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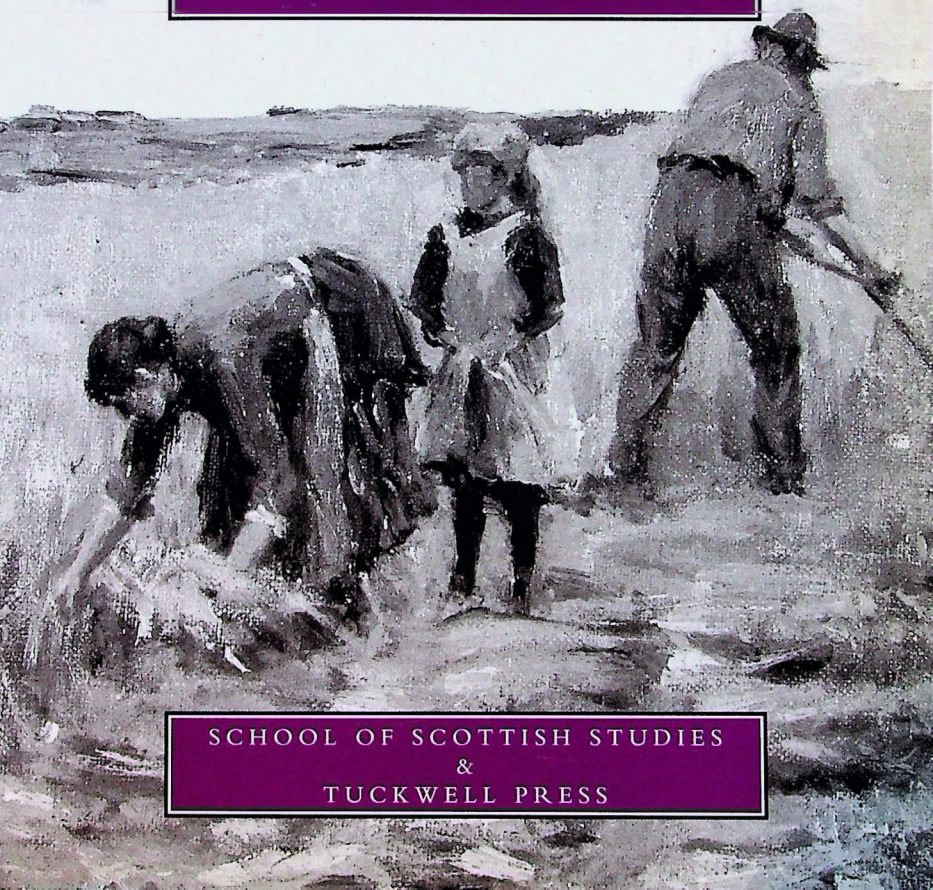

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Editorial

The last issue of *Scottish Studies* to appear was Volume 31 in 1993. As a result of various problems, there has been a gap since then, for which we apologise to our readers and subscribers. Arrangements have now been made with a new firm, Tuckwell Press Ltd, which will see to the publication of future volumes. The distribution and sales of the Journal will, however, remain the responsibility of the School of Scottish Studies, where a database has been set up to facilitate procedures.

It is intended that the next two issues, volumes 33 and 34, will appear in quick succession, in order to try to catch up on the backlog. We look forward to the future smooth running of the Journal, with regular annual issues.

The initial editing of the material in this volume dedicated to Eric Cregeen was carried out by Daphne Hamilton, who subsequently retired from the School. We are grateful to her for her input. Alexander Fenton, who took over the editing of *Scottish Studies* with the help of Ian Fraser as a temporary measure, also retired in September 1994 from his post as Professor of Scottish Ethnology and Director of the School of Scottish Studies. Following the completion of this present volume, a new Editor will be appointed from amongst the staff of the School. The Director of the School since October 1994 has been Dr Margaret Mackay, who in earlier years worked very closely with Eric Cregeen. Her tribute to him appears in the following pages.

This volume has an international range, with contributors from Denmark and Norway. It also features the last article that Eric Cregeen wrote, 'Oral Tradition and History in a Hebridean Island', itself a tribute to his depth of scholarship and his range of interests, including the exemplary way in which he could combine oral traditions with their background of history.

We have felt it appropriate to include a note about Eric's late sister, Sheila, who shared so many of his interests, and who also played a role in promulgating the culture of Scotland.

One of the contributors, and fellow member of the School's staff, is Dr Alan James Bruford. It is with great sorrow that we record his unexpected death on 8 May 1995. He was the School's Archivist. Nationally and internationally, he made a great contribution to folklore scholarship. His most recent work, edited jointly with Donald Archie MacDonald, was *Scottish Traditional Tales* (Polygon 1995), which appeared shortly before his death. His article on 'Flitting Peats in North Yell' marks his ability to work in the realm of material culture as well as folklore, and shows the detail he could attain in his field recording activities, as a result of gaining the sympathy and interest of his informants. A future issue of *Scottish Studies* will be dedicated to his memory and will contain a full Bibliography.

Duncan MacGregor Whyte (1866-1953)

Duncan MacGregor Whyte, whose painting 'Neill Eachainn MacDonald and Family' provides the cover illustration of this volume of *Scottish Studies*, was devoted to Argyll and to Tiree in particular, where he had strong family connections and where he and his wife Mary Barnard (1870–1946), an equally accomplished artist, found much of their inspiration.

His grandfather, the Reverend Archibald Farquharson, from Strathardle in Perthshire, came to Tiree in the early 1830s as Congregational or Independent minister, settling in the township of Cornaigbeg. When his wife died leaving two young daughters, her sister Christian came to act as his housekeeper and married into a family of Macleans with a long pedigree in the island and Archibald himself lived the rest of his days in Tiree.

MacGregor Whyte was born in Oban and studied in Glasgow and Antwerp and thereafter at the École Delecluse, where he met his wife. His work as a portrait painter took him to Canada and to Australia for a period of years but from 1921 he made his base at Bealach an Ruighe in Oban and summered in Tiree. The sea, the shore, landscapes and studies of individuals and groups at work came to characterise his output. He was adept at handling small craft and would set his lug-sail so that he could sketch on the water. And while Cornaigbeg remained the family centre it was the township of Balephuil, in the west end of Tiree, where he had a studio overlooking strand and sea and where Eric Cregeen was to concentrate so much of his research, that provided a major focus. There the older folk remembered MacGregor Whyte, wearing the kilt and always speaking Gaelic.

Eric Cregeen valued greatly his friendship with MacGregor's son Tearlach MacGregor Whyte, a civil engineer in Argyll, and his wife Ena, who herself had Tiree roots. They maintained both the old home in Oban and the studio in Balephuil and it was through their generosity that nineteen paintings by Duncan MacGregor Whyte, Mary Barnard and their son John were gifted to the School of Scottish Studies, oils and watercolours depicting aspects of life in Tiree earlier this century.

It is fitting that they all should be remembered with gratitude in this volume.

M.A.M.

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Eric Radcliffe Cregeen, 1921–1983

MARGARET A. MACKAY

On his appointment in 1966, Eric Cregeen brought to the School of Scottish Studies a potent combination of personal and professional qualities and experience which was to have a profound effect on the study of Scotland both within and well beyond the Department.

From his earliest years, his home environment encouraged the development of perspectives which were grounded in the local and which valued the international. His mother was a teacher and his father a Wesleyan Methodist minister, and theirs was a household where music, song and discussion — communication of all kinds — played an important role. They appreciated their three children and provided self-discipline and freedom in an atmosphere of positive inquiry and fun. Eric's mother was from Peel in the Isle of Man, and his father's father was from the south of the Island. A fixed point in the life where the family moved on the Methodist circuit in the North of England every four years was provided by regular summer visits to Mann. His sister Sheila, who was to become a writer, teacher and archaeologist, recalled the eager anticipation which she, Eric and their elder brother Allan, later a forensic scientist, always felt at the prospect of visits to grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins, and expeditions over and around the Island, exploring its past and present.

The Methodist connections brought an early awareness of the wider world, fostered by their father's lantern lectures and talks by missionaries home on leave from far flung countries. There were Manx holidays shared with cousins home on furlough from China. Eric was intrigued to know that his missionary uncle who had taught him to swim had also taught the young Mao Tse Tung. Ideals of service to and interest in the lives of others were integral to the family values and an early ambition of Eric's was to be a medical missionary. He learned Russian from an émigré family and throughout his life maintained a love of the Russian people, their writers and traditions. The circle of friends in the 1930s include refugees from Nazi Germany.

Eric's maternal grandfather and great grandfather were shipsmiths, with a smiddy on the quay at Peel, a centre for schooner-building, marine trade and nautical training in earlier days and still a booming herring port. His grandfather was a hard taskmaster, expecting the boys to rise early to accompany him to feed the goats and sheep on Peel Hill and to work in the walled garden by the quay. Eric inherited from him a respect for physical skills which remained throughout his life.

The four years the family spent at Addingham in Wharfedale (1930–34) were recalled as providing a wonderful life for children, with opportunities to explore the

countryside and visit mills and farms. There is no doubt that Eric's interest in cultural traditions was developing at this time. From the age of thirteen he began to systematically study the Manx language, before school copying out a detailed grammar and in the summer gaining fluency through practice with the last Manx speakers, filling notebooks and acquiring not only linguistic skills but also a knowledge of the traditions they conveyed.

Like many ethnologists of his generation, Eric's course was not a direct one but was influenced by several related disciplines before he came to port in the School of Scottish Studies. An early influence was William Lemon, the headmaster of his elementary school in Addingham, who had a strong and active love of history. From there in 1935 Eric won a scholarship to The Leys School in Cambridge, where he was inspired by his History Master K. C. Lewis. His formal education continued as a Major History Scholar at Christ's College, Cambridge, where his tutor was J. H. Plumb, leading to B.A. History and Latin in 1947 and M.A. in 1949.

Eric was a conscientious objector during the war years, which he spent mainly in agricultural work. Part of this time he was in the Isle of Man, which gave him the opportunity to work with those who were alarmed by the steady disappearance of Manx traditional buildings and language. Professor Carl Marstrander, a linguist from Oslo, had been recording Manx speech on wax cylinder and Cregneash village had been established by the Manx Museum, inspired by William Cubbon in 1938 as the first publicly owned, open air folk-museum in Britain. Also, after 1940, important excavations were being undertaken on the Island by Dr Gerhard Bersu, a brilliant German archaeologist who was interned there. With a team of assistants and working under armed guard, those excavations nevertheless represented archaeological research at the highest level and were coordinated by the Manx Museum. In 1947 De Valera, Taoiseach of Ireland, visited Cregneash Folk Museum and was so impressed with the wealth of heritage in the Island that he offered the help of the Irish Folklore Commission to the Museum to record this heritage.

In 1948 all of Eric's interests came together with his appointment as Assistant Director to Basil Megaw at the Manx Museum and Secretary to the Manx Museum and Ancient Monuments Trustees.

His main responsibility was the organisation of the folk life survey. With a team of thirty Manx collectors and with Kevin Danaher and a mobile recording van from the Irish Folklore Commission the survey was enthusiastically completed and housed in the Museum's archives. Good friends in Ireland, in particular Tony Lucas of the National Museum in Dublin, encouraged him and introduced him to similar studies in folk culture and to archaeological excavations taking place in Ireland.

Three happy years teaching History and Latin at Culford School, Bury St Edmunds, helped to prepare him for his next post.

In 1954 Eric joined the University of Glasgow's Extra-Mural Department as Resident Tutor to introduce extra-mural studies throughout Argyll. With the full support of the

Argyll County Council Educational Committee, for the next decade he poured his energies into developing adult education in mainland and island communities. There he is warmly remembered for the practical encouragement he gave to individuals and groups to study their own localities in a systematic way, a stimulus which continues to provide a lasting resource in the area, in publications and in archaeological and historical societies he helped to create. (Fig. 1) His idea prompted the establishing of Auchindrain Township near Inveraray as a Folk-Life Museum.

Fig 1. Eric Cregeen standing by an inscribed stone in Killevin Churchyard, Minard, Argyll in 1956. Photo: Cregeen family.

In 1958 Eric married Lily Gemmill, an artist who was teaching at Campbeltown High School and their daughters Kirsty and Nicola were born in Argyll.

Throughout these years in Argyll Eric invited speakers from many institutions, such as scientific research laboratories, hospitals, prisons and university departments including the School of Scottish Studies, to give lectures. Many stayed to visit the islands and to record the archaeology and traditional culture of the area. Eric had been collecting for some time, and in 1959 his article 'Recollections of an Argyllshire Drover' appeared in *Scottish Studies*. Although this was mainly based on oral evidence that he had recorded from Dougal MacDougall, a retired drover from Mid Argyll, it contained original detailed studies he had carried out on the estate records from Kilberry and Inveraray, the result being an unusually well rounded view of the cattle market and drovers' trade at the end of the nineteenth century. He had already begun work on the muniments of the Argyll Estate which led (with the help of a Carnegie Fellowship) to the publication in the early 1960s of *Inhabitants of the Argyll Estate 1779* for the Scottish Record Society and *Argyll Estate Instructions Mull, Morvern, Tiree, 1771–1805* for the Scottish History Society and to further seminal publications on the estate and its role.

In 1964–65 a Nuffield Foundation sociological award enabled Eric to widen the basis of his research on the West Highlands and Islands of Scotland with comparative studies in social history and anthropology, including work on Russian material. This was supervised by Professor M. Fortes at Cambridge. Before leaving Argyll for Edinburgh University he had planned to write what he would call 'The World of Domhnall Chaluim Bhain' inspired by the insight into the island's life given him mainly by Donald Sinclair, a remarkable *seanchaidh* from West Hynish in Tiree.

In 1966 he was appointed lecturer in the School of Scottish Studies in the University of Edinburgh with responsibility for research and teaching in the field of social organisation. He became a Senior Lecturer in 1969. The School was now beginning to increase its teaching capacity and he played a full part in teaching and supervising postgraduate students for the degree of M.Litt and PhD.

He helped to lay the foundations of what was to become the full degree programme in Scottish Ethnology with components in the first and second level of courses which drew not only on Scottish data but also on comparative material from the Hungarian plains to the Danish island of Læsø. This vision has informed more recent teaching at honours level and the development of the Visiting Professors of Ethnology programmes. It also ensured that the School was attuned to new perspectives in the international world of ethnology, particularly in Scandinavia. He was an active member of several committees at home and abroad which were relevant to his research and to his administrative responsibilities. In 1978 he published *Tiree Bards and their Bardachd* which was written with the Rev. D. W. Mackenzie who for many years helped him with his understanding and appreciation of Scottish Gaelic. For several months he was acting Director of the School and joint Director in 1981.

In May 1981 he was appointed Reader in Scottish Studies. His research added more than 500 hours of recordings (Fig. 2), as well as films and photographs, to the School's archives. These included information on township histories, genealogies, religion, customs and beliefs, material culture, tales, legends and songs and many aspects of social and economic life.

His work in Argyll (Fig. 3) and his intimate knowledge of the Argyll Estate muniments, with their detailed evidence for the study of community life, coupled with his understanding of the rich vein of oral tradition to be found in the areas it documented,

Fig 2. Eric Cregeen interviewing Lachlan MacLeod in Grimsay, North Uist, in 1970. Photo: School of Scottish Studies.

in particular the island of Tiree, prompted the concentrated research programme which in 1973 he conceived and directed in the School of Scottish Studies with support from the Social Science Research Council. The Tiree Project, as it came to be known, was a series of linked studies on the history and traditions of the island and its emigrant offshoots, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Eric had the assistance of a small research unit with Dr Margaret Mackay as his collaborator, Dr Mackay being responsible for the emigrant aspect of the project. The research was completed but remains unpublished at present due to Eric's sudden death in 1983.

Fig 3. Eric Cregeen with Hector Kennedy, Hilipol, Tiree, in 1976. Photo: School of Scottish Studies.

Eric's view was that oral history should be as inclusive a source as possible, including inherited tradition as well as personal recollections in its scope. He recognised the value of locally composed song, the *bardachd* for which the Tiree townships were so well known, as an important source for the historian and his use of an interplay of documentary and oral sources enabled him to develop a methodology which has been taken up by a new generation of scholars. He was a founder member of the Oral History Society, an early committee member and conference organiser, and an active supporter of the wider European dimension of the oral history movement, placing Scottish material in that context in conference papers and publications. Importantly for Scotland, he was the inspiration behind the creation of the Scottish Oral History Group and its first Chairman. Innumerable individuals and group projects owe an immense debt to the generous way in which Eric was always ready to share his experience and give practical help.

The fruits of this early encouragement are now to be seen throughout Scotland in the increasing use of oral evidence to illuminate the past to be found in publications, museums, archives, libraries, school curricula, and the media.

A dedicated scholar, Eric was scrupulous in his concern for critical scrutiny and accuracy in the use and interpretation of all historical sources, whether oral, written

Fig 4. An example of Eric Cregeen's sense of humour and skill as a cartoonist; done at the time of the Cod War with Iceland and featuring his friend and colleague Donald Archie MacDonald.

or visual. But the human element was also paramount in his scholarship, to be seen in his respect for those who were his sources, his kindness, courtesy and generosity. Never was the description more richly deserved than that used of him by older Gaelic speakers, *duin' uasal*, a gentleman in the most profound sense of the word. He retained his sense of fun, delighting family and friends with witty cartoons (Fig. 4), and his enthusiasm for his subject never faltered. On the last evening of his life he was jotting down World War One reminiscences from the man in the hospital bed next to his own.

Eric knew well the importance of timely research support and the value of direct acquaintance with scholars and archival resources beyond one's immediate milieu. The Eric Cregeen Fellowship Fund, established in the School after his death, is a fitting memorial, for its aim is to offer opportunities for researchers based in Scotland to make use of resources elsewhere for comparative purposes and others to become familiar with Scottish material.

Those who were fortunate enough to work with Eric were profoundly influenced by the way he combined a wide, interdisciplinary view with attention to individual experience and detail. His delight in discovery and his capacity for friendship will long be remembered as will his support as a colleague and his kindly encouragement as a teacher. He was a man for whom family and community had real meaning as the wellspring of life, for whom scholarly work retained an essentially human face. This he communicated in ways which will continue to shape scholarship for years to come.

The assistance of Mrs Lily Cregeen in the compilation of this appreciation is gratefully acknowledged.

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Sheila Margaret Cregeen 1924–1993

R. L. THOMSON

Sheila, like her brother Eric, with whose career her own ran in part on parallel lines, was brought up away from the Isle of Man, their father (Fig. 1) being in the Methodist ministry. She had her higher education at Manchester University, where she took a BA (Hons II.i in English and French) in 1944. From there she went into teaching, including a year at King's school, Macclesfield, during the period 1944–48, and again in 1950–54. Meanwhile she was engaged on work for a Manchester MA (1952) in the Department of Archaeology, the subject of her thesis being 'Aspects of Celtic Culture in the Isle of Man', for, although deprived of the opportunity of spending their childhood on the Island, Sheila and Eric regularly spent their holidays with relatives and came to love the place and store their minds with information, memories and impressions of the Island and its history.

Fig. 1 Allan, Eric and Sheila Cregeen, with their parents James Pentland Cregeen and Cissie Radcliffe. Sheila was to share many of Eric's interests and collaborate with him on archaeological excavations. Allan, who became a scientist, was also a keen supporter of Eric's activities.

For a time Sheila moved from teaching into museum work, as assistant at the Doncaster Art Gallery and Museum, and subsequently as Deputy Director of the Verulamium Museum at St Albans (1954–58). But the urge to communicate was strong and from 1958 onwards she held a part-time lectureship in Archaeology in the Department of Extra-Mural Education at Sheffield, and similar positions with the corresponding departments of Glasgow and Edinburgh Universities, giving evening courses in the winter months to adult education classes in Argyll, Galloway, Lothian and the Borders in Archaeology and Scottish History, and subsequently acting in a similar capacity in the Island for the University of Liverpool.

In 1966 she was at last enabled to return permanently to the Island, to teach English at the Buchan School for a year, and Archaeology and Manx History at the College of Further Education. As a teacher of English in southern Italy and Sicily earlier in her career she had acquired a knowledge of Italian, and this subject too she offered at the College. Again in her earlier years she had studied Russian with émigrés in Macclesfield, another interest shared with Eric.

Sheila also possessed in a marked degree the gift of story-telling, both orally and in writing. During her years in Scotland she wrote radio plays and scripts for Scottish schools broadcasts, generally on historical subjects, and she also published a little poetry. Her gifts were always at the disposal of public and learned causes, whether judging literature at the Cruinnaght, engaging in secretarial work for the Archaeological Society in Hertfordshire or the Society of Antiquaries, serving on the committee of the Isle of Man Natural History and Antiquarian Society (of which she was President in 1978–79), acting as tutor for the Open University, or in journalism, or in leading history rambles and engaging in archaeological field work (she had a special interest in horizontal water-mills and in building conservation), or playing an active role in Mec Vannin in the early days of that organisation in defence of the land she loved, or making the excellent fudge which her friends remember with so much pleasure.

But a list of her activities gives little idea of the witty and warm-hearted personality behind them. Even the driest discussion was lightened by a jest, and her kindness, to humans and to animals, was legendary. Death took her suddenly and her last anxiety was that her animals should be cared for. At her funeral at Patrick on 6 April 1993, the church was full to overflowing with her friends and neighbours, assembled to honour and take leave of a notably gifted, generous and well-beloved personality who in her life attracted affection rather than this world's goods. There she was buried in the same churchyard where a few years earlier her brother Eric's ashes were interred.

Oral Tradition and History in a Hebridean Island

ERIC R. CREGEEN

The Gaelic-speaking Highlands of Scotland are rightly regarded as possessing unique oral traditions of great interest and immense antiquity.[1] The songs, tales, proverbs, clan traditions and music have been intensively collected and frequently published in works of folklore, literature and history. But with a few notable exceptions, almost exclusively found among scholars versed in Gaelic, professional historians have seldom in modern times looked to this body of oral tradition as a serious historical source, nor among the multiplying works on the history of the Highlands has there been any major critical assessment of oral tradition as a historical source.

It is not surprising to find historians chary of hazarding their reputations in a field in which they are untrained. Nevertheless, there is a strong *prima facie* case for approaching the history of the Highlands with a mind alert to the claims of oral tradition. It is a region where general literacy in English arrived only in the last hundred years, where written sources are relatively scarce and often quite absent and where the transmission of knowledge has depended very largely on oral methods. Families of hereditary *seanchaidhs* once existed under chiefly patronage to recall and recite the history of the clan. Since the eighteenth century there has been no professional class of clan historians, bards or musicians but oral traditions have flourished at a popular level and have been passed on both within the family and in the informal evening gatherings or *ceilidhs* where songs and stories were sung and tales recited. It is this lively popular interest and passion for the arts that has chiefly preserved the music, poetry and narrative lore of the Highlanders up to the present.

Professionalism had gone from the scene, but the transmission of stories and songs and other lore still depended in every part of the Highlands on story tellers and singers and *seanchaidhs* with natural gifts and tenacious memories. The early collectors on the staff of the School of Scottish Studies recorded, a generation ago, tales that required several evenings for the recital, and repertoires of individual singers (like the late Nan Mackinnon of Vatersay) that numbered several hundred songs. All these items, with few exceptions, had been acquired, and were recalled, without the intervention of writing. The historical knowledge and powers of recall of such natural *seanchaidhs* as the late Donald Alex MacEachan in Benbecula were equally impressive. He had traditional knowledge which frequently threw light on important aspects of social and economic life in the islands which are left obscure in written records. His genealogical

knowledge included virtually every family in Benbecula and ranged over three to four hundred years with ease and certainty. He described himself as 'Donald Alexander, son of Alexander, son of Donald, son of Alexander, son of Eoghainn, son of Iain Bàn, son of Eoghainn Mór of Drumnadaraich', and he was able to quote traditional accounts concerning events in the lives of his remote forebears. An example taken from one of the few recordings which he made in English may be quoted:

> There was Eoghainn, who was a soldier. He was at Culloden ... He survived Culloden but he passed two miserable years in England after Culloden ... in prison. And it was through Clanranald that he got out of there, that he got home. And he was slightly wounded at Culloden field and he was either taken to Leith or taken overland to London ... I've heard that he was stripped even of his undergarments on Culloden field. And Clanranald paid some money, a kind of ransom, to get him back here to Benbecula, and he got the land free of rent from Clanranald till the day of his death. That was the pension he got, the croft that I reside on today. (SA 1973/34A)

How accurate and valuable are such oral traditions to the historians? Granted the good faith and marvellous faculties of one's informants, how strong and reliable is the chain of transmission? William Matheson, an outstanding authority on Gaelic oral tradition, indicated in a paper given at Edinburgh in 1977, that the influence of folkloristic *motifs* and of other distorting factors has to be reckoned with. In general, however, little work has been done in the crucial area where storytelling and poetry interact with historical tradition. For that matter, we know little about the influence of political events and pressures on clan traditions, though it is a century since Skene showed how, with their land under the threat from central government, clan genealogies were revised to incorporate more acceptable forebears.

Historians and anthropologists, faced with a comparable situation in non-European societies, have examined oral traditions more critically. Some of the early optimism felt about the reliability of African historical tradition became modified as a result, notably in Vansina's work. The conclusions of anthropologists like Willis and historians like Roberts and Law make it clear that whilst historical traditions may be of considerable value to the historian, the influence of myth, political interest, written texts and human frailty is constantly present, and operates overwhelmingly on traditions that trace back to a period before the nineteenth century.

We do not know without careful investigation whether similar conclusions are true of oral traditions in the Highlands of Scotland, where social and cultural conditions were different. The present article discusses some aspects of an investigation recently carried out at the School of Scottish Studies which affords a firmer basis to judge the historical validity of oral tradition in the Hebridean island of Tiree. If the conclusions formed only partially agree with those reached by Africanists, it should be pointed out

that our investigation was more limited in time scale, reaching back into but hardly before the eighteenth century; it was also based on very different types of oral material, being concerned primarily with the traditions of ordinary island families and settlements in contrast with those of ruling groups and tribal entities, as is mainly the case in African studies.

The Tiree investigation developed from a series of field-trips commencing in 1968, made with the purpose of recording from the lips of the islanders such oral traditions as survived on topics already familiar to me from earlier documentary research. The interest and abundance of the traditional lore led first to limited but detailed local studies where methods and techniques were gradually improved, and finally to a fully-developed enquiry into the history and traditions of the island from circa 1770 to 1914. A small research unit was established in 1973, with funding from the Social Science Research Council. It consisted of a research fellow (Dr Margaret A. Mackay), a research assistant (Mrs Jane MacGregor) and a director (myself). Dr Mackay and I had both studied Gaelic and Mrs MacGregor was a native-speaker, whilst more extensive Gaelic interviewing was made possible with the assistance of Donald W. Mackenzie, who had been reared and had worked in the Hebrides. We had generous academic and technical help from our colleagues in the School. Four years of intensive work, followed by further, closely related research among emigrant families in Canada, yielded a large amount of data based both on traditional and written sources.

In the period up to 1977 (which includes the earlier work in Tiree from 1968 but only the earlier part of the overseas research) our oral material was collected from over a hundred and twenty informants in some five hundred interviews. Interviews varied in length but averaged about three hours. Approximately three hundred hours of material were recorded on tape. Nearly all songs and oral texts were recorded in Gaelic, and much of the historical tradition was recorded in both English and Gaelic versions. Our informants were drawn from a wide social range, though with a predominance of crofters and their wives, craftsmen and ex-seamen, and a sprinkling of shopkeepers, professional people and members of the business world. They lived in all parts of the island, in mainland Scotland and overseas. Some were young or middle-aged but the majority were in the range sixty to eighty and above. Most were interviewed at least twice and some informants, whose range and abundance of traditional lore would have earned them in former times the respected title of *seanchaidh*, were visited frequently in successive years and recorded a score or more times.

Our collection had a historical bias, but within the context of a wide-based study of the island community it was in fact impossible to distinguish what was historical from what was literary or folkloristic. All categories of traditional lore were of potential value and we recorded much that might be termed popular oral literature, embracing prose narrative, poetry and song. We might, had time allowed, have collected a fuller record of such items to supplement the earlier collections of the Rev. Hector Cameron and others.

Other Hebridean islands might have matched our traditional sources but possibly none could have rivalled the written sources available for Tiree. They were subject to the limitations common to all historical sources referring to the Highlands (and indeed frequently also to the Lowlands): parish registers of births and marriages extant only from circa 1770 (and defective in the earlier decades), deaths unregistered until 1855, official census lists non-existent until 1841; private correspondence and diaries, extremely sparse; travellers' accounts mainly dating from the nineteenth century. Some legal, ecclesiastical, parliamentary and government records were relatively detailed though mainly for the period after circa 1850, when printed material also became more available. We had the advantage, however, that Tiree had been administered for nearly three hundred years by the earls and dukes of Argyll, whose estate records, preserved at Inveraray Castle, though uncatalogued, were unusually complete and detailed. My earlier historical work on these records had made me familiar with this invaluable source and the willing help of the present duke and his father enabled this project to be realised, despite the disruption caused by a destructive fire in the castle in 1975 and its subsequent rebuilding.

Gradually we assembled two contrasting bodies of evidence — on the one hand the written record of estate and government officials, inspectors, ministers, teachers, journalists and visitors and, on the other, the popular record of oral tradition which we recorded from the islanders themselves when sitting by their fireside or on a field bank. There was now an opportunity to compare and evaluate the written and the oral records.

The two bodies of evidence are separate and distinctive. Quite apart from their contrasting literary forms, they select different aspects of history to emphasise or ignore. Even when dealing with the same topics the treatment is quite different as will become apparent in the following pages. One cannot maintain that the process of oral transmission has been totally sealed off from the growing influence of the written word but it played a relatively minor part until the late nineteenth century; literacy was restricted and little was available in print except religious works. We have evidence that songs composed in Tiree were occasionally written down by the composer or someone else; this practice goes back into much earlier times in the Highlands, but its part in the whole process of transmission of songs, stories and family lore appears to have been slight.[2] In order to highlight what is characteristic of the oral tradition of Tiree and to indicate its degree of validity as a historical source it is proposed in this article to cite a selection of the collected material which relates to the island during the period circa 1770 to 1850.

In 1770 the island of Tiree, lying far out from the mainland of Argyll, lacking a good harbour and surrounded by turbulent seas, was remarkably isolated from the rest of Scotland. Its population, numbering between 1700 and 1800 people and scattered in small communities over the twenty-eight square miles of the island, was largely indigenous and untravelled and spoke only Gaelic. Agriculture was the basis of

the economy and land was widely distributed among the small tenants, who in turn gave employment to the cottars, a group which provided the craftsmen, labourers and servants and was usually paid in grazing rights and the use of small plots of arable land. The island was relatively fertile and supported the population in greater comfort than was usual in the Highlands. Little was imported and the rents were paid from the barley crop and the proceeds of a flourishing trade in locally-distilled whisky. (*Instructions* xxvi ff.)

There were about thirty extensive farms in the island. Some were in the hands of tacksmen (upper tenants), three of them Macleans, the others Campbells who resided in Mull or elsewhere in Argyll. Most of the farms however were occupied by groups of co-tenants who practised a semi-communal system, in which the individually-worked and scattered strips of arable were periodically reallocated among the tenants. This runrig agriculture rested on cooperation and, at some cost in terms of efficiency and experiment, ensured rough justice.

Manufacture, apart from a feeble linen industry, scarcely existed, and there was no commercial fishery. Land and cattle were thus of vital importance to the islanders, and the object of constant striving and concern. The upper tenants had traditionally enjoyed extensive holdings of land in virtue of their kinship with the laird. Under the Campbell chiefs, the claims of blood were more grudgingly acknowledged but were not ignored and tended to perpetuate the economic privileges of the tacksmen (Cregeen 1969).

Ordinary islanders regularly divided their holdings to support close relations, a custom which was already by 1770 producing serious fragmentation of land. More widely, they belonged to kinship groups which bound together tenants and cottars and were usually concentrated in particular localities. Thus many MacUolrigs (Kennedies) were clustered in a number of contiguous townships in the extreme west, a group of MacDonald kinsfolk at the east end, and a concentration of Campbells in and about Balenoe. The members in each group traced their descent from a common ancestor. Sometimes this ancestor was of high status as in the case of the 'Diurach' (Jura) Macleans, who claimed as their founder in Tiree a certain Ailein Dubh ('black Alan') who may date to the sixteenth century.[3] Consciousness of rank and class was thus contained within a framework of family and kin.

Clanship was dying out as a political force in the Highlands in the late eighteenth century, but the sentiment of clanship was still amazingly strong in Tiree. This was partly because of historical circumstances. The Campbells had acquired Tiree and other territories from the former chiefs and lairds, the Macleans of Duart, in the late seventeenth century. Maclean tacksmen and their allies and dependents had witnessed the alienation of much of their land to Campbell settlers and others favoured by the dukes of Argyll (Cregeen 1969, 96–99). Resentment against the intruders continued to fuel the loyalty of the islanders to the representatives of the Macleans even as late as the end of the eighteenth century. 'The small tenants of Tiry,' wrote an official of the

new duke in 1771, 'are disaffected to the family of Argyll. In this disposition it's thought that long leases might render them too much independent of them and encourage the people to that sort of insolence and outrage to which they are naturally prone and much incited by their chieftains of the Maclean gentry.'[1] These words, from the pen of a member of the Campbell settlers in Mull, reflect not only Maclean hostility to the Campbells but the distrust which the Campbells entertained towards the Macleans and their supporters in the island.

The oral traditions of the island were inevitably much affected by events. The Maclean chiefs had formerly maintained bards, pipers and *seanchaidhs* (the *seanchaidh* was part story-teller, part historian) to celebrate clan deeds and provide entertainment in their halls. Such posts were hereditary in certain families, and served to transmit lore and skills from one generation to the next. Chiefly patronage ceased in the eighteenth century, except on a modest scale among the minor Campbell and Maclean gentry who resided in Tiree (Cregeen and Mackenzie 1978, 5–7). The last of the official bards, John Maclean, received patronage from the laird of the neighbouring island of Coll, as had his great-grandfather, Neil Lamont, but, for lack of sufficient material support, he emigrated to Canada in 1819.

As clan institutions for the transmission of lore and history withered, oral tradition of a more popular kind rose to prominence in Tiree as elsewhere in the Highlands. In the early 1790s the natives of the island were described as much attached to dancing, song and story-telling (*OSA* XX (1794), 1983, 276). This ceilidh tradition, with its nightly gatherings in house or barn for entertainment, persisted vigorously through the nineteenth century and into fairly recent times. The earlier, more aristocratic tradition still had an influence; after all the story-tellers and 'village poets' were sometimes descended from the ancient families of official *seanchaidhs* and bards. But the focus of interest in bardic composition moved to the everyday events and familiar personalities of the contemporary scene, and the songs, with their fresh and topical flavour, convey the experiences and emotions of the ordinary islanders (Cregeen and Mackenzie 1978). The songs of the Maclean period appear to have fallen out of use and none survived to be written down or recorded in Tiree in the twentieth century.

It is now necessary, before discussing the oral evidence that bears on the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, to explain briefly what emerges from a study of the written records of that period.

Tiree, in common with the Highlands in general, was profoundly affected by the industrialisation of the Scottish Lowlands. The growth of woollen manufacture brought extensive sheep-farming and depopulation to the interior of the Highlands, but Lowland industry affected maritime areas in a quite different way. There it stimulated the labour-intensive kelp-burning manufacture which used seaweed as its raw material. The rise of this industry discouraged emigration and thus tended to be associated with a rapid increase of population (Gray 1957, 124–137). The Napoleonic war period

in Tiree was one of swift economic change, unusual prosperity and soaring population. The islanders benefited from the kelp boom, in contrast with many Hebrideans, largely because the Argyll estate left the kelp shores in the possession of the tenants under leases which gave them a generous share of the profits (*Instructions*, xxvii–xxxiii, 32ff., 46, 185–194, and unpublished Instructions).

Agriculture and settlement patterns underwent a most significant change during the war period. Under the paternalistic rule of the 5th duke of Argyll, one of the great improvers of his age, the landless cottars were settled on small holdings. This was made possible by his radical policy of depriving the non-resident Campbell gentry of their farms in Tiree and dividing them into crofts of six and ten acres. A commercial fishery was also established for the employment of the crofters. Most important of all, the duke finally gained the assent and cooperation of the islanders in a scheme he had long cherished: the traditional runrig system was abandoned and in its place compact individual farms averaging about twenty-five acres (ten hectares) were created within the townships for the previous runrig tenants. Whilst retaining certain communal activities, the tenants were now free to develop their arable land as they wished. Aided by long leases, grants and technical and other assistance from the estate, the islanders began to adopt new crops and methods (*Instructions*, 73–79). This was a veritable revolution and it stands as one of the most impressive instances of beneficial improvement in Highland Scotland, where change was too often accompanied by clearance and hardship (*Instructions*, xxx–xxxv and 55ff.).

