Sike* (Selkirk).

The geographical scatter of *strand* in stream-names is, in comparison, a much more westerly one, being confined to Galloway, and in particular the Stewartry. The burns to which these names apply drain into tributaries of the Ken, the Dee,

the Cree, and the Bladnoch, or into the upper reaches of these rivers themselves, a remarkably small area. Numerically, too, this group is smaller than the last one, for only twelve *strand*-names have found their way on to the one-inch map, like these examples from Kirkcudbrightshire: *Black Strand, Goat Strand, Loch Strand* (also one in Wigtownshire), *Loch of the Lowes Strand, Peat Rig Strand.* Many of these are probably not much older than the first Ordnance Survey maps themselves. They show as convincingly as the *sike*-names the strictly localised toponymical usage of a dialect word of slightly wider geographical application.

Where do these two terms belong etymologically? *Sike* is well known to be the northern form of *sitch* (cf. dike-ditch) or *sich(e)* and goes back to Old English *sīc* "a small stream", Old Norse *sík* "a ditch, a trench", being related to Old English *sicerian* "to ooze". In English place-names it is said to be "often used of a stream that forms a boundary" (Smith 1956:121-2), cf. *March Sike* above.

For *strand,* at least two derivations offer themselves; it might be identical with the word *strand* usually meaning "coast, beach", with the not improbable semantic change from "coast" > "side" (> "gutter, ditch") > "small burn". It could also be a different word and related to Middle English *strind* "a stream" (cf. New English Dictionary IX, I: *s.v.*), although some ablaut relationship to the above *strand* "coast" is considered for this word by Smith (1956:164) which would bring us back to the original suggestion. Or is our word a development from the other English word *strand* "a wire or string in a rope" whose etymology is equally obscure? Whatever the answer to this etymological puzzle may be, *strand* did exist in England as an independent word with our meaning at least as far back as 1240, when the first literary example occurs in the figurative usage *strondes of blode* (see NED. IX, I: *s.v.*). It is certainly one of the most remarkable elements in Scottish river-nomenclature.

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W. F. H. NICOLAISEN

B. NOTES ON COLLECTION AND RESEARCH

These notes, the second of a series gathered in the course of current work by members of the School of Scottish Studies, reflect in some degree the range and variety of the subjects covered, all of which will be represented in the series.

Funeral Resting Cairns in Scotland

Martin Martin gives the impression that, at least in his native island of Skye, the custom of raising "small cairns . . . in some places on the common road, which were made only where corps [*sic*] happened to rest for some minutes", had already been laid aside by the close of the seventeenth century (Martin 1703:152).

In some of the Western Isles this practice has actually continued into the twentieth century, and almost as long even in some mainland districts of Scotland. In 1864, when Sir Arthur Mitchell sketched a group of resting-cairns in a birch wood near Torgyle in Glenmoriston, it was still "a common practice in certain parts of the north-west mainland" (Mitchell 1880:90, Fig. 63). His account continues:

> The place of interment in these districts is often very far from the place of dwelling, and as the coffin is carried by men and not by horses, a halt is generally made on the way to the grave, so that the bearers may rest and refresh themselves. Where the rest is taken a small cairn is erected, generally about four or five feet high, and three or four feet wide at the base. On the way from certain districts to the churchyard there are some favourite halting-places, and at such places many of these small cairns will of course be found. I have seen several of these favoured spots . . . when a distinguished person is being carried to the grave, then the cairn is sometimes large and carefully constructed. There are two such cairns on the roadside not many miles from Fort-William, both of considerable size and pretension, which mark the halting-place of the funeral processions of two gentlemen who were well-known and highly esteemed.

This pair of large, carefully-built cairns, also sketched in 1864 (Mitchell 1880:91, Fig. 64), recalls another pair of about the same age, at a halting-place at the crest of the road from Kinlochmoidart to the burial island of Eilean Fhianain in Loch Shiel, the more recent of which commemorates the laird of Kinlochmoidart who died in 1868.

Such resting-places were known as *suidhe*, literally "a seat", a term also used of a hill where a saint or hero was supposed to sit in contemplation (Watson 1926:260). Thus in Wester Ross the name *Carn an t-Suidhe*, "cairn of the resting-place", one of the spots where the Applecross men are said to have rested when carrying Saint Maelrubha's body home from Kinlochewe (Watson 1926:262), may well represent a pre-Reformation tradition; while at *Uisge an t-Suidhe* in Islay coffins were rested at the ford on the north shore of Loch Indaal up to last century (oral). Some of the places called Acharn, e.g. near Kinlochaline in Morvern, and in the Perthshire parish of Kenmore, may also recall funeral resting-places since in these instances the topography suits the interpretation suggested—*Ath Chuirn*, "cairn-ford", or "ford at the cairn" (Watson 1926:477; Johnston 1934:78).

One of the most renowned of the West Highland burial-places, Eilean Fhianain, served the whole of Moidart and Sunart, and also the nearer parts of Morvern, Ardnamurchan and the head of Loch Eil. "All roads lead to this island, and these 'ways of the dead' are marked by, literally, hundreds of resting-cairns" (Donaldson *c.*1930:368-70). Our photographs (Plate IX), taken in Moidart in 1959, show some of the cairns at the Bealach Cara, on one of these routes, at the crest of the track from Glenuig to Kinlochmoidart. Several of the cairns at this point commemorate people who are still remembered locally.

Moidart is, of course, a Roman Catholic district, but the resting-cairn custom also continued in some Protestant areas of the West Highlands and islands up to this century, and it would be interesting to know how widely this applies to other parts of Scotland. Some of the routes followed until recently on the Argyll (Protestant) side of Loch Shiel have been briefly described by Mr. Alastair Cameron (Cameron 1957:13).

In the North-East the same custom was certainly still remembered in the Strathdon district of Aberdeenshire about 1892, when Walter Gregor received this account from a Mr. Michie:

> At times the dead body had to be carried a long way over the hills to the graveyard. When the funeral procession halted for a rest and refreshment, the coffin was laid on the ground. When the coffin was lifted each one attending the funeral cast a stone on the spot where it lay. In after times each passer-by had to add a stone to the heap (Crombie MSS).

FIG. 1.—Funeral resting-cairns at Bealach Cara, Moidart, beside track from Glenuig to Kinlochmoidart. South view towards Loch Moidart and Eilean Shona, 1959 (*see* p. 203).

FIG. 2.—Larger, carefully-built resting-cairn with cement cross, at Bealach Cara, Moidart, 1959 (*see* p. 203).

(Both photographs by Prof. Ian Whitaker.)

More usually in North-East Scotland, including Fife, a "risting-", or "licker-stane", was already provided at the halting-places, and the coffin rested on this without coming in contact with the ground—a rather different conception. In at least one instance, in 1611, the "Licker-stane" was described as simply "ane heape of steans" (D.O.S.T.: s.v. "Likar stane"), so this practice seems to have been essentially the same as that found in parts of Ireland, where "the coffin was laid down on a stone-heap while prayers were recited, and in some places refreshments provided. The passer-by added his stone to the resting-place heap" (Nic Néill 1948:59).

The rather different Hebridean and Highland procedure of forming a cairn *after* a coffin containing a body had rested on the ground seems to be connected with another Irish observance, also found among primitive peoples in many parts of the world: the raising of a heap or cairn wherever a death has occurred in the open (Nic Néill 1948; Frazer 1913:15). Indeed it would seem that this death-cairn custom was also still very much alive in the Highlands in the early eighteenth-century for, besides remarking that there "are small Heaps of Stones, thrown together on the Place where every particular Man fell in Battle", Burt informs us that "some of these Monuments have been raised in Memory of such as have lost their Lives in a Journey, by Snow, Rivers, or other Accidents" (Burt 1754:II, 101-3); and he particularly describes how even in the town of Inverness the Highlanders "cannot forgo the practice of the Hills, in raising Heaps of Stones over such as have lost their lives by some Misfortune; for in Oliver's Fort, no sooner was the Body of an Officer removed from the Place where he fell in a Duel, than they set about the raising such a Heap of Stones upon the Spot where he had laid" (Burt 1754:II, 211-12). Later in the century, in 1797, Maclean of Coll was fully aware that Hebridean or Highland "cairns were not erected merely where a person was interred [presumably an obsolete practice], but often to commemorate the spot on which he died; and also at all the places where his body rested, from the place of his death to the place of his interment" (Otter 1825:I, 308).

These contrasting practices, found both in Scotland and Ireland, were undoubtedly influenced by the Roman Catholic belief in Purgatory and praying for the dead; but some of the evidence collected by the Irish Folklore Commission shows that the underlying concept is the much older one of warding off the

dangerous influence of the place touched by death. As a Connacht informant put it: "Anywhere a coffin rested will have *Féar Gortach* [the malign "Hungry Grass"] ever after". Some Irish cairns represent protective offerings at such spots where coffins had rested, others at the place where a death had actually occurred (Nic Néill 1948: 49-63); and the same motives must lie behind the parallel customs in the Highlands of Scotland.

Whether the cairns at the top of the storm-beach at Currach Bay, Iona, are to be linked with these ideas does not seem to be known. Too pointed for prehistoric burial-cairns and too regular for clearance heaps, their purpose was probably already forgotten at the time of Pennant's visit nearly two centuries ago, though he seems to have been told that they represented "penances of monks" (Pennant 1774:II, 259). Theoretically they might mark the first resting-place for funerals reaching Iona by sea when weather conditions were adverse in the Sound; but the absence of similar cairns at the usual landing-points would require explanation. Another theory is suggested by an early seventeenth-century description of St. Patrick's Purgatory in County Donegal. This refers to a group of cairns at the north end of that islet in Lough Dearg, each one of which served to commemorate a person buried elsewhere —"trusting, by the prayers and merits of those who daily resort to this Purgatory, to find some release of their pains in the other" (Pinkerton 1857:72). If this were the purpose of the Iona cairns, they may commemorate people lost at sea; but they may equally well be "death-cairns" in the stricter sense of marking, not interments, but the places where a number of people had died, conceivably in some Viking raid.

