

An Emigrant's Letter in Arran Gaelic, 1834

RONALD I. M. BLACK

Reference may also be made to the burden of excessive cost of postage; a letter to Great Britain costing 4s. 10½d. Naturally, few letters were sent or received. In those days, however, letters were long and interesting. Encouraging letters sent home tended to increase emigration from the old sod (McKillop 1902: 64).

Thus wrote the industrious chronicler of the settlers from the island of Arran in Megantic County, Quebec; the truth of his statements is borne out by the letter here edited. Its writer, a young man of about twenty-five called William Hendry (or Henry, both spellings being used indiscriminately), was the eldest of thirteen children of Charles and Margaret Hendry of Penrioch in north-west Arran. Penrioch (*Peighinn Riabhach*, Brindled Pennyland) faces Kintyre across the Kilbrannan Sound; it survives as a farm behind the village of Pirnmill, which grew up along the shore in the early twentieth century. A mile north on the Lochranza road, just feet from the shore, is the tiny Congregationalist burial ground of Lennamore. It contains about 31 graves dated 1794-1898, and five of the eight inscribed stones preserve the memory of a Hendry or of a married woman born a Hendry. The name is of Ayrshire origin and has been Gaelicised simply as *Hendri* (Hendry 1857: 1). It is always spelt Hendry in Arran nowadays, and this is the spelling preferred in the present article.

In 1766 the principal tenant of Penrioch was John Currie. On 5 October 1772 its eight tenants were listed as William, Robert and Charles Hendry, Malcolm, William and Neil Robertson, John Currie and John Brown. Having been surveyed, the farm was promptly divided into three 'so as it may only be let to three tenants in place of eight'. These were to be two Hendrys and Neil Robertson. By next year, 1773, Penrioch had only two tenants, Robert Hendry and Neil Robertson, while Alltgochlach, the neighbouring farm to the south, was taken by J. Hendry and D. Hendry. A rental for 16 September 1782 lists Robert Hendry at Penrioch, 'William Hendry &c.' at nearby South and Mid Thundergay, and 'Ninian Hendry &c.' at North Thundergay and Craw. Robert Hendry married Margaret Robertson, and they had five sons, Charles, John, Neil, Malcolm and Robert. Charles married Margaret Hendry, daughter of William Hendry, Thundergay. No rentals for succeeding decades are available, but judging from our letter, by 1834 Charles

Hendry was dead, and his eldest son William had gone out to blaze a path for the family in the New World (MacKenzie 1914: 357, 359; Burrel 1982: pt. 1, 198-9, 305, and pt. 2, 16.9.1782).¹

The reason for William's departure is not far to seek. The division of Penrioch in 1773 was but part of a massive scheme by which the 8th Duke of Hamilton's Estate Commissioner, John Burrel, had sought to abolish communal farming throughout the island in favour of smaller, enclosed units yielding increased rents. By 1829 all of Arran was being farmed in the new way except some unentailed properties in the north and north-west which had formerly belonged to the Montgomeries of Skelmorlie and Eglinton. These properties were the farms of the north end between Sannox and Lochranza, which the Duke had intended to sell in 1783, and those clinging so precariously to the north-west coast between Catacol and Machrie (including Penrioch), which he had tried to sell in 1803, eventually giving them as dowry to Anne Douglas, his illegitimate daughter by the actress Mrs Easton, when she married the Hon. Henry R. Westenra, MP, later Lord Rossmore.

The writing was on the wall, and it seemed to be only a matter of time before the Penrioch community would be decimated by the end of run-rig, or even cleared altogether to make room for sheep, as had happened in Glenree in south Arran in 1825. (There had already been some emigration from the island to Chaleur Bay, New Brunswick.) Although William Hendry was not to know it, Penrioch's fate was to remain largely untouched even when finally re-acquired by the Hamiltons around 1844; his own fate became bound up with that of Sannox, as we will see (MacKenzie 1914: 173-202, 215, 226-7; Storrie 1967: 58; McLellan 1985: 150-63; Burrel 1982: pt. 2).

Hendry does not give his address, and mentions no specific locations in America except Quebec, but other internal evidence makes his new abode clear enough. In 1829 the long-expected blow fell on north Arran when the 10th Duke cleared Glen Sannox for sheep, along with the adjoining farms of Laggantuine, Laggan, Cuithe and the Cock, and in that year seventeen families and five other individuals took advantage of his offer to secure land in Upper Canada (Ontario) from the Government for such of his tenants as wished to settle there. Every head of a household and every man over twenty-one was to have 100 acres of his own, and the Duke was to pay half the passage-money. The first party of emigrants, consisting of twelve families and four other individuals, including a William Hendry (eighty-six people in all, we are told), set sail from Lamlash on the 169-ton brig *Caledonia* on 25 April 1829, arriving at Quebec about 25 June. The skipper of the *Caledonia* was Donald Miller, an Arran man, but the undisputed leader of the party was Archibald MacKillop, 'a chief among men', 'a Saul in stature among his fellows, devout, practical, and commanding', called by his grandson 'a good man . . . something of a great man, morally, mentally and physically'; each Sunday during the voyage, except the first, he conducted a service on deck, indeed he went on to lead the

fledgling community in a variety of ways, acting as their first pastor and schoolmaster, and gaining the well-deserved title of Captain.² The immigration agent at Quebec, for reasons of his own, advised against their planned destination of Renfrew County, Ontario, recommending instead a part of Megantic County in Lower Canada (Quebec), only fifty miles south of Quebec City itself. 'Captain' MacKillop and three others (Baldie Calum of our letter, William Kelso of our letter, and Alexander Kelso) set off to inspect the territory, and reported back that it was 'well watered and well wooded'. The *Arannaich* decided unanimously that that was where they should settle, thus setting a pattern of emigration from the north of the island that was to remain firm for many years to come, and which was chronicled with minute detail by Captain MacKillop's grandson Dugald McKenzie McKillop (McKillop 1902: 9, 13-14, 17; MacKenzie 1914: 216-22; McLellan 1985: 164-6).

That the community described in Hendry's letter is the *Baile Meadhonach* or 'Scotch Settlement' of Inverness, Megantic Co., Quebec, is not therefore in doubt; what is, unfortunately, in doubt is whether or not we may identify the writer of our letter with that William Hendry who sailed on the *Caledonia*, and whose name duly appears on D. M. McKillop's plan of the post-1831 settlement, holding 100 acres on Range 4 between Donald MacKillop and Widow Margaret MacMillan (McKillop 1902: 25).

The difficulty arises when we consider the question, who exactly is the writer's cousin *Uilleam Ruadh* (Red William) who is named twice in the letter? William Hendry of the *Caledonia* was a carpenter (McKillop 1902: 12), but while *Uilleam Ruadh* is clearly described in the letter as pursuing that trade, the only specific work the writer mentions himself doing is making bricks. While the identity of William Hendry, carpenter, who sailed on the *Caledonia*, suits *Uilleam Ruadh* perfectly, therefore, there is no sure trace in the pages of the *Annals of Megantic* of any other settler from Arran called William in the period 1829-34 who had left his family behind. Of William Wallace, blacksmith, who came from Arran, we are given no further information. William Gordon, born 10 May 1818 at Corrie-Burn, came on the *Albion* in July 1829 with his widowed mother, had no other family, and would have been only sixteen years old in 1834; William Johnston came with his father on the same voyage, leaving the rest of the family to follow two years later, but these Johnstons were from Derry in Ireland and do not sound like relatives of the writer, even though they had been in Scotland and some of them were employed in the mills at Bridge of Weir in Renfrewshire (McKillop 1902: 21-2, 35, 48, 83, 138, 141).

If, however, we accept that the carpenter on the *Caledonia* may have been *Uilleam Ruadh* and ask if the *Annals* offer us another William Hendry who could conceivably have been either *Uilleam Ruadh* or our letter-writer, the answer, curiously enough, is yes. Describing the tiny population of pioneers whom the *Arannaich* found already settled in the district when they arrived in 1829, McKillop says:

William Henry, about 1828, lived in Lower Ireland. He afterwards moved to the 6th range of Inverness. His wife's name was Margaret McKenzie, and he was an uncle of the late William Mowat (McKillop 1902: 35).