Conditions deteriorated in the post-1815 period. It was one of the penalties of becoming enmeshed in world markets that the local economies of the islands were rendered more vulnerable. Tiree suffered severely in the post-war decline in agricultural prices and especially from the collapse of the market for kelp. The hardship was intensified by the rapid growth of the population of the island, which doubled in the fifty years after 1790, rising from 2416 in 1792 to 4687 in 1841 (*Instructions*, xxxix and *NSA* 208). Younger islanders resorted to seasonal work in the Lowlands but there was little permanent emigration until the late 1840s when blight destroyed the potato crop over a number of years and the threat of starvation brought a wholesale exodus (Tiree papers, Inveraray Castle).

We turn now to consider what oral record survives in the memory of the islanders about this period of growth and innovation. We found many traditions bearing on the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, mainly among old people in their seventies and eighties. They took the form of songs, stories and anecdotes, place-name lore, sayings and genealogies. Like the written sources they varied in abundance, being sometimes amazingly full and detailed, sometimes sparse or non-existent. On the one hand they recreated the stir and bustle of vanished communities and breathed life into mere names; on the other they would sometimes ignore events of importance as if they had never occurred and took delight, it seemed, in mingling fact and fantasy. A brief acquaintance with the island and its traditions might have

given the impression that historians had little to learn from this strange amalgam. Growing knowledge of the less obvious riches of our informants' minds was to prove more rewarding.

The leading figures of the times had left their impression on oral tradition, as one would have expected. In general the earlier dukes were august figures beyond the normal range of popular knowledge and recall, though 'Duke John' ('Iain diuc') appeared several times in the tradition of one informant. But oral tradition has much to say about the duke's chamberlains, those grand officials who were entrusted with the administration of the island and whose word was law. In the traditional accounts they often appear as larger than life and are represented either as heroic personages or as sinister and awesome figures. Their persons have been magnified by the story-telling tradition of the *ceilidh*, and coloured by the imagery of the heroic tale, but they preserve an identity which we can recognise as the historical characters we know from the written records. Even in their exaggerated form they act, as it were, in character. The traditions which survive about Donald Campbell or 'Bàillidh Dòmhnull' serve as an illustration.

Donald Campbell bore sway as chamberlain from 1770 to 1800. He belonged to one of the Campbell families who had settled in Mull and were evidently descended from the Lochnell branch of the Campbells (*Instructions*, 3). Estate papers reveal him as a man of stubborn integrity, who consistently defended the interests of the islanders and irritated his superiors by pointing out the inadequacies of doctrinaire schemes of economic improvement (*Instructions*, 1–49). An old man called Donald Sinclair[5] sometimes spoke to me about the chamberlain, referring to him as 'Bàillidh Dòmhnull' and praising his noble and benevolent character. It was striking that although the oral traditions took the characteristic form of praise-song and heroic tale, their general tenor was in agreement with what one knew of him from written sources. According to the accounts which had been current in his township when he was young, the Bàillidh had two sons who fought in the Peninsular war and were killed in battle. He had heard old people sing eulogies of the sons and of their father, composed by a Tiree bard at the time, and he rendered some verses of one of the songs.[6]

The two sons, according to the praise-songs, had all the courage, strength, beauty and ferocity that are usually attributed in traditional Gaelic poetry to heroic warriors. One of them set up a battery on a hill in Spain during the Peninsular war and is represented as carrying two massive cannons, one under each arm. The existence of the songs must have helped to perpetuate traditions of Donald Campbell and his sons, for they would be sung and discussed in the *ceilidh*. Donald Sinclair's account of the young men is influenced by them, but he also had other sources of information. When he was a child his family had known an old man whose father remembered them as boys playing shinty (Donald sometimes rendered the Gaelic term 'camanachd' as 'hockey') on a grassy level land behind the shore.

> Macdonald was his name, Duncan Macdonald. He would tell you a story about Bàillidh Dòmhnull's children. When he was a boy he was brought up over somewhere at Hilipol there, and the Bàillidh's sons, you know between the pillar up at the Bàillidh's house and the church down at Balenoe, the level ground that is there, they used to be playing hockey there, and this Duncan Bàn, he used to tell my father when the factor's sons would be running you would fancy it was horses that was running, the ground was shaking under their feet. And the two of them were killed in Spain, aye, a pity, aye. (SA 1969/165B.)

There is no reason to doubt the authenticity of the story of the boys playing shinty on the Balenoe *machair*, but Donald's account is that of a story-teller and it echoes the imagery of the heroic tales which he had heard recited in his childhood.

The Napoleonic war formed the background of a good deal of anecdote and local tradition which bear the hall-mark of authenticity. Some traditions crystallised around the battle of Waterloo. A fine informant, Hector Kennedy, gave the names of local men who had been press-ganged and had been at the battle.[7] He recounted that his own great-grandfather Archibald Campbell was present and survived the battle but died at the hands of a wounded French soldier afterwards. Hector showed us the croft at Barrapol which he had occupied and the two houses built by his sons when the croft was later divided between them. Another family still bears the nickname which derived from their ancestor's action in evading conscription by cutting off the end of his thumb. The historical basis for these traditions cannot be put to the proof but it is clearly necessary to know what degree of veracity such local and family traditions have. Fortunately it has been possible to put traditions of similar age to the test, in particular certain traditions about a local migration.

A surveyed plan of the island made by James Turnbull in 1769 shows the settlement of Hough as a cluster of houses on the west side of the hill of Beinn Hough. At some time its location was changed and the present inhabitants of Hough live on the east side of the hill. In our search for information we learned from Hector Kennedy that a sandstorm had deluged the old settlement, the well had filled with sand, and the inhabitants had removed inland to Kilmoluag (SA 1979/75). The story of this event was amplified by others. Local tradition at Kilmoluag, we found, confirmed the Hough origin of a number of families. One old man in his nineties directed us to the site of the abandoned house of his forebear. Another informant, Alasdair Macdonald, a descendant of one of the migrants, ascribed the migration of his great-grandfather, Alan Macdonald, and of other inhabitants of Hough, to drifting sand.

The event was assigned by Hector Kennedy to the Spring before the battle of Waterloo and he connected it with the visit of the press-gang to Tiree 'for the first time'. Usually the chronology of an event in oral tradition has vaguer boundaries though the use of such phrases as 'when my grandfather was a boy' can limit an event to within a decade. It was important for us to explore historical sources to test the

authenticity of this tradition. In favour of its credibility was the fact that he had learned it from a certain Willie MacPhail, a reputable tradition-bearer and bard at Kilmoluag, and that he himself had proved unusually reliable and well-informed on many occasions. It was also perfectly credible that a settlement had been abandoned as a consequence of inundation by blown sand. Such occurrences are well authenticated in the Hebrides, and in Tiree it is known from Turnbull's 1769 Description that sand-drift had rendered as much as an eighth of the agricultural land useless in the late eighteenth century and that sand had overwhelmed a kirkyard at Kilkenneth near Hough some years before 1792 (*OSA*, XX (1794), 1983, 263–4). There was a major problem, however, in that relevant documents between 1810 and the early 1820s were not to be found. In no written source known to us was there any explicit reference to the events at Hough.

My colleague, Dr Margaret A. Mackay, went some way towards solving the problem when she examined the Tiree and Coll parish register. She found that there had indeed been a movement of population from Hough to Kilmoluag. In the years immediately following, children were recorded as born at Kilmoluag to parents who had not long previously had children recorded as born at Hough. An estate rental of 1823 showed tenants at Kilmoluag who had been earlier resident at Hough.

But did the events occur exactly as the traditional account represents? Since the migration was evidently in progress in or shortly after 1820, either the traditional association with the Spring before Waterloo was incorrect or else there was a series of minor migrations, starting off after a catastrophic storm in 1815 and continuing, as the sand spread its havoc further over the settlement, until the whole population had moved. Such a development would accord with experience of the way in which coastal land is progressively damaged by blown sand. If this was the case, the tradition has presented a gradual movement as a single dramatic event in a manner characteristic of the story teller's art and well known to folklorists. Alternatively, we may suppose that the migration in fact took place around 1820 and was transposed in time, somewhere along the chain of oral transmission, either through a misunderstanding or for dramatic effect. There are other examples in traditional accounts of a great event, here the battle of Waterloo, exercising its gravitational attraction on minor events in its temporal field.

Whichever is the true explanation of this mysterious event, it was rescued from oblivion by oral tradition, and the substantial accuracy of the oral account is largely supported by such historical records as could be discovered. At the same time it is evident that in matters of detail tradition has taken certain liberties perhaps in the interests of dramatic effect, and requires the restraining hand of the sober historian. Dr Mackay sums up her conclusions after a detailed study of this case: 'Neither the oral tradition nor the written sources can tell the whole story of what happened at Hough, but used in combination each can illuminate the other and add a further dimension to the account'.[8]

If we consider the history of Tiree settlements more generally, the contrasting but complementary nature of the two bodies of data becomes more evident. The written sources, especially estate papers, often contain detailed evidence on the physical character of the townships, their agricultural system and economic value, social composition and demographic features. It is given in a coherent form and frequently statistically, combined with observations that show the historian that the writer is like himself in his thought-processes and values. This obliging form of presentation is usually absent from the body of oral data. Its evidence is rarely given either in broad generalisations or with exact numerical precision. Its view is that of the insider and its language and images, familiar to the islanders, frequently have to be interpreted before they can be understood and utilised by the historian. Once understood, oral evidence was found to shed light on many aspects of social life, and complemented the evidence of officials and reporters in a fascinating way.

The topographic evidence was straightforward enough, though requiring some knowledge of Gaelic. It enabled us to fix the location of settlements which had almost vanished and identify their wells, folds, kilns, bothies and other structures. The ruins of dwellings, deserted over a century ago, occasionally preserved the names of their occupants. The remains of a church of eighteenth century date, sometimes mentioned in the records but recently described as having left 'no identifiable remains' (RCAHMS Argyll, Vol. 3, 158n.) were yet shown to us, clear and unmistakable, by an informant on the open moor of Druimbuigh. The building was known to him and others as 'an tigh-searmoin' ('the preaching house') and was connected with other lore, including the tradition that the first Independent minister in Tiree, Archibald Farquharson, had regularly preached there.

The destruction of a settlement by sand impressed itself on the folk-memory, but strangely enough there is no comparable tradition concerning the way in which the runrig settlements were transformed into townships of compact small farms and individual crofts. The impression derived from contemporary estate papers is of an island in a ferment of activity between 1803 and 1807 (*Instructions*, 93–97, and unpublished Instructions). Tenants occupied the new buildings which had been allotted to them in their townships and built houses and enclosures, dragging stones and timbers from the houses of the old settlements nearby, whilst landless cottars, eager to secure a holding, moved from their townships to the new crofting settlements at Scarinish, Heanish, Balemartin, Gott, Mannal and Balephuil. In the background of all the bustle was the enigmatic figure of the chamberlain, Malcolm MacLaurine, busy attending to the duke's orders or his own private and less respectable pursuits. The written sources point clearly to a relatively swift and radical change in a deep-rooted way of life. In the oral traditions of the island knowledge survives of ancestors who moved to newly created holdings, but one would never suspect that a new policy had been introduced and with it a dramatic social change.

The contrast in what is conveyed by the two types of source can be demonstrated if we consider the township of Balephuil in the south-west of the island. The 5th duke withdrew this large farm from the chamberlain in order to accommodate cottars and returned fencible soldiers. In the estate records we find that in 1806 a number of soldiers moved into the crofts there and were soon followed by settlers from other townships (unpublished letters and Instructions at Inveraray Castle). These settlers are rarely named in the surviving records and their place of origin usually remains unknown. Some engaged in fishing and were assisted by the estate to acquire boats and lines. The new chamberlain, Malcolm MacLaurine, showed his resentment for the loss of the farm in the acts of petty vindictiveness against the settlers here and elsewhere, but the duke protected them and sternly reminded the official of the responsibilities of his position, as he had in 1803 when he wrote: 'I sent you to Tyree to be my factor, to look after and promote my interest and the good of the people, not to be a great farmer seeking suddenly to enrich and aggrandise yourself' (*Instructions*, 95).

These events and personalities are preserved in oral tradition but in a significantly different way. It knows nothing of MacLaurine's connection with these agrarian reforms but several informants had accurate details of his personal life — that he was a doctor, that he lived with a sister at Hilipol and that he carried on amours with local women. Some verses of an unpublished bawdy song, composed by one of the Balephuil poets, narrate one of his affairs with a loose woman in the neighbourhood in vivid nautical imagery (SA 1968/263B). It was not until some years after the song was recorded that my colleague Dr Margaret Mackay discovered from the parish register that he had fathered two illegitimate children on two different women in the district.

Our informants also had tales of uncanny powers possessed by the chamberlain. He had succeeded in floating a boat marooned on the shore and had known where to find a stolen piece of timber which he had intended to use as a mast. The source of his knowledge was said to be a large black book which he kept in the house. Whilst he consulted it he wore an iron hoop on his head as protection against the powers he was invoking to his aid (SA 1969/165B and SA 1970/106A). These stories, told with perfect seriousness, evidently reflect what the islanders believed and felt about the chamberlain at that time. They convey resentment and distrust, but mingled with these is a certain respect and awe for the man's power and esoteric knowledge. Whilst they incorporate *motifs* widely known in oral literature, they express a certain moral truth about MacLaurine and dramatise the self-seeking and sinister aspects of the man.

What has tradition preserved of the actual history of the creation of the crofting townships? It has retained nothing to suggest the sequence of events that created crofts in this and other townships or the upheaval in old-established practices they brought. What the oral traditions recorded at Balephuil do provide, however, are invaluable details of families and individuals who settled here and formed its character, and many sidelights on township life during a long period after the Napoleonic war when written sources are largely silent. This concentration on the experience of

individuals, often kinsmen of our informants, to the exclusion of more general movements, is one of the distinctive characteristics of the oral record. It can be turned to advantage for historical reconstruction, as I hope to show in relation to the township of Balephuil, where I recorded a considerable body of information, mainly between 1968 and 1974.

These traditions concern a number of families among the early settlers in the township who eventually became linked by marriage. There are the Sinclairs, a family celebrated for traditions of all kinds, whose earlier associations were evidently with the north-west of the island; the Macdonalds who came from the east end of the island and were known as 'na Duibh' (a name which referred to their dark colouring); the Macleans, who also hailed from the east end and possessed a gift for poetic composition so that other families still like to claim relationship with them; the Browns whose ancestor married into this stock and whose present-day representative is a notable *seanchaidh*; the Blacks, whose forebear came as a minor estate official and was given a croft at Balephuil. These are only five of the forty-three crofter families who originally settled at Balephuil, but their family traditions, which are interwoven with one another and with others in the township, will serve to illumine the early history of the community.

They tell us of a returned soldier named Calum mac Iain 'ic Neill, or Malcolm Macdonald, settling on a croft which is still pointed out above a shore where kelp was burnt in kilns. According to family lore he had served in the Peninsular war as a valet to a surgeon and on his return put his experience to good use by practising the art of bleeding on his fellow-islanders; hence his nickname 'Lancer'. A characteristic story describes how he quarrelled about the seaweed with a woman on the shore and how, calling her a witch he drew his lancer's knife and slashed her petticoat and marked her (SA 1969/165). Tradition says that he came from Caolas at the east end of Tiree and that he was one of the so-called 'black Macdonalds' who were known for their lawless behaviour. This traditional lore and his patronymic, naming him as Calum mac Iain 'ic Neill 'ic Dhomhnuill 'ic Iain Duibh (Malcolm son of John son of Neil son of Donald son of black John), enabled us to overcome the problem of defective estate and parish records and to attach him to a family of tenants who occupied land at the east end of the island a century before Malcolm moved to Balephuil (SA 1969/165 and SA 1971/90B). This is one among many instances in which oral tradition made identification possible and so provided the key to information contained in written sources which would otherwise have been inaccessible.

The Macdonalds became allied with the Macleans by the marriage of Malcolm's sister, Mary, to Donald Maclean. A brother of the famous bard, John Maclean, Donald (otherwise known as 'the Cooper') could turn his hand to making a song as easily as he could fashion a barrel out of oaken staves. Donald and Mary settled at Balephuil on a poor croft which they later exchanged for a better one and established a thriving family, all of whom were talented and given to composing songs. His own songs were

true 'village poetry', descriptions of local events and persons, and were passed on orally till recent times. From one of them we learn of his flitting from the old township, Caolas, at the east end of the island to the new croft at the west end, and the tasks which faced him in ploughing up the wet, rushy land with a plough repaired by the local blacksmith and a team of four horses made up with the help of a number of fellow-crofters (SA 1971/92).[10]

A daughter of Malcolm MacDonald, Anne, married Alasdair Sinclair[11] (*Alasdair Og*), who occupied a nearby croft, and from them descended the remarkable tradition-bearer Donald Sinclair, who was usually known as *Dòmhnall Chaluim Bàin* — Donald son of fair Malcolm. Malcolm was a great story-teller, sought out by folklorists in the last century. I knew Donald as an old man and recorded a great variety of lore from him — charms, cures, sayings, place-names, genealogies, folk-tales, anecdotes, songs and reminiscences. He drew his vast store from many sources, from *ceilidhing* with old people, and from inheriting the accumulated traditions of Macleans, MacDonalds, Sinclairs, MacArthurs and other families connected with him. Although by the time that I knew him he was over eighty and his mind was occasionally confused, his traditional knowledge was remarkable in range, accuracy and depth. Among a group of outstanding tradition-bearers connected with Balephuil, he was recognised as the doyen.[12]

The written sources are often silent on the life of the crofting township in the years 1810 to 1840; births and marriages are recorded, and there are occasional lists of tenants and their rents, but little else for the estate records for Tiree are incomplete in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. In the local songs and traditions however there is mention of fishing trips and boats bringing in smuggled tobacco and liquor; of illicit stills making whisky; of the herding of cattle and milking in the folds; of occupations carried on by local men and of young men and women travelling to the Lowland harvests; of marriages and deaths in the community, and tales of 'waking' the dead; of poets and story-tellers in the township, and witchcraft and the second sight; of disasters and epidemics and emigrations. It would in fact be quite impossible to present an accurate and balanced social history of the island community without drawing upon oral traditions. Sometimes they are the only source of information about the normal events of daily life; at other times they supplement and illumine what written records provide.

Typical of such transmitted lore are the songs and stories about the herding of cattle on the commons, a subject which is little noticed in written sources. In oral sources it is often mentioned, sometimes with reference to fairly recent times, when the virtues and vices of the township herd are a recurring theme in the island's satiric songs, sometimes in the remoter past.[14] Children were much employed in herding but the crofters of each township usually jointly engaged one or more professional herds. The remains of two drystone buildings on the slope of Beinn Hoighnis were shown to us in 1973 by a Balephuil crofter, John Brown, and identified by him as the

former dwellings of herdsmen. The lower one, which was much dilapidated, was known as *tigh a'bhuachaille bhig* ('the little herd's house'), and the upper one as *tigh a'bhuachaille mhoir* ('the big herd's house').

The upper dwelling stood in a fold enclosed by a crumbling stone and turf dyke, where the grass still showed a more intense green than the surrounding hill. Above the fold was a strong dyke encircling the upper slopes and identified by our informant as *garadh nan each* ('the horses' enclosure'), a name which indicated where the tenants used to graze the sturdy ponies so often referred to in eighteenth century estate papers and eventually banished early in the nineteenth century (*Instructions*, 55, 59, 67, 89). The substantial walls of the herdsman's dwelling contained a small chamber near the entrance which fitted the description of it as a dog's kennel, whilst two slab-lined pits against the outer wall were said to have been used to store potatoes, which were part of his pay. It would be difficult to date the structure exactly. According to our informant it had fallen out of use long before his father was born in 1882 but its well-built stone walls, its state of preservation and the mention of potatoes provided by the crofters suggest an early nineteenth century context.

The history of the crofting families of Balephuil was also greatly amplified by our oral sources, which could be used to enhance the potential of written sources by providing more certain identification and other key information. Written sources mention some of the crofters and cottars of Balephuil in the early nineteenth century, in brief entries in rentals, parish registers or the records of government departments. One may discover their occupations, age, marriage-partner and children's names, their rent and how it was paid and whether they were in arrears. With luck one may find out whether they made kelp or had a fishing boat. But their personal traits and habits are seldom revealed, and their family connections and origins are usually difficult or impossible to verify. Names such as John Maclean and Donald MacDonald are so common even within one township that sure identification in historical sources is often impracticable. This is not so in the oral record of the township. Our informants knew their grandparents and great-grandparents by their patronymic and could guide us unhesitatingly to their kin and often to their place of origin.

Duncan Macdonald is recorded in the official census of 1841 as a boat-builder aged thirty-five, resident at Balephuil with his wife Janet and a daughter, Margaret. The records are otherwise unilluminating. In local tradition he is remembered as *Donnchadh ban mac Iain 'ic Sheumais* ('fair haired Duncan son of John son of James'), a skilled craftsman who travelled about widely, building sloops and smacks and whose family probably came to Balephuil from the neighbourhood of Hilipol. It was his father, Iain, who, in Donald Sinclair's account, witnessed the *baillidh's* sons playing shinty on the *machair* (SA 1971/90A).

Neil Brown is listed in the same census as a crofter, aged fifty, living at Balephuil with his wife Margaret and five children. Earlier he had had two small crofts and a Rental of 1823 shows that he was more than able to pay the rent on these (£1.8.6 and

£2.8.6) from the proceeds of kelp (£4.15.9). From family tradition we know that he was *Neill Mòr mac Iain 'ic Dhughaill* ('big Neil son of John son of Dugald') and that he had worked as a young man at foundries in the Clyde area as well as at (probably seasonal) farm-work; that the wife he married was a daughter of Donald the 'Cooper' who from her devotion to Highland ways was known as *Mairead Ghàidhealach* ('Highland Margaret'), that two of the daughters went to be servants on Lowland farms and one of their sons, Charles, left to work as a carpenter at Greenock, where he died at the age of twenty of smallpox. A nephew who died aged ninety in 1972 had been named Charles after him and with his son John, was my source for these traditions (SA 1974/83, SA 1976/120, and field-notes, 1972). From John Brown we know that his father and predecessors kept up the relationship with the Macleans at Caolas and attended their funerals at the east end — this for nearly a century and a half after Donald Maclean's removal to Balephuil. The origin of the Browns before their move to Balephuil is not retained, but the clues provided by the oral genealogy when combined with evidence in estate papers, strongly indicates the township of Balemeanach.

Here also in the census is John Black,[11] a widower and crofter of sixty years in 1841. The 1823 Rental shows him as occupying a croft for which he paid a rent of £8.17.0 — but the 1851 census describes him as 'pauper'. Family tradition is much fuller and more accurate in some respects. The census of 1851 gives his birthplace as 'Tiree', whereas Donald Sinclair (his great-grandson) narrates that he was of a Lismore family (inherently more probable) and that he came to Tiree in the service of the chamberlain, MacLaurine, bringing with him a wife from Inveraray and eventually settled in a croft by the shore at Balephuil (though now in Hynish West) which he lost at the time of the potato failure. Donald had a great deal of information about John Black's descendants. One of his daughters, Isabella, also appears in the census of 1841, married to an agricultural worker, Archibald Maclean. Her husband, known as *a ciobair* ('the shepherd') was to die in a fishing disaster. Isabella Black is of special interest and will appear again in the story of Balephuil.

Brief illustrations have been given of the combined use of written and oral sources in the areas of family history, personal biography and economic activities. In the historic reconstruction of social and cultural life the value of oral tradition is perhaps even more important for written sources are rarely able to illumine the mental activities, spiritual values and customary practices of Highland communities. They belonged to a world beyond the reach and interest of the English-speaking traveller, official and improver. No-one familiar only with the written records would suspect the cultural vitality of this township of crofters and fishermen. Most Highland townships had a poet or two but Balephuil was *baile nam bàrd* ('the township of the bards') and had numerous poets of both sexes. The poetic tradition existed early, for Archibald MacPhail, who composed the eulogies on Donald Campbell and his two sons, lived here (Cameron 1932, 4). The tradition was reinforced by the arrival of other settlers

given to poetic composition: Donald 'the Cooper' and his family, the Macdonalds at 'the *Sliabh*' (the upland area of Balephuil), the Blacks, the 'Manitoba' Macleans, and other talented families. From quite early in the nineteenth century there was a most remarkable burgeoning of song-composition in this township (Cregeen and Mackenzie 1978, 13ff.). Some families like the Sinclairs were more given to story-telling and *seanchas* (historical tradition), and others to dancing and piping, but there was a general delight in songs in every section of the community which we found still widespread and remarkable among the other people of Tiree. With this went a high regard and a certain fear for the poets as men and women of special power. It was they who celebrated in their compositions the significant events in the life of the community — the deaths, disasters, marriages and rejoicings — and immortalised the virtues of the living and the departed; they also mocked and ridiculed those who incurred their dislike in witty, bawdy, often savage satires. Donald Sinclair, himself a bard, was well aware of their fearful power and told me 'A wise man would keep on the poet's side so that he would not expose them'.

Oral sources proved able to suggest the operation of new cultural influences and subtle changes in the township. Among the bardic families was that of Duncan MacDougall,[15] who came from Mull circa 1820 as a Gaelic teacher and remained in Tiree as a Baptist missionary. He had a croft at Balephuil, baptised converts in the loch on the north side of the township and composed hymns of unusual merit. He came of a family of poets, his sister Mary being remembered in Mull as an accomplished bard and known more widely as the composer of the hymn *Leanabh an Aigh* (translated as 'Child in a Manger'). He himself had a family of children given to poetic composition. Nevertheless it is evident from oral sources that evangelical religion began to affect the poetic and story-telling tradition of Balephuil. It weaned some of the bards away from their concern with secular poetry, as in the case of the fisherman Alexander MacDonald.

John Black's daughter, Isabella, wife of the shepherd, referred to earlier, expressed this new spiritual concern in a song which she made on seeing a thrush singing on a rock on the shore. Like most of the village songs it was never printed but I have heard it sung. After addressing the thrush and praising its song, she compares its fate with that of herself and other mortal men and women.

> You are fortunate at the time of your death
> That you will not be dragged before the tribunal.
> You will fall down upon the ground
> But there will be no investigation of your life.
> But when I lie down
> And am pressed beneath the sward
> Unless I am alive in Jesus Christ
> I will stand condemned at the judgment-seat. (SA 1968/144A; translated)

It is evidence of this kind, drawn from oral tradition, that provides us with the clearest indications that social and cultural change, induced by contacts with the Lowlands, was taking place in Tiree in the early or middle decades of the century.

In the disastrous years between circa 1845 and 1850, the island in common with much of the Highlands was devastated by the failure of its potato crops and was drastically thinned by emigration. Balephuil lost many of its younger people including two sons of the Lancer and members of the Cooper's family and others who sailed to Canada. The sombre events can be followed in heartrending detail in documentary sources, which bring out the enormity of the crisis and the immense scale of relief measures organised by government, churches, lairds and private individuals. In oral tradition the calamities of these years have left only faint traces; there are excellent tradition-bearers who know nothing of this time of hunger, when over a third of the population had to leave the island. This strange ignorance is a reminder that sometimes the folk memory is faulty, or chooses to forget. The explanation in this particular instance is a complex one which merits detailed treatment in a future essay but would be out of place here.

In July 1856 a great storm sprang up suddenly and scattered the little fishing fleet which had set sail from Balephuil that morning. Twelve or more men and boys were drowned. The whole township was affected in one way or another. Except for notes left by one of the fishermen (Cameron 1932, 125–6), little is found in the written sources about the storm, but oral traditions still surviving at Balephuil and its neighbourhood about the 'Fuadach' preserve the details of this event and the impact which it had on the district in a way which written sources could not rival. It is illuminating to consider them for they illustrate the insights into basic patterns of thought and behaviour which oral sources afford. None of the five families mentioned earlier was directly involved except the Blacks; Isabel Black's husband, 'the shepherd', was drowned. The Sinclairs, though they were fishermen, sensed that the calm clear weather was deceptive and stayed at home. The scene was played out before the terrified onlookers.

> My mother remembered that day. She was a girl, a big girl at the time. And she saw two of the boats, they nearly made it but it was two old men and boys that was aboard and the boys was tired pulling at the oar. So they took the wind after them and made for Islay. But a good many were — There was two boys from Sliabh up there, two brothers, they were drowned. That's two, and there was Campbell, the steersman of this boat, three. And Maclean, the father of the people that was here, that's four. And two from Moss, that's six. There was about twelve or fourteen drowned. (SA 1968/243 B)

One of the survivors, a fisherman called Alasdair Macdonald, composed a lament which, sung by Donald Sinclair, seems to carry the sorrow of the whole community in its cadences:[17]

Oran an Fhuaidaich.

Refrain:

Tha mi fo chùram, fo mhòran cùraim
G'eil fear na stiùrach 'sa ghrunnd gun èirigh.

Seachad Colbhasa 'dh'fhàs i dorcha,
Bha uisge 's stoirm ann 's bha 'n fhairge beuchdaich

Tha fleasgaich's maighdeannan taobh Beinn Hoighnis,
Cha chulaidh aoibhnis a bhi 'gan èisdeachd.

My heart is laden, so heavy laden,
The helmsman's grave's in the ocean floor-bed.

Passing Colonsay, the sky grown surly,
The rain came squalling, the sea was roaring.

The youths and maidens around Ben Hynish
No cause of joy was to hear them mourning.

The echoes of the fatal day are still heard in houses in Tiree. An old woman living at Mannal told me that her grandmother described to her how she was just putting on the pot of potatoes for the family's mid-day meal when she heard the sound of the storm rising. Her husband Alasdair Macdonald was drowned and she left the croft with her young family to settle in a neighbouring village. The vacant croft and the adjacent one, where the crofter had also been lost in the storm, were given to a family called MacNeill from neighbouring Barrapol. The Browns at the Sliabh fared differently. Neill mór's sons were not to succeed to the croft and the chances of the family acquiring land were remote. The 'Fuadach' indirectly changed the situation. A family called Mackinnon held a small croft in the Sliabh of Balephuil. The crofter John Mackinnon had died earlier and his son was drowned in the storm, leaving a widow Margaret and three daughters in the croft. One of them, Ann, eventually married one of Neil Brown's sons, Archibald, who moved into the house and in due course inherited the land. Having no children, Archibald left the croft to his brother Malcolm, a fisherman, the father and grandfather of my informants.

For other families in Balephuil the 'Fuadach' had a more sinister significance, as Donald Sinclair, a descendant of the Blacks as well as the Sinclairs relates. His great-aunt Isabella Black had married Archibald Maclean, 'the shepherd', and had several children by him. The unfortunate shepherd died of exposure in the boat. But Isabella was suspected of practising witchcraft, and the story got about that she and Mary Campbell, the wife of the steersman of one of the boats, who was also drowned, had wished to get rid of their husbands and had created the storm by using their black art. Donald Sinclair, my informant, was convinced that this really was the case.

In the following account, translated from the original Gaelic, Donald Sinclair speaks of his great-aunt Isabella (the composer of the song to the thrush) and refers also to her being one of two women discovered earlier making a *corp creadha* or clay image to bewitch someone against whom they had a spite.

> A little pretty woman, but she had a really evil look about her all the same. They were saying that she was a witch, and so she was, a witch. And the disaster that befell Balephuil, when the men were drowned and the day turned bad, they were believing that it was this old woman and a sister of the one who was with her in the black narrows of Balephetrish, when they were making the clay body, that they were the two women who caused the Balephuil drowning disaster. Anyway they were blaming her. Neither of them had any great love for their husbands and they wanted to get rid of them ... And people were casting it up against these two women that it was them who caused the wind, because a witch is able to do just about anything. She'll make wind or calm just as she pleases. (SA 1968/ 245 A)

Had some of MacLaurine's black art rubbed off on the descendants of his ground officer, John Black? This may, in a sense, be near the truth. In Tiree, and elsewhere in the Highlands, witchcraft is a family characteristic, passed on to one's descendants, like bardic powers or the second sight. It was possessed by John Black's daughter, Isabella, and also by members of her sister Janet's family so that it eventually came into the immediate family of Donald Sinclair. We have come across other individuals and families in Tiree who have a reputation for witchcraft or for ill-luck, and frequently they are found, like the Blacks and MacLaurine, to be linked with the new régime as officials or settlers. They may in time have married in the island and appear to be assimilated into the population. But the stigma of witchcraft or ill-luck survives and prevents them from being wholly accepted within the community. Thus MacLaurine and the Blacks may have derived their reputation from the same source — association with the Macleans' clan enemy. This is speculation but perhaps the ill fame attaching to such individuals and families is the islanders' revenge for the Campbell conquest.

Oral traditions of widely different types have contributed to our study. Clearly not all proved to be of equal use and validity as an historical source. We recorded stories locally accepted as true accounts of historical events which on scrutiny turned out to have been derived from Fenian heroic tales. In another type of tradition based on actual notables in the island's history, the representation of persons and events betrayed the strong influence of storytelling, literacy devices and motifs or the conventions of praise-poetry, but an important factual basis remained. The quasi-legendary character acquired by our historical personages was evidently the price they had to pay to ensure survival in the popular memory. In yet another *genre*, concerned with local history and the experiences of forebears, the content of reliable historical detail was usually high and the influence of folkloristic motifs slight.

One cannot deny that myth in some form or another is always likely to be present in oral tradition. It affects even family tradition, that most valuable of oral historical sources. Stories of origin are difficult to corroborate and tend to incorporate folkloristic motifs whilst bold, skilful and strong ancestors show a tendency to become even more colourful. But the knowledge and accuracy of a good *seanchaidh* are impressive, and his genealogical lore will sometimes match time-scales in some of the oldest surviving written records. A depth of genealogical core of five to seven generations was common in the lore of our informants; the most that we encountered extended to nine generations. In this latter case it was possible to find historical corroboration in unpublished papers of much of the genealogy, but, as I have demonstrated in the Appendix, genealogical lore may incorporate and transmit errors and misapprehensions.

Such errors, however, are found equally in written sources and can be discovered by critical investigation. They do not weaken the claim of oral testimony to be utilised in historical investigation. However, its peculiar characteristics must be understood and then exploited by appropriate methods. The most valuable oral tradition in Tiree was locally and family-centred, viewing events in a native focus and selecting and stressing what was of interest and importance to the islanders. The investigator must adapt to this. He must not expect a date but a reference to a family event or a phase in an ancestor's life. He must not enquire after John Maclean but for John son of Donald — and preferably in Gaelic. It is not arranged in a form familiar to historians nor does it turn about the same topics. Its chronology is different, its frame of reference different. Our best informants could not be expected to deliver information and opinions on matters that preoccupy the academic historian: the trend of population figures, changes in living standard, relations between social classes, the emergence of new economic and social structures. But, as the earlier case-studies have shown, oral testimony greatly extended the range of our knowledge and brought to light crucial aspects of social life and cultural activity ignored or not understood by the literate creators of the written evidence: oral tradition preserved a vivid knowledge of events such as the abandonment of a settlement and the migration of families which had eluded the written record.

From traditional sources alone one would produce a strangely unstructured account of Tiree, but in our experience in dealing with oral as well as written sources, there is an unassailable case for the fullest study of oral traditions, even where written material is relatively abundant.

APPENDIX

Since much stress has been placed in this article on the value of family traditions, it is worth citing the genealogical lore of one of our main informants in some detail. Donald Sinclair recited his genealogy thus: Donald son of Malcolm son of Alasdair son of Alasdair son of *Alasdair* son of Neil son of Brian [pronounced Brehan] (SA 1971/

84A). Brian he claimed to have been a Barra man and on one occasion said that he came from Borve, eloped with the daughter of the MacNeill tacksman of Balnacreige and settled in Tiree, where he was given a holding (12/6/73). Donald was evidently uncertain about the first Alasdair (whom I have italicised) for sometimes he hesitated over the name and sometimes omitted it. The reason for this confusion may be that his great-great-grandfather's name was almost certainly not Alasdair, but Alan, a name with the same initial syllable. At any rate Donald's great-grandfather can be identified with fair assurance with an Alexander Sinclair, who is listed as aged six in the family of Alan Sinclair and Catherine Mackinnon in Kirkapol in Tiree in 1779 (Cregeen 1963, 53), whilst at the same date there is a Neil Sinclair a tenant in Ballamhulin who could be Alan's father (Cregeen 1963, 34). A 1776 List makes this even more likely since it gives Alan as aged thirty-six and Neil as seventy. There is, further, a Neill MacVrion who appears in other estate papers in the same generation and whom we can fairly safely accept as Donald's great-great-great grandfather.