However enigmatic, remote examples like those at Iona are unlikely to disappear. This cannot be said of the often rather insignificant cairns near modern roads and farm tracks: they are a perpetual temptation to the road- or dyke-mender, and their recording is in many areas long overdue. The main purpose of this note, however, is to emphasise that for even the simplest of customs, outwardly identical, a variety of explanations should be allowed for. The most significant clues may survive, if at all, only in oral tradition.

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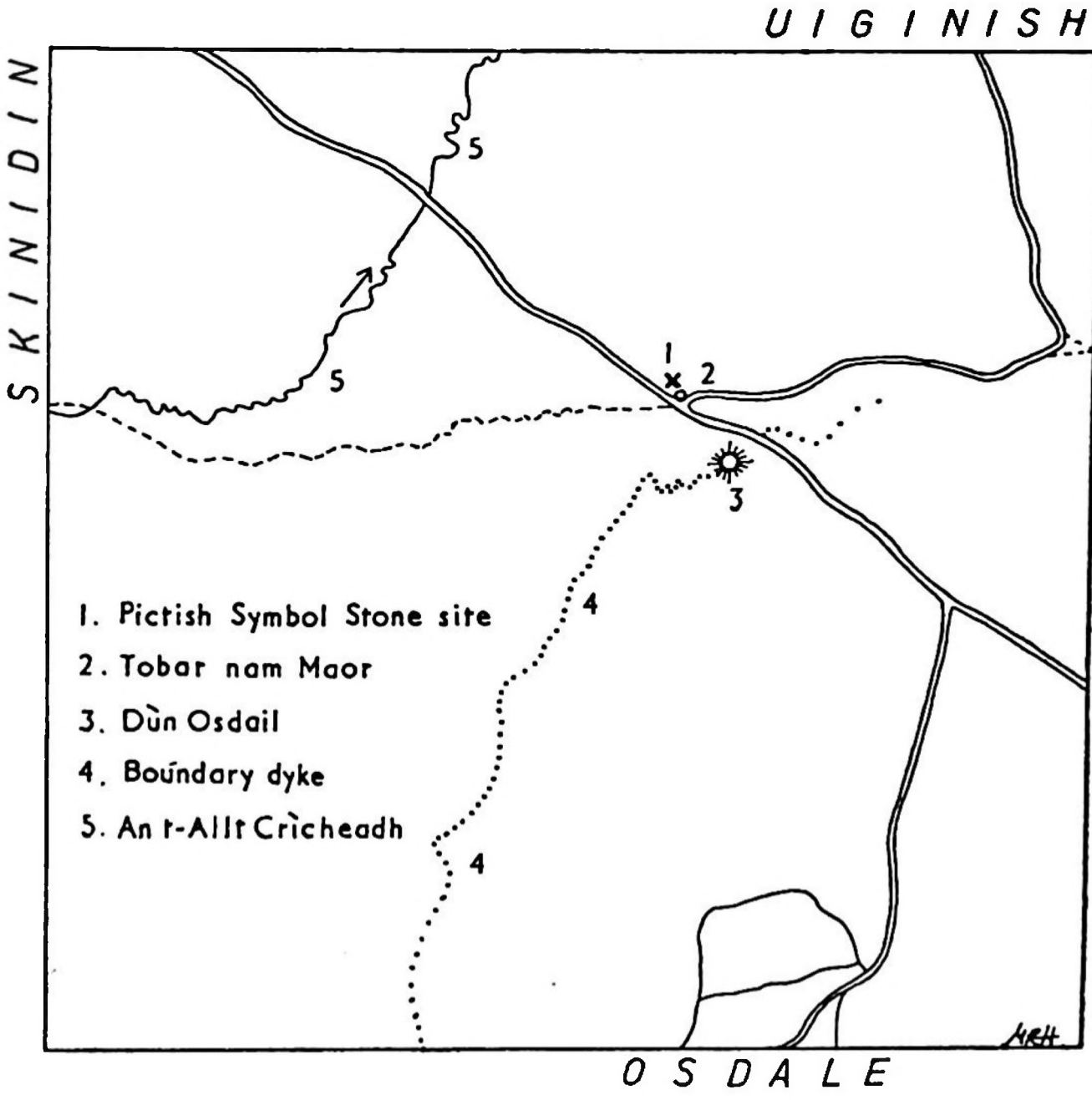
Tobar nam Maor "The Well of the Stewards"

During a recent field trip to Skye, I recorded a tradition about one of the most interesting of the Skye wells. The well is singular on account of its situation and the structures in proximity to it. It is situated a few yards away from the foot of a small hill, some one hundred and thirty feet high, on which stands the broch known as Dùn Osdail. The dating of this structure is problematic, but in common with others of a similar character, it is probably to be placed in the first or second century A.D. with the strong probability of continued occupation or spasmodic occupation for several centuries after that. The well and the broch are on opposite sides of the road leading from Dunvegan to Skinidin in Duirinish. It is clear that this well must at one time have been used by the inhabitants of the broch, and its importance is emphasised by

the presence of a standing stone, bearing Pictish symbols, which originally stood on the peaty mound above the well (Pl. X). The stone, which is damaged and badly weathered is some three feet high and about one foot five inches broad. The symbols consist of the crescent with V- rod and two concentric circles, apparently the "triple disc" symbol, the outer circle of the



disc being eleven and a half inches in diameter. Not only is this well associated with a broch and a Pictish symbol stone, but as is well known locally it is situated on a boundary where the stewards traditionally met. The fact that the names of the lands which meet at this site, Skinidin, Uiginish and Osdal, are all Norse, suggests that this was a boundary in Norse times, and therefore probably in pre-Norse times. An adjacent stream, unnamed on the 6-inch Ordnance Survey map, is known locally

PLATE X

Symbol stone from Tobar nam Maor, Isle of Skye; now in collection of antiquities at Dunvegan Castle (see p. 207).

as *An t-Allt Crìcheadh* "the Boundary Stream", this supporting the evidence for a traditional boundary in the area. Aerial photographs reveal a boundary dyke which runs down from the farmland at Osdal right to the broch, and then appears to continue towards Uiginish in the form of a ditch. In its present form, it is unlikely to be earlier than the eighteenth century, but it may be superimposed upon an older line. The spring emerges from the bank to form a considerable pool. Pieces of white crockery were lying about the well in April 1961. Since the well is situated some distance from habitation, this is noteworthy.

An informant in Glendale stated that the symbol stone was removed from Tobar nam Maor towards the end of the last century by a late chieftain of the MacLeods of Dunvegan, Sir Norman. He remembered the stone being taken by horse and cart when he was a boy of about ten years of age (he is now eighty-eight years old), to Dunvegan Castle, where it forms part of the private collection of antiquities in the Castle.[1] He also remembered that the stone lay flat on the peaty bank above the well. The presence of the symbol stone beside an important well may not be entirely fortuitous. A tradition from early Ireland, concerning the stone of the *Dagda* (the Good God, a tribal god of the old Irish legends), may be worth consideration here. The information is contained in one of the triads of Ireland, a collection of sayings going back in manuscript form probably to the second half of the ninth century A.D. Regarding the three wonders of Connaught, the following wonder is given: "The stone of the Dagda. Though it be thrown into the sea, though it be put into a house under lock, it returns to the [or out of] well at which it is".[2]

It was gratifying to be able to record a contemporary tradition about Tobar nam Maor from a man in Holmisdale, Norman MacAskill, which provides another example of a once widespread belief that a defiled well will react to such profanity by drying up or moving its position. Tobar nam Maor did both. Apparently a man once defiled the well. It immediately dried up and remained dry for seven years. At the end of this period it reappeared, flowing strongly, but in a new position, a small distance from its original place. Lights are traditionally seen at the well, further suggesting its supernormal nature.

It is seldom that one is able to visit a well which has such interesting and complex associations of both an archaeological and a traditional kind.

NOTES

[1] Information from Norman Ross, Fàsach, Glendale.

[2] The original Irish version is found in Kuno Meyer, *The Triads of Ireland*; Royal Irish Academy Todd Lecture Series 13 (Dublin 1906) 32, No. 237: "Trí hamra Connacht . . . Dirna (.i. cloch) in Dagdai, cia fochertar im-muir, cia berthair hi tech fo glass, dodeime a tiprait oca mbí". In this text *dodeime* appears to be a form of *do taeth*; cf. *Contributions to a Dictionary of the Irish Language* (Degra-Dodelbtha), ed. Mary E. Byrne and Maud Joynt, Royal Irish Academy, Dublin 1959.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The photograph on Plate X is Crown Copyright and is reproduced by kind permission of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland. It is published in the Commission's volume on "The Outer Hebrides, Skye and the Small Isles" (Edinburgh 1928), Fig. 264, and No. 528.

ANNE ROSS

Some Minor Manuscript Sources of Scottish Place-Names

A detailed survey of all Scottish place-names must necessarily include as comprehensive a documentation of these names as can possibly be achieved. Otherwise their linguistic history, their precise location, and their proper identification will be difficult, if not impossible, to determine. This documentary evidence plus the results of extensive research "in the field" taking into account, for example, the genuine local pronunciation of a name, traditional explanations of its meaning, and an accurate description of the geographical feature to which the name applies, will then form an adequate basis for establishing the linguistic affinities, morphology and derivation of our Scottish place-nomenclature. In many cases this process will be an easy one, in others even a full range of all the factors just mentioned will not give us any satisfactory clue as to the true origin of the name. For the majority of names, however, careful evaluation of local and documentary evidence will make a reliable explanation possible where otherwise the meaning would have remained obscure.

As far as the collection of documentary material is concerned, it is natural to start with printed "national" sources, and this is precisely what the Scottish Place-Name Survey has been doing during the first nine years of its existence. Here such series as the Register of the Great Seal, the Register of the Privy Seal, the Exchequer Rolls, the Retours, the early Acts of Parliament, and many others, offer invaluable,

although mostly not very early, historical evidence which can throw light on the development of the spelling of a name before it became petrified on the modern map, or even on its contemporary pronunciation.