Who was this? If he was an *Arannach* he cannot have been there in 1828, for there is no suggestion whatsoever that the first Arran settlers found any fellow-islanders there before them; but the *Annals* are far from infallible, and he may have come in 1829 or later. His nephew William Mowat arrived from Scotland in 1841 and married a MacKillop, and Samuel Henry³ of Lower Ireland and Inverness, twice mentioned in the *Annals*, may at a guess have been his son (McKillop 1902: 38, 48, 85, 91); he himself kept a sawmill, as is evident from the following:

About the year 1846, Dugald McKenzie, Sr., drew a load of lumber from the mill of Wm. Henry (Mowats) to Curries, on the Hamilton Road, and on his return trip through the so-called 'Manse-bush', a spruce tree fell across the road. A dry limb of this tree pierced the back of one of the oxen and caused its death soon afterwards. Mr McKenzie unhitched the other ox, pushed the cart off the road, and went home and borrowed another ox-team to take care of the cart and carcass. At the time the tree fell Mr McKenzie was seated on the cart but a few feet away (McKillop 1902: 79).

In another excellent anecdote a William Henry is once again mentioned, but he is described in a way that seems intended to distinguish him clearly from the above. This, without doubt, is William Hendry of the *Caledonia*:

William Henry, wheelwright and carpenter, used to tell how two of his customers were happily suited. As Henry plied his trade in the shop that stood near the concession, across the 'Little Brook' from my grandfather's house, he received orders to do the woodwork of two wooden plows. One plow was for James McKinnon, piper, schoolmaster and farmer, but withal, a man somewhat short of stature. The other plow was for big Neil MacMillan, father of Donald MacMillan, JP. Both plows were duly finished, the one for Mr McKinnon having low-set handles, as if for the use of a good-sized boy. There was something of an explosion, however, when the smaller man was shown the implement intended for his use, and he declared he would not put up with a toy plow of that kind. To satisfy his customer, the larger plow was handed over. Soon after this the burly form of Mr MacMillan filled the shop door. In answer to a question as to whether his plow was ready, Mr Henry timidly began to explain that he was afraid the only one he had on hand would not suit. 'Is this the plow?' boomed the big man, as he strode in and took a plow in his powerful grasp, to test the height of the handles. 'Yes,' said the carpenter, 'but you'll find the handles a little low.' 'Not a bit, not a bit! They are first rate,' said customer No. 2, as he bore away his prize (McKillop 1902: 80-1).

It is rather satisfying to visualise one William Henry—the writer of our letter, perhaps—ultimately owning a sawmill, while his cousin of the same name has a

carpenter's shop. However, it should be said that this failure to identify the writer with any certainty sounds a note of caution upon the use of *The Annals of Megantic* for such purposes; there are certainly errors, inconsistencies and omissions in the *Annals* (McKillop 1902: 34; cf. McLellan 1985: 172), and the fact that they seldom name the townships in Arran from which families came is a major difficulty, so the identifications attempted in this article are offered with some diffidence. Further information on individual emigrants can no doubt be obtained from the estate papers at Brodick listed in Storrie 1967: 74.

D. M. McKillop calculated that by 1833 the Arran settlement in Megantic consisted of 222 persons, of whom seven were Hendrys. These were: (1) William Hendry; (2) Rev. and (3) Mrs Donald Hendry, see n. 4; (4) our letter-writer's maternal uncle Donald Hendry, see n. 41, with (5) his wife and their daughters (6) Janet and (7) Margaret. Uncle Donald, if I may so call him, arrived in 1831 with his (widowed?) daughter Mrs Kate Cristie. Uncle Donald's wife came the following year on the brig *Margret* with: their daughters Janet and Margaret; their son Donald, who returned to Arran the same year and died in the house of Donald Shaw (for whom see below); and their four-year-old granddaughter Mary A. Cristie, later to become Mrs Joseph McNey. Their other daughter became Mrs Mary Shanks and settled in Windsor Mills, Que., instead of Megantic. Other Hendrys by birth mentioned in the *Annals* are Mrs Flora Shaw, who came to Megantic in 1839 with her husband Donald, and Mrs Mary Kelso, who came in 1848 with her husband John. But there were no Hendrys left in Megantic at all by 1902 (McKillop 1902: 42-3, 45, 48-9, 60).

Our letter was in the possession of William Hendry's youngest brother Charles when the latter died in 1916 aged ninety-four. Charles had married Mary Black, and the letter passed to their daughter Isabella (Bella), who married James Hodge. There had been Hodges in Arran since at least 1837, when Daniel Hodge appears as schoolmaster at Lamlash (MacKenzie 1914: 231). James Hodge was piermaster at Lamlash, and he and Bella lived in the pierhouse. Bella died in 1948, and the letter passed to their son Charles, who had spent most of his working life as a shipping agent in West Africa. He married first Elsie Hume, then (after divorce) Mary Lancaster, whose father Ian had been successively owner of Lagg and Lamlash hotels. When Charles Hodge retired he became piermaster at Brodick and Lloyds' agent for the island. He had a translation made of the letter (by whom is not known). It is referred to below as Charles Hodge's translation. Letter and translation passed to his son by his second marriage, Brigadier David H. Hodge, DL, of Durham. After restoration work by the National Library of Scotland in 1987 it was presented by Brigadier Hodge to the Isle of Arran Museum Trust in 1988, and is now kept at their museum in Brodick. The National Library retains a photocopy, Acc. 9479.

The Hendrys remained at Penrioch until the 1940s or 1950s, when James Hendry left to farm at Catacol. He died aged sixty-six on 31 May 1965.

Arran Gaelic is an all but extinct dialect which may be said to lie, linguistically speaking, between Kintyre Gaelic and Manx, and which seems to have struck the northerly ear as outstandingly odd, cf. *Gairm* 40 (summer 1962) 318-9. Our letter is therefore of great linguistic interest; to attempt to assess its importance as a historical record of the dialect, I append a list of as many of the reliques of Arran Gaelic as I have been able to trace.

- 1697 A charm noted in the records of the Presbytery of Kintyre and Islay, dated at Kilmory, Arran, 11 November 1697 (Carmichael 1928-71: 4, 167).
- 1705 A charm noted in Gaelic script in Kilbride Session Minutes (MacKenzie 1914: 295).
- 1778 Rev. William Shaw, *An Analysis of the Gaelic Language* (Edinburgh/London; repr. Menston 1972). Contains Shaw's translation of Pope's *Messiah* into Gaelic verse. Shaw (1749-1831) came from Clachaig, south Arran (MacDonald 1973: 2; MacKenzie 1914: 145-7).
- 1780 Rev. William Shaw, *A Galic and English Dictionary* (London).
- 1791 Rev. Dugald Crawford, *Searmoin chuaidh a liobhairt aig an Raft-Swamp* (Fayetteville, N. Car.). Crawford (1752-1821) came from Shiskine (MacKenzie 1914: 144-5; MacLean 1915: 102-3; Cameron 1912: 112-4; Scott 1915-28: 4, 63). The Rev. Prof. Douglas Kelly of the University of Mississippi tells me that some of his Gaelic sermons are extant in manuscript in North Carolina and have been read from the pulpit in recent times, by himself among others.
- 1791 Rev. Dugald Crawford, *Searmoin A chuaidh a liobhairt aig an Raft-Swamp air an fhicheada' latha don cheud mhios do'n fhoghmnar, 1790* (Fayetteville, N. Car.).
- 1795 Rev. Dugald Crawford, *Searmoin Do Mhnai' chuaidh a sgrìobhadh ann sa Bhliadhna, 1795* (Glasgow).
- 1853 Rev. Angus MacMillan, *Searmoinean* (Glasgow). MacMillan (1776-1843) came from North Sannox (MacKenzie 1914: 144-5, 247; McLellan 1985: 170; Cameron 1912: 112-4, 123-6).
- 1853 Archibald MacMillan, *Dearbhadh a' Cridhe—Laoidhean Spioradaille* (Lochranza).
- 1855 Rev. Donald Hendry, *Laoidhean Spioradail* (1st edn. Canada 1855, 2nd edn. Glasgow 1857). The hymns *Laoidh mu Amaideachd na h-Òige* and *An Soisgeul* were also published separately (Glasgow 1855).⁴
- 1867 James Hamilton, *Laoidh le Seumas Hamilton aon a Sheanairean na H-Eaglais Saoire 'san Eilean Aranach*.
- 1867 Rev. Archibald Cook, *Notes of a Gaelic Sermon* (Glasgow). Cook (1788-1865), whose influence on Free Church doctrine is still felt today, came