Now I must draw attention to an interesting point. Neil in the genealogy is 'Son of Brian'; MacVrion (Gaelic Mac Bhriain) appears to mean 'son of Brian'. Donald assumes that Neil's father was called Brian and interpreted the genealogy in this sense. But actually Mac Vrion was used as a surname in eighteenth century Tiree and appears regularly in estate papers until it was replaced by the surname Sinclair in the 1779 List of Inhabitants. Brian was therefore the eponymous ancestor, and not the father, of Neil, and his ultimate origins were almost certainly in Ireland, like those of many Hebridean families, since the form which it took in Tiree in the seventeenth century was Mac O'Vrion.

What of the Barra origin of Donald's Sinclair forebears? There is likely to be some factual element in the tradition but enquiry in Barra from reliable informants provided no certain indication and the matter must be regarded as unproven. It has been our experience that the genealogies of our informants have often shown a high degree of reliability as far back as five, six or seven generations, but that it is seldom that ancestral lines deriving from an area outwith Tiree can be satisfactorily checked. This is mainly due to two factors. One is the deficiency of historical records (and particularly of parish records) in the West Highlands. The other is that non-native lines tend to be less well recorded in tradition; their genealogies rarely go back beyond the time of settlement. Their arrival in the island is sometimes presented in a semi-legendary form as in the story which I recorded in Mull of three brothers named Macfarlane, who settled respectively in Mull, Iona and Tiree and originated the families of that surname in these islands.

Donald Sinclair's family traditions bear out this generalisation. His mother Christine MacArthur's people were incomers. Donald knew that her father was a Gilchrist MacArthur from Mull but could trace the line no further. Her mother, Janet Black, was the daughter of an incomer, John Black, who appears to have been of a Lismore family. Donald had no pedigree of the Blacks beyond this John. He knew John Black's

wife's history one generation further back, evidently because Black brought his mother-in-law, Janet MacCallum, to Tiree and her forceful personality left an enduring impression in the family traditions, as the following story shows, given here in an English translation from the original Gaelic.

> I am going to tell you about the time they were stealing cattle. It was going on far and near. And my mother's people were from Lorne on her father's and her grandmother's side. And at this particular time they were stealing cattle from the Duke of Argyll. And my great-great grandmother happened to be a dairy-maid to the Duke of Argyll. The boys wouldn't stay on the look-out to see what was happening, but this night she said — she was a hardy woman — 'I'll stay tonight,' she said, 'and keep watch on the cattle and see what happens.' And she put her tartan plaid on — the women were wearing tartan plaids instead of plain ones in those days — she put her tartan plaid on and made for the byre.
>
> She sat herself down at the cow's head. She wasn't long there before the thieves came, two of them, and they were feeling the cattle to see which were the fattest. And where did one of the thieves put his finger but in the mouth of the woman sitting at the cow's head. And when she got hold of his finger, with one snap she took off the end of it. The thieves fled, and in the morning when everything was in order the Duke said to her, 'And how did you get on last night, Janet?' — she was called Janet too.
>
> 'Oh, I got on well,' she said. 'Here's a piece of the thief's finger and you can find the rest of it for yourself.'
>
> It was a farmer who lived not fearfully far away who was stealing the cattle, for he was found. He couldn't hide his finger and he was given away by it. The Duke had the other bit of the finger. Well, I don't know if that man was punished but I'm sure he would be.
>
> But when my great-grandfather married this MacCallum woman, the daughter of the one who did ... the Duke was present, when he married [the daughter of] Janet MacCallum, the one who bit off the thief's finger. He came home to Tiree with one of the factors, and if my memory is right it was factor MacLaurine he came home with, and his house was over there on the machair, very near Island House, as we call it. And he is buried in Soroby, and the old woman who did this deed, she is buried in Soroby too. (SA 1968/247A)

The tale catches the forceful personality of Janet MacCallum and its details accord well with conditions in eighteenth century Argyll, where even as late as 1744 horses were driven off in a daring raid on the precincts of the ducal castle. Yet, even though the central theme is not to be found among classified folkloristic *motifs*, there is an aroma of the storytelling art in this tradition.

The two bodies of source-material are, in our experience, best treated as complementary and contrasting rather than as conflicting. The one body of material is largely that of the literate outsider (often an official, a minister or a teacher),

presenting events in a way easily apprehended by the historian; the material can be readily arranged in a chronological framework and used for the analysis of social and economic structure and development. The other is the insider's story, told to friends and neighbours in the native language, presenting a world without clear historical contours, where events may sometimes float freely in time and be subject to the bidding of the storyteller's imagination or at the mercy of the supernatural; it is rich in lively personalities and in intimate values, customs, attitudes and knowledge which have tended to survive the most drastic changes in material circumstances. Without the written sources we would have lacked the form and structure of the island's history; without the oral traditions the very essence of its life would have escaped us.

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NOTES

1 This descriptive introduction is largely based on Cregeen 1964, xxviff.

2 The influence of written versions of Gaelic songs on transmission is discussed more fully by my colleague Dr John MacInnes in 'The Oral Tradition in Scottish Gaelic Poetry' in *Scottish Studies* Vol. 12, Part I (1968) 29–43.

3 In May 1974 John MacLean, crofter in Cornaigbeg, usually known as Iain Alasadair, gave me his genealogy, which included nine generations (excluding himself), thus Iain (himself) — Alasdair — Iain — Diomhnall — Iain Og — Iain — Iain Og — Ailein Diùrach — Tearlach — Ailein Dubh. It is believed that Ailein Dubh was the first of the Diùrach MacLeans to settle in Tiree and that another member of the stock, Aonghas Diùrach, settled in Lewis. From comparison with documentary sources I have concluded that the traditional genealogy is correct. One of his forebears is found in a rental of 1663 as John McAllen Vc Carlich (evidently a great-grandson of Ailein Dubh).

4 The evidence strongly suggests that the anonymous writer of this report was Alexander Campbell, Chamberlain of Kintyre from 1767, possibly a member of the Braglen branch of the Campbells who had settled in Mull. He was the brother-in-law of Donald Campbell ('Bàillidh Dòmhnull') who was Chamberlain of Tiree from 1770.

5 In the nineteen-sixties a great deal was also recorded from Donald Sinclair by my colleague Dr John MacInnes, who first suggested I should visit him.

6 The Rev. Hector Cameron published two songs about Donald Campbell and his sons in *Na Baird Thirisdeach* in 1932 (6–8 and 13–15). They were composed by Archibald MacPhail, who lived at Balephuil in his later life and they must have formed part of the local repertoire. These were evidently the songs with which Donald Sinclair was familiar, and the verses which he sang came from the lament 'Do Dhomnchadh agus do Alasdair Caimbeul, clann Bàillidh Thireadh, a chaidh a mharbhadh anns an Spàinn' but include the following lines not found in the published version. His was a genuine orally transmitted one.

> Nuair a theann sibh ri sèiseadh a thoirt a' bhaile gu gèill d'ur comannd,
> 'N àm gluasad on bhatraidh, cha robh smuainteanan gealtach nur ceann;
> 'N àm direadh an àraidh thainig peileir o d'nàmhaid na dheann
> 'S mu an do bhuannaich thu 'n fhàrdraich, thuit thu gun chàil aig a bhonn.
>
> 'S ò an iongnadh do mhàthair a bhith euslainteach fàillinneach tinn!
> Chaneil duin' aic' an làthair de na chunnaic do dh'àraich a glùn;
> 'Se seo buille bu chràidhteach dhi, a' smaointinn mar bha thu gun chlì
> Call na fala san àraich 's tu cho fada bho d' chàirdean 's bho d'thir.
>
> When you began the siege to bring the town under your command,
> As you advanced from the battery, there was no cowardly thought in your head;
> As you scaled the height, a bullet came at speed from your enemy
> And before you could gain the ground you fell lifeless at the foot.
>
> And oh, is it any wonder that your mother is sick in heart and soul,
> She is bereft of all those whom she raised at her knee;
> This was her sorest wound, thinking of you with all your strength gone,
> Your life-blood draining away on the battlefield, far away from friends and your homeland.

7 *Tocher* 32 (1979), 69–106 contains a biographical feature on Hector Kennedy by Dr Margaret A. Mackay, together with a selection of his recorded material.

8 A detailed account of this illuminating case study was presented in September 1982 by my colleague Dr Margaret A. Mackay, and appears in the printed volume of papers given at the IVe Colloque International d'Histoire Orale held in Aix-en-Provence under the auspices of the University of Provence and the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris 1982.

9 Marriage of Donald MacLean and Mary MacDonald, Caolas, 4 December 1798 (Parish Register). Both Mary and Malcolm MacDonald were children of John MacDonald and Mary McConnel (MacDonald).

10 Donald Sinclair sang this and other songs by 'The Cooper'. He said that he acquired them from his father and it is noticeable that they differ markedly from versions collected by Hector Cameron and published in *Na Baird Thirisdeach*. Our research revealed a great deal of detail about 'The Cooper' and his family in and beyond the island.

11 Their marriage is recorded in the Parish Register on 1 August 1830.

12 A biographical feature on Donald Sinclair with a selection of his traditions and reminiscences appears in *Tocher* 18 (1975). He recalled his father Malcolm's connection with the collector and local minister the Rev. John Gregorson Campbell, working for him in the manse garden and providing him with traditions (SA 1972/78A).

13 Oral traditions about herds and others jointly employed by the tenants of townships in Uist and Benbecula to look after their animals are illustrated and discussed by the writer in *Oral History* Vol. 2, No. 1 (1974).

14 The surname Black hardly ever occurs in Tiree before the nineteenth century, whereas it is a characteristic Lismore surname.

15 For further information, see J. McNeill, *The Baptist Church in Colonsay* (Edinburgh, 1914), which tells of MacDougall's conversion while working at kelp there; *Laoidhean Spioradail a chum cuideachadh le cràbhadh nan Gael* (Glasgow, 1841) for his hymns as well as G. Yuille, *History of the Baptists in Scotland* and the *New Statistical Account* of Tiree. *Tocher* 24 (1976) includes traditions about the MacDougalls in Mull and Cregeen and Mackenzie 1978, 16 gives details of the family's poets.

16 The Gaelic original of this verse is as follows (English translation by the Rev. Donald W. Mackenzie):

> Nach sona dhuit aig âm do bhàs, cha sàsaichear gu mòd thu.
> Tuitidh tu sìos air an làr 's gu bràth cha tig ort feòirich;
> Ach nuair a laigheas mise sìos 's a dhinnichear on fhòd mi,
> Mur bi mi beò an Iosa Criosd gun dìtear aig a' mhòd mi.

17 The verses sung by Donald Sinclair are printed together with a translation and musical transcription in *Tocher* 18 (1975), 60–61.

18 The original Gaelic is printed together with an English translation in *Tocher* 18 (1975), 56–58.

19 See *Tocher* 18 (1975), 48–49 for the Gaelic original and notes.

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Bleith Sailoiniga (The Salonika Milling)

DONALD ARCHIE MACDONALD

On Monday, 8 April 1968 I met the boat at Lochboisdale and welcomed Eric Cregeen to his first fieldwork visit to the Uists. During the following few days he was able to meet a number of distinguished informants whose contributions on this and subsequent visits remained as highlights in his memory for the rest of his life: men like John MacDonald, Kyles Paible and Donald Ewen MacDonald, Balranald, both of North Uist, Donald Alick MacEachen of Aird, Benbecula, and Lachlan MacLeod of Ardnastruban, Grimsay.

Another principal attraction to the Uists for Eric had been the prospect of meeting Peter Morrison of Sandbank, Grimsay. I had been recording Peter extensively since 1962 and was in process of preparing a book of his stories and songs for publication.[1] Eric was especially anxious to meet him as he was the only man known to either of us who had maintained a hand-quern or *brà* in full working order and had indeed used it.

After being thwarted by the state of the tide in our first attempt to reach Sandbank on Wednesday, I had the satisfaction of bringing Eric and Peter together there on the following day, Thursday 11 April 1968. Peter demonstrated the working of the quern to us and Eric took photographs, including the one printed here.[2]

The text which I now offer in memory of both of them had been recorded by myself from Peter at Sandbank eighteen months before, on 17 October 1966, his 77th birthday.[3] We had been discussing the use of the quern in Grimsay within his own memory. He volunteered the information that he himself had used it and offered the following account as a story. It was recorded as an uninterrupted performance.[4] The result is not only an interesting exercise in oral history but also a striking piece of oral narrative. It is a remarkable account of inherited traditional skills being deployed to good effect at the diagonally opposite end of Europe by a Hebridean crofter-fisherman during the First World War. Eric Cregeen was fascinated by it.[5]

Bleith Sailoiniga

Bha mi dol a dh'innse dhan chomann[6] a seo mu dheidhinn bleith le brà ann a Sailoiniga. San àm an deach a' reisimeid againne a Sailoiniga an dèidh a bhith aona mìos deug san Eiphèit,[7] bha 'n t-acras oirnn — airson a chur aithghearr — agus cha robh e mar iongnadh. 'S e cairtean mòra cugallach fiodha air an tarrainn le daimh a bha toir suas a' bhiadh againn a Port Sailoiniga gu na loidhneadh agus bha nàmhaid a bha sinn nan aghaidh — na *Bulgarians* — bha iad air beanntan àrd far a faiceadh iad a' rathad, a' chuid mhòr dhen rathad sìos gu Sailoiniga. Bhiodh iad ag obair air a sin le na gunnaichean mòra gus gu milleadh iad a' rathad coiseadh[8] againn 's a chuile sìon a bhiomaid a' toir air. Bha seo a' cur maill mhòr uaireannan sna daimh agus nuair a ruigeadh an t-aran sinne, bhiodh e air a phrannadh agus bhiodh e gann. Chunna mi sinn a' cur crann nuair a readh dà cheann lof a chur còmhladh agus crùgan beag de bhriosgaidean cruaidhe mu mheudachd bonn-a-sia, agus 's e fiacaill mhath a dhèanadh dà leth orra. Bhiomaid a' cur crann air a' lof, 's dòcha gum biodh aon duine deug no dei'near no dusan san t-*section* agus cha bu mhòr cuid an t-aon dhe 's bha sprùilleach a bhiodh am màs a' phoca ri torradan beag a dhèanamh dhe mu choinneamh a chuile torradan eile bh'ann. Gabh a-nis a' rud a bheir an crann dhut.

Latha dhe na bha sinn a' dol mu chuairt ann a sheo, ann a' *village*[9] a bh'ann — *Verik*[10]: bha na h-urad de dh'àthannan 's de stàblaichean 's de bhàthchannan ann, agus cisteachan mòra — chanadh na seann daoine sa Ghàidhealtachd giornaileir riutha, ach 's ann air an dèanamh air seòrsa de chuilc a bha iad siud agus lìnigeadh creadha riutha nam broinn, ach bha iad làn gum beul le grân brèagha glan cruaidh.[11] Dol mu chuairt mu na bàthchannan 's a coimhead air an dèanamh a bh'orra 's a chuile sìon mun deidhinn bha e na chur seachad ùine dhuinn uaireannan agus thug mise an aire gu robh brà no dhà aig a chuile taigh. Thuirt mi ri fear dhe na gillean a mhuinntir a' Chinn a Tuath[12] — cha bheò an diugh e; 's ann a mhuinntir Hoghagearraidh a bha e — thuirt mi ris: 'Nach bochd dhuinn, a Ruairidh,[13] an t-acras a bhith oirnn agus na bheil a seo de bhiadh?'

'An ann,' as esan, 'a' dol a dhèanamh cleas nan cearc a tha thu,' as esan, 'an grân ithe?'

'Chan ann, a Ruairidh,' asa mise, 'ach 's ann a tha mi dol a dhèanamh brochan is aran air.'

'Ciamar a nì thu e?' as esan.

'A,' asa mise, 'bheil thu fhèin an aois a tha thu agus nach do rinn thu min eòrna riamh le brà?'

'O chunna mi bhrà ag obair,' as esan, 'ach chan urrainn dhomh ràdh,' as esan, 'gun do chuir mi mu chuairt riamh i.'

'*Uel*, ma-thà,' asa mise, 'cha b'e sin dhòmhs' e. Bhithinn-sa ga cur mu chuairt,' asa mise, 'agus bhithinn glè riaraichte ris a' chosnadh cuideachd agus ag èisdeachd Clann Chaluim Big[14] a b'aithne dhut,' asa mise. B'aithne dhan a' ghille an t-eilean gu math — Ruairidh Thormaid 'ic Ruairidh[13] an t-Hoghagearraidh a bh'ann. Agus 's e *section* Gàidhealach a bh'agam uileag.

'*Uel*, a Ruairidh, tha mise dol a dhèanamh suas brà agus tha mi dol a bhleith.'

'O ma-thà,' asa Ruairidh, 'bidh mise leat, a chuile cuideachadh is urra dhomh dhèanamh, ach chan aithne dhomh sìon mu dheidhinn.'

'Ceart gu leòr. Fhalbh 's faigh greim air duine no dithis eile,' asa mise, 'agus feuch a faigh sibh greim air pèilichean no soitheach air choireigin a ni feum dhuinn, agus ged a bhiodh tuill orra bheir a-staigh dhan a' *hut* againn fhìn iad, a Ruairidh.'

Rinn e seo. *Uel*, a' chiad chuideachadh a fhuair e, agus 's e bh'air a dhòigh, 's e fear ris an canadh iad Seonaidh a' Ghranndaich. 'S e Granndach Bhàlaigh[15] a chanadh iad ri athair a' ghille sin. Bha fear eile ann a mhuinntir Bheinne-Fadhla, Uilleam Mac Aonghais.[16] Bha mòran Ghàidheil eile ann, Tuathaich is Deasaich,[12] a' deanamh suas an t-*section* agus bha *squadron* againn uileag sìos ann an àthannan 's am bàthchannan 's air fad an àite bh'ann a sheo. Agus bha na Dàrna Camshronaich, bha iad air an dèanamh suas air a chuile seòrsa bh'ann an uairsin, 's iad a bha air a' laimh thoisgeil dhinn.

Cha robh sgonnan 's cha robh sùil sa bhrà, 's cha robh brod innte, ach bha fiodh gu leòr air na taighean a bh'ann. Cha robh mise fada deanamh sgonnan is sùil is brod do bhrà mhòr a bh'ann 's fhuaireadh air dòigh i 's thug mi an airc gu robh i air a deagh bhreacadh.[17] Bha feadhainn bheag is mhòr ann, caochladh meudachd unnta.

Thainig càch agus aon leth-dusan aca de phèilichean dhe gach seòrs agus a chuile gin riamh dhiubh làn tholl. Thuirt Ruairidh — 's e bha deanamh eadar-theangair[18] — thuirt e:

'Cha chumadh iad seo na clacha beaga dhut gun tighinn air uisge.'

'A, ma-thà, a Ruairidh, tha mi creidsinn gu bheil linigeadh ri seann seacaid no pòcaid ri briogais. Stiall as iad agus seallaidh mise dhut mar a chumas na pèilichean an t-uisge.'

Chaidh luideag a chur sa chuile toll a bh'ann, sa mhàs 's as na cliathaichean, gus a robh e àrd gu leòr suas airson na bha dhìth oirnn de bhrochan a dhèanamh.

Chuireadh an uairsin ann a soitheach eile dhiubh cuid mhath gràin — bhiodh lìpinn[19] no dhà ann co-dhiùbh — 's theannadh air a chruadhachadh air an teine 's ga chur mu chuairt le pios maide mar a bhithinn a' faicinn Clann Chaluim[14] a' dèanamh.

Agus bha feadhainn a bharrachd air Clann Chaluim: bha feadhainn eile — Gilleasa Mac Ruairidh[20] a chanadh iad ri fear a bh'ann: bhiodh esan an còmhnaidh a' bleith. Cha robh cruit idir aige ach bha e faighinn àiteach gu leòr a dhèanamh 's pìos math eòrna ann a mathachadh a' bhuntàta chuile bliadhna 's bhiodh e dol dhan mhuileann 's a chuile sìon. Bha brà mhòr mhòr a-staigh aig an duine sin. Bha brà sa chuile taigh a bh'ann an uairsin.

Thòisicheadh air cruadhachadh a' ghràin 's nuair a bha e cruaidh gu leòr, cha robh ach a' bhrà fhaighinn air dòigh agus dh'fheum-te sùil a dhèanamh a rachadh air uachdar a' bhrod. Agus 's e 'n t-sùil a bhithinn-sa faicinn — na seann daoine nuair a bhiodh iad a' dol a bhleith — sop connlaich 's bha iad a' dèanamh fàinne dhe timcheall air a meòir 's a' toir a-staigh a' chinn mu dheireadh grunn thursan thromh 'n rud, 's bha seo a' ceangal an fhàinne 's bha iad ga chur air a' bhrathainn 's ga dinneadh sìos agus, ma bha e ro mhòr, ghabhadh iad sop bu chaoile gus gu faigheadh iad gum biodh e cho grinn — an grinneas sa mhin a bha dhìth orra 's a bha freagarrach, 's ann a rèir seo a bha fainne bh'air a' bhrà.[17]

Cha robh againn ach ùrlar bog puill 's cha robh fhios ciamar a readh a' bhrà a chur sìos airson a' mhin a chumail glan. Cha robh duine againn a readh a chur plangaid foidhpe: cha robh iad glan gu leòr. Cha robh iad glan gu leòr airson cadal unnta gun tighinn air a dhol a chur biadh orra. Agus thuirt Seonaidh a' Ghranndaich:

'Bheir mise dhuibh pàipear naidheachd,' as esan.

Bha *Oban Times* aige bha aon trì mìosan a dh'aois agus bha e ga ghleidheadh airson a bhith ga leughadh 's ga leughadh 's ga leughadh 's a' toir leughadh dhe do dhuine mu seach 's bha e ga phasgadh seachad gu cùramach an dèidh sin. *Uel*, feumaidh gu robh e saoilsinn torr dhen a' mhathas a bha dol a thighinn on bhrà nuair a thug e dhuinne an t-*Oban Times*. Sgaoileadh a-mach e as a bhroinn 's chuireadh a' bhrà na suidhe air a mhuin.

Thòisich sinn air bleith, mi-fhìn agus Ruairidh an toiseach. Bha nuair sin càch na seasamh ag iarraidh poile mu seach. Fhuair iad sin. Nuair a bha bhleith a' dol air adhart, bha bìdeag bheag de thaigh air a thogail na b'àirde na stàbla as a robh sinne, agus bha na *signallers* ann — Seonaidh a' Ghobha, bràthair Dhòmhnaill a tha 'm *Post Office* Chàirinis, e fhèin 's a mhac gun a' latha 'n diugh,[21] agus an caiptin — a' *squadron* againn fhìn — *Captain Coles* a Sròn an t-Sìdhein. Bha iad a dol seachad air an doras againn 's chuala *Captain Coles* fuaim na brà, 's dh'fhaighneachd e do Sheonaidh:

'*What noise is that, MacLean*?' as esan.

'*They're grinding meal, Sir.*'

'*They're what*?' as esan.

'*Grinding meal, Sir.*'

'*Oh, I'd like to see that,*' as esan. '*How is it done*?'

Dh'innis Seonaidh dha 's choisich iad a-staigh, agus an ath rud a chuala sinne 's e *Coles* crom os ar cionn a' faighneachd:

'*What are you going to do with the meal, boys*?'

Sheall mise suas os mo chionn 's bha *Captain Coles* os mo chionn agus:

'*Porridge first of all, Sir, and then we'll try and bake it into scones.*'

'*You know how to do it?*' as esan.

'*Yes Sir,*' asa mise. '*I learned that when I was very young.*'

'*All right,*' as esan. '*Let me have a sample*', as esan, '*when it's finished.*'

'*All right, Sir, I'll do that.*'

Rinneadh brochan — lipinn[19] math brochain. 'S ann a thàinig a chuile duine riamh 's chuireadh sìos a *mhess-tin* air an ùrlar 's chuireadh mu chuairt ann a shin gus an do ruitheadh air. Chaidh mise suas, ann a' *lid mess-tin* an airm, gu *Captain Coles* le *sample* dhen brochan 's dh'fheuch e e 's dh'ith e e, 's thuirt e gu robh e:

'*Very nourishing indeed, Morrison,*' as esan. '*Keep on,*' as esan. '*Produce more.*'

Fhuair mise nuair sin, agus duine no dithis eile, ceud tuilleadh dhen ghràn a chruadhachadh agus a bhith deanamh min.

Bha nuair sin, far a robh sinn, san àite bheag a bh'ann a sheo, bha muileann ann — muileann Gearmailteach. 'S ann air obrachadh le *steam* a bha e agus, sa *furnace* aige, 's e fiodh a bha dol ann. Bha coilltean a-mach bhuainn. Bha muileann air a chur as a chèile 's air a chaith air feadh an talmhanna na phàirtean. 'S ann a thionndaidh *Coles* le partaidh a' lorg mu chuairt. Fhuair iad a chuile *bit* a bhuineadh dha. Bha gille eil' ann a mhuinntir Sròn an t-Sìdhein, *Roddy Munro*, agus bha e bliadhna no dha a-staigh ag ionnsachadh *mechanical engineer*. 'S e *engineer* a bh'ann an *Coles* e fhèin — *Captain Coles* — nuair a bha e òg. Theann e fhèin 's Ruairidh air a' mhuileann. Chuir iad a' mhuileann a dh-obair. Theann an uair sin *fatigue party* a' dol a-mach a chruinneachadh fiodh agus feadhainn eile toir a-null gràin agus ghoid mise agus feadhainn eile a camp a bh'air falbh bhuainn siota mòr iarainn. Cha robh claisean idir ann. Bha e còmhnard o thaobh gu taobh, de shiota dubh. 'S ann air a sin a bhathar ga luasgadh air ais 's air adhart, a' cruadhachadh a' ghràin, agus theann a' muileann air bleith.

Thugadh bhuapa mise nuair sin do *bhattery — trench mortar battery*. Chaidh mi thromh *chourse* ann a *Sitoun* san Eipheit air a shon agus thàinig mi as le *high marks*. Bha *attack* a' tighinn dheth air baile mòr a bha mur coinneamh aig na *Bulgarians* ris an canadh iad *Sirus*.[22] Bha drochaid ri dhol air an abhainn 's a chuile sìon, ach thachair sin mar a thachair è,'s chaill sinn mòran dhe na gillean Gàidhealach ann cuideachd.

Ach, co-dhiù airson tighinn go co-dhùnadh na bleith, 's ann as a' bhrà a thàinig gun deach an t-*engine* a chur a' dol — a' muileann bleith. Agus latha dhe na lathaichean a chaidh mi sìos far a robh Ruairidh — bha òrdan agam fear dhe na gillean a chur sìos a dh'iarraidh min latha sa bith a bhiodh i dhith orm — thuirt mi ri Ruairidh:

'Nach bochd a Ruairidh nach b'aithne dhut drudhag uisge bheatha dhèanamh.'

'A, nach e bhiodh math,' asa Ruairidh.

Dh'innis mi dha na bha mi cluinnteil aig na bodaich o chionn fada mu dheidhinn dèanamh uisge bheatha. Thòisich Ruairidh air, ach cha robh na foidhidinn aige idir cho math 's a bha mi 'n dùil, ach bha e rådha gun do rinn e leann math. 'S dh'òl mise

deoch dhe cuideachd bhuaithe, latha dhe na lathaichean, ach bha e mar gum biodh an dàrna leth bainne ann.

Agus 's e rud a thàinig as: rinn mise sloc a-staigh an aghaidh na *trench* againn fhìn agus, *lid* an *dixie* mhòr a bh'againn, bha mi deanamh aran ann a shin — breacagan. Cha robh sòda no *cream-of-tartar* no rud eile dol, fiù an t-salainn, ach bha iad glè mhath. Bha mi gam pasgadh ann an clobhd glan agus bha iad a' tighinn air ais[23] ann mar gum biodh breacagan eòrna chithinn aig mo mhàthair 's as na taighean eile nuair a bha mi òg.

Ach lathaichean dhe na lathaichean cò thàinig a-staigh ach fear dhe na h-*officers* againn — Albannach a bh'ann — *Lieutenant Robertson.* Agus mus do bhrist an Cogadh a-mach, bha e na *mhember* sa *C.I.D.* Duine *smart.*

'*What are you doing Morrison*?' as esan.

'*Baking scones, Sir. The supply of bread is very very scarce.*'

'*I'm sure it is,*' as esan. '*We can say the same,*' as esan. Agus dh'fhaighneachd e robh iad math. Thuirt mi gu robh.

'*Would you like to try a scone, Sir? Take it to the mess with you.*'

'*I'd be delighted,*' as esan, '*and thank you.*'

Phaisg mi suas i ann am pìos de phàipear a bh'ann 's thug mi dha i. Ach nochd mo liagh a-màireach agus dh'fhaighneachd e spèurainn tèile. Thuirt mi gu spèuradh.

'*I made it into about a dozen parts last night, with the knife,*' as esan, '*and they all enjoyed it and asked me to try and get more.*'

'*Uel,* chùm e air tadhal agamsa agus bha mi toir dha ceathramh,[24] agus uaireannan a bheirinn dha barrachd air ceathramh a bheireadh e leis dhan *mhess.* Cha robh e na chall sa bith dhòmhsa: 's ioma *toast* math ruma thug e dhomh, agus bocsa tombaca, '*Rod and Gun.*'

Agus sin agaibh stòiridh bleith Sailoiniga.

Translation

I was going to tell the company[6] here about grinding with a quern in Salonika. When our regiment went to Salonika after being eleven months in Egypt,[7] we were hungry — to put it briefly — and that was no wonder. It was big ramshackle wooden carts, drawn by oxen, that brought our food up to the line from the Port of Salonika and the enemy who were facing us — the Bulgarians — they were on high hills from which they could see the road — most of the road — down to Salonika. They were pounding it with their big guns so as to damage our access[8] and everything we were bringing in on it. This sometimes delayed the oxen very badly and when the bread got to us it was all broken up and it was scarce. I've seen us drawing lots when two ends of a loaf were put together and a little handful of hard biscuits about the size of a ha'penny, and it took a good tooth to crack them. We were drawing lots for the loaf and there might be ten or eleven or twelve men in the section and one man's share of it didn't

amount to much, and the crumbs in the bottom of the bag had to be divided into little heaps to go with every other little heap. Now just take what the luck of the draw brings you.

One of these days when we were going around here, in a village[9] there, Verik[10]: there were lots of barns and stables and byres and big chests — the old folk in the Highlands used to call them girnels, but these were made of a sort of wicker, with a lining of clay to the insides of them, but they were full to the brim with fine, clean, hard grain.[11] Going around the byres and looking at how they were constructed and everything about them was a way of passing the time for us sometimes, and I noticed that there was a quern or two at every house. I said to one of the lads from North Uist[12] — he's not alive today; he was from Hougharry — I said to him:

'What a pity for us, Roderick,[13] to be going hungry and all this food here.'

'Are you,' he said, 'going to do what the hens do,' said he, 'are you going to eat the grain?'

'No, Roderick,' said I, 'but I'm going to make porridge and bread with it.'

'How can you do it?' said he.

'Ah,' said I, 'are you as old as you are and you've never made barley meal with a quern?'

'Oh, I've seen the quern working,' said he, 'but I can't say,' said he, 'that I ever turned it.'

'Well, then,' said I, 'I was quite different. I used to be turning it,' said I, 'and very happy to be doing it too, and listening to Wee Calum's folk,[14] whom you knew,' said I. The lad knew the island [Grimsay] well: Roderick son of Norman son of Roderick[15] in Hougharry he was. And my section was all Highlanders.

'Well, Roderick, I'm going to set up a quern and I'm going to start grinding.'

'Oh well then,' said Roderick, 'I'll be with you, with whatever help I can offer, but I don't know anything about it.'

'All right. Go and find one or two others,' said I, 'and see if you can get hold of pails or any kind of container that we can use and even if there are holes in them, bring them into our own hut, Roderick.'

He did this. Well, the first help he got, and very happy he was too, was a man they called John Grant. It was Grant of Vallay[15] they called that lad's father. There was another man from Benbecula, William MacInnes.[16] There were lots of other Highlanders, North Uist and South Uist men,[12] making up the section, and our whole squadron were down in barns and byres and all around this place. And the Second Camerons — they were made up of all sorts at that time — they were on our left flank.

There was no turning-handle and there was no *sùil* in the quern and there was no *brod* in it, but there was plenty of timber on the houses that were there. It didn't take me long to make a handle and a *sùil* and a *brod* for a big quern that was there. And we got it ready and I took care that it was well picked.[17] There were small ones and big ones there, all different sizes.

The others came in with about half a dozen pails of all sorts and every one of them full of holes. Roderick said — he was the one who was acting as go-between[18] — he said:

'This lot wouldn't hold pebbles for you, let alone water.'

'Ah well, Roderick, I'm sure there must be a lining to an old jacket or a pocket in a pair of trousers. Tear them out and I'll show you how to make the pails watertight.'

A bit of rag was pushed into every hole, in the bottoms and in the sides, till they were high enough to take as much porridge as we wanted to make.

Then a fair quantity of grain was put into another of these containers — there would be a lippy[19] or two at least — and we started to harden it over the fire, stirring it with a piece of stick as I used to see Calum's folk[14] doing. And there were others besides Calum's folk: there were others — Gilleasbuig son of Roderick[20] one of them was called. He was always grinding. He didn't have a croft at all, but he was still able to get enough land to cultivate and a good plot of barley in last year's potato ground every year and he went to the mill and everything. This man had a big, big quern at home. There was a quern in all the houses at that time.

We began to harden the grain and when it was hard enough, it was just a matter of getting the quern ready and you had to make a *sùil* that would go on top of the *brod.* And the *sùil* that I used to see — the old folk when they were starting to grind — a corn straw, and they would make it into a ring round their finger, bringing the last bit at the end in several times through the thing, and this held the ring together, and they would place it on the quern and push it down and, if it was too big they would take another thinner straw until they got it as fine — the fineness they wanted the meal to be and was suitable, that was the purpose of the ring on the quern.[17]

All we had was a soft muddy floor and we didn't know how the quern could be set down so that the meal would be kept clean. None of us would put a blanket under it; they weren't clean enough. They weren't clean enough to sleep in, let alone to put food on them. And John Grant said:

'I'll give you a newspaper,' said he.

He had an *Oban Times* that was about three months old and he kept it so that he could read it and read it and read it again and give a read of it to others, turn about, and he would fold it away carefully afterwards. Well, he must have thought a lot of the benefit that would come from the quern when he gave us the *Oban Times.* It was spread out and the quern was set down on top of it.

We began to grind, first Roderick and myself. Then the others were standing around waiting their turn. They got that. When the grinding was going on, there was a little bit of a house built higher than the stable that we were in, and the signallers were there — John son of the Smith, the brother of Donald who is in the Post Office at Carinish, his son and he, to this day[21] — and the captain of our Squadron, Captain Coles from Strontian. They were passing our door and Captain Coles heard the sound of the quern and he asked John:

'What noise is that, MacLean?' said he.

'They're grinding meal, Sir.'

'They're what?' he said.

'Grinding meal, Sir.'

'Oh, I'd like to see that,' said he. 'How is it done?'

John told him and they walked in and the next thing we heard was Coles bending over us asking:

'What are you going to do with the meal, boys?'

I looked up and Captain Coles was standing over me and:

'Porridge first of all, Sir, and then we'll try and bake it into scones.'

'You know how to do it?' said he.

'Yes, Sir,' said I. 'I learned that when I was very young.'

'All right,' said he. 'Let me have a sample,' said he, 'when it's finished.'

'All right, Sir, I'll do that.'

We made porridge — a good lippy[19] of porridge. Every man came and set down his mess-tin on the floor and it was shared around there until it was finished. I went up, with the lid of an army mess-tin to Captain Coles with a sample of the porridge and he tasted it and he ate it and he said it was:

'Very nourishing indeed, Morrison,' said he. 'Keep on,' said he. 'Produce more.'

Then I, and one or two others, got permission to harden more of the grain and to go on making meal.

Then, where we were, in this little place, there was a mill there — a German mill. It was operated by steam and, the furnace of it, it was wood that went into it. There were woods opposite us. The mill had been broken up and scattered in bits all over the fields. Coles turned out with a party to search all round. They found every bit that belonged to it. There was another lad from Strontian, Roddy Munro, and he had spent a year or two training to be a mechanical engineer. Coles was an engineer himself — Captain Coles — when he was young. He and Roddy got to work on the mill.

They got the mill going. Then a fatigue party began to go out collecting wood and others bringing grain over, and I myself and some others stole a big sheet of iron from a camp some distance away. There were no corrugations in it. It was smooth from side to side: a black sheet. This was placed on top of the boiler, over the heat. It was on that we shovelled it back and forth, hardening the grain, and the mill started to grind.