As a second step, less extensive printed sources like regional sheriff court books, monastic chartularies, borough records, etc. will have to be excerpted, as well as the vast amount of unprinted records available in both Register House in the Scottish capital. When all material has been extracted from these various sources—and it is difficult to give even an approximate figure as to the number of years this enormous task is likely to take, a vast body of documentation referring to early, or at least not too recent, forms of Scottish place-names will have been accumulated in the archives of the Survey, and one might be inclined to think that it would not only be unnecessary but also undesirable to look for further sources, mostly of an unpublished kind.

However, in the few instances in which a full-scale investigation of individual place-names has been conducted, it has been found that such additional minor, local documents are frequently particularly helpful in the elucidation, and especially the identification, of local names, as well as in determining the extent of land, for instance, to which a specific name applies, or the sequence of names if several have been applied to the same feature over the centuries, or the correct location of a "lost" name, i.e. one that appears in earlier documents but is now no longer used.

It is for this reason that, although the Survey is still far from having covered the full range of major printed sources, we have nevertheless never neglected and recently paid increasing attention to the odd manuscript, which has been found to be in private possession during our field-work trips to various parts of the country. Material relevant to our studies can turn up in the most unexpected form, as a short description of one or two manuscripts will show, which were put at the Survey's disposal for inspection and photostating when the writer undertook some field-work in Upper Banffshire in the summer of 1960.[1] There was, for instance, a small notebook entitled "Scroll Copy" which gives the population of the parish of Mortlach in the year 1821, farm by farm, and name by name, as well as a full list of the inhabitants of Dufftown, street by street, in October 1826. Another, slightly more faded, manuscript consists of four foolscap pages and sets out according to

its title, the "State of Division of the Duke of Gordon's part of the Seat Room of the Parish Church of Mortlach among His Graces Tenants of Achendoun and Glenrinnes, subject to Alteration when circumstances shall require it.—August 1826". As can be imagined, this is a mine of information for anyone interested in the farm- and croft-names of that particular part of Banffshire.

A third manuscript does look, at a first glance, much less likely to produce anything of interest to the place-name scholar, for this is a lengthy, but well and beautifully written account of the hazards and hardships the author suffered when fulfilling his brother's last wish by taking him from Edinburgh to Strathaven for burial, in February 1840. This most moving narrative written about thirty years later, has an appendix of eight pages in which the houses in the "Braes of Strathaven" are listed, together with their inhabitants. The author, addressing himself to another brother, introduces this section as follows: "Having said so much already, I will intrude a little further and try to refresh my memory and give you the population of the 'Braes' individually, and who were all personally known to me (with the exception of 20 marked X) in my childhood and youth."

One need hardly add that local historians and genealogists as well as students of local place-names find this part of the manuscript a profitable source. It certainly appears in a place in which the present writer would never have suspected it. Accidental as such finds may be, however, this does not detract from their value to the Place-Name Survey, and without wanting to overemphasise their importance, one would hope that they would become accessible in the future in a less sporadic way. It is definitely not saying too much when we stress that we should be most grateful if owners of similar manuscripts were to make them available to us for inspection and, potentially, photostating or microfilming, for a limited period.

NOTE

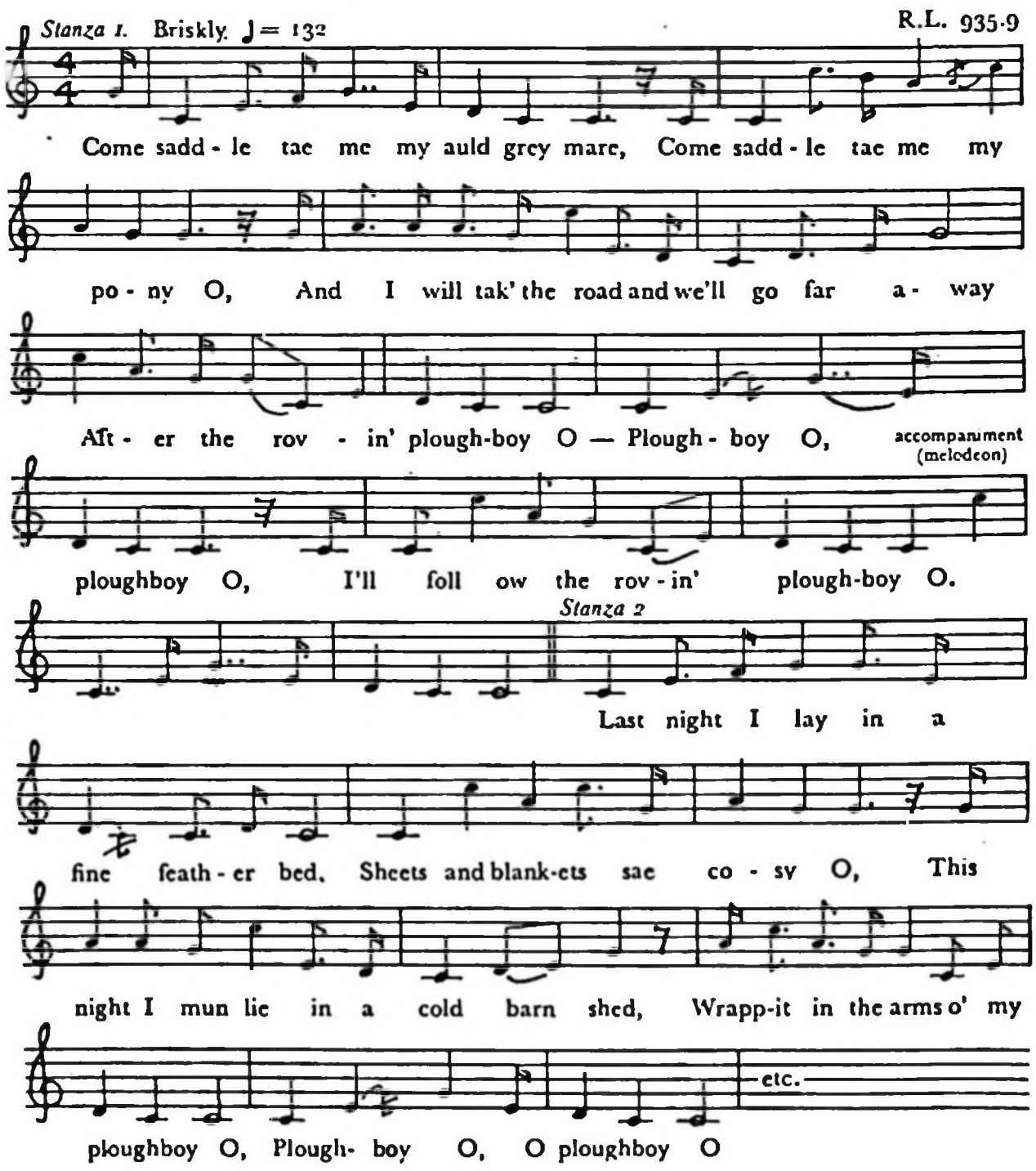
[1] The writer gratefully acknowledges his debt to Colonel and Mrs Cumming of Glenrinnes Lodge and to Mr A. C. W. Sinclair of Tomintoul for kindly making these manuscripts available to the Place-Name Survey of the School of Scottish Studies.

W. F. H. NICOLAISEN

How a Bothy Song Came into Being

In the Spring of 1952, while on a collecting tour in the Turriff area of Aberdeenshire, I was given the name of John MacDonald of Pitgaveny, Elgin, my informant assuring me that he knew many old songs. Not long after, I met Mr. MacDonald for the first time. He is a mole-catcher and rat-catcher by profession; in addition, he runs a flourishing local concert party, and is well known as a performer on the melodeon.

Among the first of his songs to be tape-recorded for the School's sound archive was *The Rovin' Ploughboy*, which he had listed among his favourites—he declared that it had "a lovely air", which indeed it has. The following is a transcription of this recording (RL 935 A9):



Come saddle tae me my auld grey mare
  Come saddle tae me my pony O
And I will take the road and we'll go far away.
  After the rovin' ploughboy O

Chorus Ploughboy O Ploughboy O
  I'll follow the rovin' ploughboy O.

Last night I lay in a fine feather bed
  Sheets an' blankets sae cosy O.
This nicht I maun lie in a cold barn shed
  Wrappit in the arms o' my ploughboy O.

A champion ploughman my Geordie O—
  Cups an' medals an' prizes O.
In bonny Deveronside there are none can compare
  Wi' my jolly rovin' ploughboy O.

Sae fare ye weel tae auld Huntly toon
  Fare ye weel Drumdelgie O
For noo I'm on the road, and I'm goin' far away
  After the rovin' ploughboy O.

A month before the above recording was made, John had sent me a written text: this latter includes a verse which he did not sing. It goes as follows:

Whit care I for a fine hoose an' land.
  Whit care have I for a fortune O?
I'd far raither lie in a cold barn shed
  Wrapped in the arms o' my ploughboy O.

In the MS text, this verse is No. 3, coming before "A champion ploughman . . ."

When I asked him about the origin of this song, John told me: "I learned it off a ploughman my father had when I was a laddie—it was his father composed it, he said. His name was Donald MacLeod".

Now it was immediately apparent to me that the first part of the song is nothing more nor less than a displaced fragment of a version of *The Gypsy Laddie* (Child 200). Here are a few specimens of the "parent" verses, as they appear in versions of the ballad printed by Child:

'Come saddle for me the brown,' he said,
  'For the black was neer so speedy,
And I will travel night and day
  Till I find out my ladie.' (Child 200 I 4)

'Yestreen I lay in a fine feather-bed,
And my gude lord beyond me;
But this nicht I maun lye in some cauld tenant's-barn,
A wheen blackguards waiting on me.' (Child 200 C 6)

'O what care I for houses and land?
Or what care I for money?
So as I have brewed, so will I return;
So fare you well, my honey!' (Child 200 G 10)

The remaining two verses of *The Rovin' Ploughboy* had obviously been added at a later stage. Was this where Donald MacLeod's father came in? My instinctive feeling was that the Aberdeenshire place-names were quite recent importations into the song—Drumdelgie, the famous "fairm-toun up in Cairnie", is now known far beyond the North-East because of the bothy song which bears its name—and I had an idea that the singer could enlighten me on this point. A tentative question brought a perfectly plain and straight-forward answer: the song, as he had heard it, was "a bittie short", and needed a better ending, so he had provided it himself.