- from Achareach, Glenscoradale (Kennedy 1895b: 15; Scott 1915-28: 6, 467; MacLeod 1988).
- 18— Rev. Archibald Cook, *Searmoin* (Inverness). Sermon on Philippians ii.5.
- 1868 Rev. Archibald Cook, *An Tiodhlac Do-Labhairt* (1st edn. Glasgow 1868, 2nd edn. Glasgow 1885, 3rd edn. Inverness 1915).
- 1877 James Hamilton, *Marbh-Roinn* (Glasgow). Elegies on three Arran ministers.
- 1877 Rev. Peter Davidson, *Poems on Various Religious Subjects*. Includes 127 pp. Gaelic hymns. Davidson (1788-1875) came from Glenrosa, Brodick (MacLean 1915: 106; Cameron 1912: 112, 137-8, 143-4).
- 1889 Rev. Dr Alexander Cameron, 'Arran Place Names', in *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*, 15 (1888-9) 122-139. Repr. Cameron 1894: 561-76.
- 1893 John Kennedy (ed.), *Gaelic Poems and Letters in English, by the late James Brown, Craw, Arran* (Inverness). Kennedy (1854-1910), a native of Badenoch, was Free Church (later UF) minister of Lennamore, his manse being at Catacol; he is not to be confused with his more celebrated namesake the Free Church minister of Dingwall, to whom he was related (*Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*, 26: vi; Lamb 1956: 288; Cameron 1912: 135, 145, 156, 159). There is a splendid monument in his memory at Pirnmill.
- 1894 Rev. Dr Alexander Cameron, 'Arran Place Names', in Cameron 1894: 561-76.
- 1895 Paper by Rev. John Kennedy, Catacol: see References. Kennedy's notes are in Glasgow University Library (MS Gen. 1090 nos. 68-9).
- 1895 Verse and prose collected in West Bennan and Druim-a-ghinnir (Carmichael 1928-71: 2, 307, 354-5, 370).
- 1896 Rev. John Macalister, *Gaelic and English Sermons* (Inverness). Macalister (1789-1844) came from Kilpatrick, Shiskine (Cameron 1912: 135-6).
- 1897 Paper by Rev. C. Robertson: see References. Robertson's extensive notes on the dialect and place-names of Arran are in the National Library of Scotland, MSS 390-1, 420-2 and 424.
- 1899 Rev. Archibald Cook, *Everlasting Love* (in Gaelic).
- 1907 Rev. Archibald Cook, *Sermons, Gaelic and English* (Glasgow).
- 1908 Ronald Currie, *The Place-Names of Arran* (Glasgow).
- 1914 Chapters 'Folk Lore' and 'Gaelic Songs of Arran' in MacKenzie 1914: 251-350.
- 1916 Rev. Archibald Cook, *Searmon* (Inverness). Sermon on Job xxxiii.24.
- 1916 Rev. Archibald Cook, *Searmoinean Gaelig* (Inverness). 2nd edn. Glasgow 1946.
- 1957 Holmer's *The Gaelic of Arran*, with texts (collected 1938) at pp. 160-91.

- 1969 Heinrich Wagner and Colm Ó Baoill, *Linguistic Atlas and Survey of Irish Dialects* 4 (Dublin): Arran material (collected 1961) at pp. 189-211.
- 1976 *Tocher* no. 21, 189-90: 'A "Tynwald" in Arran?'. Recorded from Donald Craig (Machrie/Pirnmill) by David Clement in 1973. Linguistic Survey of Scotland tape 950. Other Linguistic Survey tapes of Arran material are as follows:
- Craig, Donald (Machrie/Pirnmill) 913-6, 931-2, 934-5, 937, 939, 941-6, 951-3, 955, 971, 984, 999, 1069, 1077.
- Currie, Dan (Thundergay) with sisters 944a.
- Currie, Willie (Machrie) 210d.
- Hendry, Janet (Catacol) 56c.
- Hendry, Mrs Katie (Alltghobhlach) 56b, d.
- Kelso, Ishabel (Lochranza) 52, 53a.
- Kerr, John (Lochranza) 932, 934, 951-2.
- MacBride, John (Shannochie, South End) 57b.
- MacLeod, John (Pirnmill) 210e.
- Murchie, James (Shiskine) 54b, 55, 56a.
- Murchie, Miss Marion (Lochranza) 995a.
- Robertson, John (Kilpatrick) 210b, 1150 (= School of Scottish Studies SA 1965/129); with sister Belle Robertson 210c.
- Sillars, Mrs I. (Shiskine) 53b, 54a.

This list could furnish the bulk of the material for any complete diachronic study of Arran Gaelic, or indeed of Arran literature for that matter. It can be seen that our letter comes relatively early, and that its personal, informal character is only otherwise to be sought among the Linguistic Survey tapes, which are quite recent. Much of the list consists of religious material prepared for publication in more or less standardised Gaelic in the second half of the nineteenth century. Even the songs published by MacKenzie in 1914 are largely regularised in spelling, e.g. *Deòcan as Deònaid* in Holmer 1957: 179 is *Seòcan agus Seònaid* in MacKenzie 1914: 331 (see n. 18).

We may assume that Hendry's mother was a monoglot Gaelic speaker, but that her children were bilingual. Their knowledge of written Gaelic was derived from Bible study. Hendry seems to have no trouble spelling scriptural words like *Tighearna* 'Lord', *beannachdan* 'blessings, greetings', *teaghlach* 'family' and relationships like *nighean* 'daughter', *seanmhathair* 'grandmother' and so on, but his spelling of non-scriptural words and names is often quite bizarre and of course has the virtue for us of revealing many dialect features. The emigrants' literacy is thus described in the *Annals*:

Nearly all the settlers could read both Gaelic and English, and all could speak

some English, though, of course, Gaelic was the current language, and it was in Gaelic that Mr [Donald] Hendry preached. Each family owned a few books, and the settlers were especially well stocked with Bibles, both English and Gaelic, these having been brought out in considerable quantities, as they were under the impression that in the new country it would be almost impossible to get such books. In some instances the books and baggage of the passengers had been damaged by water on the way over. They also had psalm books, and a few such works as Josephus' Antiquities, Rollo's Ancient History, Peter Grant's Gaelic Poems, and devotional works by Baxter, Bunyan, Dyer and Boston. A few families had quite a number of good quality books (McKillop 1902: 31).

Hendry's letter is written on paper watermarked 1829—did they bring paper out with them too? Writing paper was so scarce in Megantic schoolrooms that scraps of brown wrapping paper were used to write on, and copybooks were used twice, first the right way up and then upside-down using the spaces between the lines (McKillop 1902: 58).

The *Arannaich* had been partly bilingual since at least the time of Martin Martin, who wrote of them that 'they all speak the *Irish* language, yet the *English* Tongue prevails on the *East-side*, and ordinarily the Ministers preach in it, and in *Irish* on the *West-side*'; this ambivalence is well reflected in the saying *Arainn bheag mhiodalach bhreugach, a cùl ri caraid 's a h-aghaidh ri nàmhaid*—'Little fawning lying Arran, her back to friend and her face to foe' (Martin 1716: 225; Cameron 1894: 480; Holmer 1957: 185). Hendry's letter reveals the kind of systematic borrowing (*line, clearadh, swampach*, etc.) which is commonly a feature of such front-line dialects, and which is jeered at by William Ross in the song given in the Appendix, and chuckled at by *Caraid nan Gaidheal*, for Cowal, in his review of the Highland Society's Gaelic Dictionary (MacLeod 1829: 14):

Feòraich de fhear san àite sin, Ciod an t-àm de 'n latha tha e, is cosmhuil gur e'n fhreagairt a gheibh thu, *WELL, ma ta, cha'neil CERTAINTY agam air A PHARTICULAR sin.*

Holmer's remark that 'the Arran people are always accused by their Argyllshire neighbours of an extraordinary indulgence in what is termed "mixed" language' (Holmer 1957: 2) was probably as true in 1782 or 1834 as in 1938 or 1957; it is often heard nowadays of Lewis speakers. Another of the letter's characteristics is a degree of muddle where lenition is concerned—indeed, one is almost tempted to suspect that mutation in Hendry's Gaelic is following rules quite distinct from those of standard Scottish Gaelic. His most troublesome quirk of all is his habit of writing *g* as in English 'George' for slender *d* or *t*, e.g. *minisgair* for *minisdear* 'minister', *Keggi* for *Ceitidh* 'Katie'. When all is said and done, however, the letter represents a colourful pebble atop a cairn of literary achievement that is remarkably large for such an insignificant corner of Gaeldom; even a hundred years later it was reported

that 'Arran is an island of scholars and a great many of the Gaelic speakers can read and write the language' (Holmer 1957: 1).