I was taken away from them then to a battery — a trench-mortar battery. I had gone through a course in Sitoun in Egypt for it and I came out with high marks. There was an attack coming off on a big town opposite us held by the Bulgarians that was called Séres.[22] The river had to be bridged and everything, but that turned out as it did, and we lost a lot of the Highland lads there too.

But anyway, to come to the conclusion of the milling: it was the quern that led to the engine getting started and the mill grinding. And one of these days when I went down to see Roddy — I had orders to send one of the lads down for meal any day I wanted it — I said to Roddy:

'What a pity, Roddy, that you don't know how to make a drop of whisky.'

'Ah, wouldn't that be good!' said Roddy.

I told him all I had been hearing from the old fellows long ago about making whisky. Roddy started to try it, but he didn't have as much patience as I thought he would, but he told me he had made good beer. And I got a drink of it from him too, one of these days, but it was as if it were half milk.

And the end of the matter was that I dug a hole into the face of our own trench and, in the lid of the big dixie we had, I was making bread there — bannocks. There was no soda or cream-of-tartar or anything else to be got, not even salt, but they were quite good. I was wrapping them in a clean cloth and they were coming back[23] in it like the barley bannocks that I used to see my mother with and in the other houses when I was young.

But one of these days who should come in but one of our officers — a Scot he was — Lieutenant Robertson. And before the war broke out he was a member of the C.I.D. A smart man.

'What are you doing, Morrison?' he asked.

'Baking scones, Sir. The supply of bread is very very scarce.'

'I'm sure it is,' said he. 'We can say the same,' said he.

And he asked if they were good. I said they were.

'Would you like to try a scone, Sir? Take it to the mess with you.'

'I'd be delighted,' said he, 'and thank you.'

I wrapped it up in a piece of paper that was there and gave it to him. But my lad appeared again next day and asked if I could spare another one. I said I could.

'I made it into about a dozen parts last night with the knife,' said he, 'and they all enjoyed it and asked me to try and get more.'

Well, he kept on calling on me and I would give him a quarter,[21] and sometimes I would give him more than a quarter to take to the mess with him. It was no loss to me: many's a good toast of rum he gave me and a box of tobacco, 'Rod and Gun.'

And that's the story of the Salonika milling.

NOTES

1 The book was published under the title *Ugam agus Bhuam* (Moireasdan 1977). The entire book is in Gaelic, without translation. Peter Morrison, a splendid source of oral tradition, stories and songs, died on 7 July 1978 in his 89th year. He had served in the First World War as a corporal with the Lovat Scouts, in Gallipoli, Egypt, Salonika and France. For a further account of him, with three of his stories and two songs of his own composition, see *Tocher* 16 (1974) 303–22. See also *Ugam agus Bhuam*, Introduction (Moireasdan 1977: ix–xxii).

2 BV3 d6 8827 in the Photographic Archive of the School of Scottish Studies. Another was published as the frontispiece in *Ugam agus Bhuam* (Moireasdan 1977).

3 SA 1966/94 A1 in the Archives of the School of Scottish Studies. The Gaelic text was printed in *Ugam agus Bhuam* (Moireasdan 1977: 85–90), under the title *'Bleith leis a' Bhrathainn ann a Sailoinigа'* ('Grinding with the Quern in Salonika'). A number of minor alterations in spelling have been made in the present

text, in line with the new standard orthographic recommendations. As the book has been out of print for a number of years, it was considered appropriate to print the Gaelic text here as well as an English translation. The Gaelic is a verbatim transcription from SA 1966/94 A1 and the English follows it as literally as possible. In transcription a very few slight hesitations have been passed over silently. I accept full responsibility for any errors or infelicities in either text.

4 In the final three items on the previous tape, SA 1966/93 B7–9, I had been interviewing Peter about his memories of grinding with the quern in his youth, grinding songs, etc. He said he had also used the quern in Salonika during the First World War: '*Bha mise bleith leis a' bhrathainn ann a Saloinigà 'n àm a' Chuid Chogaidh agus tha mi làn chreidsinn gum b'fhiach e innse* ...' ['I was grinding with the quern in Salonika myself at the time of the First War and I quite believe it would be worth telling'.] He went on to add that this was in the Struma Valley, about 94 kilometres from Salonika, and immediately embarked on the story. He had got only as far as to mention the bombardment of the road by the Bulgarians when the tape ran out. The tape was immediately changed and the present text (SA 1966/94 A1) recorded uninterrupted.

5 Eric Cregeen himself recorded information about the quern and its use from Peter Morrison on a later visit, on 31 March 1970 (SA 1970/65). At the same time he and the School of Scottish Studies technicians, Fred Kent and Ralph Morton, made a brief 8 mm. film recording of Peter grinding here on the quern.

6 *Comann* = ' company'. To the best of my recollection those present were Peter, his wife, one or two other members of his family and myself. It is possible that his friend and neighbour Donald MacLean (*Dòmhnall Sheonaidh Bhàin*) whom I had been recording earlier that day, was there also.

7 The Rev. Angus MacVicar, who served as Chaplain with the Cameron Highlanders and Lovat Scouts in the Struma Valley between 1916 and 1917 notes: 'The Lovat Scouts were withdrawn from Gallipoli in the spring [1916] and sent to Egypt, where they spent the whole summer kicking their heels in the desert. In October they arrived in Macedonia [Struma Valley] as an infantry battalion, the 10th Camerons, and were attached to the 82nd Brigade, 28th Division' (MacVicar 1966:62). Note, however, that Peter Morrison states that they had been 'eleven months in Egypt'.

8 *Rathad coise(adh)* = *lit.* 'foot road'.

9 It was a little surprising to find Peter using the English word *village* here, rather than a Gaelic term such as *baile beag*, etc. I have noticed, however, that in this text, he does tend to use English words much more freely than was his usual practice in narration. This may be partly due to the fact that he was describing what was certainly very much a bilingual Gaelic-English situation on the Struma Valley Front, as indeed in many other First World War situations. It may also be worth noting in this context that he renders English dialogue entirely in English, without any attempt at translation into Gaelic apart from the usual '*as esan*' ('said he'), etc.

10 *Verik*. This was how I transcribed the name, purely by ear, from Peter's telling. I believe, however, that it should probably be equated with *Verikon*, a village which is located on maps just south west of the Strimon River, about 4 km. south east of where the road from Salonika crosses the river. I am grateful to my colleague Ian Fraser for his help in matters of place-names and maps (see also Note 22).

11 The grain was wheat, as confirmed by Peter in a following interview on the same tape (SA 1966/94 A2). At home it was bere/barley (*eòrna*) that Peter Morrison had been used to grinding.

12 *An Ceann a Tuath* ('The North End/Head') is the usual Uist term for North Uist. *An Ceann a Deas* ('The South End/Head') is South Uist. *Tuathach* ('A Northerner') is 'A North Uist Man' and *Deasach* ('A Southerner') 'A South Uist Man', see pp. 40/44 below.

13 Roderick MacDonald, identified below by the usual patronymic system as *Ruairidh Thormaid 'ic Ruairidh* (Roderick son of Norman son of Roderick), see pp. 40/44 below.

14 A family of Mathesons living in the South-West of Grimsay when Peter was young. They were notable tradition bearers (Moireasdan 1977: x).

15 Lachlan Grant who was manager of the offshore island farm of Vallay, North Uist about the turn of the century.

16 I have taken *Mac Aonghais* to be the surname 'MacInnes' here rather than the patronymic 'son of Angus'. There is a tendency to use the surname rather than the patronymic when referring to someone from another island (Benbecula in this case) or an area not particularly well known to the speaker.

17 Some of Peter's quern terminology differs from that usually found elsewhere, e.g. in Dwelly's Dictionary, where a Lewis source is cited for most of the forms (Dwelly 1971: 111–12). *Sgonnan* for the 'turning handle'

and *breacadh* for 'picking'/'dressing' are usual. In the interview (1966/94 A2) following the present text, Peter glosses *sgonnan* as *làmhchrann*, which can be used for a wooden handle of various kinds (Dwelly 1971: 566). *Brod* can have various meanings, e.g. 'goad', 'dart', 'sting', 'flounder-spear' (Uist), 'poker', 'lid', 'best of anything', etc., but I have not encountered it elsewhere in connection with a quern. As used by Peter it would seem to combine the functions of 'spindle' and 'bearer' (the wooden cross-piece below the eye which supports the upper stone, Shetland 'sile'/'soil'). In the interview he calls the bearer *an drochaid* ('the bridge') and says that a pointed wooden *stob* ('pointed stick'/'pin') set in the lower stone (which he calls *a' leac iseal*) fits into a depression in the *drochaid*. *Sùil* ('eye') is the normal word used for the round hole in the centre of the upper stone of the quern into which the grain is poured. This usage was familiar to Peter who uses it without prompting in the interview, but in the present text he uses *sùil* to indicate a feature which I have not found described elsewhere: a ring or *fàinne* made by twisting a straw round the finger. This ring is then pushed down into the hole in the upper stone so that it rests on top of the bearer, apparently to control the flow of grain and thereby to regulate the relative coarseness or fineness of the meal. (See also pp. 41/45). For an account of the use of querns in the Northern Isles and related terminology and bibliography see A. Fenton *The Northern Isles: Orkney and Shetland* (Fenton (1978), (1997): 388–93, *et passim*).

18 *Eadar-theangair* = *lit.* 'interpreter'/'translator'.

19 Dwelly's Dictionary gives *lipinn* as 'quarter peck (measure for grain)', 'lippy' (Dwelly 1971: 592). This measure, usually a round wooden vessel like a small tub or barrel, was well known and used in Uist until comparatively recently.

20 Gilleasbuig MacDonald, Grimsay. It is interesting to find this reference to a *man* grinding with the quern. It had been my understanding that this was normally regarded as being women's work. See above, however, Peter Morrison's reference to himself grinding with the quern as a boy, with no suggestion in either case of there being anything unusual about this practice.

21 The late John MacLean, Carinish, North Uist. His brother Donald and Donald's son John, mentioned as living at Carinish Post Office, have both died since. Donald MacLean was himself a good tradition bearer. In October 1962 my then colleague Iain Crawford and I recorded a number of items from him, including an account of a method of making peat charcoal (SA 1962/44 A1). This was later published in *Scottish Studies* (Crawford 1964: 108–13).

22 *Sirus*. Transcribed thus from Peter's pronunciation on tape. This I believe to be the town which appears as both *Serrai* and *Sères* on maps of the Struma Valley, and figures prominently in the 1916 campaign.

23 *Tighinn air ais* ('coming back'). I assume that Peter means that he sent the raw bannocks to be baked at whatever kitchen or cooking facilities were available and that they came back to him from there.

24 *Ceathramh* = *lit.* 'a quarter'. Large girdle-size bannocks were usually divided into four large scones, each of which was called *ceathramh*. Professor Alexander Fenton tells me that in Scots, witness his own native usage from Aberdeenshire, the term 'quarters' (*quaarters*, earlier *korters*) was used for oatcakes, even when they were divided on the girdle with a kitchen knife into eighths.

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Flitting Peats in North Yell

*ALAN BRUFORD

This article is published both as a tribute to the memory of Eric Cregeen, who introduced me to the concept of oral history and encouraged me to collect it, and to that of Tom Tulloch from North Yell,[1] Shetland, who showed me how interesting it could be. Whether you call it oral history, or ethnology, or folk life including a bit of folklore, which is what I thought I was collecting when I first met Tom, what he told me about his own community was what mattered to him, and everything he told me interested me. Tom, with the help of his wife Liza, made the work of collection a more enjoyable experience than anyone else I have recorded — ethnological fieldwork can often be exciting, but though it may be pleasant to remember it is usually exhausting to do. Tom and Liza simply let me sit in their living room above the post-office in Gutcher, when Tom was not busy with his post-round or anything else, and listen to him telling me things: while Tom fed me with information and I scribbled notes, Liza fed me with regular tea and scones and sometimes more substantial meals. When I wanted to record something in detail I brought out the tape-recorder, and quite often we moved into the ben room. I have described this leisurely method of fieldwork and how it developed in more detail in the feature on Tom Tulloch in *Tocher* 30.[2]

What Tom told me brought out the close relationship between all aspects of a community's traditions, from stories, songs, sayings, dialect, music and dance through family history and relationships with landlords to the techniques of the many types of fishing and farm work, what you ate and how you got it, how you built, furnished, lit, heated and cleaned your house, and all the day-to-day details of life in a very different world. Much of this described ways of life that Tom himself (born in 1914) had not seen, but he learned a great deal from his mother, born Andrina Fraser, and her sister Maggie, born before the disastrous summer gale of 1881 put an end to the flourishing haaf fishery at Gloup, and heirs to family traditions stretching back in some cases to the seventeenth century. Moreover the family, including Tom's grandfather Charles Fraser, the local joiner and undertaker, lived in an eighteenth-century laird's house, the Haa o Midbrake — they had been moved into the empty house until the landlord repaired their dilapidated croft-house, which he never got round to — and were therefore able to provide rooms to lodge visitors from all over Shetland. The house had many other more local visitors, the joiner's customers and cronies, and after his death continued to be what Highlanders would call a ceilidh house. As the youngest of twelve children Tom lived on in the Haa until he felt it too was past repair in the 1950s and regularly heard his mother and aunt's conversations with each other and

all sorts of callers, from neighbours to sightseers and people (including Mrs Jessie Saxby) who had heard of their knowledge of local lore and history. Tom must have been interested enough from a fairly early age to pick up a good deal of what he heard, and the excellent oral memory which preserved it was no doubt another part of his inheritance from his mother.

The recording which follows, however, is oral history in the usual British sense of the term, Tom talking about something he and Liza remembered well from their own youth. Tom had a good memory not only for words but for actions: in his younger days he had done joinery work like his grandfather, making 'windows an doors an skylights an horse-harness an cairts an barrows and anything at wis just required aroont the croft. An besides that ... I shod dizzens o horses' as well as other blacksmith work and building, and butchering and salting mutton and pork for winter use for the whole neighbourhood — and working the croft and inshore fishing like everyone else. He could describe very clearly how to do such things, and I wish there had been time to record or even film many more such detailed descriptions before his death in February 1982, not very long after his retirement from the Post Office. My last visit to Gutcher in September 1978 had as its main purpose the recording of Tom's life story and other items for the feature that appeared early in the next year in *Tocher* 30. After filling two tapes on my first morning with Tom I left him to recover and spent 24 hours away with Jamesie Laurenson in Fetlar and Gibbie Basil Inkster in the Herra west of Mid-Yell, but when I came back I made this detailed recording about something Tom and Liza both had often mentioned and evidently felt strongly about, the work they had done in their summer holidays from school (between the ages of seven and fourteen) helping neighbours to bring in their peats.

The account transcribed below may not make it clear just how ambiguous Tom and Liza's feelings were about this work. It was evidently a very vivid memory. Tom was as keen to hand on the details of how this was done as he was about other aspects of local culture, and indeed was particularly interested in the pack-saddle, harness and other equipment used on the ponies carrying peat and other loads. It was one of the half dozen subjects he raised on my first short visit to him in 1970, and about that time he made a model of a pony with this equipment on its back, using the correct materials as far as possible. The recording makes it clear too that he was happy to explain all the details of the work, and that as children they had been proud if certain families asked them to work for them. It was also clear, perhaps more from Liza's reaction to the memory but from Tom too, that it had been extremely hard work for them as children, and had left little if any time for them to enjoy their summer holidays. Although they were actually paid for their work, at an average rate of two shillings a day, which in the 1920s must have been worth well over £5 today, they were expected to put most of their pay into family funds, or towards their own clothing, and were lucky if they had a shilling of it in their pockets on the local regatta day. In spite of the pay, which was surely an innovation since the turn of the century, they felt exploited, and remembered the experience as more like a labour camp than a summer camp.

Tom's account complements the excellent description in Alexander Fenton and Jamesie Laurenson's article on 'Peat in Fetlar' (Fenton and Laurenson 1964), which introduces the subject of this present article very usefully, in several ways. It says little of the peat-cutting or stacking, and nothing of the peat-boats and peat-houses which were part of the very different economy of Fetlar. But this difference in local methods of bringing home peat in different parts of Shetland, of which more below, must be emphasised. The north end of Yell was formerly part of the same parish as Fetlar, and shares some of that island's culture, but in other respects, including dialect forms, it is closer to its other neighbour, Unst. North Yell and Unst alone, as far as I know, used *riva-kishies* rather than regular *kishies* to carry peat. Tom's account also gives an insider's very detailed view of one part of the process, driving the ponies (or *mares* as they were collectively called, regardless of sex), which was almost exclusively carried out by children in North Yell — a custom no doubt originating in the *haaf* fishing days, when all the working men of most families were at sea until August and all the peat work after the actual cutting, and all the farm work until harvest, was left to the women and children and a few old men. Finally, the ponies also carried several other loads through the summer and autumn — hay, sheaves of corn, peat mould and *teck* (heather) — and perhaps others such as seaweed and dung for manure in the spring, but this would have been a smaller-scale, more intermittent operation which did not need to involve the children. As in most parts of Shetland the ground was too rough for horses to be used in ploughing, so carrying these loads was usually their only work.

The account which follows is my transcription from SA 1978/87, a tape recorded from Tom and Liza Tulloch at Gutcher Post Office on the evening of 27 September 1978. It can mostly be left to speak for itself, with the help of a short glossary of dialect words and terms and a note on features of the dialect and its transcription. A few notes explain or amplify other points. Three matters, again all concerned with differences within Shetland, seemed to deserve very long notes and have instead been treated as appendices. Appendix A summarises information I have recorded in other parts of Shetland and Orkney about the variety of methods used to bring home peats. The other two are mainly transcriptions from Tom Tulloch's words on a tape recorded four years earlier, SA 1974/208: Appendix B on the use of bent grass in North Yell, and Appendix C on the North Yell use of 'teck'.

I had hoped when I first planned this article several years ago that it could be checked over by Liza Tulloch, but sadly she died in September 1992, when I had the text of the interview roughly transcribed but not ready to send. I am grateful to her son Lawrence Tulloch for correcting my slips in transcription and interpretation.

Tom Tulloch: Flitting Peats in North Yell

Noo when we were bairns the most o wir summer hoalidays wis spent caain the horses, flittin hom the peats an hey an mul[3] an later on the coarn at hairst time. An even afore

wir summer hoalidays started we would speak among wirsels at the schūl, 'at this fokk or the next fokk wis axed wiss to com an caa horses tae them: and they were some fokk better tō work to what was consider't to be the best fokk, and the fokk 'at fed you best an the fokk 'at peyed you best!

But it wasna a very agreeable job at the best o times: you were usually called aboot five o'clock i the moarning, becaze they were a considerable competeetion among the fokk to see wha could be first to the hill. And we would hae to go up to the girse an feetch in the horses an help to bent[4] them: you first pat on the flaakie ipae them, wis the first 'at geed on, and then the clibber. And the clibber wis made up oot o the clibber brods and the clibber shank and the clibber neebie, and the pin that connectit this pieces together wis caa'd the varnickel pin.[5] And then the strap that geed inunder — the piece o rop 'at geed innunder the mare's belly to hadd on the clibber was caa'd the wymegirt; and they were a V-shapit piece o rop fae the wymegirt up to the clibber 'at they caa'd the gointer. An efter the flaakie and the clibber wis on, then the maeshies geed on. An efter you were gotten on the maeshies, then the riva-keeshies[6] geed on. An that was a ... kishie made oot o a net, oot o simmonts. An when you were gotten all the horses riggit, then you set oot fir the hill.

AB: A moment ... How exactly did the maeshies and the riva-kishies, how were they fitted on?

TT: Oh yes, yes. The ... maeshie wis a coorse net made oot o the simmonts, and they were a ... loop, a long loop o simmonts at each end, and the piece 'at wis nixt to the clibber, it was hookit ower the tap o the clibber right doon at the mare's back, and that wis caa'd the lower fettle. And then the ither end of the maeshie, the ither loop 'at wis there hookit ower the neebie o the clibber, and they ay caa't that the upper fettle. And the riva-kishies when they were empty wis jist hookit ower the neebie o the clibber, but of coorse when they were full of paets then they were set in i the maeshie. They were set in i the maeshie on their boddom efter they were been fill't wi paets, and then they were long paets laid in ipo the top 'at they caa't the layin-in paets. And then you lifted up the upper fettle o the maeshie an hookit him ower the neebie o the clibber, and that turn't the riva-kishie upside doon: but this big layin-in paets hinder't the ither paets fae runnin oot. An when the mares cam to the stack, 'at you took a maeshie aff o the neebie o the clibber, then the riva-kishie wis the right way up again, he stūd upon his boddom.

But when you were gotten aal the horses riggit an set oot fir the hill, the owlder fokk wis wi you, the layers-up. An you hed to tak a kishie wi some grub an a bucket wi some fier (fire), an you went to the hill and they got this fier kindled, and of course they were plenty o paets to keep him goin what wis efter o the day. An if they were six mares then they would divide them op into two lots o t'ree, and a bairn caa'd 'next the hill' and the ither een caa'd 'next the toon'. The wān 'at caa'd 'next the toon' wis the wān that wis caain next to the hooses, and the wān that wis caain 'next to the hill' wis the wān that wis caain next to the paet banks. An if they hed more as maybe six horses

then they divided them op into t'ree lots o three, and they were a third bairn 'at caa'd, an that wis caa'd 'i the middle'.

An this gūd on fae the aerly moarnin until brakfast time, an that wis maybe a cup o tay an a boiled eeg i the hill, made ipo the oapen fier, an wan o the layers-up relieved you while you ate this, and then you pat the ither bairn to the hill and so on till every boady wis hed their brakfast.

The bairn 'at wis caain next to the hill wis expected to help wi the layin up ipō the mares. You — they would tell you to go an feetch in the mare an you — the fokk 'at wis layin up while you were been away would a been fill't the riva-kishies wi paets an hed them staundin a peerie bit apairt, an you led the mare wi the hälters in atween the two riva-kishies and then haeld on her heid while they laid up upon her. And this gūd aheid wi aa the mares, and the bairn 'at wis caain next to the stack wis supposed to help wi the takkin aff o the mares — tak aff wān side, ir if he wisna aeble to tak aff the side then he wis supposed, ir wis expected, to empty tha paets oot o the riva-kishie an ... pit him back ageen ipō the clibber. But that wisna aal that aesy becase we were warkin wi wir bare feet an very aften the paets ran ipo wir feet an hortit wir taes. And it wis faerly coamon for wiss to ... strik wir feet on stons an hort wir taes, an we sometimes would look fir a lag o oo stuck in upon a brae and row aroont wir taes to protect them, to hinder the straes fae brakkin in tae them, fir it wis very soär!

And this gūd on all day: the same procedure gūd aheid at denner time, an maybe a cop o tay in the efternūn. And they were a graet lock o that owlder fokk 'at kempit the wān wi the ither to see wha would bide in the hill longest an do the biggest day's-wark.

An that wis a case o wiss drivin the horses, we werena leadin them, an we were caain them in ... bunches. An some o the horses 'at wis kind o ill-vickit would ha' teen i their heids til ha' set aff, and then you were expectit to ... go and feetch them, no matter whar they gūd, an ... they said 'The horses wis rin aff!' And sometimes the leeds would go ower ipo you an that wis considered to be ... a braw catastrophe. An if the layers-up wisna in agreement the wān wi the ither, ir if wān wis stronger as the ither, then it ... wisna a ooncommon thing at aal fir the leeds to — wān side to be haevier as the ither, and the leeds would go skave. And this would put wiss bairns caain in a great consternation in case 'at the leeds did go ower. And sometimes if it wis the case 'at they were flittin graet big long mossy paets 'at didna brak very raedily, then they would never wark wi riva-kishes at all: they would jist big the paets in i the maeshies, an laid that up, an they caa'd that 'bōldeens'.[7]

And when the day's flitting was done we were älways very gled to get hom because we were tired an we were run fir saeveral miles durin the coorse o the day: in fact they were some times 'at you were comin to the stage 'at you were nearly creepin! But even when you cam hom you were expected to help wi the aff-bendin o the horses an pittin the bendies inside into some shed or some protection fae the wadder, fir the owlder fokk took graet care o the mares' bendies and they never left them forth all night, they aalways wantit to keep them dry. An efter the bendies wis teen aff, 'at they [the

ponies] got their full tether restored ageen, then we were pitten wi them to pit them to some shālter or pit them oot ipae the girse.

And then we'd ha' been teen in an we would ha' gotten wir sopper an hed to wāsh wir feet an go to bed, and we would ha' been called almost at the crack o dawn the followin moarning: an this was repeatit until such times that the paets wis hom. An if it wis a kind o generous fokk 'at you were warkin fir, i wir time the remuneration fir a day's caain — it would ha' been maybe fourteen or fifteen 'ooers — wis two shillins a day. But ... we were ay fairly prood even o wir day's pey or wir week's pey, whitever it might till ha' been.

An even after the paets wis feenished flittin, this same procedure gūd aheid wi the flittin hom o the mūld — that was whāt wis used fir the beddin o the kye an the lambs through the winter time. And the hey wis flit intō the yard ipō the mares jist the sam wey, ither as they didna need ir use riva-kishies fir that: that wis jist biggit in i the maeshies withoot them being pitten in in any contaeners. An i the hairst time it wis the sam wi flittin in the coarn: the shaves wis jist biggit in. But when they were flittin in the coarn ipō the maërs, the mares hed a habeet o tryin to aet the coarn, an this wis tried to be preventit as faur [as] it was poassible, an sometimes they would hae a peerie kishie 'at they caa'd a cuddie[8] that they would smook ower the maër's mōls so 'at they couldna get aetin. An if they didna hae a cuddie then they were a flat piece o wuid, wi a string atil it 'at gūd aroont the maër's heid, that they pat i their mooth to prevent them fae aetin the coarn, that they caa'd a kaepar.[9] An that wis the wey 'at the moast all stoff wis shiftit i ... wir young days, 'at they were no ... tractors an a graet lock o the grund wisna suitable fir ta wirk even horses an cairts if you'd haed them.

AB: And was it normally with all the flittin — was it just the peats that the bairns helped with or did they help with everything?

TT: No, the bairns helpit wi aal the flittin, but when we were flittin hey or coarn, insteed o the maërs being driven they were aalways led, by the tether. Fir the flittin o the paets they were driven.

AB: And how were they kept together, the three o them?

TT: Oh, they got used to that, the mares ... They just went together, and usually there was a leader — they were aalways wān 'at wis first. An if it 'been such a thing 'at that leader wis laid up an got her leed last it would ha' been no time until shō wis leadin ageen: shō passed the ither wāns, and the ither wāns acceptit this. They seemed to get to know this, 'at this wis their leader, and they accepted her as a leader.

AB: And the müls that they took in for the kye to lie on ... what was this? Just peat mould?

TT: It wis just ... dirt, it wis mould aff o a ... peaty grund. Hit would ha' been gotten loosened op wi the frost in winter, and then dried up i the spring o the year, and ye scrapit it aff: it might till ha' been, dependin on the quântity o frost it wis been in winter, it might til ha' been an inch ir inch an a half thick, an you scrapit it up while it was dry, an pat it into roogs an catter'd it op wi feels until such times as you could get it hom.

AB: And what was that put into then?

TT: When it was teen hom hit was usually pitten until a shed of some description, a barn, ir, yees, they were hooses, a kind o inferior whality o hooses that they would ha' just ha' caa't the mūldy hoose — it was used for noathing ither but to keep mūld aūl.

AB: Yes, but I mean when you were bringing it home was it in kishies or ...?

TT: Oh, no, it hed ... it ether heed to be in bags, but afore bags was — the jute fir the hemp bags[10] wis plentiful, it wis flit i the straēn kishies, not the riva-kishies: the riva-kishies wis net but the straēn kishies wis — could howlt the mūld.

AB: Yes ... I'm not very clear how it ... wouldn't come out of the straēn kishies unless you could fix the lips together ...

TT: Ah well, the straēn kishie wis set up on its bottom, it wisna turned upside doon ... like the riva-kishie ... The straēn kishie wis ālways set up the right wey up and the maishie teen an pitten up aroond it.[11]

AB: And all the bendies would be made out of bent, would they?

TT: In ... North, aroont wir direction, aal the bendies wis made oot o bent: ... but ... here in Yell, North Yell at the Saunds o Breckin wis the most usual place fir to get bent. In ither places t'rough the isle, insteed o usin bent it wis floss 'at wis dried ... an made into the simmonts, an although the floss didna hae such a boannie appearance whan it wis feenished, that wis much more durable as the bent ... Yes, yes, it lestit much longer as the bent, but it wis more difficult to wark wi an didna hae such a nice appearance.

AB: And I suppose you would be ... got to flit your own peats, for your own ... toon ... without being paid for it.

TT: Oh yes, yes, this wis very aften the case, an if you — any body didna have suffeecient horses o their owen, ir ... they might till ha' hed horses an ... no bairns, then you would unite, an some body would provide the horses an some ither body would provide

the bairns ... The horses wis very aften united: this would ha' gone aheid atween freends an ... neighbours.

AB: Yes. And if you were helping somebody else, would you stay at their house?

TT: Ah, well, this used to be done, but this wis ... til a graet extent aboalished ... i my time, but it wis known o: they wir a few places 'at you stoppit aal night at, but generally you geed hom to yoursel. But you were expected to turn oot bright an aerly i the — a moarnin, although you wir goin hom to yoursel.

AB: And ... while you were ... leading in the peats, then there would be ... somebody actually building a stack?

TT: Yes yes, they wir ālways a man at the ... hom end tō — biggin the stack, an they took graet - graet care an graet paens ipō the biggin o the stack, becase they were dependin on the paets fir aal haetin purposes, an tō a saertain extent in some hooses fir light as weel as haet, an it wis essential that the paets be dry an properly lookit efter. An it wis a considerable art to big a paet stack so 'at it ... repell't the waater.

AB: But it would be quite usual for a crofter to have half a dozen ponies of his own?

TT: Oh yes yes, it wis quite coamon fir a crofter to hae suffeecient ponies tō do his owen turn wi, but if it wis such a thing 'at he didna happen to hae in, as A'm alraedy said, that wis a case o unitin wi some ither body.

AB: And these would be kept just on the scattald most o the time, would they?

TT: They were kept on the scattald ... unless the time 'at you were usin them; they always got the benefeet o some green grass the time 'at you were usin them, but before an efter that then they were turn't loose i the hill, just on the scattalt.

[*Tape turned over*]

TT: When wir day's wark ... o flitteen wis ower, 'at we came til it wis the hidmast thryte — that wis the hidmast time to the hill wi the maērs, then we would start an — and roar 'Hoitna!' That wis ... aevidently 'Feenish!' fir that day, an we would roar 'Hoitna hoitna hoarn!' And then they were ālways something added on to that to mak it rhyme:

Hoitna hoitna hoarn,
We'll flit no more till the moarn!

An we would sometimes roar:

> Hoitna hoitna hoarn,
> The grey coo o Skyla's aetin i the coarn!

An that gūd ahead at the close nearly o every day, but 'at when the paets wis completely an entirely feenished that wis intensified!

Liza Tulloch: I'm sure that the mares kent that!

AB: And what sort of ages would you be when you were doing this?

TT: Well you raelly werena expected to be caain horses until you cam schūl age.

AB: Which was seven?

TT: Yes, that wis seven. An you werena expectit to be caain horses efter you left the schūl.

AB: An that was fourteen.

TT: That wis fourteen, yes. Efter that you were — got a stage op, you were promoated aither til a layer op or then the bigger o a stack!

AB: (laughs) Yes. But that you would do just for your own peats, would you, or ...?

TT: No, there were sometimes fokk 'at didna hae ... youths o their owen would employ you, fir a layer op, but then your wages ... increased a bit, maybe to t'ree shillins a day, an the same fir biggin a stack. An the fokk 'at you were biggin the stack fir, they wid ... nearly every night they wid inspect the stack an they wid point oot tō you any improvements 'at they wanted upon it for the followin day! ... That you werena giein enoff o tilt ipō the peats i the proper direction to rin oot the waater, ir if you were biggin the paets too loosely, as the stack settlet in they wad be inclinet to faa ower ipae their side — aal that wis pointed oot tō you! An you dare not pat any kind o any mūld i the — among the paets, the paets hed, each wān hed to be as far as possible hented up wi haund, so 'at you didna pat mūld in i the stāck, becase mūld t'rough the winter time helt the waater an hed a taendency o makkin the paets weet.

AB: ... And what would be the average length o time — would it take as much as a week to build the stack for one house, or ...?

TT: Nnnnooo, scarcely a week ... Maybe the staundin pairt o a week, but ... fife days would ha' shifted a ... firin o paets, a twalmonth's firin o paets. But usually they didna wark the horses more as t'ree days at the wān time, and then geff them a raest. But they hed more maercy ipō the hoarses as whāt they hed ipō the baerns 'at wis caain them, becase that wisna ooncoamon fir fokk 'at wis maybe short o gettin baerns to caa, then they would [ha'] kent the day 'at you were goin to rest, and ... they would seek you to caa to them that day!

AB: You said the pay that you had, you were allowed to keep for yourself, but you were expected to ...

TT: Mak useful, mak right use o it ...

LT: We usually got the two shillins but I ālways gave mine to Mother becase my father was never able to work: he hād the rheumatism, ir arthritis or somthing. So we ālways gave to Mother, but we got this two shillins every day fir warkin.

TT: We got the two shillins a day fir caain the horses, but it really wisna teen fae wiss be wir paerents, but we were expectit to mak some useful use to it, ether to buy something to wear ir something fir wir feet, ir mak a contribution towards buyin something useful.

LT: An sometimes we laid it op afore ... The Regatta,[12] to hae a shillin i wir poaket fir the Regatta comin on, ir something like that.

TT: Yes, an it wis ... til a graet extent at that time, that wis the oanly means 'at we hed o aernin a shillin at all!

APPENDIX A: PEAT FLITTING METHODS IN THE NORTHERN ISLES

The information summarised below is based mostly on my recordings and notes from various parts of Shetland and Orkney since 1970 (sources given only for detailed accounts), supplemented by a few references from the school of Scottish Studies Central Index. It is far from a comprehensive list, but it adds some details to the useful outlines in Fenton 1978: 212–3, 229–32, and Nicolson 1978: 92–3, particularly on the use of sledges in the South Mainland of Shetland. Precise dates were seldom given, but all informants were over the age of 55 in the 1970s and talking mainly of practices remembered from their own youth, so this information generally applies to the early years of this century, before and after the First World War, seldom after the Second.

1. *Boating peats.* In Orkney the island of Eday (including the Calf of Eday) was a source of peats for people in North Ronaldsay and Sanday, as is well-known, but also for

(North) Faray, and at times for parts of Westray (Rapness) and Stronsay, as well as the commercial export of peat to distilleries in Mainland Scotland which lasted until 1939. Peats from Flotta were boated to parts of South Ronaldsay and Burray, and from Hoy (the North part of the island) and Rysa Little to Graemsay and Longhope in the south part of the island of Hoy.

In Shetland peats were boated from Whalsay to the Out Skerries (and within Whalsay flitted by boat to Isbister across the Loch of Isbister). Some peat for Whalsay may also have been cut in Nesting on the Mainland.

Peat for Papa Stour came from different places for the tenants of the two heritors of the island: Aithsness on the Mainland belonged to the Nicolsons, Papa Little to the Busta estate, and peat was cut accordingly (sometimes cut for Papa men by Mainlanders from Aith), and brought home in October when the haaf fishing and harvest were over (SA 1974/213 B, Willie Georgeson, Papa Stour/Scalloway).

When the peat ran out in the Ness of Muness, Unst, people around Uyeasound and Snarravoe used to boat it from Yell (between Gutcher and Cullivoe) and the small island of Linga (noted from Henry Hunter, Muness, 1974, and his relative James Hunter, Bressay, 1975).

Burra Isle and (South) Havra people boated peat from the Cliffs and Deepdale on the Mainland (see Nicolson 1978: 92 and detailed account for Havra below). Nearby Trondra took it from the smaller islands of Papa and Hildasay off Scalloway. Robert Slater there (SA 1974/215 B) described how the women rowed a haddock boat to these islands: the Trondra women were notable oarswomen, able to beat a Navy team at a regatta and row with corn to the mill at Weisdale ten miles away, and some could cut their own peats or at least flay the bank. If they were lucky, he said, they might get a man for skipper — others might have said cox: he played the part between the ages of 11 and 15! This was finished by about 1936. The Trondra people held rights to banks in Papa, but paid five or ten shillings a year for a piece of moor in Hildasay.