So much for the words—but what of the tune? Was it related to any previously recorded tune for *The Gypsy Laddie*? Looking into Gavin Greig's *Last Leaves*, I found that he had collected two tunes for the ballad, the first of which seemed clearly related to the *Rovin' Ploughboy* tune. I am indebted to my colleague Miss Gillian Johnstone for the following note: "1b [the second of the three variants of Tune 1 printed in *Last Leaves*] is very reminiscent of *The Rovin' Ploughboy*; its shape is broadly speaking the same, and it has the distinctive rising octave in the second line of the quatrain".

Alexander Keith, editor of *Last Leaves*, appends the following note to the airs he prints for *The Gypsy Laddie*: "Tune 1, which does not appear to have been printed before, is the usual, almost the only, air used in the north with this ballad". (Greig-Keith 1925:128).

We have therefore a fascinating example before our eyes of the evolution of a bothy song. A fragment of Child 200 goes its own way and becomes a lyric song, some ploughman chiel or other following a time-honoured practice by substituting "ploughman" for "gipsy". (It seems a fair guess that this was Donald MacLeod's father's principal contribution.) And when it reaches John MacDonald (himself a folk poet, with a number

of songs to his credit), it acquires the local touches which give it its characteristic stamp—in effect, make it a North-East bothy song.

Interestingly enough, the process did not stop there, for when Jeannie Robertson heard *The Rovin' Ploughboy* on tape, she at once spotted the connection between it and *The Gypsy Laddie*, and when I paid her a visit in Aberdeen only a very short time after she had first heard the tape, I found that she had already set a long version of the Child ballad, got orally with a different air from her own folk, to the "Ploughboy" tune.—It only remains for somebody to use her re-created *Gypsy Laddie* as the starting point for a new lyric song, and the wheel will have come full circle.

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HAMISH HENDERSON

A Folktale from St. Kilda

Dùgan is Fearchar Mór: bhiodh iad a' falbh 'na h-Eileanan Flannach a mharbhadh chaorach—a ghoid chaorach agus 'gan toir leotha Hirte. Agus co-dhiù, là bha seo, dh'fhalbh iad a mhullach na beinneadh[1], Dùgan is Fearchar. Agus bha teampull[2] ann an t-Hirte fo'n talamh far am biodh daoine teicheadh ma thigeadh an namhaid. Agus bha an dorus cho caol air agus chan fhaigheadh sibh a staigh ann mara deidheadh sibh a staigh ann air an oir. Agus dh'fhalbh an dà bhodach a bha seo là bha seo mhullach na beinneadh agus thòisich iad ri eubhach á mullach na beinneadh gu robh na soitheachan-cogadh . . . cogadh a's a' Chaolas Bhoighreach agus a chuile duine aca dhol dh'an teampull. Well, dh'fhalbh na daoine bochd air fad dh'an teampull a bha seo agus 'se rinn mo liagh (*sic*) ach thòisich iad ri buain fraoch; bhuain iad boitean a (*sic*) fraoch a' fear agus thug iad leoth am boitean a' fear air an gualainn is thàinig iad dhachaigh.

Is bha na daoin a's an teampull. Ach bha rùm gu leòr gu h-ìseal a's an teampull. Agus nuair a thàinig iad a nuas a ——[3] cha do rinn iad càil ach chuir iad am boitean ris an dorus agus chuir iad maidse leis agus thac iad a chuile duine riamh bha 'san àite. Ach fhuair aon nighean—bha i cóig bliadhna diag—fhuair ise mach a measg a' cheò a bha seo agus chaidh i ann an uamha dh'fhalach gus an dàinig am bàtà là airne mhàireach[4]

Agus coma co-dhiù là bha seo an déidh dhiu na daoine mharbhadh, chaidh iad a ghabhail ceum—Dùgan is Fearchar. Agus . . . "A ghoistidh! a ghoistidh,"[5] as an dala fear ris an fhear eile, "tha mi faotainn àileadh teine seo!" "Ho! isd amadain! Chan 'eil," as eisein, "ach teine dh'fhàg thu as do dheaghaidh." Agus dé bh'ann ach bha an nighean a theich bha i fo'n a' chreag a bha seo fòtha agus cha do rinn i càil ach a h-aodach a chuir ma mhullach na poiteadh a bh'aic air an teine le biadh fiach gun cumadh i an ceò gun a dhol a suas.[6] "Och", as eisein, "a ghoistidh, ghoistidh, 'se an teine dh'fhàg sinn as ar n-deaghaidh".

Well, dh'fhalbh iad an uairsin is ghabh iad ceum agus là airne mhàireach thàinig a' soitheach a bha seo—soitheach a' bhàillidh. Agus bha nighean, bha i a's an toll a bha seo, cha dàinig i mach leis an eagal agus dh'fhan i a's an toll gos a robh am bàta beag gu bhith aig a' chidhe agus nuair a bha am bàta gun a bhith aig a' chidhe, thàinig i mach as an toll agus chaidh an dithis acasan a sìos a choinneachadh an eathar, 'eil thu faicinn? Agus nuair a mhothaich iad dh'an nighean, as an dala fear ris an fhear eile, " 'S fhearr dhuinn falbh agus a marbhadh". Well, cha d'fhuair iad . . . cha d'fhuair iad an t-seansa . . . cha d'fhuair iad an t-seansa marbhadh. Chaidh iad . . . leum na daoine mach as an eathar is fhuair iad greim air an nighean a bha seo agus dh'inns an nighean dhiu a' naidheachd.[7]

Well, rugadh air an dala fear aca—rugadh air Fearchar agus chuireadh e Stac an Aramair a measg nan eòin agus chuireadh Dùgan a Shòaigh, an eilean eile tha an iar air Hirte, measg nan caorach[8] agus a measg nan ian. Well, a' fear a chuir iad a Stac an Aramair, ghearr e as deaghaidh an eathair agus chaidh a bhàthadh—cha do thog iad idir e—ghearr e mach air a' mhuir is leig iad leis gun do bhàsaich e. Ach Dùgan,[9] chaidh a chuir a Shòaigh agus bha e ann bliadhnachan beò; bhiodh e 'g ithe nan caorach is ag ithe nan eòin. Tha na h-asnaichean aige fhathasd ann a shiod: dh'fhiach mi fhèin na h-asnaichean 'na mo làimh.

TRANSLATION

Dugan and Big Farquhar: they used to go to the Flannan Islands to kill sheep—to steal sheep and bring them back to St. Kilda. Well, one day they went up to the top of the hill,[1] Dugan and Farquhar. And there was a temple[2] in St. Kilda, underground, where people used to flee if an enemy came. The

doorway was so narrow that you could not get in unless you entered sideways. And these two fellows went to the top of the hill one day and began to shout from the top of the hill that there were warships in the Kyle of Boreray and everyone to go to the temple. Well, all the poor people went to this temple and what did my bold lad(s) do but begin to cut heather; each of them cut a bundle of heather and carried his bundle on his shoulder and they came home.

The people were in the temple, but there was plenty of room down inside it. And when they (the two men) came . . . they immediately placed the bundle against the doorway and they lit it with a match and they choked every single person in the place. But one girl managed—she was fifteen years of age —she managed to get out in the smoke there and she went to a cave to hide until the ship arrived on the following day.[4]

At any rate, one day after they had killed the people, they went out for a stroll—Dugan and Farquhar. And . . . "My friend!"[5] said one of them to the other, "I get the smell of fire here!" "Oh quiet, you fool! It is only the fire that you have left after you". What was it but the girl who escaped; she was underneath the rock below them and at once she placed her clothes over the top of the pot that she had on the fire with food in it, so as to keep the smoke from ascending.[6] "Och my friend", said he, "it is the fire that we left after us".

Well, they went off then and they took a stroll and the following day the ship came—the factor's ship. And the girl, she was in the hole there; she did not come out through fear and she remained in the hole until the small boat was almost at the pier, and when the boat was almost at the pier she came out of the hole and the two men went down to meet the boat, do you see? When they observed the girl, one said to the other, "We had better go and kill her". Well, they did not get a chance to kill her. The men leapt out of the boat and they caught hold of the girl, and the girl told them the tale.[7]

Well, one of them was seized—Farquhar was seized and put out on to Stac an Aramair among the birds, and Dugan was sent to Soay—on another island west of St. Kilda—among the birds and among the sheep.[8] The man whom they sent to Stac an Aramair, he jumped after the boat and was drowned: they did not pick him up—he jumped into the sea and they left him until he died. But Dugan,[9] he was sent to Soay and he was there alive for years: he used to eat the sheep and the birds. His ribs are there still; I myself have handled the ribs.

This story was recorded in Glasgow in March 1961 from Norman MacQueen, a native of St. Kilda. Clearly the story occupies a central place in the traditions of the islanders; all the St. Kildans whom we have recorded know it, more or less in the form in which Norman MacQueen tells it here. Another version was recorded from Donald MacQueen, also in Glasgow, an uncle of Norman MacQueen. Donald MacQueen begins thus:

"A skiff came to St. Kilda from the mainland hundreds of years ago. Two men came on the skiff with oars of iron . . . They landed and said that they were taking command of the island, and the St. Kildans, they could not say anything".

In conversation, Norman MacQueen said that Dugan and Farquhar used to row to the Flannan Islands with oars of iron and told that on one occasion a sailing ship tried to arrest them but failed utterly despite the fact that the St. Kildan boat was laden with sheep.

Substantially the same version of the story (omitting, however, the detail of the oars) was taken down in 1862 from Euphemia MacCrimmon, "the oldest woman in St. Kilda", (she declared her age to be 60 in 1860) by Anne Kennedy, niece of the minister of the island. This along with answers to a "string of questions . . . on points of antiquarian interest" was embodied in a letter from Miss Kennedy to Capt. F. W. L. Thomas, who published it in May 1874 (*Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* **10** [1875] 702-11).