It remains only to be added that the Megantic Outlaw, so well remembered in Lewis, is nowhere mentioned in *The Annals of Megantic*. Donald Morrison, who received the nickname after killing a man in a gunfight, belonged to the community of Lewis immigrants who settled during 1851-5 in the 'Long Bush' around Sherbrooke and as far east as the shores of Lake Megantic, all of a hundred miles south of Inverness. As the Long Bush was settled and cleared, new counties were created—the Lewis settlement became Scotch County, while Megantic County shrank to the district around Inverness itself. The two communities were far apart in more ways than one. Their Gaelic dialects were mutually almost incomprehensible, while nonconformity and the Disruption (1843) separated them in church matters (McKillop 1902: 5; MacDonald 1978: 167-8; Verity 1987).

TEXT

[Square brackets] indicate missing, illegible or almost illegible text. Lacunae are mainly due to the loss of a portion of the letter (about 4 x 6 cms.) where it was sealed. Semi-legible portions have been examined under ultra-violet light. The letter consists of a single folio sheet = four pages, folded to reveal only the address on the outside.

october the fifteenth 1834

May dear mother brothers and sistes

a mathair greadhich tha me gabhail a cothrom-se air sgrìobhadh dar niunsuidh a ligal a chluinntinn duibh⁵ gu eil sinn ule gu maith sanamsa buidhachas do dhia airson a throcairen dhuinn agus a mhianemig⁶ gu biodh e ni ceun agibhse ri ra agus bha duil agum ri litir a chur dar nionsuid toisach en tamaridh⁷ ach gholabh mi began uine en e steates tiomull da cheud mile on aite so deic agus tree fichead mile en taobh eile line agus be nobair a bha agam chuid do nuine bhi deanamh⁸ clacha craidha⁹ agus bha uilliam ruagh mo cusinn lam agus cuigear eile do mhuntir¹⁰ en atie agus thanig sien dhachie ach dhean¹¹ Peter Hamilton cairid domh fein agus dhiar e ormsa na bighinn a chur in fhios dachie ruibhse¹² dhinseadh da mhuintir gun robh e gu maith agus cha neil e teachd dachie gu cion blianadh ma soirbheas leis Aagus tha agum ra innseadh dhuibh nach beo shoni chui a bha lochraoinsa gholabh e leis en tinnis ann e Quebec gu robh en tighearna uile gar nulamhachadh airson na uair sien. Agus tha nighean do uilliam kiliston¹³ a bha air sanagan a tha duil acha¹⁴ gu mheil i en tiniscatic¹⁵ agus nighean eile do bhaldy callum nach eil a faotinn a slainte idir (p. 2) Ach tha en eslaint an sgach atie Aagus tha mo chairden leis e mheil mi a dol ma guairt gach laa Agus tha bhrathair mo

mhathair agus a theaghlach gu maith, a mheud dhiu sa tha aig en tigh, ach tha e fein a fainachadh gu mhor agus tha iad teachd air enaidh¹⁶ gu maith on a tanik iad do d[u]iche¹⁷ so tha achda¹¹ da bo agus beathin bega tha achda¹¹ air a blianadh so na deanadh chuidachadh maith do theaghlach na dha a bharrachd orra fein agus tha e agra nach measadh e bhi riamh na bu sona na tha e na biodh a clann leis en so cruinn. tha iad cur moran beannachdan dar nionsuidh agus tha goinag¹⁸ mo chiosin¹⁹ fastage²⁰ se namsa aig e mhinisgair tha i cur moran beannachdan nionsuidh Agus tha ma cairdean leis em bheil mi cur moran beannachdan dar nionsuidh agus a ghiunsuidh mo shean-mhathair agus un²¹ Keggi puithar mathair agus tha mo chairid caoimh uilliam adhfurachi air teachd dachie agus tha e gu maith ca dan e ach ma aon seachduin agus gholabh e risg en de air slighe a dhol don atie n robh e roimh tiamull²² sae ceud mile se so²³ ghabh iad sea mios teachd e nuas roimh leis en raft gu Quebec agus tha uilliam ruagh mo cusin caoimh gu maith tha e uairean ag obair air en taorsneachd agus a chuid eile saoirachadh ferrain agus tha chuid a dhuil agie gun thig a chuid eile don theaghlach a mach ach cha neil fhios agie agus tha mi creudsinn gu maith gu biod iad na bhear en so na tha iad (p. 3) agus moran a thullie orra ach cha neil mi toirt misneach do dhuine air bith teachd air en uairs oir tha moran tigheachd nach eil toilite don atie so agus cha neil mi fein ra tholite don atie so fathest ach faodidh e bhi gle maith air a hon sin ach tha fhios agam gu biodh mi gu mor na bu tailiteacha na biodh sibh fein se chuid eile don theaghlach en so agus a chuid mor a thainig don atie so en toiseachd.²⁴ thaink iad re iomad sarachadh []²⁵ en deigh doibh teachd [] a mhuintir a tha teachd a njos e faotinn agus ch[] teachd en toiseach en atie so tha toilite deagh [] toir achda¹¹ le oibrachadh²⁶ gle goirt uairen air a[] a dheanas²⁷ daoine en so cha bhi egal orra gun toirear [] Cha druin mise in e²⁸ clearadh air mo lot fal[a] gad gaineadh tha e go²⁹ fada o margadh snach biodh mo[r] ann domh ach na biodh duil agum ri sibhse e teachd en so thoisachin air ulamhachadh air air son en so se gholabhain blianadh em o cosnadh a chuidachadh leibh teachd a mach cha neil fhios agum cocu³⁰ a tha mi deanadh gu maith dar taoibhse a bhi fantuinn en so sna nach eil ach se bhi a bhear lam tha sibhse ligal fhacin air curam dhìomsa gach uair tha sibh faotnn cothrom air agus cha bo choir do[mhsa bhi ro]churamach tiomull oirbhse tha fadail orm go²⁹ fada se tha mi gun air facinn fein agus mo chairden caoimh uile tha en sin ach tha dochas agum gu faic mi sibh en so air no en sin en uine gun a bhi anabar fada ma se sin toil en tighearna tha en tatie so gu maith fadailach a bhi ann air uairen cha naik snn read³¹ se bith [tiomull ach]²⁵ oirn ach e caoile agus ne speran os air cion tha en gheameradh³² enso dirach fada agus fuar tha sneachd aguin ma namse (p. 4) agus cha nainith domh aon do mo chairdean en sin le a chuidachadh nach feudeadh geainead gle maith en so na biodh iad aon uair bhos tha chuid don fearun dirach maith agus chuid gle surrach tha chuid dheagh³³ swampach clachach creagach ach tha chuid mor dheagh³³ maith airson feum

dhaoine tha mi a cur moran beannachden dar nionsuidh fein agus thiunsuidh mo sheanmhathair agus un²¹ gach brathair athair se brathair mhathair tha agum agus un²¹ gach puthar mhathair es athair agum agus un²¹ gach chairid es banchairid tha agum gad nach urrad mi nainmsachadh⁴ en draist

Ulliam Hendry

Mrs Charls Henry
Penrioch
Island of Arran
Scotland

TRANSLATION

October the fifteenth 1834.

My dear mother, brothers and sisters.