2. *Other Details.* In many parts of Shetland there were workable peat-banks in the 'hill' (scattald, common pasture) quite near the edge of the arable ground of the crofts: so I was told by old Mrs Mowat at Setter, by Selivoe, Sandsting, in 1975 that the peat there used simply to be built into stacks in 'the hill' where it was cut, about half a mile from the houses, and brought home on people's backs in kishie-loads as it was needed. This was all right unless there was heavy snow! On the other side of the Mainland, in South Nesting, Andrew Hunter gave me a full description of using the clibber and maeshie to load kishies of (as I understood) peats on a pony's back (SA 1975/162), but three years later (SA 1978/72) he told me that in his area peat had normally been carried a mile and a quarter from the hill in kishies on people's backs, though nowadays it was brought by lorry from near Sandwater.

Where it had further to come, ponies with clibber and maeshie were usually more use than carts (which few people kept) over the rough ground, but in parts of the South Mainland sledges or slypes seem to have been quite regularly used. Robbie

Bairnson, later first curator of the Dunrossness Croft House Museum, who lived nearby at Wiltrow, told me in 1970 that they brought peat from the hill ground to the north (on the slopes of the Ward of Scousburgh?) down to the road on a horse-drawn sledge with a box-shaped body, something like a large fish-box by the sound of it, with two-inch broad planks two inches apart, on two runners. It tended to go too fast over floss or rushes. The women and boys, with any working men who were not at sea and those old men who were not at home to build the stacks, took charge of this (SA 1970/233 B).

In one place in the South Mainland, Tresta (not identifiable on the O.S. 1" map), there was actually a wire transporter set up to haul sledges of peat earlier this century, shown in one of J. D. Ratter's photographs.

The most remarkable account I have recorded, however, came from the late John Williamson, New Grunnasound, East Burra Isle, a native of the now uninhabited island of Havra (SA 1974/212 A3). As noted above, Havra peats were cut in or above the valley of Deepdale on the west coast of the Mainland, not far from the banks used by the people of Sandwick on the east coast, and boated home from Bodi Geo, round the corner, where they were stacked to await fair weather (or earlier no doubt the end of the haaf fishing, when the men would have time for home work) about the third week of August. 'Blue' peats in the third row from the top, or lower, were not taken because they were too brittle when dry, and would not have survived the rough journey by sledge and boat. The Bigton men brought horses to take the sledges from the peat bank or the nearby hill dyke to the top of the steep slope down to the sea: from there people, mainly children from the ages of eight to fourteen, pulled or rode them down to the geo, because they would have run on the horses' heels. It was fun bringing them down, less fun taking them back up, though they were then empty. These sledges were just frames with crossbars and galvanised runners, and the kishies were supported not by planks but a network of haddock lines, like the 'handbarrows' used to carry seaweed and so on. A big sledge would hold four kishies (made of willow in his time), a child's one only two or at most three.

APPENDIX B: BENT IN NORTH YELL

In most parts of Shetland floss, the common rush, was twisted into cords or simmonts to bind the straw in kishies, flackies and so on, and to make maeshies and other items of pony harness. Where it was available, however, bent, or marram grass, were generally preferred as being finer (though not necessarily stronger or longer lasting). In Orkney it was more plentiful on sandy soils and 'bent bands' were used to bind cubbies and caisies and other straw work until coir yarn became generally available. The Sands of Breckin in North Yell provided one of the few prized supplies of bent in Shetland, so Tom Tulloch knew about its use. The following account recorded from him on tape

SA 1974/208 B2 arose from a discussion of shared rights, dividing seaweed, lotting rigs and so on. It is not always clear from the context when the sound 'shaer' means 'shear', in the sense of cutting a crop, and when it means 'share'.

[The bent that] grew Nort' at the Sands o Breckin, it was consider't to be a very praecious commodity, and it was oanly a saertain number o the people 'at had a share there, everybody didn't have a share there ... At wān time the bents was so scarce that the whoale lot o it was shoarn an collected in a pile and then divided, so ... the small sheaves 'at it was put or tied up intō was called baets, baets o bent, and you were entitlet to so many baets o bent fir every mark o lānd 'at you hed, and that was the diveesion there. And when aal the best bent was shoarn, the privileged few got a chance to share the out-crop, so to speak, and they were tearin this aff the shaerers! But ... aevidently this wis died out. I do remember the bent bein shoarn wi conseederable gusto: it was never touched, you daren't go dere an take wān scrap o bent until a saertain day. And the people aal hurriet there, it was more or less a Klondyke ...

AB: What sort of an area did it cover?

TT: Well, it's much graeter now, but ... it's spread ... It ... at that time I doan't think surely would ha' been moare than an area o three-quarters of an aecre. But the whoale o that area was not bent, they were a saertain amount o grass in the centre, becase bent oanly thrives where the sand is loose, very loose, and through the time, when the sand settlet down the bent hed a tendency o dyin out ...[At one time] it nearly became extinct. It would appear laek that, for they were some boady 'at was taellin aboot the bent on the Saund o Breckin, and this man 'at was taellin aboot it said, 'My faither telt me 'at his faither telt him 'at his faither's faither telt him 'at Ringan Spence telt him 'at they were at one time, 'at they were a hundred and twenty baets o bent 'at grew ipō the Saunds o Breckin!' So that would nearly imply 'at this 120 baets o bent was a very big quāntity o bent, and that 'at it was less at the time 'at this man wis spaekin. But Ringan of course was the Shaetland name for Neenian, and that Neenian Spence was one o the lairds 'at was in the Haa of Houllan, and it's on raecord when that Neenian Spence was in the Haa o Houlland ... [Ninian Spence of Houlland died in 1710 (Grant 1907: 300).]

[I've watched my father taking one of the dried] baets o bent and loosenin the band on them, not taekin it completely off, but loosenin the band, and then grippin ... it firmly i the top an shaekin it, an then all the short straws would fall oot, and perhaps he would oanly get what he raeckon't two saerviceable bits o bent out o three ... That short straws was aevidently no use fir the windin purposes. And after it had

gone through all this process then it was taeken an stoared in a dry place in the dwellin house, and taeken doon through the winter, and that oalder men would sit the whoale length o a winter night an winnd the bent. I never did any bent windin, but I mind me father sittin windin night after night, hundreds o fathoms o bent.

LT: They, aal the owld men wänd ...

TT: Yes, they all wänd ... And ... the bent, down where it was cut aff o the grount they were perhaps maybe aboot three inches o a hard stalk, approachin the thickness o the knitting needle, and then there would maybe be three small stalks comin out o this.

LT: Would they caa that pickin the bent?

TT: Yae, that wis efter it was wund — but this hard stalk was not wound in along wi the rest o the rop. When they hed to lay in new strånds this hard straw was always left stickin out, an when they were feenished their night's winndin o the bent then they would go back over this wi a poacket knife an snip all this hard ends off, an clean it up, and they would say 'at they were pickin the bent. And this hard end was composed o two or three different layers ... And wiss as bairns, we would take this aends, an you could pull oot a centre piece, and then we would light them in the fire and we would smoake them!

[Bent simmons]: They wis oanly used for the moare sophisticated purposes, it wis by way o bein a valuable proaduct. But the rops or the simmonts 'at wis used fir the teckin o the hooses, an also fir the linkin o the coarn skroos was wound out o the straw, and that was caa'd gossie simmonts ... Farther sooth through the isle, of coorse, as we're alraedy said, the bent wisna very coamon, if it existed at all, and the better class o simmonts was wound oot o the floss.

AB: ... The baets o bent, were they just like an ordinary sheaf o corn?

TT: Yes, a miniature sheaf o corn.

... They would plait the baets o bent at the tap and then tied it ... two together, an hang them over maybe a rop abuff the fier, and that was the reason o the pleatin at the top. And this was to finish off the dryin.

APPENDIX C: STRIKING TECK

This conversation immediately follows that in the previous Appendix, on SA 1974/208 B3. In the following year two other people mentioned teck to me. Mrs Joan Leask in the Mainland district of Aith also said that it was 'struck' with a 'teck scye' to feed cattle, but described it as a mixture of heather and hibba, a coarse grass that grew

among the heather. Jamesie Laurenson in Fetlar described it as a mixture of heather and the burra (heath-rush) which grew with it, and used for bedding more than food for the cattle (cf. Fenton 1978: 424). Only in Yell does heather alone seem to have been used as a replacement for scarce hay, as peat mould was used as bedding in the byre, to replace the straw that would all have been needed for making kishies and so on and for thatching — for which the plentiful heather in Yell was apparently not used at least in Tom's memory. However, he speaks in the main interview above of carrying hay on the ponies in his own time, and not of carrying teck; the description below may refer mainly to his mother's youth, when the larger population would have had no arable land to spare for hay.

In this interview there is an audible smile in Tom's voice in all the sentences I have marked with an exclamation mark.

AB: It was referred to as teck?

TT: Teck, yes ... It was the haether cut off.

AB: Fine — fairly fine heather?

TT: Well, of course the heather all through Shetlan is fine in compare tō the haether 'at you get in Scotlan!

AB: So you set it up in front of the cow to eat what she wanted, an the rest was used for bedding?

TT: Yes, the rest was used for beddeen. An there ageen, each croafter hed his portion o the hill 'at he was allowed to strick teck on. Teck draws they caa't them. And it was cut wi the Shetlant scye, the teck — that wis usually refer't til as the teck scye. And at that time there was very little hay in Shetlan, fir it was — ground that could cultivate was ... all cultivated. So the quantity o lānd that was used for hay was very, very little. And the scye wasn't referred til as bein a hay scye, it was a teck scye. An they didna refer til it as mowin teck ... They referred to mowin hay, but they didna, never referred to mowin teck, it was strickin teck: fir that was the, weel more the impression 'at it gave you, they were strikin this off. The scye was liftit completely clear o the ground an they feetched a swipe with it, fir the teck roots or stalks bein very hard it wouldna have been easy til ha' mown them aff just wi a circular sweep, so you hed to strike at them and it was called strikin teck.

AB: But it would be quite difficult to lift it off if there was a good bit of hard stalk left, wouldn't it, or could you pick it up fairly easily?

TT: Well of course them 'at was strikin the teck knew the... right places to go to, an it wasna just any kind o haether 'at was selectit fir teck, it was only the haether 'at they consider't to be suitable.

AB: The name suggests that it was also used for thatching.

TT: Ah yes, of coorse that's true, it was used for thatching, an that was aalso used as beddeen fir the human bein... Yes, fir the people. Hit was consider't to be by wey o bein a...pretty luxurious baed, a teck bed. They would select the heather cowes aal about the saem length, an placed them in i the bed very tightly, and then put straw on the top. And no doot that resembled a interior spring!...

And a maeshie, a maeshie o teck of course was a pretty unruly bundle, an when they were rowin a boat, the — what shall I call it, from the oar? When you pull't the oar through the water an lifted it up of course it caused a disturbance in the water — it still does that when you're rowin a boat! — and...the skill ir the strength o your rowin was judged be the whantity o water 'at you could dislodge ir disturb, and that disturbit waater wis referred til as 'vills'. An anyboady 'at wis a very expaert ir a very strong rower...they would say 'at they were aeble to pit up a vill laek a maeshie o taeck!

AB: But if it was used for thatching would you use it instead of the straw, the hallows of straw you lay on the roof, or was it just used for the simmonds?

TT: Weel this is a thing 'at I'm not paerfectly sure of. I never saw a roof thatched wi heather ... no, not even wi heather simmonts: I did know 'at heather simmonts was in existence, but I never saw heather simmonts bein used, or yet did I see haether bein used as thatch.

GLOSSARY AND FORM OF TRANSCRIPTION

The transcriptions in this article, like those in *Tocher* (see Bruford 1979: 341–3 for an earlier note on transcription practice) are impressionistic rather than strictly phonetic: they try to give the flavour of the dialect and accent without making the words too difficult for anyone who reads English to recognise. Shetland spelling conventions are not dogmatically adhered to, notably in the case of *th*; most Shetland texts write *da* and *dat* for 'the' and 'that', but to my ear there is usually a distinction in the speech of most Shetlanders from the North Isles and North Mainland at least between the way they pronounce the initial consonants of 'they' and 'day'. *T* for unvoiced *th* is commoner in Tom's speech, and has been rendered as *t'*. I do not write *ch* for *j*, which is usually unvoiced, but the next step, *sh* for *ch* may be shown.

On vowels, the umlaut indicates much the same sounds as in German for *ö* and *ü*. I use *ä* where an *a* is shorter or higher (more like *e*) than in standard English; occasionally it, like *ë*, indicates a diaeresis, where a long vowel or diphthong breaks into two distinct syllables (*maër* for mare, though this like many features may vary from one time to another that the word is used; where the sound could not be a diphthong, as in *fier*, I have dispensed with the symbol). Otherwise *ae* ideally indicates a long open *e* (French *è*, which would ideally be written *ai*) replaces *ea*, *ee*, or short *e*, as in *paets*. Similarly *oa* can be used to show a broader long *o*. I use *oo* or *ow* in preference to *ou* for clarity; if *ou* is left in a standard English spelling it is pronounced as in standard English. Otherwise I generally follow the Scots Style Sheet in omitting apostrophes after *wi*, *o*, *-in* and so on, though they are used for letters omitted at the beginning of a word (*'at*). Some vowel differences from standard English can be shown by omitting a final *e* (*hom*, *cam*).

The north Yell and Unst dialects often make a short *e* into *ee* (*eeg* for egg). This part of Shetland regularly uses *wh* for *qu* (so *white* may mean quite); I occasionally use old Scots *quh* for an intermediate form like Welsh *chw*. Another local peculiarity is turning the long *a*, written *aa*, of other parts of Shetland into *au*, especially before nasals (*laund*). In fact as final *d* is often, but not always, unvoiced to *t* (and final or even medial *v* to *f*) 'land' may end up as *launt*. Other endings like *-in(g)* and *-ion* are lengthened, and the pronunciation of *pronoonsiaesheen* can be quite impressive.

The most noticeable difference in the grammar of the Northern Isles is the formation of the perfect tense with the verb to be rather than to have: 'we're seen' rather than 'we've seen'. Other past tense forms in strong and irregular verbs are usually similar to mainland Scots (*pat* for put, *geed* for went, *wänd* for wound) as are forms like *didna*, or *they are/there*, *they were* for there is, there was. Shetlanders tend not to use the neuter pronoun, and things are 'he' or 'she' rather than 'it'. Another peculiarity in North Yell seems to be the doubling of prepositions, so that 'under' becomes 'inunder', 'in' 'in atil', and even 'out of' is 'oot ot o'. Some of the most characteristic Shetland speech, finally, uses no strange forms of words, but simply uses the words in a way that may puzzle readers or delight them: 'what was efter o the day' rather than 'the rest ...', 'the staundin pairt of a week' (greater part ...), or 'ither as' for 'except that'.

References below are mostly to SND (the Scottish National Dictionary), the most recent authoritative source for most Shetland forms, sometimes also to Jak. (Jakobsen 1928–32). ON = Old Norse.

aff-bendin	unharnessing
as *can mean*	than
axed	asked
baet	small sheaf (or bent)
bend, bent	harness (verb)
bendies	harness (noun)

big (verb)	build
bigger, biggit	builder, built
brods	boards
burra	the heath-rush (*cf* lubba below)
caa	call *or* drive
catter op	cover roughly? (not in SND, but *cf* catter-batter)
clibber	pack-saddle
cowes	clumps (of heather)
cuddie	small basket (see SND)
feel	turf (SND fail)
fettle	carrying-strap (of a kishie)
flaakie	mat (of straw and or floss simmonts)
floss	the common rush
forth, fort'	out, outside
gointer	saddle-strap (SND gointack, Jak. gongtag)
gossie simmonts	coarse straw rope (SND gorsimmen)
gūd, gud	went
hallow	bundle or armful of straw
hent	lift, grip
hairst	harvest, autumn
hidmast	last (hindmost)
hit	it
howlt	hold
ill-vickit	awkward, capricious (of animals: *cf* Scots ill-trickit and SND sv vik)
ir	or, *sometimes* are
kaepar	(see note 9)
kemp	compete
kishie	flexible basket of straw and bent or floss simmonts
lag o oo	lock of wool
lay up; layer up	load (verb), make a pile; loader
leed	load (noun)
(a) lock	a lot (SND lock n.[2])
lubba	heath-rush (burra) and similar coarse grasses (SND)
maeshie	a carrying-net of simmonts (SND maise, from ON meiss, basket)
mark	a merkland: rental unit of land once valued at 13/4d
mōls	muzzle (SND mull)
mossy	boggy; of peat, soft fibrous upper layer
mūl(d)	loose earth, peat dust (SND muild)
neebie	top of clibber (see SND kneebie, ON knipa, peak)

peerie	little
riggit	harnessed
riva-kishie	net basket (see note 6)
roog	pile, small stack (ON hrúga)
scattald	hill ground, common pasture (see SND sv skatt)
scye	scythe
simmonts	hand-twisted rope of straw, floss, here usually bent grass
skave	askew (ON skeifr)
skroo	(corn) stack (SND scroo, ON skrúf)
smook	put on or off (garment) (SND smoo)
straën	straw (adjective)
teck (noun)	thatch, fine heather (see Appendix C)
teck (verb), teckit	thatch, thatched
thryte	trip, turn? (not in SND or Jak.)
varnickel pin	connector on clibber (SND varnagel)
vill	wave from oar-stroke
wir	our, *sometimes* were
wiss	us
wymegirt	belly-band (wame-girth)

NOTES

1 'North Yell' is not a separate island, but the northern end of the island of Yell, which shares some features of dialect and culture with the neighbouring island of Unst rather than the rest of Yell, and from the Reformation to 1868 formed a separate parish with its other neighbour Fetlar. Physically, however, North Yell is like the rest of the island — a vast blanket of peat bog where the cultivation or settlement never seems to have been attempted beyond a coastal fringe less than a mile deep.

2 Tom Tulloch's own words in *Tocher* 30 (Bruford 1979) are the main source for the information in the introduction.

3 See account below, pp. 55–6, for how this peat 'mould' (earth, mud, or when dry, dust) was obtained.

4 *Bend, bendies, aff-bendin* all apply to the horse's harness as a whole. The terms describe the action of putting it on.

5 For the parts of the clibber see Fenton and Laurenson 1964: 10–12 and fig. VII *Varnickle* is stressed on the second syllable.

6 The riva-kishie (the v often sounds more like an f) is peculiar to Unst and Yell according to Jakobsen (1928–32) and I have not heard of it being used in the southern half of Yell. Fenton 1978: 249 quotes a Fetlar form *reppakishie* which suggests that it may occasionally have been used there, but I think I remember Jamesie Laurenson mentioning it as an Unst speciality. Jakobsen's suggestions about the derivation of the first element, if followed through, seem contradictory and overlapping, but SND *sv rive*, to sew roughly, seems the most convincing.

7 This word may simply be 'buildings', but it is not Tom's usual pronunciation of that.

8 The word 'cuddie' was most often used for a 'bait cuddie', a small straw or docken basket 10–15m across used to hold fishing bait.

9 Jakobsen (1928–32) derives this from ON *keppr*, a cudgel (*cf* Gaelic *cabair*, a beam?) but the Scots verb *kep*, to catch, restrain, etc., seems a more likely origin: *cf* SND sv *kepper*, which favours this origin though citing Norwegian *kipling* in the same sense.

10 The wording here is interesting: it suggests that the first sacks imported to Shetland for local use were of (hempen) canvas, and the term 'hemp bags' remains in use even after jute became the usual material.
11 Normally when straw kishies were used to carry peat they were held upside down in the maeshie like riva-kishies in North Yell, but for peat mould the *fettle* (carrying-loop) of the kishie seems to have been hung on the horns of the clibber before the maeshie was hooked on to them to hold the kishie in an upright position.
12 Regattas (which now in fact normally involve sailing rather than rowing races) have been the occasions of the most significant regular summer social gatherings for Shetland district communities this century.

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A Lewis Man's Song Notebook

MORAG MACLEOD

Two songs recorded from Roderick Campbell appear in the issue of *Tocher* (No. 43) dedicated to Hamish Henderson. The recordings were made by Hamish himself in 1958, but mention is made of a notebook given to me by Eric Cregeen, which was given to him by Mr Campbell. It contains seven 'little songs', songs that would be sung to children, either to put them to sleep or to amuse them. It contains, as well, six waulking songs, including versions of the two collected by Hamish Henderson. In the interview quoted in *Tocher* No. 43, Mr Campbell mentions that he learned the songs from his mother who was Annie Maclean from Arnol, and his sister (presumably Mòr who was married to Donald Smith from Bragar).

The original text with translations, and music where available, are given below. Mr Campbell occasionally varied the vocables on tape, slightly, from those he wrote in the notebook. The text given underneath the music corresponds with that on the tapes. Where he has left the refrains incomplete, I have left them thus.

Roderick Campbell was born in North Bragar in Lewis in 1881. He was a teacher in St Kilda for a short time, and then in Argyll and the Islands for about forty years. He retired from teaching in 1943, but it was not until 1948 that he moved to Ardrishaig, where Hamish Henderson and Eric Cregeen made recordings of him.

Both Roderick and his brother Peter won the Bardic crown at the National Mod, in 1930 and 1929 respectively. Roderick moved to Stornoway in 1958, but moved again shortly after that to Glasgow, where he died in 1963.

ORAIN BHEAGA LITTLE SONGS

There are, I think, many reasons why little songs have not been given the attention that has been given, for example, to waulking songs in recent times — but only in recent times. Both have been kept alive through their functional nature, but the time is coming when these songs will be known only from published versions. Songs for play with children would have been sung more publicly than those for actually lulling them to sleep. It is possible that only members of the household would hear lullabies, as mothers or anyone else nursing a child would be hoping for peace and quiet at such a time, and visitors would cramp the style of any singer. It is likely also that mothers would invent words as they sang, to suit the circumstances and names of the particular child. The songs, therefore, developed independently. This may account for the fact that no two versions

of little songs are exactly the same, in spite of their shortness. The only influence on the memory would be that of the household in which the person heard the song in childhood.

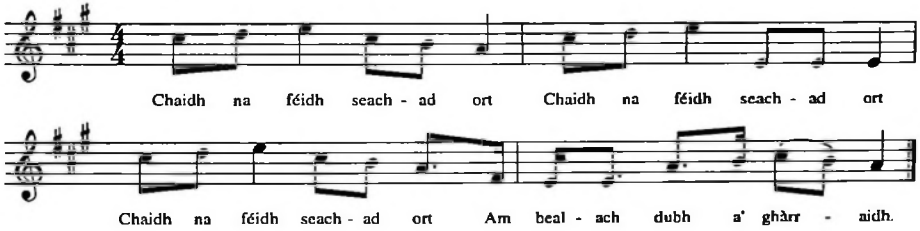
Chaidh na féidh seachad ort
am bealach dubh a' ghàrraidh.

Sìodagan, seódagan, etc.

Leag iad thu, thog iad thu
am bealach dubh a' ghàrraidh.

The deer went past you
in the dark breach of the garden wall.

They knocked you down, they lifted you up
in the dark breach of the garden wall.



SA 1958/193 A3

Sìodagan, seódagan, cuid an leinibh bhig
Chaidh am bodach leis a' chreig, 's chan ith e mìr a-nochd.

Tìribh seo, buailibh seo, cuid an leinibh bhig
Chaidh am bodach leis a' chreig, 's chan ith e mìr a-nochd.

Sìodagan, seódagan, (sheedugan, shodugan), the little infant's food
The old man fell over the cliff, and he'll not eat a bite tonight.

Dry this, thresh this, the little infant's food
The old man fell over the cliff and he'll not eat a bite tonight.

These two would not seem to be the same song, but Roderick Campbell gives them the same refrain. This may have been quite a common occurrence, and something

similar may be seen in some of the other songs in this collection. The second rhyme is in *Aithris is Oideas*, and I know it myself from childhood, or a form of it, used when a child was getting impatient for his gruel to cook. The words were

Bruich, bruich, bruich, cuid an leinibh bhig,
leanabh beag a' call a chéille, 's a chuid fhéin a' bruich.

Cook, cook, cook, the little baby's portion,
The little baby going mad while his own meal is cooking.

It was spoken, not chanted or sung, and the last 'bruich' would form the first word of a repeat of the verse. A baby's food would usually be prepared separately, and one would not expect the baby to understand the words used. The rhythm of the words was of paramount importance in an attempt to distract the baby in its fretting. Could Roderick Campbell's version possibly be for an older child, to accompany the motions of eating, with the food 'falling over the cliff' into the child's tummy?

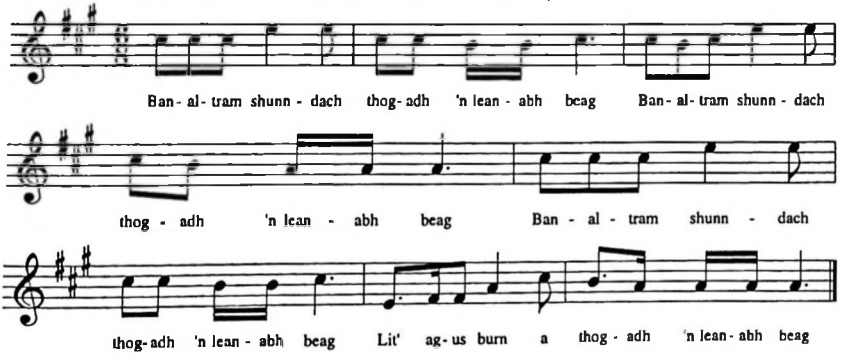
Banaltram shunndach

Banaltram shunndach thogadh 'n leanabh beag (three times)
Lit' agus bùrn a thogadh 'n leanabh beag

Mir' agus mùirn a thogadh 'n leanabh beag (three times)
Lit' air a' ghlûin a thogadh 'n leanabh beag.

It's a cheerful nurse would rear the little baby;
porridge and water would rear the little baby.

Play and merriment would rear the little baby;
porridge at the knee would rear the little baby.



SA 1958/193 A7

A version to be found in *Eilean Fraoich* (p. 33), recommends porridge *without* water, that is, presumably, made with milk only. The barring in *Eilean Fraoich* is, I think, wrong, and should be as it appears in *Amhrain Anna Sheumais*, i.e. the first bar line should be after the second Bb. Mr Campbell's version differs from those slightly, in melody and in rhythm. A text, with an explanatory note, appears in the *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*, Volume XVI, 107.

Cagaran gaolach

Cagaran, cagaran, cagaran gaolach
Cagaran laghach air fear de mo dhaoine.

Dèan an cagaran 's dùin do shùilean,
's ó, ma chaidil thu, slàn gun dùisg thu.

Tha bó dhubh agam, tha bó dhubh bhuam,
tha trì bà bricc 's a' bhruthaich ud shuas.

Lovable little darling, little darling, little darling,
Lovable little darling, one of my kin.

Murmur softly and close your eyes,
and oh, since you've slept, may you waken in good health.

I have a black cow, I'm missing a black cow,
there are three piebald cows up yonder hill.

The first two verses are well known as taught in schools, or for Mod competitions. The third verse is known in many variations in oral tradition, and is sung on the cassette, *Orain*, by Christina Shaw.

Gheibh thu caoirich

Gheibh thu caoirich, gheibh thu crodh (three times),
gheibh thu buaile fearainn, gheibh (pronounced 'gheo').

Gheibh thu othaisg dhubh na ciora (three times)
gheibh thu laogh dubh na bà
gheibh thu othaisg dhubh na ciora
's a' bhó bhiorach leis an àl.

Gheibh thu caoirich, etc.

Caith do bhròg an dubha dubha
caith do bhròg an dubh' a Nèill

Caith do bhròg an dubha dubha —
Shiubhail iad, 's cha dèan iad feum

Gheibh thu caoirich, etc.

Thèid mo ghaol suas am fireach
thèid mo laogh don an tràigh,
thèid mo ghaol suas am fireach,
breacan guailne air mo ghràdh.

Gheibh thu caoirich, etc.

You'll get sheep, you'll get cattle,
you'll get cattle pasture, that you will.

You'll get the pet sheep's black one-year-old,
you'll get the cow's black calf.
You'll get the pet sheep's black one-year-old,
and the horned cow with its young.

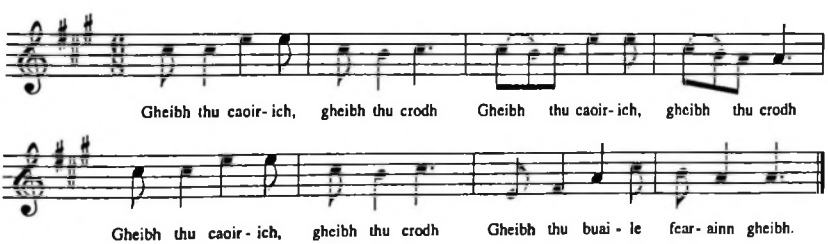
You'll get sheep, etc.

Wear out your black, black shoes,
wear out your black shoes, Neil.
Wear out your black, black shoes —
they've worn out, and they will not do.

You'll get sheep, etc.

My love will go up the hill,
my little one will go to the shore,
my love will go up the hill,
my darling wears a shoulder plaid.

You'll get sheep, etc.



SA 1958/143 A4

Sung as a lullaby by, for example, Jessie MacKenzie on SA 1957/15 A.5, but the text is different.

Maraich' thu ma bhios tu buan
's cha chuir am muir ort, a luaidh

Maraich' thu ma bhios tu beò
's cha chuir am muir ort, a sheòid.

Both verses may be translated, 'You'll be a sailor, if you're spared, and you will not be seasick, my love / my hero.'

The verse, 'Wear out your shoes ...' etc. is sung by the Campbell family of Roag, Dunvegan, as a reel with a very interesting stress-pattern in the second 'turn' of it.

Meal do bhròg an, caith do bhròg an
Meal do bhròg an dubha, Nèill,
Nuair a rachadh i na siubhal,
Meal do bhròg an dubha, Nèill.

'Enjoy your shoes, wear out your shoes, enjoy your black shoes, Neil, when she put on speed, enjoy your black shoes, Neil.' It is sung by Mary Ann Kennedy on the cassette *Strings Attached*, published by Macmeanmna, Skye 1991.

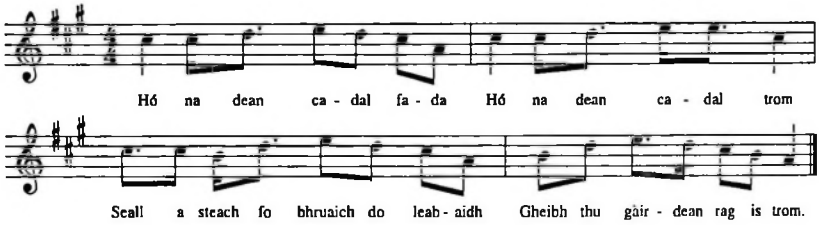
Hó na dèan cadal fada

Hó na dèan cadal fada
Hó, na dèan cadal trom —
Seall a steach fo bhruaich do leabaidh
Gheibh thu gàirdean rag is trom.

M'ulaidh, m'eudail fhèin mo luran
M'ulaidh m'eudail fhèin mo rùn
Dùin an t-sùil is dèan an cadal
socair sìobhalt air mo ghlùn.

Ho, do not sleep for long,
ho, do not sleep deeply —
look, underneath your bed
you'll find a rigid, heavy arm.

My treasure, my own jewel, my love
my treasure, my own jewel, my dear,
close your eyes and go to sleep
gently, peacefully, on my knee.



SA 1958/193 A6

The second verse is conventional, and could be a spontaneous composition of the person from whom Roderick Campbell heard it.

The first verse belongs to a song traditionally attached to Lochaber. Mrs Kate Nicolson, South Uist, was recorded by Donald Archie MacDonald telling the story of the song, on SA 1963/15. It is told in Gaelic, and this is my translation.

> Well, it was about a girl of Lochaber origins who was in service out by the Rough Bounds out there a long time ago. She was working in a house, and she knew fine what was going on (happening) to other poor souls who were staying the night. And this fellow came ...

D.A.M. And they were killing them, were they?

> They were killing them. This fellow came, and she recognised him, and she did not know how she could manage to tell him about things. There was no Gaelic in the household. But when he went to sleep, she began as if she was lulling a child, and making a sort of song, as she was able, which saved him his life. And when he got away, he married her, as well he might!

D.A.M. Yes, indeed. And how did the song go?

> 'S a ghaoil na dean cadal idir
> Ghràidh, na dean cadal trom
> Fhir a mhuinntir Loch Abar
> Ghràidh, na dean cadal trom.

My dear, do not sleep at all
Darling, do not sleep deeply;
You from Lochaber
Darling don't sleep deeply.

Kate Nicolson sings three verses on this recording. Versions of the song with a story have also been recorded from James C. M. Campbell, Kintail, on SA 1951/45, SA 1957/103 and SA 1973/1975.

Hó mo luran

Hó mo luran, hé mo luran
hó mo luran, fliùr mo ghràidh-sa,
dèan an cadal air mo ghlùinean,
dùin do shùilean ciùine tlàtha.

Bidh mo luran anns a' mhuileann,
théid e sgiobalt' chun na h-àirigh;
théid mo ghaol-sa mach an t-aonach
chruinneachadh nan caorach bhàna.

Hó mo luran, etc.

Rinn thu 'n cadal, 's dhùin do shùilean,
thùirling brat o'n Ti as àird ort;
tha thu cuairtichte le m' aoibhneas
ainglean caoibhneis cumail blàiths ort.

Hó mo luran, etc.

Ho, my love, hey, my love
ho my love, my beloved flower,
go to sleep on my lap,
close your soft, gentle eyes.

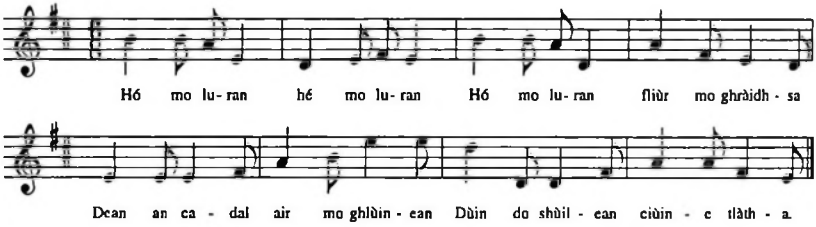
My love will be in the mill,
he'll go smartly to the shieling;
my darling will go out by the hillside
to gather the white-faced sheep.

Ho, my love, etc.

You have gone to sleep, your eyes have closed,
a cloak from the Most High covers you;

you are surrounded by my happiness,
kind angels keep you warm.

Ho, my love, etc.



SA 1958/193 A5

Like *Cagaran Gaolach*, this is familiar more as a song learned in school and for Mod competitions. The words have a flavour of self-conscious composition by a literate person.

ORAIN LUAIDH WAULKING SONGS

Hì liù a ra hù a
Gur tu mo chruinneag bhòidheach
Hì liù à ra hù a.

A nighean bhuidhe tha 's a' ghleann,
na fir an geall do phòsadh.

Gur binn' thu na na cuthagan
's a' bhruthaich 's am bi neòinean.

Gur binn' thu na na clàrsaichean,
gur ait thu na na ròsan.

Rachainn fada fada leat
nan gealladh tu mo phòsadh.

Rachainn leat a dh'Uibhist
far am buidhicheadh an t-eòrna.

Rachainn leat a sear 's a siar
gun each, gun srian, gun bhòtainn.

Falt buidh' ort mar na dìtheanan
's a' chìr ga chur an òrdugh.

Rachainn do na h-Innseachan
nam biodh do dhaoine deònach.

Rachainn leat a dh'Eirinn
as do léine ghil gun chòta.

Chuala mi na minisdeirean
bruidhinn air do bhòidhchead.

Mise muigh an cùl na tobhta
's tusa staigh a' còrdadh.

Hi liù a ra hù a
You are my beautiful girl
hi liù a ra hù a

Yellow-haired girl in the glen,
men are keen to marry you.

You are sweeter-voiced than cuckoos
on the daisy-covered hillside

You are sweeter-voiced than harps,
more cheering than roses

I would go far, far away with you
if you would promise to marry me

I would go with you to Uist
where the barley ripens

I would go east or west with you,
with no horse or reins or boots

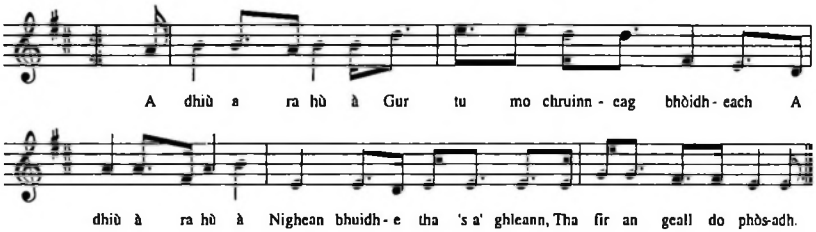
Yellow hair on you like flowers,
with a comb keeping it in place.