Whether or not the story preserves any recollection of an actual event, St. Kildan tradition avers that the population which the island carried up to 1930 were all descendants of colonists who arrived subsequent to the massacre. That these came from Skye, Harris and Uist, as the islanders claim, seems to be corroborated by St. Kildan surnames.

It is more than likely that several strands of tradition have been woven into the story of Dugan and Farquhar. The theme of the massacre of a community by asphyxiation in a cave appears in the famous tale of the murder of the MacLeods of Eigg by the MacDonalds. Here again one person survives. This "sole survivor" motive is a fairly common one. The reference to "oars of iron" is curious; it may reflect a distorted memory of the islanders' first acquaintance with iron-shod oars.

NOTES

[1] *Oiseabhall* in Donald MacQueen's version.

[2] Now called the "Fairy Cave" in English according to Donald MacQueen. In Euphemia MacCrimmon's version, "Teampull na Trionaid . . . Trinity temple or church."

[3] Phrase in recording unintelligible.

[4] "The following day" really refers to the day after that on which Dugan and Farquhar smell fire. Both the MacCrimmon and Donald MacQueen versions tell how the woman who had escaped came back to the deserted village for food and fire. Both make it plain that there was a considerable interval between the massacre and the arrival of the ship.

[5] *Goistidh*<M. E. godsib. Apparently used here merely as an intimate form of address. Cf. the development of *gossip* in English and Scots.

[6] Donald MacQueen relates that the girl "used to kindle a fire during the night and used to place a pot over the fire to keep it alive all day; she did not light it all day in case smoke should be visible and they should see it." In Euphemia MacCrimmon's version the girl flees not to a cave but "to another temple". This is identified by Thomas as St. Brendan's.

[7] In Donald MacQueen's version the girl emerges from hiding calling out, "Thàinig Dia! Thàinig Dia!" "God has come! God has come!"

[8] The wild Soay sheep.

[9] The traditional site of Dugan's dwelling on Soay is called *Taigh Dhùgain*, Dugan's House, by the St. Kildans.

JOHN MACINNES

A Smith's Beam Drill

At this crucial stage in technological history, when the village workshop is being superseded finally by the mass production factory, it is essential that all traditional techniques be recorded in detail. The village smith has been, in fact, a living repository for much of the records of nearly 3000 years of iron technology and thus the preservation of this material is of historical importance. This note describes an almost vanished item in this corpus—the beam drill.

Like the pole-lathe, the beam drill belongs to that compendium of village craftsmanship whose origins may, as with the nail making "oliver" (Graham 1961), be relatively recent, or may be one of the many techniques which reached optimum efficiency in Roman times, and have evolved very little since, The earliest brace and bit, developed perhaps from the bow and pump drills, seems to appear in Assyrian contexts (Thebes) during the early 1st Millennium B.C. and becomes quite common by the Roman period. For metal working in particular, the necessity must have occurred, quite early, for exerting

greater force on the brace than one man could apply unaided. The weighted lever is the obvious solution to the problem and one can only presume that this device was adopted early and persisted until the eighteenth-nineteenth centuries although little archaeological or documentary evidence exists and the argument is thus dangerously teleological. The existence of prehistoric beam drills, used in the manufacture of perforated stone axe-heads has been adduced from nineteenth century finds at Swiss lake-dwelling sites (Forrer 1907:101). These finds are not satisfactorily dated and the illustration (see Fig. 1) shows an essentially hypothetical reconstruction of museum

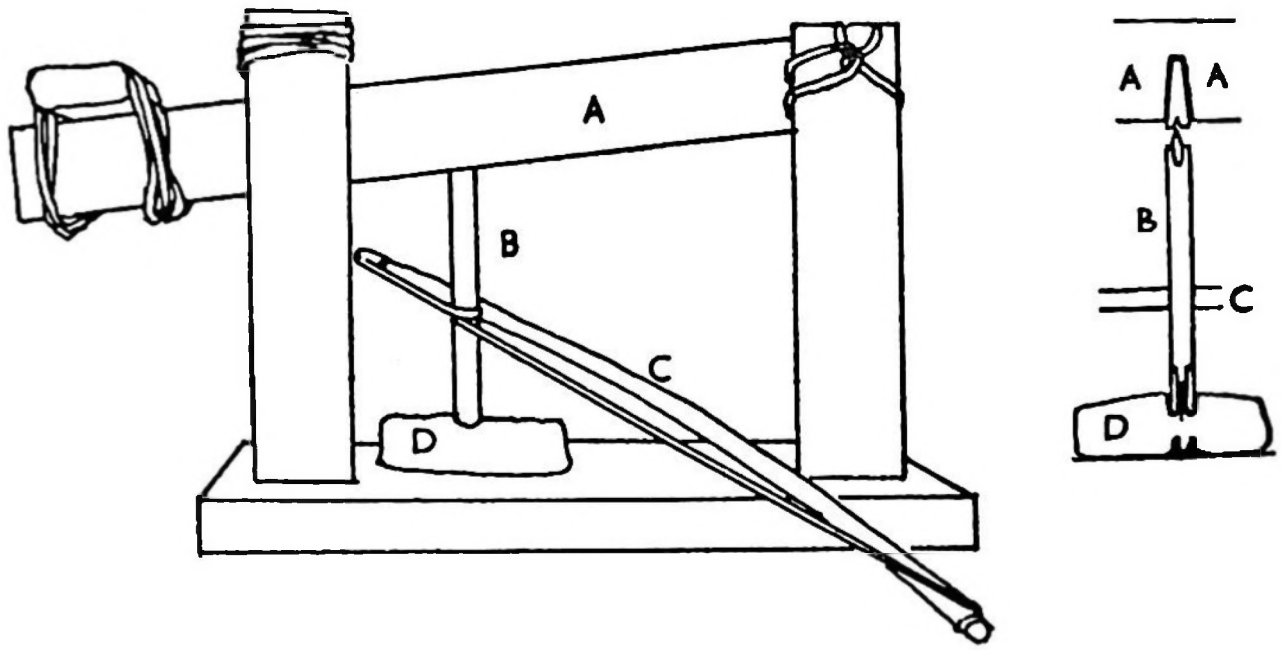

FIG. 1.—Prehistoric (Swiss) Beam Drill, after Forrer 1907: 103 Pl. 29.

material rather than an archaeological deduction from objects found associated in situ, and merely indicates possibilities.

Certainly the beam drill was not uncommon in Britain in the nineteenth century (Jobson 1953:138); an example exists in the Shibden Hall Museum, Yorks, and there is a local name in Suffolk (*sway*).

The particular example illustrated existed in the smithy at Kingston, East Lothian until recently and my attention was drawn to it by Mr. A. Fenton of the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland (The National Museum has acquired the complete contents of this smithy which was last used as such in 1934). The Beam (see Fig. 2) hinges at the struts on the left and is operated by the rope, bar, and chain arrangement shown. At the opposite end of the Beam varying weights can be suspended thus altering the pressure on the brace. The brace

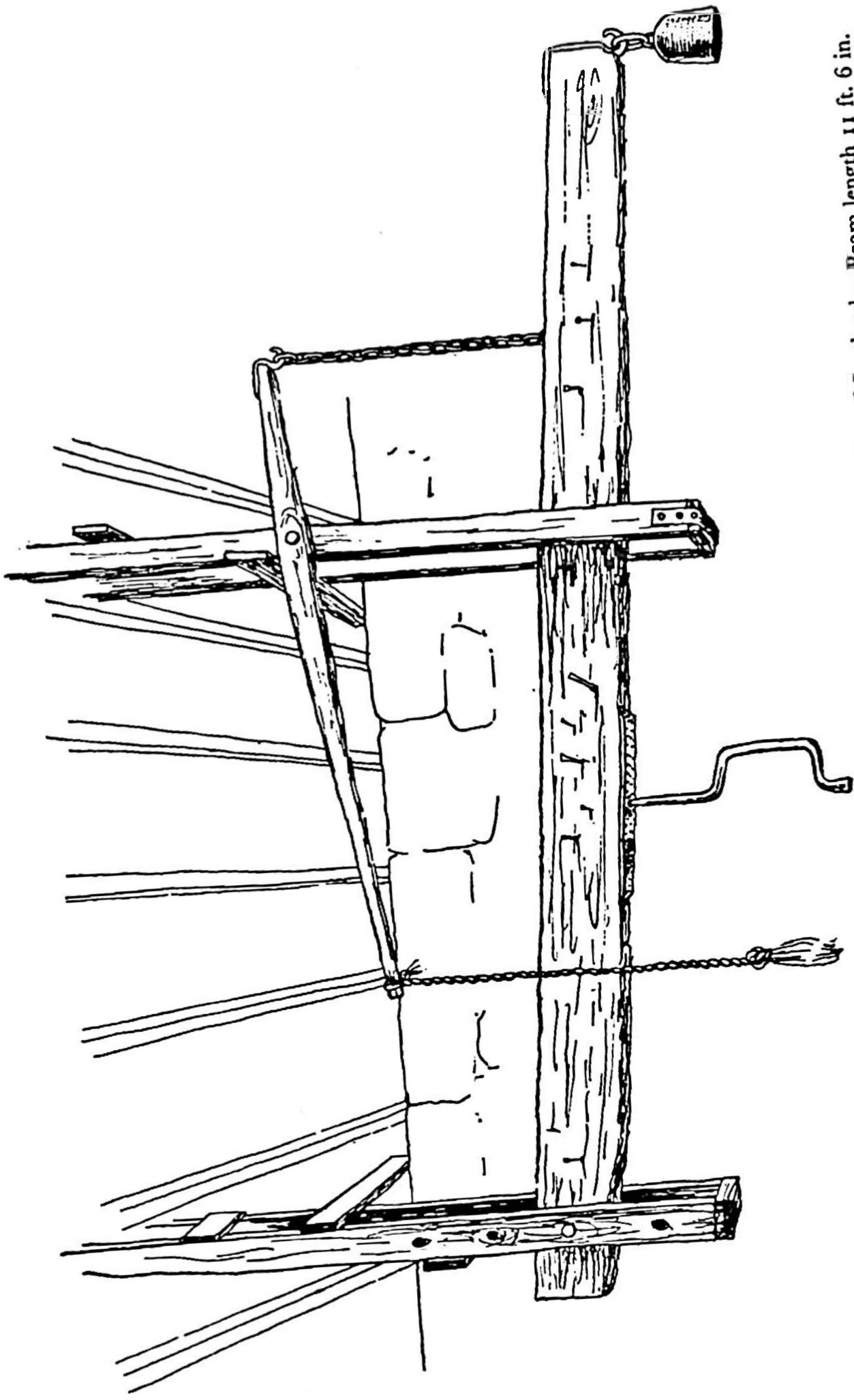

FIG. 2.—A Smith's Beam Drill, now in possession of the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland.—Beam length 11 ft. 6 in.

itself can engage at any point on the metal plate. The whole structure is, of course, suspended from the smithy roof conveniently above the work bench.