Dear mother, I am taking this chance to write to you to let you hear that we are all well at present, thanks be to God for His mercies to us, and that we would wish⁶ that you should have the same to say; and I had expected to send you a letter at the beginning of the summer, but I went for a short while to the States (about two hundred miles from this place, seventy miles the other side of the Line),⁵ and the work I had for part of the time was making bricks, and my cousin Uilleam Ruadh was with me and another five lads¹⁰ from the place; and we came home, but Peter Hamilton (a friend of mine) stayed, and he asked me, if I were sending word home to you, to tell his people that he was well, and he isn't coming home for a year if he gets on all right.⁶ And I have to tell you that Johnnie from Cuithe that used to be in Lochranza is dead. He died of sickness in Quebec.⁷ May the Lord prepare us all for that time. And there's a daughter of William Kelso's from Sannox⁸ that they think is in a consumptive sickness and another daughter of Baldie Calum's⁹ that isn't getting her health at all.

(p. 2) But then there's no place without illness, and my friends¹⁰ with whom I go around every day and my mother's brother and his family¹¹ are in good health, those of them as are at home,¹² but he himself is failing very much; and they have got on well since they came to this country. They have two cows and small beasts. This year they have as much as would be a considerable help to one or two families in addition to themselves, and he says that he would consider himself never to have been happier than he is now if he had his children gathered around with him. They send many greetings to you. And my cousin Janet¹³ is in the Minister's⁴ service at present; she sends you many greetings. And my friends¹⁰ that I am with send many greetings to you and to my grandmother and to my father's sister Katie.¹³ And my dear kinsman William Murchie¹⁴ has come home and he is well. He only stayed

about one week and set off again yesterday on the way to the place he was in before, about six hundred miles from here.¹⁵ Before that they took six months coming down by raft to Quebec. And my dear cousin Uilleam Ruadh is well, he is sometimes employed as a carpenter and works the land the rest of the time, and he has some hopes that the rest of the family will come out, but he does not know, and I can well believe that they would be better here than where they are, (p. 3) and many other people besides, but I am not encouraging anybody to come at the moment, for many are coming who are not pleased with this place, and I'm none too pleased with this place myself as yet, but it may be very good for all that. But I know I would be far happier if yourself and the rest of the family were here and also the large number that came to this place at first. They came through many a trial after arriving that the folk who are coming now [are not] getting¹⁶ and [] coming first to this place who are pleased [] good [] many of them by very hard work, sometimes [] people stay here they are not afraid that [] will be taken []. I have not done any clearing on my [empty(?)] lot [] doing(?) it(?) it is so far from a market that it would not be [much use(?)] to me, but if I were expecting you to be coming here I would start preparing for you here and I would go away and earn for a year to help you come out. I don't know whether I am doing well by you to be staying here or not but it's (here) I'd prefer to be. You are showing your concern for me every time you get the chance to and [I] ought not [to be too] concerned about you. I am distressed that it has been so long since I have seen yourself and all my dear kinsfolk who are there, but I hope that I will see you either here or there before too long, if that is the Lord's will. This place is pretty tedious to be in sometimes, we can see nothing around us but the forest and the skies above.¹⁷ The winter here is just long and cold. We are having snow at the moment.

(p. 4) And I don't know any of my kinsfolk there who might not with His(?) help do very well here once they were over. Some of the land is just fine and some pretty useless, some is very swampy, stony and rocky but a lot of it is very good for people's needs.¹⁸

I send many greetings to yourself and to my grandmother and to all of my paternal and maternal uncles and to all my maternal and paternal aunts and to all my male and female kin though I can't mention them just now.

William Hendry

Mrs Charles Henry
Penrioch
Island of Arran
Scotland

APPENDIX: WILLIAM ROSS'S LAMPOON ON ARRAN GAELIC

The following poem contains numerous Arran Gaelic features (e.g. see nn. 18, 22); as a one-time travelling packman, although born in Skye of a Ross-shire mother, Ross (1762-?91) had visited many parts of the Highlands and islands, and knew his dialects. On a public level it may be a satire on some of the Clyde fishermen who had begun to pursue the herring into the northern Minch in the 1780s, but on a private level its target is undoubtedly Samuel Clough (1757-1815).

Clough was captain of a twenty-gun privateer which, some time during the winter of 1781-2, was bound out of Liverpool for Jamaica. Caught by a gale, he ran before the wind and made the safety of Stornoway harbour. It was probably on this visit that he met Mór Ros, one of the beauties of the town, whom the poet idolised. He set sail again when the wind dropped, but soon returned. He sounds a romantic figure, and was indeed a reasonably wealthy young man, thanks no doubt to the vulnerability of the French merchant fleet—he had assets in both Liverpool and Jamaica. Suffice it to say, he and Mór were married at the beginning of February 1782, by the parish minister of Stornoway, John Downie, who privately remarked: 'Far fowls have fair feathers.' He made a generous settlement on his bride and a will in which he left her everything; then, perhaps a month after the marriage, he finally left for Jamaica. Mór remained in Stornoway, and was still there on 6 December 1782, as a letter of her father's shows; some time afterwards, however, Clough came back and took her to her new home in Liverpool. The rest is folklore, and our poem is but one of a series of cathartic songs made by Ross on the event, each one very different from the rest, culminating in the great *Òran Eile* (MacMhathain 1955: 340-2; Black 1968: 7-8, 43, 121).

Published in John Mackenzie (ed.), *Orain Ghae'lach, le Uilleam Ros* (Inverness, 1830), 95-8; 2nd edn. (Glasgow, 1834), 151-5; 3rd edn. (Edinburgh, 1868, repr. 1870, 1874, 1877), 78-80. I have regularised spelling and punctuation to some extent. In the few instances where the second and third editions differ substantially from the first I follow the former in the text, giving readings from the latter in the Notes. Title in all editions: *Òran a rinn am bàrd, mar gun deanadh seòladair deasach e, air dha bhi ann an taigh-dannsaidh, anns an taobh-tuath.—Tha 'm bàrd air deanamh an òrain do réir Gaelig an t-seòladair féin.* (A song that the poet made, as a southron sailor would have made it, after he had been in a dancing-house, in the north.—The poet has made the song in accordance with the sailor's own Gaelic.)

1. Bha mi 'n-raoir 'san taigh-dhannsaidh,
Bha iad *tranga* gu leòr—
Bha na h-ìonagan glan ann,
'S iad cho cannach 's bu chòir;
Cha robh srad air a' ghealbhan
O'n a dh'fhalbh sinn o bhòrd
Ach gràine beag luathre
Bha fo sguadradh nam bròg.
2. Bha na Màireagan uil' ann
Is iad air tionnal gach taobh,
Ged nach d' éirich a' ghealach
Cha robh maill' air a h-aon;
B' fheàrr sud na bhi 'm breislich
Cur a' *cheti* fa-sgaol
Na bhi *pumpadh* na *Deònaid*
Air a' mhór-chuan re gaoith.
3. Chan eil beath' ann as bòidhche
Na th' aig seòladair féin—
Seach gum bi e 'na mharaich'
Bidh na cailean á dhéidh;
Bidh na h-ìonagan cannach
'Ga leantainn gu léir
Toirt am mionnan gu *sure* iad
Nach bi *trìsair* gun fheum!
4. An tug thu 'n air' a Rob Tàileir
'S a chuid Màireagan féin
Agus déidh aig na h-òighean
Air a phògadh gu léir?
Bidh esan da ruagadh
'S da'm buaireadh le 'bheul—
Tha e soireanta sò-ghradh't
Mar gum pòsadh e ceud.
5. A fac' thu 'n Sgiobair bha làimh ris
'S a Mhàireag r'a thaobh,
A làmh thar a muineal
'S i bulach 'na ghaol?
Re'ag i leis thar Caol Mhula
Agus tiumal a' Mhaol
Gu bhith *lòradh* a *phica*
Nuair as dripeal a' ghaoth.