I would go to the Indies with you
if your people would approve.

I would go to Ireland,
with you in nothing but your shift.

I have heard ministers
speaking of your beauty.

Me outside at the back of the house wall,
you inside arranging your marriage.



SA 1957/15 B4

This is one of the most popular waulking songs, especially in Lewis and Harris. Versions appear in *Eilean Fraoich* (pp. 79 & 80), and in *Folksongs and Folklore of South Uist* (p. 222).

O ró mo chuachag

Hi rì liù hó
O ró mo chuachag
Bhi rì liù lé hó.

Cha b'fhada bhiodh mo leannan
úghinn á Beannaibh a' Chuailein.

'S nuair a thigeadh e dhachaigh
's mi nach fhaireadh an gruaimean.

Tha mo cheist air a' ghille
thug an linne mu thuath air.

Le bâta beag biorach
nach úlleadh tonn uaine.

Fuil a' bhric air do léine
fuil an fhéidh air do ghualainn.

'S truagh nach robh mi le mo leannan
ann an lagan beag uaigneach.

Fo dhubhar na coille
far an goireadh a' chuachag.

Cha b'e uisg' an lôin shalaich
thug mo leannan gu cuan leis.

Ach uisge-beatha nan gleannaibh
air a staladh trì uairean;

Uisge-beatha na Spâinne,
fion lâidir gun truailleadh.

Tha mo cheist air a' ghille
thug an linne mu thuath air.

Hi rì liù lé ho
o ró, my dear young girl
hi rì liù lé ho

My sweetheart would not take long
to come from the bens of Cuailean

And when he would come home,
I would certainly not feel sad.

I admire the lad
who went towards the northern firth

with a sharp-stemmed little boat
which a green swell would not hold back.

Trout's blood on your shirt,
deer's blood on your shoulder.

Oh, to be with my sweetheart
in a lonely little hollow,

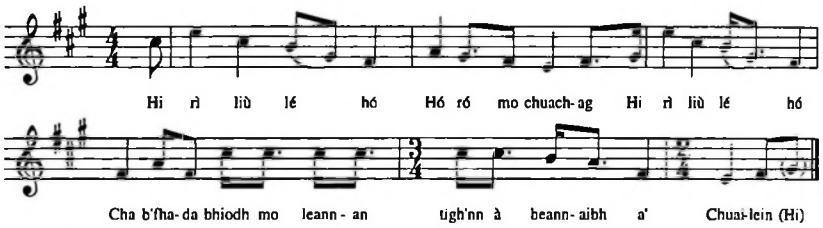
In the shade of the forest
where the cuckoo calls.

It was not water from a dirty pool
that my sweetheart took to sea

But whisky from the glens,
thrice stilled;

Whisky of Spain,
strong, fine wine.

I admire the lad
who knows the times.



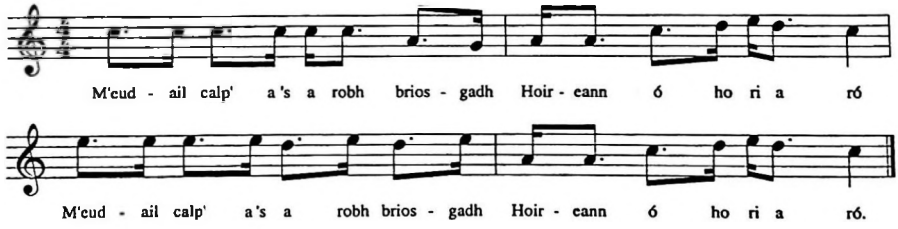
SA 1957/15 B3

Another popular song, using motifs contained in other songs, (see *Hebridean Folksongs*, Volume 3, 18–33). There are two versions in *Eilean Fraich*, pp. 233 & 234).

Hoireann ó hi rì a ró

M'eudail calpa 's an robh briosgadh —
dhìreadh tu bheinn air a sitheadh
thigeadh tu far an robh mise —
O, na ruigeadh, cha bu mhisde.
'S truagh nach robh mi le mo leannan
'n taobh na beinne guirme caise
gun duine bhith oirnn am fagas
ach leanabh beag gun fhalbh, gun astar
nach innseadh an sgeula dhachaigh.
'S truagh nach robh mi le mo chéile
'n taobh na beinne guirm ag éirigh
gun duine a bhith gar n-éisdeachd
ach na rionnagan 's na reultan.
Mhic an fhir tha 'n tìr nan gleannaibh,
gheall thu mo phòsadh gun cheannach
's buaile chur fo chaoirich gheala.
Bha mi latha falbh nam beannaibh,
có thachair rium ach na fearaibh;
dh' fheòraich iad có dhiubh a leanainn.
Thuirt mi riuth' nach b'iad bh'air m'aire,
gur e bh'agam mac fir baile
aig am biodh na caoirich gheala.
Siud mo leannan, 's cha b'e fuath e
's cha b'e neul na gaoithe tuath e,
's cha b'e 'n gormshuileach air chuan e
's cha b'e 'n glaisean 's an là fhuar e.
Mhic an fhir tha 'n tìr an eòrna,
gheall thu na preasanan dhòmhsa —
cùl mo chinn a chur an òrdugh.

My love the leg with the springy step —
You would climb the hill, however steep,
you would come to me —
Oh, if you did, it would not be a bad thing.
A pity I was not with my sweetheart
beside the steep green mountain,
with no-one near us
except a little child who could not walk, or go far,
who would not tell a tale home.
A pity I was not with my love
beside the green hill, on rising,
with no-one listening to us
but the stars.
Son of him who is in the glen country,
you promised to marry me without dowry
and to fill a fold with white sheep.
One day I was walking the hills,
whom should I meet but the men;
they asked which of them I would follow.
I told them they were not on my mind,
that I had a gentleman's son
who had white sheep.
There goes my love, no fearsome thing,
no cloud of the north wind he,
no unskilled eye at sea his,
no grey-face on a cold day.
Son of him in the land of barley,
you promised me presents —
to set my back hair in order.



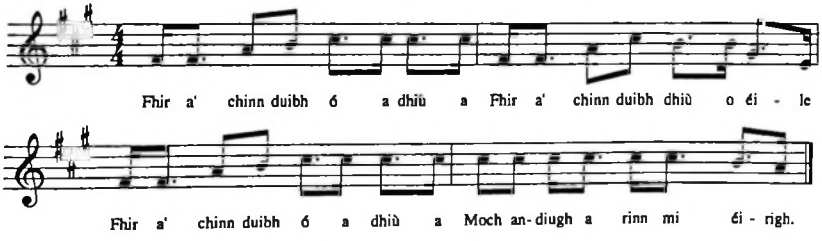
Fhir a' chinn duibh

Fhir a' chinn duibh ó a hiù a
Fhir a' chinn duibh hiù a éile
Fhir a' chinn duibh ó a hiù a.

'S moch an-diugh a rinn mi éirigh
Ma 's moch an duigh, bu mhuich an-dé e
Ghabh mi mach ri srath nan geugan;
fhuair mi 'ghruagach dhonn gun éirigh.
Mhic an fhir tha 'n cùl an t-sléibhe
dam bu dual bhith uasal spéiseil,
's math a nighinn fhìn do léine,
's cha b'ann le uisge na féithe
ach bùrn na h-aibhne 's brais a leumadh.
O na stracadh bann do léine
Na stracadh, gu fuaghainn fhéin i
le snàthad chaol is snàth féille

Black-haired one, o a hiù a
black-haired one, hiù a éile
black-haired one, o a hiù a

Early I got up today,
if early today, earlier yesterday,
I went out by the glen of the branches;
I found the brown-haired girl still in bed.
Son of him who is at the back of the hill-slope
whose habit was to be noble and kind,
well could I wash your shirt,
not with water from the creek
but water from the fastest running river.
Oh, if the hem of your shirt should tear (or: let the ... not tear)
If it did, I would mend it myself
with a fine needle and good thread.



SA 1957/1957/15 B6

This refrain is better known in Lewis than elsewhere, but the main text has echoes of other waulking songs. There is a version in *Eilean Fraoich* (p 58).

'S na hi a hù, Chalamain

'S na hì a hù, Chalamain
Fallain gum bi thu.
'S na hì a hù Chalamain.

'S ann a chuir mi mach m'acair
air a' charraig nach dìobair.

Air a' charraig nach caraich
gus an caraich mi fhìn i.

O, fhir a' chùil bhuidhe,
's trom an cumha do ghaoil mi.

O, fhir a' chùil steudaich
's mór an dèigh th'agam fhìn ort.

O fhir a' chùil shocair
nach dochainn na cìrean.

O Chalaim nan Calam,
sùil mheallaidh nan nighneag.

'S math thig siud air mo leannan,
bròg than' a' bhuinn aotrom.

'S na hì a Chalamain (little Calum)
Well may you be
'S na hì a hù Chalamain.

I dropped my anchor
on the rock that will hold.

On the rock that will not move
until I move it myself.

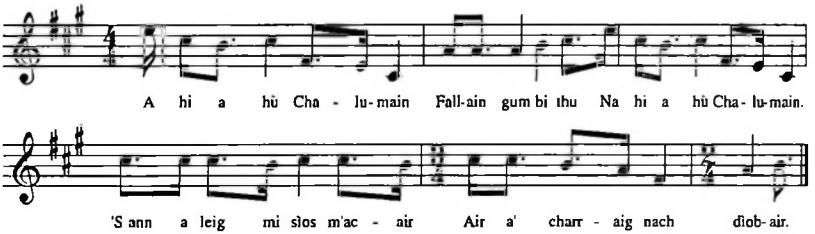
Oh, man of the yellow hair,
I deeply mourn your love.

Oh, man of the curly hair
great is my love for you.

Oh, man of the gentle hair
which combs cannot spoil.

Calum of all the Calums
with eyes that bewitch the girls.

It well becomes my sweetheart,
a fine-made shoe with a light sole.



SA 1957/15 B5

This song also has a strong Lewis provenance, but is known elsewhere, sometimes with *Chalumain* replaced with *Chaluim Bhàin* (Fair-haired Calum). A similar refrain appears in *Orain Luaidh Màiri Nighean Alasdair* (p. 57) but the remaining text is very different. The first two couplets here are reminiscent of a time in the 1940s and 50s when religious words were put to waulking song tunes.

See *Tocher* No. 43, and there is a version in *Eilean Fraoich* (p. 60).

Mo nigh'n donn ó gù

Mo nigh'n donn, ó gù
Hì rì liù hó
Mo nigh'n donn hó gù

Mo nigh'n donn, choisinn geall
far na champaich na scòid.

Mo nigh'n donn a' chùil bhàin,
's toil leam mànran do bheòil.

Mo nigh'n donn a' chùil duinn,
bheirinn oidhch' air do thòir.

Bheirinn oidhch' agus oidhch'
airson coibhneas do bheòil.

'S nan tigeadh tu 'na mo lìon
's mi nach iarradh an còrr.

Nach ann oirnn a bhiodh an t-sealbh
's cha b'e airgead no òr.

Chuirinn suas ri do chluais
ite chuachach an eòin.

My dear girl, ó gù
Hì rì liù hó
My girl hó gù.

My dear girl who won wagers
where warriors sat together.

My dear girl of the fair hair,
I like the murmurings of your lips.

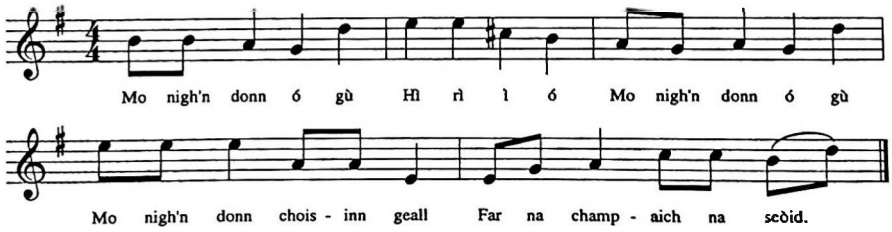
My dear girl of the brown hair
I would spend a night trying to win you.

I'd give night after night
for the kindness of your speech.

If you came into my net
I would ask for nothing more.

How prosperous we would be,
and not with silver or gold.

I would set up beside your ear
the cup-shaped feather of a bird.



SA 1957/193 B2

This is a very popular song. There is a version in *Eilean Fraoich* (p. 68) and it is sung by Christina Shaw on the cassette *Orain*. See *Tocher* 43.

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Á fjall in the Faroe Islands

BJARNE STOKLUND

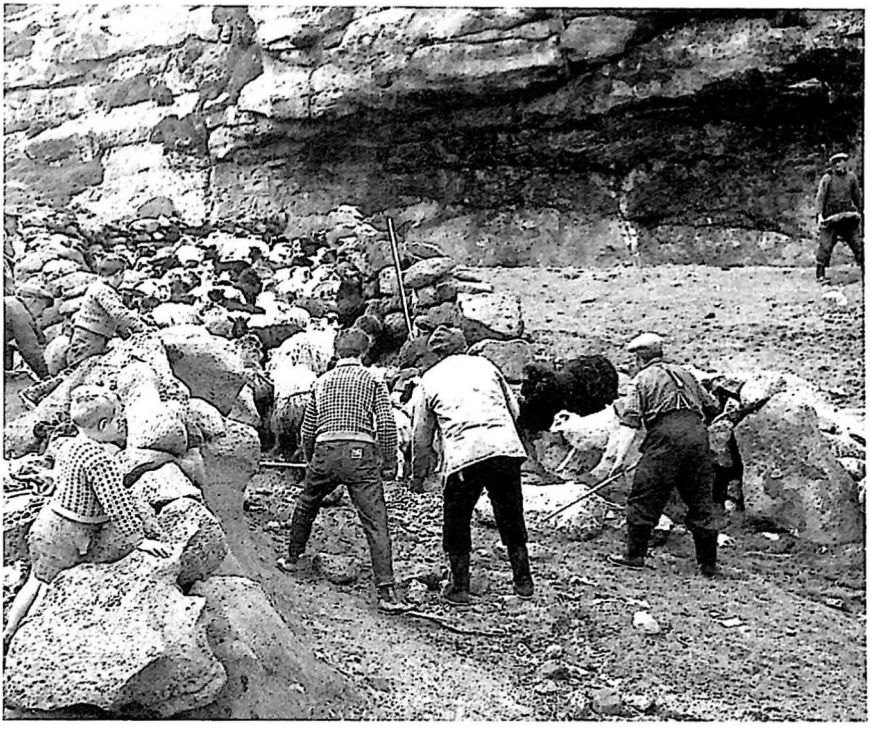


Fig. 1 The village children look on from the stone wall as the men of Kirkja drive the sheep into the fold at Skarðsvik on Fugloy. Photo 1959.

From the most ancient times, the fish-landing-stage and the sheepfold have been factors exerting the most crucial influence on Faroese village life. People born and bred in a *bygd* have among their most vivid and cherished memories their experiences at the landing-stage and sheepfold — Both landing-stage and sheepfold were places from which the village children drew spiritual strength and understanding of the values of the Faroese community, when they watched the boats returning from the fishing grounds and the sheep being driven into the fold near the settlement.

So writes Robert Joensen in his major work on sheep-farming in the Faroe Islands.[1] This article will deal with one of these two central elements of the older Faroese peasant culture: the sheepfold (Faroese *rætt*). It is based on field-research material in the form of notes and photographs that I collected on trips to the Faroes for Sorgenfri Open Air Museum in 1959 and 1961. The bulk of the material concerns two small villages, both in the northernmost island group of Norðuroyar: Múli, at the north point of the biggest of the islands, Borðoy; and Kirkja, one of the two villages on the small island of Fugloy.[2] In the following account I have also relied on the extensive material presented by Robert Joensen — which, incidentally, also comes mainly from Norðuroyar.

To understand the significance of the sheepfold and the activities associated with it, it is first necessary to give an outline of the classic Faroese peasant economy. The composite occupational pattern involves the resources of both land and sea, and the Faroese *bygdir* or villages are therefore almost all along the coast. Sailing among the rocky grey-green islands, one sees from afar the villages marked off as sharply-bounded lighter areas at the foot of the fell slopes. What one is seeing is the village's cultivated infield or *bøur*. Here it is first and foremost hay that is grown, as winter fodder for the cattle. Today some potatoes are also planted; and formerly there were a few fields of barley, used for making small unleavened loaves (*dýlar*) which were baked in the ashes of the hearth. Probably equally important was its role in crop rotation: interspersing a barley crop at regular intervals improved the hay crop.

In the outfield or *hagi* there is a distinction between the lowest, nearest, part, called the *húshagi* or *undirhagi*, and the highest, most remote, the *fjallhagi* or *yvirhagi*. The sheep graze in summer in the *fjallhagi* while the cattle use the pastures in the *húshagi*. In winter, when the cattle are stall-fed, the sheep come down from the fell and graze in the *húshagi* as well as inside the *bøur* or infield itself. While every man has his own particular part of the infield, the outfield is used by the community as a whole. The *hagi* of a village always borders directly on the neighbouring village: there is no no-man's land in the Faroes.

Since ancient times an individual property-owner's share in the village land has been measured in *merkur*. Each *mørk* is made up of sixteen *gyllin*, and each of these in turn of twenty *skinn*. The value of the *merkur*, however, varies from village to village. The number of a farmer's *merkur* determines his area of infield, and the rights in the outfield connected with these holdings. His rights to most of the natural resources that were made use of in the composite Faroese economy were limited by his *mørk* figure: the summer pastures, for instance, for grazing his cattle; the turf in the outfield, for cutting; and the wild birds on the fell, that he could catch — in fact, the only unrestricted resource was the sea, for fishing.

The most important of the rights tied to the *mørk* figure, however, was that of keeping sheep in the outfield. Sheep-breeding played such a central role in the economy: sheep's wool is Faroe gold, runs an old adage. Sheep products such as mutton, tallow,

wool and skin, met a number of the villagers' own needs; and knitted woollen goods were their most important export, until the development of the fishing industry after the middle of the last century.

The rest of this paper will look more closely at how sheep farming was organised in one of the small villages in Norðuroyar - Múli on Borðoy. This village consisted, in about 1950, of five families with the disposition of land assessed at ten *merkur*. Each *mørk* carried the right to keep twenty ewes in the outfield. Here, as in most places, the sheep were owned in common: that is, no farmer had his own flock of sheep, but his *mørk* figure specified how large a share of the total yield of mutton and wool could go to him. From Múli's outfield between ten and twelve sheep could be slaughtered per *mørk* every year. A large portion of the yield, however, went to people outside the settlement who had inherited land in Múli, and who paid those living on the land to tend the sheep.

Fig. 2 Seyðaból, the shelter-fold for the sheep, in Múli's winter outfield. Photo 1961.

Muli's outfield consists of four, not particularly deep, bowl-shaped valleys surrounded on three sides by steep fells whose peaks reach a height of 750 metres. To the east the valleys open out into a slope (*brekka*) running down towards the sea. The sheer fell-sides (*hamrar*) are broken by horizontal bands of less steeply-sloping ground (*røkur*) where men can move along the hill face. The fells in Múli's outfield have three of these *røkur*, continuing from valley to valley. Here, and at the top of the slopes, the sheep graze in summer; this is their *summarhagi*. In the winter they migrate down the slope towards the sea, where they have their *veturhagi* or winter outfield, with the horseshoe-shaped *seyðaból*, open sheltered sheep folds, where they can seek respite from snow storms (Fig. 2). In about 1960, these sheltered folds were to some extent replaced by proper sheep-cots with roofs – at the time a fairly new phenomenon. Múli's 'summer outfield' was then considered good, despite its inaccessibility: on the other hand, it had a bad 'winter outfield', often plagued with snow.

With the *mørk* figure, Faroese peasant society had a means of regulating the ecological balance.[3] The point was to keep the optimum number of sheep in all parts of the outfield area, so that the pasture resources were husbanded as efficiently as possible without being over-exploited. From ancient times Múli's sheep were divided into four *gongur*, each with its own pasture area (Fig. 3):

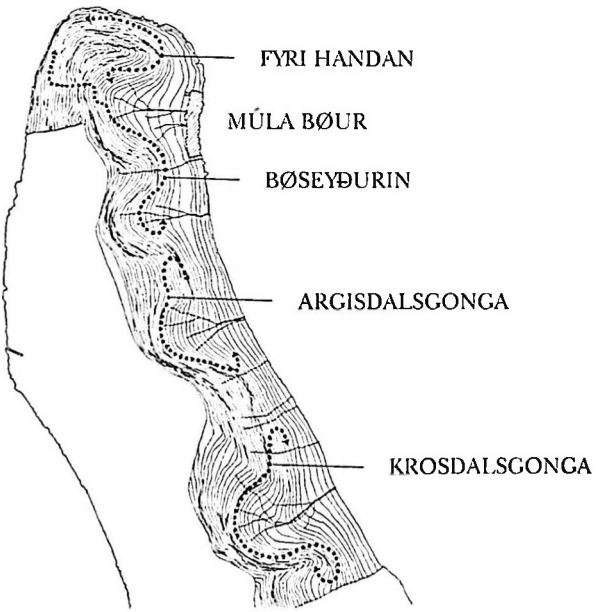


Fig. 3 Sketch map of Múli's outfield. The broken lines mark where the four sheep *gongur* have their grazing areas.

(1) The *Fyri handan* flock of about fifty sheep grazed in the valley behind the village on the north side of the *Matar* stream. As they grazed, they might move up to the north side of the steep Múla fell quite safely, but if they went as far as the western side, they could not normally get back.

(2) The flock called *Bøseyðurin*, about eighty sheep, had its place in the remaining part of the valley behind the village, and in the adjacent Klivsdal to the south. The sheep from this *gonga* also grazed on the part of Múli's outfield lying on the western side of the fell.

(3) The *Argisdalsgonga* consisted of about fifty sheep, and belonged, as the name suggests, in the Argisdalur valley.

(4) The southernmost flock was called the *Krosdalsgonga*, after its grazing area. It numbered about eighty sheep, but from about 1960, no longer existed as an independent flock, since the southernmost part of the Krosdal valley had been exchanged for land elsewhere.

Each of the four *gongur* was in turn divided into two or three *fylgir*, and these too were called after their particular part of the area occupied by their *gonga*. The whole system thus looked as follows:

(1) *Fyri handan*
- (a) *Yviri í Múlanum*
- (b) *I vatneseyðanum*
- (c) *Uppi í fjalli*

(2) *Bøseyðurin*
- (a) *Teir á bønum*
- (b) *Teir á klivjum or skipaleitiseyðurin* (this *fylgi* however is not very old)
- (c) *I innara bøseyður*

(3) *Argisdalsgonga*
- (a) *I Krosdalsseyðanum*
- (b) *Millum áirna*

The main responsibility for tending the sheep in the outfield lay with the *seyðamaður* or shepherd chosen. By frequent visits to the outfield throughout the year he was able to keep a watch on the sheep, not least during the critical lambing period in the spring. He was expected to be familiar with the individual *fylgir* and their pastures – preferably, in fact, to know every sheep in the outfield.[4] In the summer he had to make sure that the sheep and their lambs grazed high upon the fell, so that the 'winter

outfield' was preserved. Both in summer and winter he had to see that the sheep from each flock stayed in their own pastures. It was his task, too, to see to practical matters in the outfield such as the draining of particularly damp stretches of ground.

One of his most important responsibilities was to organise and supervise the rounding-up of the sheep into one of the village's main folds. There were sheep-gatherings in the early summer for ear-marking the new lambs and plucking the wool from the sheep, and also in the autumn when sheep were to be taken out of the flock for slaughtering. These tasks used to be spread over five or six gatherings, partly so that with each gathering the men would have the opportunity of taming the half-wild sheep and getting them used to the gathering-fold. Never more than one *gonga* was driven into the fold at a time. Usually, about ten men took part in the gathering, forming a chain high up on the fell and driving the flock in front of them down to the shore, over terrain that was often steep and trackless (Fig. 13).

Fig. 13 As the mist rises over the steep fell slope, the line of the fell men appears, driving sheep in front of them towards Skarðsvik. Photo 1959.

The village of Múli formerly had three such gathering folds or *rættir*. One lay in the infield itself and was used to round up the two *gongur* (*Fyri handan* and *Bøseyðurin*) that grazed closest to the village. The other two folds lay in Argisdal and Krosdalur and were used for gathering the two flocks that grazed in these more remote parts of the Múli outfield.

The gathering fold in the infield was called *Niðri á rætt* and was considered the village's oldest. It was difficult to see, because it was sunk so that its 1–1½ m high side walls did not project above the surrounding fields, and the bedrock itself formed the bottom of the fold. On their last stretch before being caught, the sheep only had a narrow passage between a guide wall and the sheer drop to the sea (Fig. 4). In the

Fig. 4 The wall which, during the round-up, guides the sheep into the fold in Múli's infield. The wall is built with a 'chest' and 'back': a steep, stone side out towards the sheep and a sloping, grassy bank on the other side. Photo 1961.

middle of the century the passage had to be widened a little, since some of the sheep had plunged over the edge during a round-up. On the same occasion the 8-9m long entrance to the fold itself was widened to between 1 and 1½ m. The irregularly-shaped fold is 9 m long, with a width of 4m at the widest point (Figs 5–6).

A remarkable feature of this old fold is the large, worn boulder, about 1½m wide at its base and ½ m high, which lies a little to the side of the central line of the fold and about a third of the way in. This is a *gandasteinn*, or magic stone, they said in Múli. Stones like this were once found in other folds, for example in the neighbouring

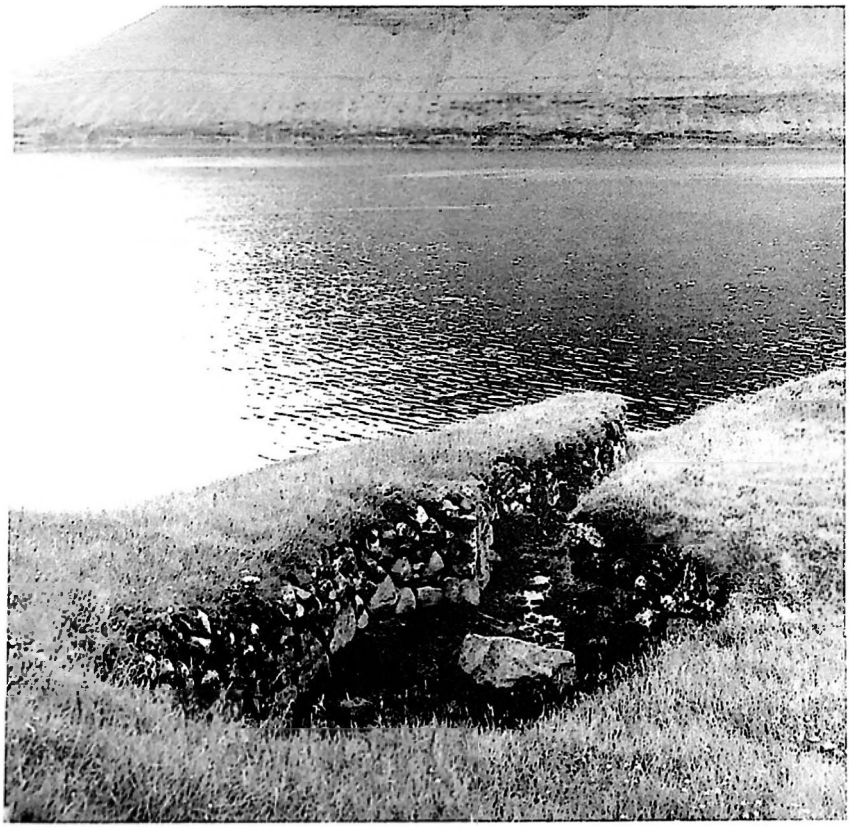


Fig. 5 The old gathering-fold in Múli's infield is sunk below ground level, so the stone walls do not project above the surrounding meadow land. (At the front is the fold itself; and to the back, the narrow entrance.)

villages of Viðareiði and Skálatoftir, but in most places they had been removed to make more room in the fold.

When the shepherd ear-marked the lambs, he always sat on this stone – it was thought in Múli that one could thereby be sure of getting sheep that were ear-marked here back to the fold again. However the stone also had a more practical function connected with the autumn gatherings: if the sheep were driven close together and they just filled the space in front of the stone (about two thirds of the fold), this was a sign that enough animals had been taken out for slaughtering.

In his book on sheep-farming, Robert Joensen mentions similar stones from other folds in the Norðuroyar, but without being able to given any certain explanation of

Fig. 6 The fold in Múli's infield. The bedrock forms the bottom, and in the middle lies the big boulder from which the ear-marking was done. Photo 1961.

their significance.[5] As a rule they are not, like this one, completely free-standing stones, but project from one side-wall out into the fold, dividing it into two sections. The shepherd sits on a similar stone while ear-marking the lambs in the fold at Skarðsvik on Fugloy (See Figs. 15–16).

Formerly, the old fold in Múli's infield was used for sheep-gathering all the year round; but as it damaged the hay crop when the fold was used in summer, a new *rætt* was built in 1955 south of the infield. This was then used when the two *gongir* nearest the village were to be rounded up and the wool plucked.

The Krosdalur fold had disappeared by about 1960: it became superfluous when the *Krosdalsgonga* ceased to exist as a separate unit. Like so many other folds in the

Fig. 15 The shepherd, seated on a boulder in the fold at Skarðsvik, ear-marks the new lambs. Other men guard the entrance to the fold so that the restless sheep cannot get out. Photo 1959.

Fig. 16 The shepherd takes his knife to ear-mark a lamb. Sheep are taken out of the fold, and in the background, more men are busy plucking the wool. Photo 1959.

outfield, it lay right down on the shore, and in fact could only be used at ebb tide. Its walls, made entirely of stones, were often knocked down by the surf in the winter and had to be piled up again.

At the Argisdalur fold, which was also built with stones all the way round, there was a feature that was present in many other folds in the area. This was the *smoga*, a small, square opening in the end wall of the fold, just being enough for a single sheep to pass through (Fig. 7). In Múli it was said that the hole had been made to prevent sheep-stealing. It was blocked up when the fold was in use, but otherwise was left open

Fig. 7 The gathering fold in Argisdalur. At the end can be seen the small opening called the *smoga*. Photo 1961.

so that the sheep illicitly driven into the fold could get out again. Such a safety precaution, however, was not needed at the fold in the infield.

The same explanation of the phenomenon was given to Robert Joensen. But he was also given other explanations, for instance that an opening like this was useful for counting the sheep, because they could be let out of the fold one at a time. Others say that it was important when taming the sheep and getting them used to the fold. If the *smoga* was left open at this time, they could escape again quickly, and so would go into the fold more readily on a later occasion.[6]

When taking part in the fell-gathering, it was important to have the proper clothing and equipment. In former times the men wore the characteristic hide shoes which were ideal for keeping a firm foothold on the fell. Now these have been replaced by plimsolls (see Fig. 17). A fell-man would bring a rope, knife and provisions, but the most important item of equipment was the *fjallstavur*, fell-crook. The old fell-crook was at least as long as its owner was tall; and it had to be strong enough to bear his weight if, for instance, it was laid across a fissure in the rocks for him to cross over. At the bottom the fell-crook ended in an iron spike, and just above this were four upward-

Fig. 17 Two men plucking the wool from a sheep outside the fold at Skarðsvík. Note the plimsolls, which have replaced the traditional hide shoes. Photo 1959.

pointing hooks which could be twisted into the wool of a sheep that was hard to catch. As a man moved down a steep fell-side, he would hold the crook horizontally in towards the fell, partly supporting himself, partly breaking his speed (see Fig. 13).

By the mid-century this special tool had fallen into disuse, in most places, but one still took a staff or stick on a fell drive. The photographs from Skarðsvik on Fugloy in 1959 show that those taking part had either a long staff, which was used in the same way as the proper fell-crook, or a short walking stick, the hooked handle of which could be used in catching the sheep (see Figs. 12 and 14).

Fig. 12 Two men from Kirkja on Fugloy on their way through the mist towards Skarðsvik on the morning of 23 June 1959.

Fig. 14 The last stage of the sheep gathering at Skarðsvik on Fugloy: the last sheep are driven into the stone-built shelter-fold. Photo 1959.

Among the fell-man's regular equipment were also a number of thick, woollen cords, about a metre long, called *seyðband* in the Norðuroyar, but elsewhere in the Faroes, *hafl*. These woollen cords were used to bind the sheep's legs if it was taken out of the flock for slaughtering, or when its wool was to be plucked (Fig. 8).

Since ancient times there had been definite rules for the colour the woollen cords should be. In the photograph the sheep's legs were being tied with a black cord, but black was avoided in many places, as it was an omen of death among the sheep. At Skarðsvik, though, it was dark brown cords that had to be avoided. In Múli and many other villages grey ones would never be used, as grey was the colour of the *huldufólk*, the supernatural beings who played an important role in Faroese popular belief. Once, in about 1913, it was noted that a grey sheep that lay with bound legs disappeared without trace, although a man was standing by keeping an eye on it.

In the 1930s woollen cords were still being made in Múli in the old-fashioned way, with a hand spindle (*hand-snælda*). In the autumn, when the slaughtering season was

Fig. 8 The four legs of the sheep that is to have its wool plucked off are tied together with a thick woollen cord. In the background lies the wool from another sheep. Skarðsvik, Fugloy 1959.

at hand the *kongsbonde*, the King's yeoman, in Múli (who is demonstrating the procedure (Figs 9–11)), used to make about fifty cords. A thick woollen thread was spun on the spindle, and six of these threads were twisted together — still using the spindle — into a woollen cord of suitable thickness. The length of the cord was double the distance between the foot and the hand at knee height (see Fig. 10). New cords were always used in fell drives, but the old ones could be used again for other purposes: they were useful, for instance, for tying round hide shoes in the winter to give a better grip on the fell-side.

Figs. 9–11
'The King's yeoman' in Múli shows how to make a *seyðband* on a hand spindle. Fig. 9: Spinning the thick woollen thread. Fig. 10: the cord is formed from six of the thick hand-spun woollen threads. The length should be double the distance between foot and hand at knee height. Fig. 11: With the hand-spindle spinning, the six threads are twisted into a woollen cord. Photos 1961.

As mentioned above, the sheep used to be rounded up at least five times a year, and since only one *gonga* was taken at a time, this meant that the Múli men were on the fell rounding up sheep about twenty times a year. It is therefore not surprising that this important and demanding work came to play a very prominent role in the consciousness of Faroese villages. The work is called *á fjall*, which simply means 'to the fell', but always implies 'to round up sheep'.

In the summer the men went *á seyðaroyting*, when the business was to pluck the wool from the sheep and ear-mark (Figs 15–16) the new lambs; but they might also do the ear-marking separately on an earlier drive – they were then said to *reka til smáum*. Each *gonga* was driven into the *rætt* twice for wool-plucking. The first gathering would usually take place about Midsummer and the next a few weeks later. (The Faroese sheep are not sheared: the wool is plucked or pulled off with the hands (Fig. 17)). In the first instance only the loosest wool was taken: the rest was left until the next time of going *á seyðaroyting*. Thus, by doing the plucking twice, they would ensure that no loose wool was lost.

The photographs of the sheep-gathering were taken on the island of Fugloy in June 1959, when fell men from the village of Kirkja were *á fjall* to round up the sheep on the steep northern side of the island at Skarðsvik, where there is a *hagi* which the villagers of Kirkja and Hattarvik share. The object was to do the first wool-plucking and to ear-mark the new lambs. The ear-marking was done by the shepherd, seated on a large boulder in the front section of the fold.

On that occasion we walked over the fell from Kirkja in a thick mist, but when we reached the steep north coast at Skarðsvik, the sun broke through. The banks of mist slid like glaciers down the fell slope, and for the rest of the day there was clear, bright sunshine. Although a summer fell drive could thus take place in ideal excursion weather, as a rule it was far rougher when gathering sheep for the slaughter in the autumn and early winter. Then the days were short, and the weather changeable, cold and windy.

The first fell drive of the autumn was called *á skurð*, when the male lambs and the smallest ewe lambs were separated out for slaughtering. One by one they were taken out of the fold and laid outside with a woollen cord tied round all four legs. On the next fell drive, called *á klipping*, it was the turn of the other ewe lambs when those that were to be used for breeding were selected. It was called *á klipping* because the lambs kept for breeding were marked by clipping the wool on their foreheads. Every single lamb was closely scrutinised to be sure that only the best were selected to perpetuate the stock. At the same time the ewes that were too old – their age was assessed by looking at their teeth – were separated out.