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IAIN A. CRAWFORD

C. OTHER NOTES

The Lammas Feasts in Cramond Parish

In John Wood's book, *The Antient and Modern State of the Parish of Crammond*, which he published in 1794, he described the celebration of an annual festival called the Lammas Feast which had been held in the parish up to the year 1758. He dealt very briefly with this and referred the reader to an account which had appeared elsewhere.

It was therefore a surprise to find, when his note-book and a number of letters came to light recently, that he had had in his possession a very graphic account by a man who had himself taken part in one of the more notable skirmishes which were sometimes fought between the herds on Lammas Day.

Unfortunately this account, which covers four very closely written foolscap pages, ends as abruptly as it starts, without a clue to the name of the author. It is therefore presented as an anonymous piece of eighteenth century reporting.

As for the antiquity and first institution of the herds in the west end of cramond parish and corstorphine parish Metting together on lambas day on lenie hill and the herds on the east end of cramond and corstorphine parish Meeting on clermiston hill is of antient practice and hath been handed down and keept in practice from century to century as for the towries on the above Mentioned hills which will be about two Miles distant

from each other and in view of each other they were comonly taken little Notice of through the year till about a Month before lambas when they were rebuilt and put in good repair their hight about ten or twelve foot about three yards wide at the bottom built round with divets and Stones till near the top when Several round divets were cut with a hole in each of them and laid one above another on the top of the towries and on lambas Morning the rod whereon our colours was fixed was put downe the hole on the top of our towrie and was seen by the easteren party letting them know that we were to Meet them on cramond Muir that day and after the herds had all got dinner their antient took them down of the towrie and went down the hill with flying colours the piper playing before him and the herds Marching behind him in order blowing their horns till they came down to lenie port where their company Increassed and became Stronger by the young Men that their Met them before they Marched to battle the form of the herds dinning table on lenie hill near their towrie was about thirty foot long three foot broad the table was Made with divets with the green side up and all the seats round the table of the same form and around all the table were cut out ground about an foot and an half deep and the same breadeth that the herds Might sit easie at dinner the table containued from year to year and Needed little repairation the common entertainment of the herds lambas feast on lenie hill was Sweet creame butter chease which they had in abundance Not only to feast themselves but also poor boyes that came that day to attend them the herds hiered a tylor the night befor lambas who ornamented their colours with ribbons Seued on a large table Naptkin and afterwards put on a long rod or fork Shaft the ribbons were all borrowed from the young girls round the country Side they were aquanted with in these dayes about fifty years ago their was no ribbons worn on the heads of farmers wives nor their daughters nor their Servant Maids in the west end of cramond parish Save a belt ribbon which Some young girls wore I have heard it said that in a centery back young Maidens whose character was blameless in the eys of the world were Married with their own hair ornamented Nothing on their head and widows and young women that had been guilty of furnication were Married with toys seued round with lace which Some old women wear yet at this day the order of the herds marching to Meet one another on cramond Muir was the piper went playing before the antient

with flying colours next the herds in three men rank with horns blowing after and when they Met on the road that yet goes through cramond muir the east party stood on the east Side of the road and the west party stood on the west Side of the road and they Salutted each other the reson of a battle betwixt the two parties was when they were Near eqwall in Strength that the one would not low their colours to the other but when one party was Stronger than the other the Stronger party asked the weaker party what they were for and if they said they were for peace then the antient of the stronger party ordered the antient of the weaker party to low his colours and after lowing his colours they shook hands and ordered their piper to play up and they took a dance together and parted in peace some times they ran a race before they left the Muir and after that each went to their respective places and Spent the afternoon in joyality in running races and playing at the bab and penyston which were games practised in these dayes as for the Number of men and boys some times more some times fewer perhaps about thirty young Men on the westeren Side and as many boys and as for the Number of the races Some times two Some times three and the common thing that the herds received that day from their Masters to Spend was two pence they gave a halfpeny to the races and hapeny to the piper and drunk or plaid at the bab the rest Some times the young Men contributed and Made a race the length of the foot races about a Mile out and in the prizes about sixpence the first threepence or a pair of garters the second and a little mell to the third and if any More running they had Nothing I shall now give you an account of the bloody battle fought on cramond Muir I am not sure on what year if was fought I think it was on the year Seventeen hundred and thirty four I heard it said at that time that the time that the battle lasted was observed by a gentleman who was rideing through the Muir when the battle began to continue half an houer it was said at that time to be Mr Stewart of binnie for their were near as Many of our party fled as were of us that stood and hazered our lives in the high places of the field it was said that the above named gentleman rod after these of our Side that fled and Made them to return back thretining them that if they did Not that he would Shoot them for I heard it Said at that time that it was in Some Mesure oweing to that gentleman that we gained the victory that day when we were Marching to cramond Muir the place apointed for battle I

was in good spirits for their would have been on our Side about thirty Stout young men and as Many boys and that day the east party was first on the field of battle and they Sent out a Spy to Meet us and to take a view of us on our March to them and So Soon as he met us he began boasting like goliah of old telling us that their was a man among them that would bet any two of us betwixt and kirkliston new bridge I tould him that he was Not sure of what he spoke till once he made it to appear he also boasted that our company was weaker than theirs and that we would be made to low our colours I tould him that he was Not Sure of that neither till he Made it to appear so when we Met on the spot of ground where the battle was fought the spy that Met us whose name was grive pointing out from among their company to me said that I was one that wanted Matching they all fixing their eyes on me I spoke up and said that if we Matched we would match altogether so their antient asked our antient whose name was John Muir what he was for he returned him that answear that he was for any thing that his company was for so their antient tould ours that we were weaker than them and they would oblidge us to low our colours so I then took a veiw of them and turning took a veiw of our own company I thought we were an eqwall Match to them I then spoke up to our own company and desiered them Not to low our colours one of them then took hould of our colours and expressed himself in the following Manner come let us go to Mutton hole I then seing the fork Shaft taken hold of whereon our colours was fixed to carrie them of was lifting my stick to knock him down that was taking hold of them at the same instant grieve whom I above Named haveing his eye on Me cried out that I was the first that lifted a stick then the battle was Set on in array with great furey sure I am Not in Military order on knocking down another if their were any by standers their they Might have Seen at the on Set 20 or 30 knocked down in a minnet and at the same instant their were four of them striking against Me and I alone striking against them when one of them drew out from before Me and came behind my back and Strook Me on the head which made Me fall to the ground and after lieing on the ground he strook Me on the left arm and hand which Made My hand swell being the hand that I held my stick in so Soon as I found them Not striking on Me I sprang up to My feet My stick lieing on the ground at My foot I took hold of it and the first Man that I ran to and Strook at was John Muir our own

antient his back being to Me and being So ordered that I being at Some distance from him the end of My stick strook on his shoulder or back which made him look back I then seeing his face said o John is that you I after ran to Robert cunningham at that time farmers son in clermieston and Strok him on the head which Made him fall in a whin bush and Made a women cry out and call Me a Murdering doge for wemon were comeing running for fear of their children as the cry was flying through the country Side that many was lieing dead on the spot where the battle was fought after that the eastren party were flying and running from the field where the battle was fought and the cry was Made through our camp that our colours was carried of by our enemies for the fork shaft brok near the end that our colours was fixed on which gave one of them an opertunity of running of with them it was said at that time that the person that ran of with both our colours and theirs did Not Stop till he was east at wardie So after finding it true that we heard Noiced through our camp that our colours was carried of Not withstanding we haveing the glory of the victory it Made our anger Still to increass and after consulting together we agreed to take 4 pair Shoes of their feet and haveing loused the buckles of thomas hodges yet alive we changed our Minds thinking it too cruel we then agreed and took four of their coats of their backs the above Named persons being one of the four which we carried to leny port in triumph and keept till we received our colours So we Spent that afternoon rejoiceing in the victory that we that day had obtained over our eniemies and did ron no race but drunk the Money that we had collected for them and getting our heads dressed that were wounded Mrs robertson at plowlands being the only doctress that clipt the bloody hair from Severall of their wounds and dressed them My head was Not cut tho I got a Stroak which Made Me fall to the ground Some dayes after the battle we heard that our colours were lieing at cowet bridge within a Mile of edinburgh we wearieing to get our colours back in order to get the ribbons that was on them which were borrowed from the young lasses in the Neighbourhood returned back to them which would have been about one pound sterlin value about five or six of us agrees all able young men to go east and get our colours and on our jurney east we held a council of warr Least any of the Men of the place or washer wives should fall on Us or refuse to give us our colours we agreead to Stand closs to one another with our backs to