6. 'Chan eil *doubt*,' arsa Màireag,
 'Nach *overhàlig* mi ball!
 (Ach gille gramail bhith shìos orr'
 Nach toir fiaradh g' a ceann);
 Ged a thigeadh na *sgualaichean*
 Cruaidh on a' ghleann,
 Cha bhi 'n Sgiobair fo mhì-ghean
 Gus an diobair a chrann.¹⁹
7. Tha iasgach an sgadain
 Ro bheag againn 'san àm,
 O'n 'se 'n t-*ounair* tha *cost* oirn
 Cha bhi 'm *brot* oirn air chall;
 Bithidh *grog* againn daonnan
 'S cha bhi aon fhear gun dram,
 'S gheobh sinn nìonagan bòcha
 Gu ar pògadh is taing.
8. Gheobh sinn nìonagan bòcha
 Is mnathan òga gu réidh—
 'Se mo raoghainn-s' an nìonag
 O'n a bhios mi ri beud;
 Thàinig còmhlàn dhiu tharais
 Air an chala so 'n dé
 'S bha sinn mar riu a' dannsadh
 Fad 's a shanntaich sinn féin.
9. Chan eil *shig* 's na puirt Fhrangach
 Nach danns iad air uair,
 No car an Dun-Éidin
 Gun aig té 'san taobh-tuath;
 Miann-sùil bhi 'ga léirsinn"
 'S iad a' leumnaich mun cuairt
 Mar ri balaich chinn-fhìdhleach"
 'S sgal pìoba"²² 'nan cluais.
1. I was in the dancing-house last night,
 They were hard at it—
 There were grand lassies there,
 As pretty as need be;
 Not a spark was in the fire
 Since we left the ship
 But a tiny grain of ashes
 Squashed under the shoes.

2. The Popsies were all there
Gathered from each airt,
Though the moon hadn't risen
None of them were loth;
Better that than confounded
Clearing the jetty
Or pumping the *Janet*
On high seas in a gale.
3. There's no finer life
Than a sailor has—
Because he's a mariner
The girls pursue him;
The pretty lassies
Follow him as one,
Swearing they're sure
Trousers won't be worthless!
4. Did you notice Rob Tailor
With his own group of Popsies
And all the young virgins
Dying to kiss him?
He goes hunting them down
And tempts them with his mouth—
He's gleg and charming enough
To marry a hundred.
5. Did you see the Skipper close by him
With his Popsy at his side,
His arm round her shoulders
And she completely besotted?
She'd go through the Sound of Mull with him
And round the Mull of Kintyre
To be lowering his peak
When the wind's at its height.
6. 'Without a doubt,' said Popsy,
'I'll overhaul some tackle!
(As long's a thravn lad's down on her
That won't give her head leeway);
Even should squalls come
Wild from the glen,
The Skipper won't worry
Till he loses his mast.⁴⁹

7. For fishing the herring
 We don't give a fig now,
 Since it's the owner that's paying for us
 We won't lack for broth;
 We'll always have grog
 While no man lacks a dram,
 And we'll get lovely lassies
 To kiss us with thanks.
8. We'll get lovely lassies
 And young women easy—
 My choice is the lassie
 Since I'm up to no good;
 A bunch of them came over
 By this harbour yesterday
 And with them we danced
 As long as we craved.
9. There's no jigs or French tunes
 That they won't dance as required,
 Or movement in Edinburgh
 That some lass in the north can't do;
 They're a sight for sore eyes
 As they caper about
 With the fiddle-head boys,⁵¹
 Sound of pipe⁵² in their ears.

NOTES

- 1 The genealogical information on the Hendrys in this article was obtained from Mr Alastair Hendry through Mr Alastair Sillars. It was noted on 13 November 1949 from Mr Stewart Robertson, son of Jessie Hendry, daughter of Charles Hendry and Mary Black.
- 2 He was captain and then major of a company of volunteers raised at the time of the rebellion of 1837. Afterwards he was promoted to colonel. Already an unpaid inspector of schools, he became a Commissioner of the Peace. He died in 1867 (McKillop 1902: 9, 11-17, 25, 47, 145, 166-7; MacKenzie 1914: 219-26).
- 3 The name of Samuel Henry's daughter is cited as one of the oddest in the county—Jemima Kezia Karen-happuk Henry (McKillop 1902: 85). Donald Meek has pointed out to me, however, that these are the three daughters of Job (Job xlii:14), and that it is common practice in evangelical circles to name children after such biblical heroes or heroines; he himself has known a family with two daughters called Jemima and Kezia.
- 4 Rev. Donald Hendry, a Congregationalist. A cousin of William's grandfather Robert Hendry, he was born at Alltobhlach in 1774 and was known as *An t-Iasgair Arannach* (The Arran Fisherman). His hymn *An t-Iasgair* begins:

Tha m' inntinn tric fo smuaircan
'S mi seòladh measg nan cuantan

(My mind is often melancholy/As I sail amongst the oceans). However, it ends:

Is fàgaidh mis' am bàta
'S na liontan le taing.

(And I shall leave the boat/And the nets with thanks), for he was eventually employed by the Independents (Congregationalists) as an itinerant preacher in the Western Isles and North Kintyre. His work seems to have been supported by the congregation at Sannox, and Mrs Janet MacKay, wife of the influential Sannox pastor the Rev. Alexander MacKay, sent him her good wishes in eight lines of Gaelic verse beginning *Mo bheannachd chum an iasgair a-nis o'n shuair thu t' iartas*, 'My blessing to the fisherman now that you've got your request' (Hendry 1857: 2, 14, 16; Meek 1987: 24). Mrs MacKay was a sister of Duncan MacMillan, great-grandfather of Prime Minister Harold Macmillan (cf. n. 39); her husband accompanied the departing members of his flock to Lamlash in 1829, and preached a farewell sermon from the deck of the *Caledonia* on the text 'Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you' (1 Peter v.7). Donald Hendry went out as missionary to the Megantic colonists, many of whom were ex-fishermen like himself, on the *Foundling* in 1831 with his wife Elizabeth Kelso. They had no children. Known in Canada as Elder Hendry, he was not ordained until after the arrival in 1844 of his successor as pastor to the community, the Rev. William Anderson, a Lowlander from Airdrie. Although not licensed to conduct marriages in either Scotland or Canada (cf. n. 37), he did in fact marry one couple in the settlement. A dogmatic Calvinist, he was very able and pious but reserved. He settled on a 100-acre bush farm on the outskirts of Inverness. Worked largely for him by the people, this provided his main source of support. The community was mainly Congregationalist and he was certainly its first minister, but his first meeting-house, built of round logs in 1832, was inter-denominational. About 28 feet long, it was roofed (like the settlers' houses) with bark, with a lean-to at the end for his horse, and had one window, subsequently two. The door was at one end, the fire at the other, with nothing but a hole overhead to let out the smoke. Such an arrangement was, of course, quite normal in Arran, but the result in Canada was that it was so cold in winter that groups of worshippers had to take turns in occupying the bench nearest the fire. Hendry's pulpit was built well above the floor, so in summer he had an excellent view of the congregation, but in winter, when the pine logs were spluttering and scattering smoke far and wide, he was up in the thickest of it. Eventually, by making a collection of bushels of wheat, the congregation raised enough to buy a stove for the building, which largely solved the problem. Hendry preached two- to three-hour sermons, in Gaelic only—twice on Sundays, but only once in the short days of winter, and also every Thursday evening in his own house. Once while preaching he noticed that some members of the congregation were asleep, so he suddenly stopped speaking. The unwonted silence woke the slumberers. 'Aha,' said Hendry, 'I have got the way of you now,' and he rebuked them severely. He died, deeply respected, of 'a lingering and painful trouble' in spring 1847, and many years afterwards a monument was erected to his memory in the cemetery of the new Congregational Chapel which had been built in 1840. His hymns were very popular in Argyll when they appeared in 1857 (Hendry 1857: 2; McKillop 1902: 12, 25-6, 31-3, 40, 42, 46, 51-3, 109, 112, 147, 159; MacKenzie 1914: 218-9; MacLean 1915: 151; McLellan 1985: 165; Meek 1988).

- 5 It would appear that throughout the letter Hendry is addressing the entire family and not merely his mother. This is a pity, as it prevents us learning anything of his use of second person for single individuals. Robertson found that in Arran, as in Ireland, 'the use of *thu* or *sibh* is determined solely by number, and never by age or rank, except that old people say *sibh* to a minister'; the standard Scottish Gaelic practice, in line with French, is to use *sibh* more generally to show respect, and certainly to one's mother; while Holmer, in stark contrast to Robertson, found that even in the 1930s, in line with English, *thu* was gradually giving way in Arran to *sibh* except as a mode of address by the old to the young (Robertson 1897: 256; Holmer 1957: 123).