What was left now was the hardest task of all for the fell men, if this was a *rætt* that lay far from the village: transporting the animals to be slaughtered back home. The men might do this by carrying them on their backs, by driving them, hobbled, or sailing them home in boats. When the Múli men rounded up the flock from the remote

Krosdalur for the slaughter, they would normally use the *rætt* that is in Argisdalur, because it was closer to the village. Besides the two slaughter drives mentioned, there was a third, called *á jólasseyðin*. This took place in December, when animals were taken out of the flock for Christmas slaughtering.

This material, in the form of notes and pictures from two small villages in the Faroese Norðuroyar in the years 1959 and 1961, documents a side of Faroese working life that was even then very much on the decline, and which has today become history. The sheep still play a role, but the tending of them, and the working procedures, have been simplified. The old stone gathering folds have in most places given way to more modern ones cast in cement, with several chambers, and a dip to rid the sheep of parasites in their fleece. The sheep are fed in the new sheep-cots in winter, and the careful tending in the outfield has ceased; and, finally the enclosing of individual outfield plots has begun to undermine the very foundations of traditional sheep-farming in the Faroese outfield.

Translated by James Manley

NOTES

1 *Fåreavl på Færøerne* by Robert Joensen (*Færoensia* vol. XII, Copenhagen 1979, ed Susanne Barding and Holger Rasmussen), p. 37. *Fåreavl på Færøerne* is a collected edition in Danish (with a summary in English) of the four Faroese books on the subject: *Royvið* (1958), *Greivabitin* (1960), *Býta seyð og fletta* (1968) and *Vambarkonan* (1972).
A detailed account of sheep-farming from the point of view of legal history has been given by E. A. Bjørk in *Færøsk Bygderet I. Husdyrbruget* (Tórshavn 1956/57, photo repr Tórshavn 1984).
Jóan Pauli Joensen gives, in *Føroysk fólkskultur* (Lund 1980), a survey of working life in connection with sheep-farming, with detailed bibliographical references. The book, originally published in Swedish, is also available in a Faroese edition with updated references: *Fólk og mentan* (Tórshavn 1987).

2 The trips were made in connection with the acquisition of a Faroese house, and moving it to the Open Air Museum. The house came from the small village of Múli where we stayed for a couple of months in 1961 to arrange the dismantling and shipping of the various parts of the building. In Kirkja, although I only had a short stay there in 1959, I had the opportunity of taking part in the fell drive at Skarðsvík that is documented in a series of photographs.

3 An ecological view of sheep-farming has been given by the geographer Jesper Brandt in 'Det færøske landbrugssamfund' in *Om økologi. En introduktionsbog*, by Peter Agger & Jesper Brandt. 2nd ed., Copenhagen 1978, 64ff.

4 The division into *fylgir* is based on notes kindly made available to me by the philologist Jóhannes av Skarði.

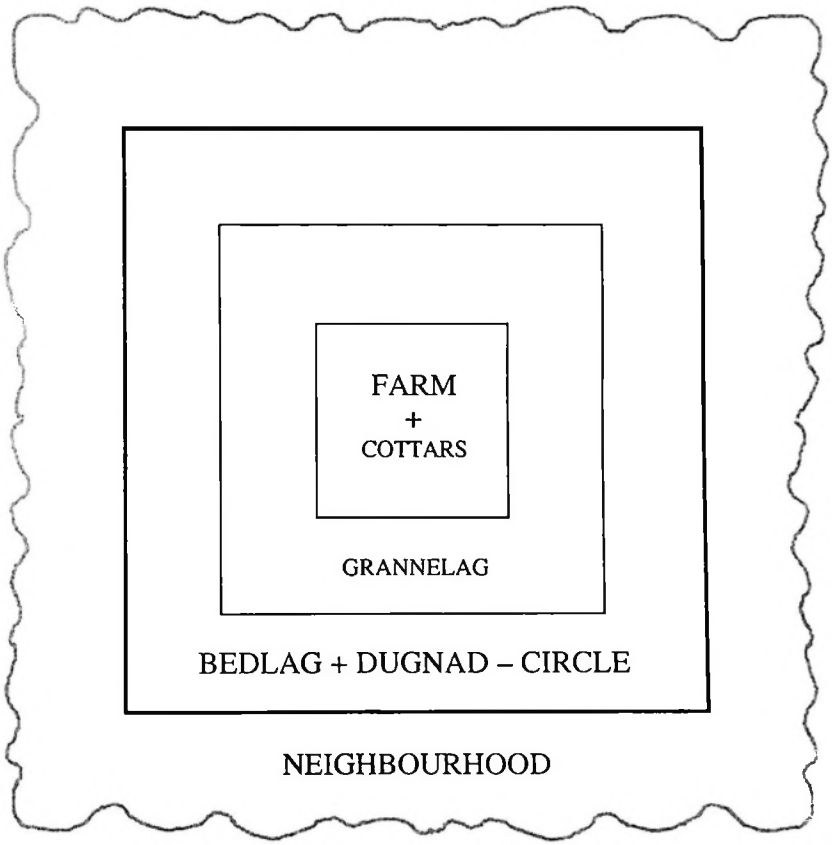
5 Robert Joensen, *op. cit.*, 39

6 *Op cit.*, 40.

Traditional Rural Community in Norway

INSTITUTIONAL NETWORK AND SOCIAL GROUPINGS*

RIGMOR FRIMANNSLUND HOLMSEN



The topic I have chosen to deal with, the traditional rural community in Norway, lays particular emphasis on the agrarian side, and is based mainly on unpublished material

from the investigations undertaken by the Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture, Oslo. This was founded in 1922 and at first concentrated chiefly on the Study of the Arctic Cultures and some Arabic languages. Then, in 1928, a comparative study of the development of rural communities was added to the Institute's programme, at the suggestion of the historian Edvard Bull (1882–1932). In conjunction with Max Bloch and Alphons Dopsch, he pointed out that in this field Norway could provide evidence of particular value for international comparative research since it had retained many of the ancient characteristics up to that time (1928). He mentioned specially the subdivided farms with clustered settlements and ground divided into patches and strips and also the contrast between the single farms in the plains of eastern Norway and the multiple ones with land held in common which were found in the south, north, and above all, in Western Norway.

The first subject chosen for the nationwide investigations, the history of the *seterbruk* (hill-farming, out-farming, shieling), has resulted in a series of publications.

The next to be worked on was called 'Farm Communities and Neighbourhood Communities in Norway'. The planning for it was partly done during the war-years of 1943–45, but the field-work could not be started until 1946–47.

The traditional rural community in Norway has never been one and the same throughout the country: natural features, living conditions and occupations vary greatly from one part to another. Norway runs from 58°N to the northern tip of Europe at 71°: the contrast between winter and summer caused by the changes in daylight conditions, climate and weather is striking over the whole land, but varies a great deal in different areas. The mountains in the South as well as in the North divide Norway lengthways into two main parts: a coastal one, with oceanic conditions; and an inland one where the difference in climate between summer and winter is more Continental.

The agricultural area in Norway amounts to less than three per cent of the total 324,000 km², the inland region having the best part of it, while conditions in the mountain and coastal districts are rather marginal for agriculture. The census of 1801 shows that eighty per cent of the total population was living mainly by agriculture and forestry, often combined with fishing. Up to about 1850, when modern industrial development first began, peasants throughout Norway tried as far as possible to be self-sufficient in agricultural products, however poor conditions might be for farming. In mountain districts and along the coast this self-supporting economy continued, to some extent, up to the 1920s and even the 1930s.

Now Norway is a highly industrialised country, with less than ten per cent of the population engaged in agriculture. The total number of people amounts to a little more than four million, nearly three-quarters of them living less than ten miles from the sea. The remaining one-quarter is dispersed over the rest of the country — mainly in the towns, in the valleys, and on the plains of the inland eastern area.

The transition from being practically a self-sufficient agricultural country to a highly developed industrialised one has taken a fairly short time. But along with this development,

old fashioned conditions still prevailed well into this century in some remote mountain districts and coastal parishes. In these places it has been possible to study the social life with the old customs being carried on in exactly the same way as in earlier generations.

It was not until 1857 that an effective enclosure law was passed to further the re-allocation and consolidation of the individual farmer's land. In many instances the farms were most extensively sub-divided, and various kinds of joint ownership were practised. A hundred years later the process of enclosure was still going on. Today there is hardly any joint ownership left in infield property; but in grazing areas, mountain *seters* (shielings) and even sometimes in forests, some degree of joint ownership may still be found.

In the old days inter-dependence and co-operation were typical features of the communities which developed from the sub-divided farms. The more numerous the holdings, the greater the inter-dependence and need for co-operation among neighbours. This influenced all farm work: it was practised in the cornfields, the hay fields and the forests; even the number of cattle to be admitted to the common grazing areas had to be decided on jointly, each farmer being allowed a certain number of beasts in accordance with the size of his individual holding of land. Another way of dividing the pastures was for each farmer to have the right to graze as many animals as he could feed through the winter: cattle had to be stall-fed for several months of the year because of the climate, even in the milder coastal districts. Large quantities of hay were collected for winter fodder, but spring would seldom come early enough to save the cattle from starving. Dr I. F. Grant has shown us a similar picture in parts of Scotland. It was essential to enable the greatest possible number of cattle to survive until the spring, when the greening mountain pastures would soon give new strength to the weakened animals. They would then be able to produce milk for the butter and cheese which was so necessary for the next winter's supplies, with a surplus amount to sell in order to pay taxes. Correct administering of the mountain pastures was therefore essential for survival: it was a vital part of the extensive farming system. A great deal of co-operation among neighbours was needed in their daily lives; it was also a necessity that everyone should be willing to submit to what was generally agreed upon within the society.

Those were the conditions that prevailed in places where dwellings were reasonably close to each other. In areas of scattered settlement there would be less co-operation or common action among the farmers. This, as a rule, was the case in the richer agricultural districts with dispersed farms, especially in the Eastern district where agricultural methods were most advanced. Modernising of methods and implements had begun around the 1850s, and the transformation of the old society followed a few decades later, about 1870–1880. This period is very interesting to us today, because it coincides with the limit to which history from oral sources can be trusted to reach back with accuracy. It means that we can have direct access to the time when the disintegration of the old society had just started in the agriculturally most advanced areas, and so can trace the breaking-up process of the social institutions there.

In the more remote areas, however, a change did not come until about 1920, or even later, in some places.

In the old society, people had a feeling of responsibility towards their neighbours. Even when they were unrelated, they were always free to turn to one another for help. There are old sayings: 'A neighbour is the brother of his neighbour', and 'It is better to have a good neighbour nearby than a brother far away'. Neighbours would not always be on friendly terms, of course. They might disagree, they might quarrel, they might dislike each other, but they would still be bound together within the neighbourhood and would therefore always be ready to give help when it was needed. Even those living far away in the wilds, so to speak, (whether a family or a single person) would always be considered as belonging to the nearest neighbourhood. They would never be left totally alone: if they were in any danger or difficulty they would be given assistance from the neighbourhood they belonged to.

The members of the farming population were more or less of equal social standing. To some degree a stratification did exist, but only in the wealthiest agricultural districts in the South-Eastern regions, or in the richer parts of Trondelag, could one say that it was of any importance. In those districts a social distance really was observed between the farmer, on the one hand, and his farmhands and the cottars who worked for him, on the other: a family tie between the farmer and a subordinate was not socially acceptable — but of course would sometimes occur all the same.

In the coastal and mountain areas it was different. Here the servants were treated, on the whole, as members of the family, which they also often happened to be. The cottars, too, were frequently related to the farmer's class. Nevertheless, it was possible everywhere to find a social difference based on difference in economic power.

The individual farm was the centre for all those who in one way or another belonged to it. These were, first, the farmer and his family and household with the servants; next, the retired farmer and his wife, who generally lived on the farm either within the general household or on their own; and then there were other people living within the bounds of the farm who did not belong to the farmer's household, the cottagers, craftsmen, and perhaps others of lesser social significance who were trying to make a living in some way. As long as the practice of the old society was kept up, the farmer and his family felt a responsibility towards all the people living on the domain of the farm, at least in some ways. Those people would all have a special link with that farm, even if the link were weak. It gave them the security of belonging to a centre. In some connections, this belonging might lead on to a larger group, the neighbourhood, but this was not a matter of course. More often the road for the people of lesser social importance would end at the farm, but as long as the paternalistic order prevailed, they were provided for. Every obligation was due to the farm and its farming population: more consideration was given to it than to the actual farmer and his family, as we shall see in more detail later. One could say that the current farmer and his family were seen as guests for their life-time on the land which had been handed down to them

from their forefathers, and which they themselves would in turn hand down to their own descendants. The bond between that family and the farm — the landed property — was extremely strong.

The Norwegian farming population seems to have formed a highly self-regulating community. It would otherwise be impossible to understand for certain how the Norwegian settlement patterns originated. The provincial laws for the Middle Ages give no evidence of any settlement-planning, and there is no parallel, in Norway, with the detailed regulations to be found in Danish and Swedish laws. There is also no mention whatsoever to be found in records of the Middle Ages of the social groupings which we are going to look at next. There are, though, a number of directions given about the mutual obligations of neighbours: that they should have equal rights to joint property, should bear witness to the births and deaths in the neighbourhood (particularly for the purpose of securing rights of inheritance), and so on. In early directions of this kind we might hope to find the roots from which more recently known groupings in a neighbourhood could have grown.

There were a great number of duties to fulfil in each neighbourhood, and for this purpose a number of different groups, varying in size, had formed themselves through the ages. One of medium size, called the *grannelag*, consisted of the closest neighbours. Its main object was to provide mutual help and support in any eventuality that went beyond everyday needs. Its members voluntarily came together when they knew help was needed. When a baby was born the women from the *grannelag* would help watch over the baby in turn until the child had been taken to church and christened. It was believed that evil could come upon an unchristened child if it was not watched over continually. In sickness, the neighbours would take it in turns to sit up with the patient, when needed. When someone died, the men in the *grannelag* helped with the coffin and its transport to the graveyard, and there they would even dig the grave. The *grannelag* was a fairly well-defined group, a stronghold of close neighbours, who rendered help voluntarily, with no thought of immediate return. Some other day one of them might need the helping hand. The principle was mutual help in cases of need.

The smallest group of neighbours — it could hardly really be called a group — consisted of two close neighbours, or more rarely of three or four. They would practise *bytesarbeid*, 'exchanged work', together. This was not simply a matter of doing each other a favour but was an exchange of work, usually strenuous, founded on an agreement. *Bytesarbeid* was a convenient arrangement that was customary on smaller farms with few hands, and belonged mostly to a time when farms had to be self-sufficient. Farms with a large enough staff of servants and labourers would never arrange for *bytesarbeid*, so there is hardly ever any record of it in the richer agricultural areas in former days. However, only a few decades ago a peculiar turn of events came about. Because of high wages, and, still more, the scarcity of farm hands, the big farmers to some degree took to *bytesarbeid* by forming a kind of 'co-operative'.

In the old days the arrangement of *bytesarbeid* largely depended on family ties, on friendship, or on an occasional agreement between a few neighbours. It was carried out either when a task was too heavy or difficult to be completed single-handed, or when it would go more smoothly and be less monotonous if performed in company with others. The principle of this exchange work was that it was done in return for work of a similar nature.

Bytesarbeid might include both men's and women's work, and tended to be seasonal. The men on two neighbouring farms, for instance, would agree to do the slaughtering of cattle as exchanged work, first on one farm and then on the other. Work exchanged among more than two people could be digging potatoes in the autumn, or threshing corn.

The women would arrange exchange work for the baking of *flat-brød* ('flat bread' is a very thin, hard, unfermented bread, baked on large round plates, for long-term keeping). Two people were needed for this work, which usually lasted for a week or two every spring and autumn. The women — like the men — would very often arrange for exchange work at slaughtering time, as it was their task to prepare the meat, offal and blood, for winter supplies. The women would also resort to exchange work for the annual spring-cleaning when they would clean everything in the house that possibly could be cleaned — walls, ceilings, furniture etc.

There was no name for the small group of neighbours practising *bytesarbeid*; they only said that they perform exchanged work — (*gjør bytesarbeid*). These groups were quite informal, as was the *grannelag*.

In contrast to these informal groups, there were larger groups attached to the neighbourhood that were strongly formal, even institutionalised. They again could be of two kinds: (1) institutions functioning within the neighbourhood on its own premises exclusively, but still being quite formal; and (2) those through which official authorities imposed special obligations on the population, almost like a kind of tax. The farmers within a certain area would be made collectively responsible for these official obligations, but would often be free to administer for themselves such things as the upkeep of a bridge on the main road, or a joint contribution to the poor (before the Poor Laws of 1900 abolished the old custom whereby paupers had to move from place to place in the parish). This kind of neighbour-grouping is of great interest, but here I would like to concentrate on the groups which were working exclusively for the benefit of the neighbours themselves, and within the neighbourhood. I have chosen two strong groups which for centuries acted as real institutions but were wholly administered by the neighbours. These two groups, or institutions were: the *dugnad* circle, which dealt with practical tasks; and the *bedlag*, whose most important functions were concerned with the high points of human social life, weddings and funerals. Both groups were often the same size, usually larger than the *grannelag*, and embracing the whole neighbourhood.

The dugnad circle

The *dugnad* circle (*dugnadskrinsen*) operated in everyday life when more labour was needed than the individual farmer possessed on his own farm. When people combined to help an individual in this way, the name *dugnad* was applied. It means something like 'help given to someone'. This circle, or group, was large enough to provide the necessary number of hands for the heaviest normal tasks, but was flexible in that for a minor job only a few members of it would need to be called upon.

The work in question differed greatly. It might be clearing stones from a patch of new ground, or transporting hay from distant hayfields down to the farm. A man who for some reason had fallen behind with his seasonal work in spring or autumn might call for *dugnad* help. Transporting timber for house-building after a fire, for instance, was another kind of *dugnad* work. In treeless areas the transport of timber could be a burdensome job, and in roadless mountain parishes, where it had to be done during the winter when frozen lakes and rivers could serve as roads, it was difficult and exhausting for men and horses alike. Tasks which had to be completed in a short time would also call for the many hands of the *dugnad* circle. The old-fashioned kind of roofing, of birch bark and turf, which is seldom seen today but was formerly used both for living quarters and outhouses, could almost be called a *dugnad* speciality. This roofing work was difficult, and required a certain number of people in relation to the length of roof as they had to be placed close enough to be within reach of each other. Also the roofing material was sensitive to the weather. Windy weather and rain had to be avoided, as also had hot sunshine. The best time for roofing with birch-bark and turf was late afternoon or evening so that the whole job could be completed in a single day.

When the hard labour was finished, the *dugnad* host would reward the workers with a party, where there was an abundance of the very best of food and drink. Usually only the men took part in the task but the women of the *dugnad* circle would most likely be busy in the kitchen preparing and serving the food.

Who would be entitled to receive help from the *dugnad* circle? Anyone who was in need of it would receive *dugnad* assistance provided he lived on the domain of one of the farms belonging to it. Everybody, from the wealthiest farmer to the poorest cottar, might be in need of such help at one time or another. It was a form of mutual help which was both a privilege to receive and a duty to give, and nobody could refuse to participate in the *dugnad*. A farmer might join in *dugnad* work several times during his life without ever being in need of such help himself. Here once more we come across the point made earlier, that more consideration was given to the farm as a whole than to the farmer-family currently living there. This is seen clearly in connection with the *dugnad* obligation. It was considered that it was the *farm*, not the farmer, that both received the *dugnad* help and was obliged to render it (a farm might have received help in a previous generation or might come to need it in a future one).

The Bedlag

Like the *dugnad* circle, the *bedlag* neighbourhood-group must be considered an institution. The significance of this group is indicated in the word itself, which means 'a group of people (*lag*) who are invited', understood here to mean invited to the important social entertainments and feasts within the *bedlag*. These feasts often lasted for several days.

As far back as the evidence goes, the *bedlag* had its most important functions at weddings and funerals: at a funeral to take leave of the dead person who had belonged to the community, at a wedding to welcome the bride and bridegroom into the society. (A young couple acquired, on marriage, a new and quite different status in the community. In the old rural communities, unmarried people, both men and women, had a much lower status than those who were married.)

Since funerals and weddings were the main functions of the *bedlag*, years might pass between each gathering. All other occasions in human life were regarded as being of interest only to the family concerned and to a few of the nearest neighbours. Even the birth of a child, and the christening, did not involve the *bedlag*. Personal anniversaries were not celebrated in earlier days. Christmas might be celebrated by a gathering of quite a small group of neighbours, but never by the whole *bedlag*, whereas the Midsummer Feast extended far beyond the *bedlag* and people from the whole parish would congregate for it.

A *bedlag* would often be defined geographically by the particular terrain. A river, a mountain, the shape of a valley might mark the limit of reasonably easy communication between farms and so the boundary could be drawn naturally. These boundaries were nearly always fixed, which meant that the same people from the same farms would gather together on all the solemn occasions within the *bedlag*. A *bedlag* with fixed boundaries would generally be *named*, after the most important farm or a certain local feature. Sometimes there was an interesting reason for a particular boundary-pattern.

It is important to stress that, even though the boundaries of different *bedlags* might overlap throughout the various neighbourhoods, *the bedlag boundaries for each individual farm were always well established and fixed.* The farm would invite and be invited to the same neighbouring farms over and over again.

The *bedlag* was exclusively an institution of neighbours, with no connections outside it whatever, not even with relations unless they also happened to be neighbours, but in that case they belonged *as neighbours.* (As a matter of course relatives were invited to a wedding or a funeral however far away they might live, quite distant relations being counted as close in earlier days, both second and third cousins.)

The size of the *bedlag* could vary from four to five farms to twelve or even twenty-five. One might ask whether everyone living within the border of the *bedlag* was certain to belong to it fully, by virtue of being invited and inviting people back. No general answer can be given, since the social order varied in different parts of the

country. The farmer and his family automatically belonged to the *bedlag*, as also did the *kårfolk* (the 'old people', grandparents). The servants usually went along with the family they worked for, if they were treated as family members which was the case in the greater part of the country, the south, west and north, and even in the east on the small and middle-sized farms. The position of the cottars was less straightforward. In the areas where the servants were treated as family members, the cottars would generally belong, in the sense that they were invited to all farms within the *bedlag*, but very seldom would they be in an intermediate position, being invited to the farm to which his plot belonged, but nowhere else. In some parishes in the east the cottars might be invited to their master's feasts, but mainly to look after the guests' horses, although they would always be asked to join the party for a while. In such cases one cannot say that the cottars belonged to the *bedlag*, and that is probably why, in some eastern parishes, they formed circles of their own for social gatherings, usually inviting the servants in the neighbourhood to join them. But it is difficult to be more specific about this because underlying feelings, as well as customs, are strongly linked to social standing. People of lower social status living on the territory of a farm but not working there, might perhaps be invited to the farm they lived on when there was an occasion for the *bedlag*, but they would not be invited to the other farms — which means they did not, in fact, belong to the *bedlag*

Funerals

Funerals would of course have to take place regardless of the time of the year. In the winter the size of the host's house might make it necessary to reduce the number of guests invited from each one of the farms, and to do this, old accepted rules were followed so that no one should feel insulted at not being invited. For funerals the guests would not bring their children with them unless it was a close relative who had died.

Weddings

The wedding parties would generally take place at midsummer — *mellom onnene*, 'between the seasons' — after the spring work had been finished and before the hay-making had begun. If the weather was fine, it was possible, and pleasant, to spend the days of the festivities out of doors, when the number of guests would not be limited by the size of the house. The days were long and light, the barn was empty (there was no hay left) and had been decorated for the dancing. Neighbours would provide sleeping quarters for most of the guests while the nearest relatives and the old people would stay in the house where the wedding was. The number of guests would easily be about 100 or much more, sometimes 300. The relatives of both bride and bridegroom were invited, as well as the entire *bedlag* of each of the two. In a wedding party all the generations would be there, from the very old to the very young. Relatives who seldom met would arrive from far and near.

The amount of food and drink for such a gathering of people, which might last for anything from three to seven days, could not possibly be met out of one year's produce from a single, self-supporting, farm. It was therefore the custom for the guests to contribute to the feast by bringing a certain amount of food (as they would, too, for a funeral). They would bring fresh meat, butter, *lefser* (like bannocks, but thinner); they would also bring sour cream for the making of the bride's porridge, the most ceremonial meal of the wedding feast, and any other food they liked.

The name of such a gift of food was *sending* or *føring* — meaning what they (the guests) sent ahead of them, or what they brought along with them. The quantity each brought would depend partly on the number of persons in their family, partly on the size of their farm. Here again the farm is significant, and it is also interesting that only farmer families were expected to bring the *sending* or *føring*. Such a gift was not expected from the cottars' families if they were invited — nor from unmarried people, who would be counted with the family they belonged to (they would either be sons or daughters, or else the servants). It emerges clearly here, as so often, that the farms and the farmer families were the backbone of the old rural society.

Bedlag Patterns

The *bedlags* assumed different shapes under different conditions, bearing in mind that each individual farm had its own *bedlag* with firmly fixed bounds which meant that the same group of farms invited, or were invited to, each other over and over again.

Examples can be found in two types of settlement:

(1) the linear settlements, found in a valley or along a fjord; and (2) the broad settlements, which were on the plains of the inland parishes especially of eastern Norway and could easily extend in almost every direction without meeting any geographical impediment.

There are three kinds of *bedlag* boundary patterns in both these types:

(a) *Faste*, 'fixed' — boundaries that were the same again and again.

(b) *Skjoten*, 'the junction'. When two *bedlags* bordered on each other it would often happen that two farms, one from each *bedlag*, feeling they were close neighbours, would exchange invitations thereby crossing the boundaries between the two *bedlags*. They still belonged to different *bedlags*, but were inviting each other as friends (in addition to inviting the farms in their own *bedlag*).

(c) *Skiftende grenser*, 'changing bounds'. Even though each individual farm held certain fixed bounds to its own *bedlag*, it could happen that every single farm within that *bedlag* would regard the *bedlag* bounds differently, so that no two farms would have an identical view of them. In a linear settlement, the *bedlag* pattern would be like a chain composed of interlinked rings. In a broad settlement, the pattern would look like a net, with the border lines continually crossing each other.

Since the *bedlag* tradition has been so rich, over the greater part of the country, it seemed worth trying to gather as much knowledge about it as possible. Collecting work was carried out by the Norwegian Country Women's Association, in addition to what was previously done by the general collaborators of the Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture. When the collected mass of material can be analysed fully, I hope it might throw some light on what is still obscure about the *bedlag* institution. What to me seems absolutely unintelligible is the fact that there is no reference to be found to the *bedlag* in the Middle Ages, nor to any other institution that can be compared with it. The nearest we can get to it is in a passage in the old medieval law which states that when a person died the master of the household was free to ask for help from his neighbours to bring the dead to the church-yard to be buried, but might ask only so many men as would allow him to be the sixth man himself. This does not at all indicate any fixed circle of neighbours.

The only kind of neighbour-group known from the Middle Ages is a group of three or four neighbours who were bound to meet at Christmas and drink their Christmas beer together, toasting Christ and Mary, under threat of a fine to be paid to the King and to the Church. This had been turned into a local custom which still persisted in some western parishes for some time after the beginning of this century, under the name of *grannaskål* — meaning 'neighbour toast'; but it does not correspond to the *bedlag* institution either.

There are many features about the *bedlag* that are still obscure. It was a firmly rooted social system in all parishes south of Troms; but the two northernmost counties, Troms and Finnmark, have no traces of the *bedlag*, except for some inland parishes in Troms which were settled at the end of the eighteenth century by the people from valleys in eastern Norway, Gudbrandsdalen and Osterdalen. The settlers brought their own domestic customs with them, with the result that the old *bedlag* system functioned here, partly, until the Second World War and some traits are still known. The fact that, in the North fishing had such an important place may account for the *bedlag* institution not taking hold in the rest of Troms, and in Finnmark. But much is still uncertain: the material collected from those two counties has not been sufficiently analysed yet. At the moment it can only be said that it seems as if the crews of the fishing boats meant more to the men than the neighbourhood did, and that the women kept up the sense of neighbourliness in the area while the men were away. Moreover, a wedding company there was held to be only for the family concerned, so even that occasion was irrelevant for the neighbourhood as a whole.

If we want to know what the situation is like today for the old *bedlag* tradition in Norway, it seems clear that there is hardly any part of the country where it is kept up fully. Some traces of it are found here and there, but that is all — and then, mainly in connection with funerals. The tradition has been on the ebb since about 1900, when

the richer agricultural districts took the wedding celebration away from the neighbourhood and restricted it to the family concerned and their private circle of friends; but in most other districts the *bedlag* tradition was still alive right up to the Second World War.

*Lecture given in May 1982 in the School of Scottish Studies when the author visited the University of Edinburgh under the Northern Scholar's Scheme, at the invitation of Eric Cregeen.

'Here I am in another world': John Francis Campbell and Tiree

MARGARET A. MACKAY

A glimpse of the great nineteenth century collector John Francis Campbell of Islay (1821–1885) at work in Tiree is to be found in a small clutch of copied letters within a group written in the autumn of 1871 among the Campbell manuscripts in the National Library of Scotland (Adv. Ms. 50.4.6, 128 recto — 135 recto). A note on 126 recto reads 'Letters written while in Scotland autumn 1871 kept and copied to make a journal'. This was his practice on his travels, which took him to many parts of the world. The transcription which follows shows his enthusiasm for his subject, his humour and his own narrative gifts as well as, importantly, material collected and his respect for his sources among the population of crofters and cottars. Here, as often, he made sketches and watercolours; in the foreground of the watercolour of the thatched house we see the shadow of the artist himself.

Certain obvious errors and mis-transcriptions of Gaelic place-names in the copying have been corrected in the text [indicated by italics] or notes and where necessary for easy comprehension punctuation has been inserted, though in the main this and capitalisation are as in the manuscripts. Missing words are indicated by three full stops, as is a hole in the paper towards the end of the last letter. Notes provide further information on some of the people Campbell encountered.

At the start of his stay Campbell wrote, 'Here I am in another world. All ask me to their houses. All are indifferent to rain and wind and weather, hospitable, hearty, cheery folk and I mean to spend a week amongst them'. One hundred years later Eric Cregeen's experience, which extended over a much longer period, was the same. He too received the warmest of welcomes wherever he went in Tiree and elsewhere, found rich veins of oral tradition of all kinds, some of it among the descendants of the nineteenth century sources for John Francis Campbell, John Gregorson Campbell and others, and never stinted in his respect and affection for those who shared it with him.

Tiree Saturday 9th Septr 1871

My Dear Mother

Yesterday I walked in the rain from the inn at Iona to Port a Churaich[1] where St Columba landed and buried his ship. The barrow which is said to *bear* his grave is seventy feet long. I have my doubts as to this for parallel to the barrow is another mound and the two make a kind of enclosure. I suspect the ruins of a building — The little bay is full of shingle and on the shingle are numerous cairns some would fill a cart others are large and would make fifty or even a hundred loads of stones. Tradition says that these were built for

penance by the devout. I suspect that they are memorial cairns made by large and small bands of pilgrims. They are very like cairns which I have seen raised and used for drying fish in Norway and Newfoundland *on* similar shingle. I gathered some pebbles and marched back to the Inn where I wrung out my Coat and dried it at the fire as well as I could. It was vain to change for the Steamer was coming, at four she came. There is no ladder over the side and I had to get a common shore ladder and climb up the side at the risk of slipping in between boat and ship. We ran to Banessun [sic][2] where Alick Campbell Killinalen came on board and got a dram for me. The Steward offered him water but he said there was plenty of that outside. His sister Jane is to marry a Liverpool Merchant Young by name. They are to be wedded there next week I believe and I was bidden to the feast. On board was Captain Stewart of Colonsay who asked me to come to him and shoot seals. I was obliged but I am not going. He was sad about his six motherless bairns. When we got there at half-past ten it was pitch dark and we had to tumble over the side as best we could into a boat with fishermen and girls and boxes and gear. We landed on a rough pier and stumbled up somehow to the splendid Hotel where I am doing the usual thing waiting. I have fallen in with Geikie[3] the Factor and MacQuarrie[4] the Farmer and Brown a tenant at Campbell of... and the minister Campbell,[5] and a man who works in the Light house boat every one has invited me to his house and I am going to visit MacQuarrie to begin with because he is a good Gaelic man and knows people who have stories and will get them he says. But if I cared much about it I would try to do otherwise for I am amongst gentry the worst class for my purpose. Now as a sample of Highland travelling I started from Inverary [sic] at half past three on Monday — slept at Oban took the fast boat in the morning and landed at Tobermoray [sic] at about 1 on Tuesday. I got my old story man and wrote two Gaelic ballads. I heard several more and did a good stroke of business — meantime the packet was in the harbour waiting for a wind — On Wednesday morning the wind had come but from the wrong quarter so dispairing of the Tiree packet I took the fast boat to Iona. There I fell to work on the old stones and made a lot of rubbings — on Thursday came word from Long John[6] that I was to go to him and Willy Turnbull to fetch me. I spent the morning amongst the tombs and a very fine morning it was and I did a good stroke of work that turn. At *three* I crossed the Sound and drove to Ardfeenaig three miles. There I dined with Long John & his wife and afterwards I drove back to and crossed the Sound in a crazy boat in the dark again — Next morning Friday it rained but I was determined to see Carnan Cùl Ri Eirain[7] and the holy port and the spouting cave and I saw them all in spite of the rain. I got to Tiree near about Saturday morning having started from Inverary on Monday. The distance is not much more than to Edinburgh or Berwick at most and that would be an affair of one day. Here I am in another world. All ask me to their houses. All are indifferent to rain and wind and weather, hospitable, hearty, cheery folk and I mean to spend a week amongst them. Here comes my dinner so I wish you luck.

Yours affecty

J. F. Campbell

Keep this for my journal.

Sgarnish. Tiree. Sept 12. Tuesday. 1871

My dear Car [or Cas, Campbell's half-sister Castalia, as in letter of Sept 17]
You are the greatest fixture so I send you this. Pass it on to your Mother to keep for me as Journal. I got here on Friday and on Saturday morning drove with MacQuarrie the former subfactor and general factotum here down to his place at Heynish. His house is close to the Skerry-mhòr establishment and under the highest hill in this kingdom of the land under the waves. It is only 500 feet high but on the top of it at the South West end of this Outer Isle are lots of great sea boulders fourteen or fifteen feet long perched upon pillars. So far as I can make out they came from the North West. I went to the top on Sunday and had a most agreeable walk and Gaelic talk with my host. On Saturday we dawdled — The Captain of the Light house tender is an Islay man with yellow whiskers Brown by name. I went to his house on Saturday and the man went wild He beat me over the back and ejaculated for ten minutes — introduced me to his wife and daughter of Forbes the Islay light keeper and made all his family come and shake hands with me in turn and then he began again with his och och well well oh dear dear me maister Johnny of our own — Then came another MacAlister[8] a relation of the Banker at Bridgend and then we fell to talking over old friends and old times as if we were brothers. It seems than I am not forgotten in the Highlands. Before Church on Sunday I went to look at the pumice stones. They are in a lot of shingle under sand hills — they are rolled and there do not seem to be any great number. Probably they are part of a lot drifted by the sea at a time when this Island was under water. We also went to *a* Churchyard to look at Iona stones and an old Cross which is very peculiar. I had no time to draw — also we picked up a lot of shells, cowries and blue shells with creatures in them which I believe to be snails washed down by the waves. I put a lot of them into my pocket and today I had to throw them away and get purified. The Minister gave us a Gaelic Sermon and then seeing me said that he saw some one who did not understand Gaelic and took to English. His accent might have suited a Frenchman I never heard an accent quite like it. Yesterday Monday was beautiful. I got a Tailor by name MacArthur[9] and spent the whole day writing stories. I wrote 11 yesterday and the 12th this morning before breakfast. After that I drove off with McQuarrie called at the Island house where the Duke lives when he comes, and then walked four miles to this place where the Steamer now is taking in sheep on her way South. If any telegraphing is needed send to Greenock for the Steamer Dunvegan bound for the North and I may get the message in a few days. I shall take the Steamer to Barra when she comes. The weather is grand and I am in good care.