each other that None were to come behind our backs to knock us down and we all resolved to fight while we were able to stand but we received our colours without any resistance Made and ordered them to come west for their coats I remember the year after I went to cramond Muir with the wester herds and we were stronger than the easteren herds and we Made them low their colours to the ground and I trampled on them with My feet which was very Mortiefying to them I heard it said that severall years before that time that the easteren herds hiered two souldiers that were Marching on the road to go to cramond Muir to feight with them against the westeren herds and the same year the westeren herds got the victory and the souldiers got their Skins well pand which Made them Swear that they would Never go to a club battle again I knew a Married Man who went to cramond Muir with the westeren herds one year and carried their colours and that his wife Might Not know put a gravet in his pocket least there should be a feight and the gravet about his Neck Made rid with blood and the Same year their was a bloody battle which gave him an ocasion to put it about his name was James fortown I have heard it said long ago that they have been carried from the feild of battle on both Sides in blankets but I Never heard of any that died &cc the Meeting together of the whipmen for any thing I know is also of antient date the reson of their Meeting together once every year is to keep up brotherly love and good order among the whipmen the young whipmen were received into Memberships about twelve or fourtain Years of age when they could drive a plough or go alonge with a full plowghman and drive two loaded horses for in these dayes about forty or fifty years ago before the toll roads were Made cols and lime were carried in Sacks on horse backs and when a Young whipman was received into Membership he was bound to carrie in his bonnet (for their was No hats worn among the vulger in those dayes) an knife ilson lingle an Needle and thread or lingle and if his Neighbours horse threw of their load being alone if they within cry of their Neighbour they were bound to return back and help their Neighbour on with his Load if one Man came on the coal or lime hill and Several of his Neighbours before him they were bound to wait and help him and bring him alonge with them they were bound Not to Speak ill of their Master behind his back but to be faithfull in his Service behind his back as well as before his face when carts began to be in fasion after the

tollroads were Made if a whipman couped his cart he was fined if tome of eight pence if full of four pence commonly the whipmen in these dayes had their Meetings at publick houses on the roadsides every Meeting of whipmen had one bailie and two officer which were chosen on the day of their Meeting before they parted and were to containue that year to observe good order in that qwarter wherein they were Members and if any of that qwarter wherein they were Members were gwilty of any fault the bailie ordered his officer to Summon him before him against their Next Meeting and he was finned according to the rules of that law the whipmen perscribed &c on the day that the whipmen Met being once a year in the Summer Seson they hiered a piper and were very Merry in the afternoon Some times the Servant girls that lived Near the place of their Meeting would have come and the young lads and them would have danced together for it was a very rare thing to hear of furnication commited in these dayes when a gentleman whipman was ridding by the whipmen on his jurney the bailie of the whipmen with his bonnet in his hand and his officer at his back with the pint stoup and cap with ele and the piper playing the baillie of the whipmen salutted the gentleman and desiered that favour of him to drink with the whipmen commonly the gentlemen Stopt his horse and took the cap in his hand and drank the bailie and whipmens health and after throwing them a Sixpence or Shilling they wished him a good jurney with a loud hosa the blowing of horns are of antient date as we read in Scripture and Still continues in practice by posts when comming through towns horns in the Night Seson are heard a great way of and in the winter Seson were bloan at every farmers house about eight at Night when the suppered the horses and cowes and as their was No watches in those dayes nor clocks in the west end of cramond parish the stars were their rull by Night to witt the Seven Stars the evening and Morning Stars and the cock crowing in the Morning these were all the rules that we then observed and were Never far disapointed I had almost forgot to Mark down the Names of two of our Men which ought to be keept in record written on parchment in letters of gold to witt James lersman James letham the first fought with a Strong lithe oak Stick with a knot on the out end of it the second fought with two catch Shafts on of which he lifted from one of his Neighbours Sides after he was knock down he fought with one and keept of the stroaks that his eniemies gave with the other these two Men

waxed vailent in fight and Made Severall to fall to the ground and like davids vailent Men of old ought to be Named amongst the first three

DAVID SIMPSON

Book Reviews:

Burns: A Study of the Poems and Songs. By Thomas Crawford. Edinburgh, Oliver and Boyd, 1960. xvi+400 pp. 35s.

Mr. Crawford has done a rare, difficult, and valuable thing. He has written a critical work on the poems of Burns without being deflected into biography or dithyrambics on Burns the Man. There are signs that something similar may happen to Byron; which is salutary, since after all the reason why the men are remembered is that they wrote the poems.

There are various ways of doing it, but Mr. Crawford is doubtless right in pushing ahead empirically, in the light of the critical methods in vogue and the main themes that occupy attention nowadays. The result is a book with which anyone can agree or disagree in detail as he reads; and that is the best thing a critic can do for his reader and his subject, for the attention is on Burns, not on any "original" "revaluation" or pretentious theory which would focus attention on the critic rather than on the subject. It is a book for students of Burns by a student of Burns, and one is grateful for it, and for the obvious fact that this student admires his author. To deal properly with it, then, one would have to go over it in detail and discuss one's agreements and disagreements with points as they arise, but that could be done satisfactorily only in long sederunts with Mr. Crawford. That one feels like that is the best proof that Mr. Crawford has done what he set out to do; in a review one had best confine oneself to general impressions.

Mr. Crawford is indubitably right in treating Burns as a poet in his own time and place. He has tried to work back beyond "Romantic" ideas and to establish his critical position first in the late eighteenth century and then in the present day. In this he has not been quite successful. Eighteenth-century literature was primarily social. For success, a writer had to be a social being and also a forcible individual. Burns was both, and, as Mr. Crawford, like Jeffrey before him, points out, he was not isolated but grew up in a society which was neither unintelligent nor illiterate. He must be studied not only as an individual bundle of emotions *plus* a philosophic mind, but

also as an individual in relation to other individuals and a participant in the interests, occupations, and ploys of his time. Relations and participations must be examined in terms of society as well as in terms of emotion and thought, and they will then be seen to exist on different levels. Personal relations may vary from deep love and hate to casual acquaintance, and many things do not involve deep convictions about religion, politics, or sex. It is here that I am dubious about some of Mr. Crawford's judgements. He takes everything with a uniform seriousness that (to my mind) is inappropriate, for a social being like Burns would not. The emotion of *Ae fond kiss* may be a profound personal experience, but it is on a different and more general plane that Burns blithely hymns *the lasses O*!

This difference of levels may be observed in the Epistles. The epistle in verse—and, as W. P. Ker pointed out, especially the verse epistle in braid Scots—was a well understood thing. It could be used for different motives, and it must observe the distances between the parties. To write to a close companion of youth like David Sillar was one thing, to reply to a "fan letter" from one who claimed notice as a fellow poet like Lapraik was another, to answer an invitation from a genial acquaintance with whom Burns had hit it off on a cheerful evening, like Logan, was yet another. Mr. Crawford fails in taking the epistle *To the Goodwife Of Wauchope House* as an example of how "many of Burn's compliments to the aristocracy sound utterly hollow and unreal today". Mrs. Scott, like Lapraik, had liked the Kilmarnock poems and wrote to say so. Like many of her kind—and some of her relatives—she enjoyed spinning rhymes, and, with good precedent, wrote in the accepted fashion, to which Burns replied in kind. That is all there is to it. The familiarity of address was part of the game. To have addressed Dr. Blacklock in an ordinary letter as "my good old cockie" and to have referred to Mrs. Blacklock as "honest lucky" would have been mere bad manners; in the convention it was admissible and would be appreciated by all concerned. Part of the whole affair, and of eighteenth century writing as a whole, was, again, the pleasure of skill. Cleverness was—and is—a value.

This obtains throughout the poems and songs, and if we do not notice it we miss something not only characteristic but remarkable. Burns was entirely aware of his audience and modulated tone, style, and sentiment accordingly. He was not always tactful, but on the whole he judged his distances

and expressed his shades of meaning and feeling with admirable precision. It is a mistake to think of him as emotionally identified with his subjects at all times, and of his cooler exercises of observation as failures. Mr. Crawford has reservations about the *Farmer's Address to his Auld Mare Maggie*. Does he expect Burns to be sloppy about a horse, or find it necessary for him to be continually making the quasi-allegorical connexion that occurs in *To a Mouse*, when a trivial happening coincides with the poet's mood and so acquires a personal significance? *Hallowe'en* is a matter of manners-painting touched with gossipy satire; *The Cottar's Saturday Night* (which one is glad to see Mr. Crawford giving its proper value) is manners-painting touched with respect and a sort of regret for lost innocence. *The Jolly Beggars* is more complex—too complex to discuss here —but it also is manners-painting, touched with the infectious hilarity of the scene, but observed from a distance sufficient to make Burns criticise by the very form of the poem, halfway between *Hallowe'en* and *The Beggar's Opera*.

I am dubious also about Mr. Crawford's values as shown by his comparisons with other poets. The comparison of the close of *John Anderson My Jo* with that of Wordsworth's utterly different poem *A slumber did my spirit seal* is merely inept. Yeats, D. H. Lawrence, and Mr. T. S. Eliot are the great figures for Mr. Crawford's generation. Burns certainly must stand up to the tests involved in giving him his proper place among the great, but are these comparisons fruitful? I should rather use Burns to test them: they would each come rather badly out of it, to my mind. The Cambridge habit of eternally placing writers in ranking order is getting tiresome, and is of no great use to critical understanding or appreciation. So is the older and commoner habit of conscripting writers into our own sectarian armies, moral, political, ecclesiastical, and so on. We need discrimination, and Burns can be discriminated as a writer, and his writings from one another, only by someone who knows the eighteenth century writers, minors like Soame Jenyns and the Whiteheads and Peter Pindar and Byrom and Scott of Amwell as well as Pope and Fielding, and knows them by having read and enjoyed them for their own sakes at their own level, by reading, not by the self-conscious, conscientious process of "research". Mr. Crawford's attitude to the eighteenth century men is too much that of Herr Ritter, whom he has found all too helpful. He is oppressed by two academic habits, that of Göttingen (let us say) and that of Cambridge. It is

natural, and perhaps proper; other men have gone too far the other way. He is oppressed also by the expectation that he should take sides, which distorts, for instance, his view of Burns's Edinburgh acquaintances and of the results of his visit in 1787. On the other hand he has the advantage of native knowledge of Scottish values in speech, feeling, and—if he would allow himself to see it more broadly—social habit.