- 6 'In Arran, *tha e a mhiann* = he wishes to, as, *tha e a mhiann a dheanamh*, he wishes to do it' (Dwelly 1949: 650, following Robertson 1897: 254). This phrase suggests confusion between *a mhiann* 'wishing' and *gum miannamaid* 'that we would wish', see n. 18 below.
- 7 I.e. *t-samhraidh*. This would generally be pronounced [tāvri] in Arran, but this evidence, taken together with *gheameradh* (n. 32) suggests the development of an epenthetic vowel and the delentition of *mh*: [tāməri]. Holmer noted an isolated instance of such delentition, *ag amharc* [ə gəmərək] 'looking', at Carradale, just across the Kilbrannan Sound from Penrioch, while Linguistic Survey informant Donald Craig (see p.70) had [m] in *tamhail(t)* 'a ghost'. This might be cited in support of Robertson's statement that the speech of north Arran was closer to Kintyre Gaelic than that of the rest of the island, a point about which Holmer could come to no definite conclusion, although he accepted that there may at one time have been recognisable divergences in the dialect of the various parts of the island (Robertson 1897: 229-30; Holmer 1957: 2, 25, 36, 44; Holmer 1962: 34).
- 8 *adh* is written in above *-amh* to represent actual pronunciation [d'ɛnək] (Robertson 1897: 238; Holmer 1957: 62, 69, 156).
- 9 I.e. *crèadha*, gs. of *crèadh*, pronounced [kr'a:] in Arran (Robertson 1897: 234; Holmer 1957: 19, 47, 78).
- 10 *gilleam* (lads) is written in above *mhuntir* (folk).
- 11 I.e. *dh'fhan*.
- 12 Cf. *nach pill thu rium?* 'will you not return to me?' (Holmer 1957: 1).
- 13 *Kiliston* = *Caolisten* = the common north Arran surname Kelso (an Ayrshire name of Borders origin). Note that *ao* is pronounced *é* in Arran, and compare the standard development of Morrison → *Moireasdan*, Robertson → *Robasdan*, Ferguson → *Fearghasdan*, Finlayson → *Fionnlasdan* (MacKenzie 1914: 81, 117; Black 1946: 391).
- 14 I.e. *aca*, regularly [axkə] in Arran Gaelic, as this confirms, despite the general absence of pre-aspiration from the dialect (Holmer 1957: 125).
- 15 I.e. *tinneas-caithte*, in which *caithte* is genitive singular of *caitheamh* 'wasting, consumption'. That this is the Arran name for the disease is confirmed by Dwelly 1949: 951.
- 16 I.e. *an aghaidh*, cf. Robertson 1897: 243; Holmer 1957: 50, 74.
- 17 *Dùthaich* 'country' is in Arran *dùiche* (Robertson 1897: 242; Holmer 1957: 59, 80, 106, 108).
- 18 *Goineag* ('Stinger') is a name for one of the winds of spring:
- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Tri latha Gearraig, | Three days of Cutter, |
| Tri latha Goineig, | Three days of Stinger, |
| Tri latha Sguabaig, | Three days of Sweeper, |
| Tri latha Faoilich fhuair, | Three days of cold Woftime, |
| Suas an t-earrach. | The spring is over (Smith 1964: 28). |

However, such a nickname is unlikely to be in question here, and the probability is that *Goinag* is simply Hendry's attempt at spelling a name of the type *Johnag* (Joan, usually *Seonag* in Gaelic orthography) or *Jeanag* (Jeannie, usually *Sineag*) or Janet (usually *Seònaid*). The last seems particularly likely, as it generally took the form *Deònaid* in Arran. The chorus of an Arran song goes:

Deòcan is Deònaid,
 'Se Deòcan a rinn a' bhanais,
 'Se Deòcan is Deònaid a rinn a' bhanais ainmeil.

(Jockie and Janet./It's Jockie that made the wedding./It's Jockie and Janet that made the famous wedding.) William Ross, too, uses the name in stanza 2 of his lampoon on Arran Gaelic. Hendry uses *g* for [d'] or [t'] in *mhianemig* = *mhiannamaid* above, and in *fastage* = *fasdaid*, *mhinisgair* = *mhinisdear*, *Keggi* = *Ceiltidh*, *risg* = *rithisd* and *gearnead* = *dèanamh* [d'ɛnək] below. Perhaps the practice is stimulated by the Arran habit of pronouncing non-initial *sg* as *sd*, e.g. *Latha na Càisde* for *Latha na Càisge* 'Easter Day', cf. Manx *Sostyn* for *Sasgann* 'England', *sushtal* for *soisgeul* 'gospel', etc.; note also south Arran *cuideal* for *cuigeal* 'distaff', *caidil* for *caigil* 'smoor', and conversely *cliug* for *cliut* 'a cuff with the fingers'. Janet was one of the commonest girl's names among the Megantic settlers, but there need be no doubt that the Janet in question here is William Hendry's first cousin of that name, see n. 41 (Robertson 1897: 243; Holmer 1957: 17, 178-9, 195).

- 19 For *ciosan* 'a cousin' see Holmer 1957: 115.
- 20 '*Fasdaid*, adjective. Fee'd, as at market—Arran' (Dwelly 1949: 418, following Kennedy 1895: 131).
- 21 This usage supports Robertson 1897: 252 as against Holmer 1957: 100 that Arran *un* (*chun*, *thun*) can occur independently of the definite article.
- 22 *u* is written in above *-a-*. Given as *tiomall* at Shiskine, *tiumall* in south Arran (Robertson 1897: 235; Holmer 1957: 80). *Tiomall/tiumall* is the characteristic form of *timcheall* ('around') in the most southerly dialects of Scottish Gaelic. William Ross mimics it in stanza 5 of his lampoon on Arran Gaelic.
- 23 I.e. *às a-seo* ('from here')? In any event, *on atie so* ('from this place') is written in above by way of clarification.
- 24 Cf. Robertson 1897: 247; Holmer 1957: 70.
- 25 Ink rubbed when still wet to remove text.
- 26 ?Altered from *oiber*.
- 27 I.e. *dh'fhanas*.
- 28 I.e. *aona* [inə], used as in Irish. *Chan eil aon duine an siud* = Northern [Scottish Gaelic] *Chan eil duine an siud*, 'there is no one there'. *Aon*, which is not emphasised in such uses, is thus used frequently [in Arran] not as an intensive but as if a step had been taken towards supplying Gaelic with an indefinite article' (Robertson 1897: 256; for pronunciation see Holmer 1957: 93).
- 29 I.e. *co* 'so', see Robertson 1897: 246 and Holmer 1957: 118.
- 30 I.e. *có 'ca* = *có aca* = *co-dhiùbh*.
- 31 *Read* ('a thing') corresponds to Irish *réad*, Manx *red*, rather than to the more general Scottish Gaelic *rud*, cf. Robertson 1897: 234; Holmer 1957: 57, 112.
- 32 I.e. *geamhradh*—generally [g'avrək] in Arran (Robertson 1897: 229; Holmer 1957: 44), but this evidence suggests epenthesis and delentition of *mh*: [g'amərək]. See n. 7.
- 33 The use of *dheagh* for *glé* is interesting, cf. Scots *gey*.
- 34 Cf. *ainmiosachadh*, Robertson 1897: 245.
- 35 'Walking through the "Long Bush" was an experience of some of the settlers. Young men, at times walked through to Vermont, earned what they could in the summer, and walked back in the fall' (McKillop 1902: 45). Assuming that the distances given are miles of walking and not as the crow flies, and that the figure of 200 miles is the total, they would point to Montpelier, the state capital of Vermont. The *Annals* cite an instance of a MacKillop settler bringing his sister on foot from Inverness to Montpelier for medical treatment. If on the other hand the total intended is 270 miles, the distances given might perhaps point to Manchester, NH, which is about 250 miles from Inverness as the crow flies and is the only specific location mentioned in the *Annals* where a young settler found work on the other side of the Long Bush, albeit in 1848 (McKillop 1902: 45, 136).
- 36 Peter Hamilton had come from Arran in 1831. He subsequently married Ann MacCurdie and settled down in Inverness. He was still alive in 1900, aged ninety, so he was twenty-four in 1834. His wanderlust seems to have been inherited by his son Donald, who was thought to be dead for eleven years until discovered in Lillooet, BC, in the 1890s by Ronald Currie from Inverness (McKillop 1902: 42, 80, 162).
- 37 *Seonaidh* was the regular form of Johnnie in Arran, as elsewhere (Holmer 1957: 178-9). The township of Cuithe is three miles over the hill from Lochranza, at the northern tip of Arran. The impression given is that *Seonaidh Chuithe* had been a well-known character in Lochranza—a fisherman, perhaps? Charles Hodge's translation gives his name as Cook; this may be no more than a misinterpretation of *chui* (Cook in Arran Gaelic was (*M*)*acCùca*), but the Cuithe people were among the emigrants on the *Caledonia*, while one of the four unattached men of the party was a John Cook, the others being Robert and Donald Stewart and William Hendry. John Cook married Mary MacKillop in September 1830. They were the first of the Arran settlers to be married in the new country, and had to walk the 40 miles to Quebec to find a minister (McKillop 1902: 12, 45; McKerrill 1987: 155).
- 38 A John Kelso was tenant of Mid Sannox in 1766, and of the new East Farm of North Sannox in 1773; a Robert Kelso was tenant of the new South Farm of Mid Sannox in 1773. William Kelso and his wife Mary MacKillop, with their children Mary, Alexander, Catherine, James, Margaret and three-week-

- old William, were on the *Caledonia* in 1829; of the children, James lived to 1898 and William to 1892, but none ever married (McKillop 1902: 11, 25, 43, 60; MacKenzie 1914: 357, 359).
- 39 'Baldie Calum' is the patronymic of Archibald MacKillop, perhaps a son of Malcolm MacKillop who became tenant of the new Mid Farm of North Sannox in 1773; in Megantic the abbreviation Baldie seems to have been applied almost exclusively to him to distinguish him from others of the same name, particularly Captain—ultimately Colonel—Archibald MacKillop (n. 2). In Arran Gaelic, Archibald is *Gilleasbai*, vocative '*Leasbai*'. The parenthesis '(... Auchie)', placed after the name in Charles Hodge's translation, may be a misreading of '[Malcolm's] Archie', but seems more likely to be the place-name Achadh, otherwise anglicised Achag. The Achag was one of the three divisions made in 1773 of the original farm of Corrie, just south of Sannox, and one of the three houses there about 1801 was occupied from 1793 to 1816 by Duncan MacMillan, great-grandfather of Harold Macmillan (cf. n. 4). Baldie Calum was married to a Janet MacMillan, and their children were Donald, Mary, Malcolm, Angus and Archibald; two of them are referred to in the *Annals* with their patronymic Valdie (Bhaldie), i.e. Donald Valdie, Mary Valdie. The latter is presumably the girl suffering ill-health in 1834, but even so, she survived to marry Peter MacKenzie (arrived 1843), with whom she migrated to Missouri, subsequently becoming Mrs H. Thurber; this may have been Harley Thurber, son of a family already long settled in Megantic when the first *Arannaich* arrived in 1829 (Robertson 1897: 243; McKillop 1902: 11, 40, 43, 60; MacKenzie 1914: 359; McLellan 1985: 172). It may be of interest to note that the only other Baldie mentioned in the *Annals* was yet another Archibald MacKillop, who arrived with his widowed mother in 1831. Called Baldie 'Vaischer' (*Mhaighstir*), he took over from 'Captain' MacKillop as the community's first official teacher. He shared Donald Hendry's 'Old Log Meeting House' (n. 4) until a schoolhouse was built about 1835. He was very badly paid, but a good scholar, and applied to the authorities for reimbursement for the extra burden of teaching Gaelic, which was turned down—'the refusal of the Quebec authorities to sanction the teaching of Gaelic was not unnatural,' remarks D. M. McKillop laconically, 'being but a step in the direction of allowing the Gaelic language to die out'. Not surprisingly, *Baldie Mhaighstir* was one of the first to leave the new settlement for good, a trend perhaps foreshadowed in our letter—he migrated to Ontario about 1836 (McKillop 1902: 55).
- 40 Or kinsfolk.
- 41 Mr and Mrs Donald Hendry, their daughters Kate, Janet and Margaret, and Kate's daughter Mary A., now aged six. (As stated above, their other children, Donald and Mary, did not settle in Megantic.) Janet married James Kerr in 1836, the couple walking 15 miles to the settlement of Leeds to be wed by the Church of England minister there and walking back the same day (McKillop 1902: 39, 42, 45).
- 42 The young men would sometimes go to Quebec City to work as stevedores, etc., or to the lumber camps on the Ottawa River. Many of the unmarried women went into service with families in adjacent settlements (McKillop 1902: 36-7).
- 43 MS. *Keggi* = *Ceitidh* = Katie, cf. n. 18.
- 44 In the letter the second part of the name is written *adhfuachi* with *r* added above the *u*, while Charles Hodge's translation has 'William (Duncan's Wm)'. I suspect that 'Duncan' may be nothing more than a misinterpretation of *adhfurachi* as *Dhonnchaidh*, reading *n* for *r*; there need be little doubt that it actually represents the surname *MacMhurchaidh* (Murchie), which was pronounced *AcUrchaidh* in south Arran and *Acfurchaidh* at Shiskine on the west side (Robertson 1897: 230, 238). Judging from our letter, the pronunciation ten miles further north again at Penrioch was the same—[ak furəxi]. In Arran Gaelic pre-aspiration is almost unknown (but see n. 14) and non-initial velar *dh* has the same [k] sound as unvoiced *g*; note that Hendry writes *go* for *co*. William Murchie, son of John Murchie and Margaret Hendry, was born at Achadh Mór, less than a mile north of Penrioch, on 22 April 1805. He came to Canada with the Rev. Donald Hendry and a few others on the *Foundling* in 1831. On 20 December 1838 he was married in Lower Ireland to Elizabeth Sillers, who had come from Arran with her parents, brothers and sisters on the *Newfoundland* in July 1829, and they raised a family of eleven. On one occasion their house was burned while they were at a meeting. 'The fire was first considered as accidental, but after a time, some articles of clothing that had a remarkable resemblance to those supposed to have been burned, were seen being worn by the

- members of a neighbouring family, who have long since moved away from Inverness.' William Murchie died 17 September 1877; his wife was still alive, aged eighty-four, in 1900 (McKillop 1902: 22, 42, 70, 147, 161-2).
- 45 As the crow flies this would suggest Cleveland, Ohio, and by any permutation somewhere on Lake Erie, from where the descent could have been made by raft (with a portage at the Niagara Falls) to Lake Ontario and thence by the St Lawrence River to Quebec.
- 46 While accepting that 'though the hardships and privations of the early settlers were severe . . . in a few years plenty and peace was the general portion', the *Annals* add the rider that 'in some respects the first years were not the hardest, the greatest pinch coming after the first supplies of clothing had been worn out and the utensils, etc., that had been brought out had become useless or damaged' (McKillop 1902: 34, 67). But the letter certainly seems to confirm the view that 'in the year 1831 . . . thirteen families arrived, to find things rather easier for them than they had been for the pioneers' (MacKenzie 1914: 225), for there were not many new arrivals between then and 1834.
- 47 The pioneers of 1829 were faced with 'a solid block of woods' (McKillop 1902: 18).
- 48 This confirms exactly the description of the land in McKillop 1902: 24, 26. The settlers' greatest disappointment, perhaps, was that the more they cleared and cultivated, the more rocks and stones appeared—a phenomenon also encountered in other parts of Canada, such as Cape Breton. Cf. MacKenzie 1914: 225.
- 49 1830 edn. has *Cha bhi 'n Sgiobair fo mhi-ghean/Ach gun diobair a chrann*, 'The Skipper's only worry will be/That he'll lose his mast'.
- 50 1830 edn. has *feuchadh for léirsinn*, same meaning.
- 51 Characteristically of the author, a pun is intended between the contemptuous *chinn-shidhleach* 'fiddle-head', referring to the ornament at a ship's bow consisting of a scroll turning aft or inward, and the more heroic *chinn-ileach* 'Islay-hilt' (same pronunciation), referring to a sword.
- 52 1830 edn. has *piobain*, perhaps implying a small pipe such as used by sailors.

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