This notice seems critical of Mr. Crawford, but is really sympathetic. The difficulties are understood. He has given us an unco quantity of fine confused feeding, and deserves our gratitude for it. A student fresh to Burns may not have a clear, precise, well-lit figure in his head: all the better. No student who has gone any way into Burns dare neglect Mr. Crawford's book, or will be tempted to undervalue it.

W. L. RENWICK

More West Highland Tales, Volume II. Edited by Prof. Angus Matheson, J. MacInnes, Prof. H. J. Rose and Prof. K. Jackson. Oliver and Boyd. Edinburgh. 1960. 55s.

The problem of editing and publishing the large corpus of Gaelic folk-tales collected in Scotland, in MS and on tape, is a formidable one. Indeed two distinct problems are involved: one concerning scholarly manpower and the other concerning finance. But both may be said, in a sense, to stem from the same public attitude, an indifference to a large slice of the history of Scotland. It is this indifference which makes specialisation in Gaelic studies seem foolhardy to many students, and which makes funds for research and publication hard to acquire.

The book under review is a most handsome contribution to the publication of these Gaelic folk-tale riches, yet it underlines certain problems which should be faced. It would take many more volumes of this size to complete the publication of Campbell of Islay's MSS, and there still remains the large quantity of material collected in Scotland by members of the Irish Folklore Commission and of the School of Scottish Studies, and by other private collectors during the last hundred years. This is not a task that should be tackled haphazardly, or on a shoe-string budget: to do it that way is almost inevitably to do it badly.

Ideally, publication and analysis of this corpus of folk-tales should go hand in hand. This would entail a great deal of preparatory work: the meticulous cataloguing and calendaring of the collections, and the compiling of motif and other indexes.

Such a process would enable the whole publication to be planned on orderly lines, making the maximum contribution to understanding of a subject which at best is lit by fitful, if magical, lights.

The editors of the present volume have had to contend with these basic difficulties, not of their own making, and not susceptible to solution by them. They have had to contend with other difficulties to which they are anxious not to admit. A great deal of work on the Campbell MSS had been done by J. G. Mackay, who had largely prepared this and as yet unpublished volumes for the press. "Volume II is indeed his memorial", says Professor Jackson in his prefatory note. But Mackay had apparently committed himself to a volume-by-volume publication of Campbell's materials without substantial rearrangement of the items. A collection made a hundred years ago, and for long available for inspection, need not be published in so mechanical a way.

Furthermore, Mackay had adopted principles of textual editing which are now quite out of fashion, and rightly so. Admittedly his problem was not an easy one. He had to deal with versions of tales from a wide variety of dialect areas, written down by many different scribes of widely varying competence. Some, like John Dewar, seem to have been to a large extent illiterate in Gaelic; others, like Hector Maclean, were fully literate. Some may have set too great a store on their literacy: probably J. G. Mackay himself did. It is disconcerting to see from footnotes here and there that Mackay altered words and expressions, to bring the diction of the tales closer to a literary norm of which he approved. Thus on p. 120 the MS form *sloop* has been changed to *aon-chrannaich*, and on the same page *maighstir* is substituted for *caibhtinn*; but on p. 126 *caibhtinn* is retained. On p. 126 also, the MS *air son an do cheannaich e iad* has been changed to *do'n do cheannaich e iad* (The gain, if it is a gain, is very marginal). On p. 164, the MS *Dh'fheòraich e air son na banachaig* has become *Chuir e fios air a' bhanchaig*, which has a different nuance. The form *dhuit* appears regularly, for all dialects represented, but other forms which are not nineteenth century standard literary Gaelic are retained, e.g. *char* (= *chaidh*), *dar* (= *nuair*), *roimhid* (= *roimhe*), *na leòr* (= *gu leòr* or *nas leòr*), and *dorusd* (= *dorus*). In many instances the MS forms are given in footnotes, but the editorial principles are not clear enough to indicate when we have dialect forms retained and when not. The impression that one gets is that

Mackay could not make up his mind how to tackle this problem. This makes the book somewhat less valuable for students of Gaelic as distinct from students of the folk-tale.

It should be emphasised, however, that when we allow for these vagaries of Mackay's, the Gaelic text has been edited with great skill, sensitivity and consistency by Professor Angus Matheson, and seen through the press with meticulous care by the editorial team, and especially (as is acknowledged) by Mr. John MacInnes. But in any future volumes it would be only fair to the editors that the bogey of Mackay's predilections should be firmly laid.

The items in this volume are varied in subject matter and in style, and the volume might for this reason have a fairly wide appeal, although the price indicates that the publishers do not anticipate this. The stories range from historical or semi-historical anecdotes such as *Murchadh, Mac Tighearna Ghèarr-loch*, and *Sliochd nam Burraidhean* (the story of a disastrous fight between two septs of the MacCallums), to stories in which several international folk-tale themes are intertwined, such as *Uirsgeul na Nighinn gun Bhaisteadh*, in which the themes of the Homecomer's Vow, Bluebeard, and the Calumniated Wife appear, the latter being worked out in some detail. In between these extremes there are legendary, semi-historical stories such as *Feadan Dubh an t-Siosalaich*, the tale of a seventeenth century Chisholm chief's visit to Italy and his piper's acquiring of a black pipe chanter of special value; plain adventure stories with no supernatural elements, such as *Mac an t-Seòladair*, *An Nighean Sgitheanach* (a tale of how a Skye maid acquired riches and lived happily thereafter), and *Mac a' Chìobair* (a fantastic story of a poor man's wooing of a rich man's daughter); stories about fairies and mermaids, such as *Fear Gheusdo* (which tells of the magical transporting of a cow from Skye to Uist, and the eating of a *bodach-sìdhe*, or fairy changeling, by those left at home in Skye), and *A' Mhaighdean Mhara* (the popular story of how a mermaid marries a human being); folk-tales largely concerned with a succession of shape-shiftings, such as *Fiachaire Gobha* and *Na Trì Saighdearan*; and tales of enchantment and deliverance, such as *An Cat Glas* and *Fear a' Bhratain Uaine*. The book would have benefited from a more coherent arrangement of the stories.

Some of these seem to be of particular interest because their themes are meagrely attested in Scottish Gaelic tradition. Thus *An Cat Glas* is a "Cat-redaction" of a fairly widespread

European story of enchantment and deliverance not otherwise known in Scottish Gaelic printed sources (Reidar Christiansen remarks in *Irish and Scandinavian Folk-tales*, p. 114, that "Welsh and Scottish Gaelic versions do not occur".) The theme of corpse-eaters, which occurs in *Am Marsanda agus an Duine Eile*, is also rare in Gaelic tradition.

The style and plot of the stories varies from the triple repetition that is so common in Gaelic folk-tales to continuous, and sometimes gripping, narrative. Sometimes the language is stylised (although there are not many "runs" in these stories); at other times it is plain, or even bald. Anglicised usages appear in some, as in *Fear a' Bhratain Uaine*, while others retain a sinuous Gaelic idiom throughout. There is much useful work to be done on an analysis of these various styles, and on the possible connections of certain of them with the literary as opposed to the folk tradition in Gaelic. The overall impression one gets is of a people marvellously at ease with the seen and the unseen worlds, using a language that has been made malleable for the purpose of such story-telling over many centuries. When the Census statistics come to us later this year they will tell us only half-truths about Gaelic in Scotland. Their story will be one of decline in numbers: they can tell us nothing of the quality of this speech, which still graces many small gatherings throughout Scotland.

Something must be said about the notes to the stories. Most of these are by J. G. Mackay, whose extensive and curious fund of information must excite admiration. He quotes many parallel versions of stories, and these lists are sometimes extended by the editors. It is to be regretted that the editors did not feel free to extend their own share of the notes, and it is to be hoped that this self-effacement will not survive in any future volumes. An index of rarer words would have been welcome: one of the few words to escape the editors' fine net is *òrd*, on p. 44, where the MS's *òrd mhath mhaide* should doubtless have been retained, in the sense of "a good *piece* of wood" (Mid. Ir. *ordu* is feminine, and the word survives in some Gaelic dialects, usually in connection with fish—*òrd(u) éisg* "a morsel of fish"). There remain some obscurities of vocabulary, but these are very few in number, and the editing of the text, and the translation, have added considerably to our precise knowledge of Gaelic usage. The translation is itself something of a work of art.

DERICK S. THOMSON

Poems From Panmure House. Edited with an Introduction by Helena Mennie Shire. Printed at Cambridge for *The Ninth of May*. By Sebastian Carter.

These two poems and one traditional ballad are transcribed from the Commonplace-book (ca. 1630) of Robert Edwards, minister of Murroes Parish two miles north of Broughty Ferry, a dozen miles from the Newtyle house—still occupied—where the Bannatyne MS was written seventy years previously.

The two poems, which may be songs, are pleasant but undistinguished. The ballad version of "The Sheath and the Knife" (Leesome Brand) with its perfect refrain, is a treasure:

> There was a sister and a brother
> the sun gois to under the wood
> who most intirelie lovid othir
> god give we had nevir beine sib. . . .

Mrs. Shire has printed opposite the Scottish ballad the Danish "Redselille og Medelvod" (Roselille and Ole) which, with her Introduction, Gloss and Commentary, make her booklet a valuable addition to ballad scholarship as William Motherwell foresaw:

> "Could, however, there be MS copies of other of our ancient ballads recovered, it certainly would be a most desirable and valuable acquisition."

One suggestion. She refers (p. 9) to "the poignant refrain of the broom, celebrating lost loveliness:

> The brume blooms bonnie and says it is fair. . . .
> And we'll never gang doun to the brume onie mair."

But the incest motive in this version of "Leesome Brand", compared with "The Broom of Cowdenknows", "The Broomfield Hill" and the song "Allan Maclean" with its stanza:

> I asked bonny Sally
> To go to the broom
> "O yes" replied Sally
> "Tho it be to my ruin,

all suggest that the broom is a traditional symbol for illicit love.

WM. MONTGOMERIE

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Items in bold type denote titles of contributions ; the names of contributors appear in small capitals.

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