My love to you.
J. F. Campbell

Scarnish Tiree. Sept 15th 1871

My dear Mother or Car or anybody who gets this
I wrote as the Steamer Dunvegan was going South and got my letter on board. I wrote another to Dasent[10] and posted it and here it is still. Next day — 13th — Wednesday —

I spent with the policeman who says Ossianic ballads very well. I got my own book from the Minister who is a learned man and found that with some variations I have all that the policeman could give and more. We walked up to the house *of* an old fellow here who can repeat the Lay of Osgur and found the same thing. I gave him my book to read when he had finished and he told me that I had misplaced the verses which he learned from his parents here long ago. I have almost made up my mind to cease working at poetry for the mine seems to be nearly exhausted. My own story mines not nearly worked out. I get something new every day and *if* I could catch the people here I should have enough for a new book.[11] I got this from the Minister just now. He got it in Coll. Three Giants lived in a Cave. On a day said one 'Chuala mi *geum* bo' I heard a Cows low. A year after the second said 'What was that you said a while ago?' But the first said 'nothing'. A year after the third said 'If you do not cease your chatter I will leave you the Cave to yourselves". As an illustration of the nature of Giants that little story is a Jewel. Yesterday 14th I walked to the Sound of Coll. The weather was magnificent and the heat great. I visited two old churches with two churchyards at Kirkpol [sic] and found a bit of an old cross set up as a headstone. The Churches are very old and opposite to them is a rock called Am *Mollaichte.* The Cursed *Mollaichte.*[12] The story is that St Columba broke his boat on the rock and cursed it. Thence I went along a strand like Laggan in Islay and spoke to many natives in their fields and houses. I asked one old fellow for a drink of water and got milk. His name is MacLeod. He was much struck with my portly frame and asked if I was in good health. I laughed and said I was. I would not carry your weight for a hundred pounds said the man. I am carrying it said I. I am sure you were strong said MacLeod. I am not sure that I could not put you on your back still said I. Well said my host do not spare saying that you met a man who was not afraid of you. Let us go out and try a fall. Now really this was Norweigian [sic] manners to give a man hospitality and want to fight him on the spot. I laughed at the old sinner and learned afterwards that he wants to try a tussle with everybody. I could have thrown him I am sure but it was too hot and I am too old and lazy for athletics. The old fellow got hold of my legs and felt them as he would those of a horse and finally he asked me to share his dinner. I thanked him and went on to the Sound where I lay on my back and basked & smoked and listened to the prattle of a lot of kilted boys and girls with kilted coats who were puddling in the Sea. They got a partan mòr mòr — a great great Crab and they were happy as fairies. In MacLeod's house is a cripple idiot boy who is generally supposed to be a changeling. He is often quoted to the Minister as a proof of the fact in which all this Island most firmly believe. Coming back from the sound the Minister who had driven the Coll Minister to the ferry overtook me and told me of a Stone which is good for raising a storm. A woman told him that she tried the spell for her brother who was a smuggler and chased by a revenue cruiser. According to the Instructions she dug up the stone with the tongs and turned the side to the [blank] that was needed but there was not a breath of wind. I got back here and dined and jawed with MacQuarrie all the evening. He told me of a stone in Mull with a hole in it. Tradition says that St Columba was hunted by a 'beither'. He threw his mantle over the stone and the snake dashed at

it and went through the stone and died. The Saint laid him out on the rock and there is his mark to this day — vein of white quartz meandering through the rocks. When shewn the place as a child he says that he trembled for fear of the great beither which died in the Ross of Mull. That will do for Fergusson[13] on Tree and Serpent worship. A very similar story was told to me at Lochaweside about MacArthur of Innis Dravinieth but with more details. There was a mantle and a stone in that but also a fight and a dog and all sorts of details which I have written. I also got a charm for driving away changelings which is Fenian and therefore curious and worth preservation. Today 15th I walked 3¾ miles over to Valla on the north side to see an old Fort. It is exactly like forts in Sutherland about five feet of the outer wall is standing at one place It was round with a double wall and a passage in the thickness. There is a doorway visible. And outside was a rampart It stands on a rocky point looking north and near it is another place called Dunbeag. This one is Dun Mòr. Some boys dug in the ... centre and came to red ashes doubtless ... an antiquary might find many curious ... things there. There is a well just outside ... and within sight are other forts which is ... usual. Probably they were protections against sea rovers. The steamers will come soon and will land this in Skye. If you write P.O. Portree Skye I may get your letter in ten days. Now I am going to on towards Barra.

I am yours affecty
J. F. Campbell

NOTES

1 *Port na Curaich*: 'port of the coracle'.
2 Bunessan in the Ross of Mull.
3 Geikie (or Geekie) succeeded Campbell's friend from Islay, 'John Ardmore', known as *Am Factor Mòr* in Mull and *Am Baillidh Mòr* in Tiree, as the Duke of Argyll's factor in the island. Campbell continued to be factor in the Ross of Mull from his base at Ardfenaig House. He is the 'Long John' referred to later in the letter. Geikie later emigrated to Manitoba with many others from Tiree.
4 Lachlan MacQuarrie was ground officer and a farmer in Tiree. In a letter of 17 September 1871, Campbell writes from East Loch Tarbert in Harris that MacQuarrie would not allow him to pay for his stay and the hotel in Tiree 'which I did not like but could not help'.
5 The Reverend John Gregorson Campbell (1836–1891) began his ministry in Tiree in 1861.
6 John Campbell of Ardmore (above).
7 *Carn Cùl ri Eireann*: 'hill with its back to Ireland'.
8 Alexander MacAlistar, Lightkeeper aged 27 from Portnahaven, Islay, is listed in the 1871 census along with his wife Mary Anne, 23, and daughter Elizabeth, 1.
9 John McArthur, 36, tailor, is listed as living in the township of Moss with two brothers and two sisters in the 1871 census. All were unmarried. He is listed among John Gregorson Campbell's Tiree informants in the list appended to Alfred Nutt's introduction to Volume V of the Argyllshire series of *Waifs and Strays of Celtic Tradition*, p. xx.
10 Sir George Dasent, Campbell's friend and mentor in the collection and publication of oral narrative, whose *Popular Tales from the Norse* of 1859 had influenced him profoundly.
11 Campbell would publish some of the material he and others gathered in Tiree in *Leabhar na Feinne*.
12 *Am Mollaichte*: 'the cursed one'.
13 James Fergusson the archaeologist had published his *Tree and serpent worship: or illustrations of mythology and art in India in the first and fourth centuries after Christ. From the sculptures of the Buddhist Topes at Sanchi and Amravati* in 1868.

The permission of the Trustees of the National Library of Scotland to publish these letters and illustrations is gratefully acknowledged.

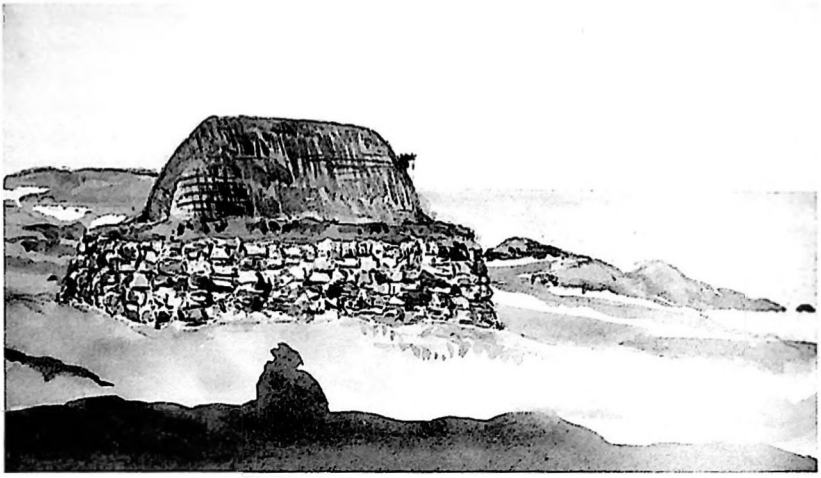


Fig 1. J. F. Campbell's sketch of a thatched house by the shore in Tiree; the artist has included his shadow in the foreground. Adv. Ms. 50.4.6 116 verso. Reproduced by permission of the Trustees of the National Library of Scotland.

Fig 2 One of J. F. Campbell's pencil drawings. The church is at Kirkapol, Tiree. Adv. Ms. 50 4. 6 116 recto. Reproduced by permission of the Trustees of the National Library of Scotland.

Notes and Comments

Ionad na Gaeilge / Centre for Irish Studies

Ionad na Gaeilge/Centre for Irish Studies has been established within the University of Edinburgh's Celtic Department in commemoration of a former student of the University. The Justin Arbuthnott British/Irish Fund which has been the source of initial funding, was set up to promote greater understanding between the peoples of Britain and Ireland. Justin Arbuthnott was tragically drowned with three other University of Edinburgh students in July 1989 when their boat capsized off the coast of Co. Donegal near Aranmore Island.

The new Centre differs from existing centres and institutes of Irish Studies in Britain, focusing primarily on the Gaelic dimension of Irish Studies. Such a Centre finds a natural niche in Scotland with its closely related Gaelic language and culture. Indeed the Centre will build on and benefit from the strong links which the Department of Celtic and the School of Scottish Studies in particular have developed with Ireland over the years. Moreover the Centre will act as a focus for the wide-ranging, and hitherto uncoordinated, expertise which exists in the field of Irish Studies among the staff of the University of Edinburgh.

As Scotland's first ever Centre for Irish Studies, the Centre aims to encourage, conduct and direct research in the area of Gaelic language and culture, particularly in those areas which have relevance to both Ireland and Scotland.

The Centre intends to establish reciprocal and cooperative links with similar institutions and centres both in Ireland and Britain. Links have already been established with The Institute of Irish Studies in Liverpool, the British Association for Irish Studies, Sabhal Mór Ostaig (the Gaelic college in Skye) and Bord na Gaeilge, the state agency responsible for Irish Language policy in Ireland.

The Centre will encourage and support research in the field of Irish Studies by promoting collaborative research between Irish and British scholars, by holding conferences, colloquia and seminars and by assisting in the publication of research work carried out at the Centre. This will partly be achieved by inviting visiting scholars from Ireland to the Centre. Two scholarships, one to Ireland and one from Ireland, will be offered and will be open to those whose research interests include a Gaelic dimension.

The Centre's first visiting scholar was Lillis Ó Laoire, lecturer at the University of Limerick and renowned sean-nós singer. During his visit to the Centre, he researched

the effects which national competitions have had on traditional Gaelic song in Scotland. He also delivered a stimulating lecture on the nature of the sean-nós tradition which drew parallels with developments in Scotland and Ireland.

The Centre provides a unique resource for students of Irish Studies in Britain. Its holdings include materials relating to the main areas of Irish Studies such as linguistics, literature, history, sociology and traditional song. Substantial donations have been received and promised from institutions, publishers, public agencies and individuals. This resource will provide the stimulus for the development of Irish-related courses and research within the University of Edinburgh and will, it is hoped, ultimately lead to the availability of an interdisciplinary course or degree in Irish Studies at the University of Edinburgh.

The Centre is located and managed from within the Celtic Department. An Advisory Committee reflecting the various disciplinary and cultural interests of the Centre advises on general matters and on the future development of its activities.

ROIBEARD Ó MAOLALAIGH

Society's Bairns

At the south-west corner of Edinburgh's Chambers Street there is the new Museum of Scotland, scheduled for opening on St Andrews Day, 1998. Most people will remember the site as a small garden, which it was over the last decade of its vacant period. Prior to that, in the 1940s and 1950s, it was a bustling community of inter-related families in which as a child I gained a grounding in children's lore and the custom and belief of urban ethnology.

The layout of Society Buildings, as the site was formerly called, gave an insularity which added to its sense of community. It was a squarish area enclosed on all four sides by buildings. There were two entrances to the square, one a stone cobbled hill leading in from Chambers Street, and a more commonly used pend situated between the 'Territorial' and 'The Hole in the Wa' public houses in Lindsay Place. The entry from Chambers Street was dominated by a large unimpressive and unoccupied Victorian building which locals referred to as Brown's School. It was so large that it obscured the property and activities behind, and it had a large open basement area which to the minds of children was a moat, a dumping place and a playground. After periods of heavy rain the 'moat' retained water which lay stagnant until it weathered

dry to reveal a variety of mosses, lichens and moulds. The local name for this place was 'the plaguey'.

The only part of the square which was rightfully named Society Buildings was the residential accommodation on the south side which backed onto Bristo Port. This was a mixture of eighteenth and nineteenth century tenements built beside the site of Scotland's first limited capital company, the Society of Distillers and Brewers, established around 1640. Three hundred years later the brewery was gone and had been replaced by a bakehouse belonging to 'Strachans the Bakers' in Lindsay Place.

Opposite the housing was the plaguey wall which was approximately eight feet high by the pathway but plunged to twenty-five feet on the moat side. To the side of the plaguey was a flat area of derelict grassless land which acted as a general play area. In the early 1940s a concrete bomb shelter with wooden slatted bunkbeds was built on the land but as the population of Society Buildings feared no German bombers it was soon converted into a variety of uses but mostly a convenient lavatory.

The only other populated part of the square was an isolated stair, adjacent to Brown's School, which was the last remaining section of Brown Square, one of the early developments in Edinburgh's eighteenth century expansion. The building actually had two stairways but these were divided by an iron railing and one side was officially named Chambers Street. The Chambers Street stair was the home of Scotland's first Chinese restaurant. As no young people lived in either of these entries they were of limited interest to Society's urchins except for games of 'rattle and run' by which they would annoy residents into chasing them. In the early 1950s it was revealed that the Chinese premises contained an opium house.

Windows were an important part of 'Society' society. Regardless of weather or time of day there was generally an adult hanging out of a window observing what was happening. Headsquared or turban-headed women would call to each other from their windows to engage in conversations and in good weather there were multiple conversations all over the front of the buildings. This, however, meant that the children were seldom out of adult observation.

Like most Edinburgh children, the ones from Society played chase or hide games such as tig, hide and seek, kick the can, allevoy, etc., but the location of the plaguey wall added risk to participation. In any game, such as tig, where physical contact was demanded, the children would take to the wall which they could manoeuvre on like mountain ibexes, giving the sure-footed an advantage over the others. Strangely enough adults never interfered with running the plaguey wall and accepted a possible fall as part of the hazards of childhood.

In the event of a game requiring a temporary halt it was done by licking the balls of our thumbs, and holding them upright and outright while calling 'barleys'. A more permanent halt could be brought about by calling 'the game's up the pole' and often a day's activities was brought to an end with the cry 'come oot, come oot where ever ye are the game's up the pole'.

Many games were seasonal and were arranged to fit into either long or short daylight hours and favourable climatic conditions. Girls and younger boys played peevers (hopscotch) at times when their chalked beds would last for days without being rained on.

Guiders and girds were two activities that were encouraged by adults to be played somewhere other than in Society because of the noise involved. The fashion in guider wheels was for ball-bearinged rollers which made a racket on cobblestones. Girds, which were generally metal hoops taken from whisky casks, were almost as noisy.

Gang hut season was a most important time of the year and fell during the eight week summer holiday from school. Affiliations were made among the children and huts built according to groups. Construction was basically of wood knocked together with any nails that could be found, stolen or straightened. The outside covering was mainly sacking or bits of linoleum. Roofs tended to be either of linoleum or old carpets, but if there was a jutting bit of building it would be utilised. In the plaguey there was a basement door below an internal stair that provided excellent cover for a hut, but attachment to permanent structures made the huts a danger.

Once a hut was constructed, lighting and heating were installed in the forms of candles stuck into bottle necks and wood fires inside tins. This made the fear of fire ever-present and something that was taken very seriously by the Fire Brigade who made occasional visits and knocked all huts flat. But the huts were important to the children as private places where they were out of view of adults. There they could share scraps of information on sexuality, examine physical differences between boys and girls, and contemplate the purpose and activities of visiting District Nurses. They were also places to smoke broken up 'fag-ends' in clay pipes bought from White's sweetie shop in Chambers Street.

On excursions outside Society Square anything of value that was found lying around, whether lost or not, was immediately given the incantation 'finders keepers, losers greeters' which established ownership onto the finder. This however clashed with the custom of 'halfers' and 'quarters' which if said quickly enough entitled the sayer to a portion of the find. Consequently a finder would attempt to deny this right by shouting 'finders keepers, nae halfers, nae quarters' and so claim full ownership of the find.

Another finding ritual was 'God before the Devil', which was used when finding foodstuffs such as a sucked sweet, chewed chewing gum, an apple core or half eaten pie. By calling 'God before the Devil' the food was cleansed and made suitable for eating. Once again the 'halfers' convention could be applied and if used wisely meant that the user got access to a sweet or gum after the outside dirt had been sucked away.

During pigeon keeping season most of the elder boys located their hutches on a ledge inside the plaguey wall, about twenty feet up, which could only be reached from above. There they would caress their fantails and blow down their beaks to make them puff out their chests. Gathering pigeons entailed climbing church spires and other such lofty places to lift them from their nests, bring them back to the ledge and incarcerate them until they became 'homers'. The whole objective in keeping pigeons

was to capture, and later sell, other peoples' birds by luring them into your hutch in pursuit of some particularly attractive bird of your own. An obvious drawback in the system was a constant stream of irate bird fanciers demanding their pigeons back and offering violence if they were not returned.

There were almost as many girls as boys in 'Society' but for much of the time they were involved in separate activities: girls with their skipping and ball games and boys with the manufacture of guiders or gang huts. On occasions boys were required to purchase goods from the girl's 'shops' using buttons as money, for which they received a week's rations of stones wrapped in newspaper. In return girls were required to act as judges in the boy's 'best falls' competitions when they plunged to dramatic 'deaths' from the Museum wall. Shared games such as tig and rounders were mostly evening activities.

On cold evenings both boys and girls sometimes resorted to Paw's arrey (area) which was a cellar workshop underneath the houses. As the only natural light which penetrated this room filtered in through wooden shuttered windows there were usually a couple of oil lamps in operation. The quality of light, especially when there was a fire in the grate, was almost supernatural as it highlighted aspects of curiously shaped tools and the junk collection of a man who never threw anything away. Paw was at least seventy years old and was the natural grandfather of more than half of the Society children. He acted as shoe repairer and general handyman for the area while he told stories of people who lived in the locality past and present including ones of 'dummy doctors' who prowled the area collecting bodies for the university.

Bonfire days were times of great activity. There were two bonfire days in the year, Victoria Day and Guy Fawkes Day, but preparation for them started weeks in advance with the boys searching the city for combustible material that could be 'liberated' and carried back to Society. Unfortunately all other areas were also collecting fuel for their fires and when different groups met there was instant confrontation. Boys were generally prepared for combat and carried a variety of wooden cudgels. The closer to bonfire day the more frequent became the attacks of gangs desperate to steal each other's wood to make their own fires the best in Central Edinburgh. To avoid this, Society hid its wood in a disused cellar where a chimney sweep had abandoned a lifetime's collection of soot, but even then it was often plundered.

Society even possessed its own 'boney' collecting song;

> We are Society heroes, we fight bravely to victory.
> When we are in the thick of a fight we fight with all of our might to victory.
> Ello, ello bonfire wid, ello, ello bonfire wid.

This of course was an adaptation of that other well known song of Saturday morning matinees:

> We are the Mystery Riders, the tuppenny sliders, the penny cones.

Bonfire night itself was usually a disappointment with the bigger boys assuming command although they had contributed very little to wood collecting. Parents brought squibs (fireworks), but demanded rights of supervision. Firemen invariably turned up saying the fire was a danger to an overhead power line and extinguished it. In spite of this the next bonfire day would be approached with equal enthusiasm and commitment for the pleasure lay within the ritual.

Confrontation played a large part with Society childhood but it was mainly a method of self-assertion and establishing position within the group. Seldom did it develop into actual violence. There was even a convention called 'the gully' which allowed status to be established without having to resort to a 'square go'. When there was a dispute between two apparent equals, the one who considered himself dominant would offer the 'gully' by placing his left hand on the other's right shoulder and saying 'there's the gully', the right hand was then placed on the other's left shoulder with the words 'there's the knife', this was finished by saying 'I can do ye a' yer life' followed by a light slap on the left cheek. There was no great disgrace in accepting 'the gully' and it certainly did not last a lifetime as the words would suggest but only carried over until the other felt confident enough to make a reciprocal challenge. Confrontations that looked as though they could become serious were quickly nipped in the bud by the ever watchful eyes and interventions of adults.

OWEN F. HAND

A Danish Analogue to 'Wandering Willie's Tale'

The origin of 'Wandering Willie's Tale' in *Redgauntlet* is debatable. Was it based upon an oral story known to Scott in his youth, as his notes to the 1832 edition of *Redgauntlet* claim? Or upon a literary version in Joseph Train's *Strains of the Mountain Muse* (Train 1814, 191–5), a book which he certainly knew? If the latter, was Train himself drawing on a story 'current in Nithsdale', as Alexander Fergusson thought? (Fergusson 1886, 216–17).

Without venturing to express an opinion on the Scottish aspects of this question, I would like to draw attention to a Danish analogue which I recently came upon by accident. It was collected by the indefatigable Evald Tang Kristensen, and appeared in the massive 'New Series' of his *Danske Sagn*, in the fifth volume, posthumously published in 1934. The exact date of collection is not given, but most of the material for this

'New Series' was gathered between 1900 (date of completion of the 'First Series') and 1927, when publication of the 'New Series' began. Kristensen was one of the most rigorous folklorists of his time in his concentration on direct fieldwork and in amassing numerous variants, presented in bare simplicity, without commentary or theorising.

The story to which I refer is no. 544 in Vol. V of *Danske Sagn: Ny Række* (1934), 200–201. It has no title, for Kristensen only numbered his items. I would translate it as follows:

> There was a farmer who lived down on the most westerly farm of Møllerup, and he had to go over to Trøjborg to pay his tax to the squire. Now when he gets there, the squire is desperately ill. Well now, there's some sort of sheriff there who takes the money, and he promises that the receipt will come sure enough, as soon as the squire gets better. But he died not long after, and no receipt ever arrived.
>
> So then, the squire's son comes home (he had been on a long journey) and takes over the estate, and he looks through the account books. Whatever was not down as having been paid already was called in for payment.
>
> One fine day, the farmer at Møllerup gets a stern letter saying would he be so good as to pay his tax by such and such date. So off he goes to Trøjborg, and he says that he'd paid such and such a sum, but never had had a receipt, because the old squire had been sick. That was a pack of nonsense, said the squire's son, and he wanted to have the money.
>
> 'All the same, I won't pay this bill,' says the farmer, very angrily. 'And even if I have to fetch that receipt from your father in Hell, even so, I'll get it, that's sure!'
>
> 'You should be careful what you say,' says the young squire.
>
> 'No, I won't, and I wish you good day!'
>
> So he sets out for home — and he's none too happy, for it's no easy matter to go to Hell, or so he certainly supposed. The upshot was that he saddled his horse and rode off wherever luck might lead him. He let the horse choose its own path, for he did not even know just what he was looking for.
>
> Now as he's riding along, up comes a man and says to him, 'You're looking very gloomy, I think. What exactly are you looking for?'
>
> 'Yes, I could do with some help, I can tell you!'
>
> The man says that yes, he could certainly help him, and so the farmer tells him the whole story.
>
> 'Well now,' says this man, 'you must just ride on, and you'll come to a gateway all blazing with fire, and there you must tether your horse and go in. They will come and offer you a chair, but you must take care never to sit down, and never to accept anything to eat, but simply demand your receipt. If you do this, you'll get to see the squire, sure enough.'
>
> So on he rides, and comes to the gateway, and tethers his horse, and goes in.
>
> They invite him to sit down.

'No, I want my receipt.'

So the squire sets to and writes it out, and he takes it and puts it in his pocket. But after that he remembers nothing more.

In the morning he is woken by his horse neighing, and when he looks around he sees that he is lying in the churchyard on the old squire's grave, and the horse is tethered nearby, where he had tethered it himself. Now for the first time he remembers his adventure, and he feels right down to the bottom of his pocket — and the receipt really is there.

He stables his horse, and then goes off to see the young squire. Here is the receipt, he tells him, and if he would look at the handwriting he would recognise it.

The squire's son had to admit that yes, it was quite correct — 'But where did you get it?'

'Well, I have to tell you that I fetched it from Hell, just as I said I would.'

'Phew!' says the squire's son. 'If you promise me never to tell a living soul about my father, your farm at Møllerup will be free from all taxes and dues to Trøjborg in perpetuity.'

And that's how it was settled, and since then that farm has never paid any tax to Trøjborg.

But the affair was probably *not* kept secret, otherwise I wouldn't have been able to tell this story, would I!

In theory, there are two ways one could account for the obvious similarity between this oral Danish narrative and Scott's story. One is that Scott was indeed (directly or through Joseph Train's work) using a traditional story to which Denmark supplies an analogue; the other, that the popularity of Scott's novels on the Continent led someone to borrow the plot of 'Wandering Willie's Tale', simplify it, and retell it in oral style with local place-names. This person would not necessarily be Kristensen's informant; it could have been someone earlier in the nineteenth century.

The chief differences between the Danish tale and Scott's are, roughly, these: the *dramatis personae* are fewer; there is no narrator; there are no allusions to historical personages, and the squire is anonymous; there is no monkey; the hero is not a musician; the scene in Hell is less vivid and menacing; it is implied that the missing money had been stolen by the sheriff. On the assumption that the story has been borrowed from Scott's novel into Denmark, it is easy to see why allusions to Scottish history should be dropped, and why a dishonest sheriff would be both more credible and more relevant than an uncanny monkey; however, since Danish legends are rich in sinister motifs concerning the Devil and damned ghosts, I find it hard to imagine why a Dane who had read Scott's description of Wandering Willie's visit to Hell should water it down to something so tame. Nor do I see why he would drop the motif of music; a fiddler could quite well take the role in Denmark that a piper does in Scotland. If there was borrowing in this direction, the borrower did not make full artistic use of the material.

If, on the other hand, Scott was elaborating upon an oral tale corresponding to content to this Danish one, it is easy to see why he should give it a more complex and 'literary' frame, and relate it to historical persons. And of course we have Scott's own comment in 1832 to suggest that this was precisely what he had done.

Dr Alan Bruford kindly drew my attention (pers. com. Oct. 1994) to a group of Scottish tales published in *Tocher* 25:30–32 and 33:188–195, and in *Scottish Studies* 7:106–114 and 16:1–2. In these, someone goes to Hell in order to get back a contract for his soul which he had pledged to the Devil; on his return, he brings news that a place in Hell is waiting for a wizard (priest, robber) who had told him how to get there, thus bringing that person to repentance. Dr Bruford suggested that the rent-receipt story could have originated, probably in Scotland, as a Protestant parody of this older Catholic *exemplum* known from Scandinavian, Celtic and Slavonic countries.

So, although the finding of a single foreign analogue may not constitute proof that what we may perhaps term 'The Receipt from Hell' is an International Migratory Legend, I believe that it points strongly in that direction. Perhaps one day further analogues will be found to clinch the matter.

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JACQUELINE SIMPSON

The Regimental Wearing of the Highland Dress, 1798

Lord Elgin kindly sent me in April 1991 a copy of the text of a letter dated 26th December 1798, of much interest regarding the attitudes of soldiers to the wearing of Highland dress. It is reproduced here, with Lord Elgin's permission. Clearly, after wearing the dress for three years, the men had become much attached to it, though this feeling does not appear to have been shared by some of the officers.

In a letter of 11 March 1998, Lord Elgin related that the Elgin Fencible Highlanders marched from Perth to Liverpool. They were about 500 to 600 strong leaving Scotland, but over 200 were added from the jail at Carlisle on the way. They sailed from Liverpool to Dublin and marched to Mallow where they remained. Local supporters presented the Regiment with Colours, which are still at Broomhall.

By attrition, the Regiment more or less petered out. Some officers and men enlisted in the Regular Forces, and others on compassionate grounds returned to Scotland.

The cost of outfitting the Regiment was finally repaid to Cox & Kay's, Bankers, in 1840. Lord Elgin had made over his entitlement to half pay as a General to the Bank for over 35 years.

The Regiment disbanded at Falkirk and the stand of arms was handed in. Only the Colours and the written records returned to Broomhall.

Dr Diana Henderson (pers. comm. 2 Aug. 1993) has provided some further background detail. Lord Elgin's regiment was one of 36 fencible regiments raised in Scotland between 1793 and 1802. His was raised in 1794 and reduced in 1802.

Stewart of Garth stated in 1822 that 'Lord Elgin's regiment ... had about three hundred highlanders wearing a part of the highland garb, the bonnet and truis (sic)' (Stewart 1822, II 439).

Also existing around this time were the Elginshire Volunteers, comprising some 80 men around 1802–3. The regiment was referred to, in addition, as the Earl of Elgin's Fencibles. It appears, incidentally, that this is the Lord Elgin of the Elgin Marbles.

The text is as follows:

Mallow
26 December 1798

My Lord

We the Highlanders of your Lordships Regt having still a high regard for the Highland dress and Being about a month ago oblidged to Bind ourselves up in Panteloons tho we had your Lordships word of honour that we would never need to wear any other dress But our own ancient Highland dress A dress that our ancestors has fought many a Bloody Battle in. But our Reason for applying to your Lordship at this time is that we are afraid when your Countries Service calls your Lordship to a foreign Country and our dress once taken from us we fear that we will not recover it any more in your Lordships Regt. Bgde Major Hay who is a very good officer but Cannot wear the dress himself and it seems to us that he is determined that we will not wear it no more than himself and his Reason is always Preaching up the doctrine of the good of the mens health But what the meaning of this doctrine is we Cannot Concieve for we asure your Lordship that your Lordship Regt is as healthy as any in his Majesties Service and it seems very remarkable to us after wearing the dress for three years and all the men accustomed to it Thus abruptly to take it from us Even at a time when there was not a dissenting voice amongst

your Lordships Soldiers — and we having Enlisted in your Lordships Regt and Promised to wear it We think it hard thus to be deprived of it for no other reason But because some of your Lordships officers Does not Choose to wear it — But we Still hope Before your lordship leave Britain that you will grant us the favour of appearing once more in our Highland garb and under that Conspicuous name of Elgin Highlanders were it anything dishonourable to your Lordship or detrimental to his majesties Services we asure your Lordship we would have neither art nor Part in it and we Beg your Lordship to grant us this favour and we assure your Lordship wherever the Service of our Country calls us we will Endeavour to merit that name that is in your Lordships Power to Bestow upon us we mean the name of Elgin Highlanders. We cannot pass over without Congratulating your Lordship upon the trust reposed in you By your King and Country We humbly Beg your Lordships Pardon But we trust you will forgive us for making this Bold and that your Lordship may live long a leading member of the head of the affairs of the nation is the humble Prayer of the Soldiers of Elgin 1st Regt in Expectations that they will Soon Be E. Highlanders again.

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ALEXANDER FENTON

Student Projects and Dissertations on Traditional Crafts and Industries, 1976–1997

Compiled by Rhona Talbot

FIRST YEAR PROJECTS

1976

MP1976.07 Gillian E. Donaldson, THE KIRKCALDY POTTERIES

MP1976.08 Margaret Falconer, A STUDY OF A LOCAL DISTILLERY — THE GLENLIVET

MP1976.15 Ailsa M. Lang, TRADITIONS OF KILBARCHAN: THE WEAVER'S COTTAGE

1977

MP1977.04 Marion Fleming, THE SMIDDY AT CHIRNSIDE

MP1977.16 Sheila M. McWattie, PAISLEY AND THE THREAD MILLS — AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY

MP1977.19 Susan H. Newlands, A STUDY OF WEAVERS' HALL, CRIEFF

MP1977.24 Peter Sanden, A SMITHY OF STOER, SUTHERLAND

1978

MP1978.21 Paul Nieuwenhuis, THE TALISKER DISTILLERY IN ORAL TRADITION

1980

MP1980.18 Hilary Sandler, THE YOUNGER GENERATIONS (BREWING)

1981

MP1981.09 Neil Macgregor, ROSLIN GLEN GUNPOWDER MILLS

MP1981.12 Karen Roach, A SURVEY OF THE ANCIENT GOMSHALL TANNERIES AND WATER-MILL

1982

MP1982.12 Pamela Mackay, THE WAULKING AND THE WEAVING

MP1982.17 Anne H. Scott, THE CANDLEMAKERS OF CANDLEMAKERS' ROW

1983

MP1983.10 Yvonne McEachern, TWO LOCAL CRAFTS STILL IN OPERATION IN 1983, ONE OLD AND ONE NEW: THE LOCHWINNOCH SILK MILL AND THE CLYDE COOPERAGE OF LOCHWINNOCH

MP1983.13 Wendy M. Smith, J. & D. WILKIE LTD., KIRRIEMUIR (A history of J. & D. Wilkie's Kirriemuir Linen Works, the main town industry, 1867 to the present, based on interviews with former employees)

MP1983.14 Gillian Whitehead, DUNFERMLINE LINEN: AN OUTLINE HISTORY

1985

MP1985.14 Gillian Naismith, THE MILLS OF DUNBLANE, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE SPINNING MILLS

MP1985.16 Gary West, MACNAUGHTON'S WOOLLEN MILL

1986

MP1986.04 Pearl Colquhoun, NEW LANARK IN RECENT YEARS (Reminiscences of a textile mill town)

MP1986.07 Anja Gunderloch, A GLIMPSE OF SHETLAND KNITTING

MP1986.11 Lorne McCall, THE VILLAGE SMIDDY (Midlothian and Stirlingshire)

MP1986.19 Valerie Williamson, SWEETIES

1987

MP1987.05 Sandra Chard, THE MECHANICAL GENIUS—THE COUNTRY MILLER

MP1987.24 Paul Moclair, DAN MORGAN: KATESBRIDGE BLACKSMITH

MP1987.26 Tracy Murray, PRINLAWS: THE FLAX INDUSTRY IN LESLIE FROM THE EARLY 1900s UNTIL CLOSURE IN 1957

MP1987.30 Morag Reive, LIFE IN THE TAILOR'S WORKSHOP

1988

MP1988.03 Jennifer A. Ball, CLYDE SHIPYARDS AND THEIR WORKERS

MP1988.10 Sandra M. Brown, COMMUNITY LIFE IN CADHAM, FIFE FROM THE 1930s TO THE PRESENT (A study of a Fife papermill town and the changes it has undergone, based on interviews with residents)

MP1988.17 Marnie Ferguson, JOHN FERGUSON 1903–1970: BAKER & CONFECTIONER

MP1988.21 Hugh Patrick Hagan, THE TOOLS AND TRADITIONS OF A SHIPYARD CARPENTER

MP1988.23 Susan Huntley, LIVING WITH JUTE

MP1988.24 Radhika Johari, TEXTILE TRADITION OF BANGLADESH

MP1988.26 Robert Lambden, ABERCAIRN TINPLATE WORKS

1989

MP1989.10 Christopher C. Evans, 'LIFE AS A TAILORESS' — MARGARET ALEXANDER OF CANONMILLS, EDINBURGH

MP1989.11 Anna M. Feldweg, ROBERT CRESSER: THE HISTORY OF AN EDINBURGH BRUSHMAKER

MP1989.20 Chris Higham, SOMERLEYTON, A BRICKFIELD AND A PEOPLE

MP1989.27 Alison McCann, WOMEN IN FACTORIES: 1950s

MP1989.50 Jo Ellen Wilson, FRENCH POLISHER IN GLASGOW IN THE 1930s

1990

MP1990.02 Alison M. Bonsor, 'OOR INDUSTRY' THE RISE OF THE HAWICK HOSIERY INDUSTRY (A study of the Hawick knitwear industry from the 18th century to the present day)

MP1990.05 Rosemary Gardiner, LIFE IN DUNDEE IN THE 20TH CENTURY WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE JUTE INDUSTRY

MP1990.11 Stuart A. Jackson, ASPECTS OF ALLOA PAST AND PRESENT (A study of the development of an industrial town, based on written sources)

1991

MP1991.04 George Boyd, SHIPBUILDING

MP1991.12 Emily Cusic, THE APPEAL OF CELTIC ART

MP1991.18 Janet P. Foggie, IN THE SHADOW OF THE SCOTTISH COLOURISTS

MP1991.19 Joyce E. Fraser, A PROJECT ON KIRKCALDY POTTERIES IN PARTICULAR WEMYSS WARE

MP1991.40 Catherine M. Nicol, THE HISTORY OF SCOTCH WHISKY IN PARTICULAR MALT WHISKY

1992

MP1992.04 Christopher Davis, THE KNITTING TRADITION IN MY FAMILY

MP1992.09 Catherine O. R. Gallacher, GRANDMOTHER'S KNITTING SKILLS AND THE CARRYING ON OF THE TRADITION

MP1992.22 Joyce H. M. Miller, A STITCH IN TIME A COMPARISON OF PAST AND PRESENT CUSTOMS AND TEXTILES IN PERU

SECOND YEAR PROJECTS

1988

MD1988.06 Anja Gunderloch, TRADITIONAL SCOTTISH HANDKNITTING

MD1988.11 Christina Stewart, SCOTTISH THATCHING TODAY: A LOOK AT SOME OF THE WORK CURRENTLY BEING DONE

1989

MD1989.09 Frances C. Hobb, GRAIN WHISKY AND THE NORTH BRITISH DISTILLERY COMPANY LTD

MD1989.11 Louise McDonald Lorimer, A WHIRRING OF SPINDLES, A CLACKING OF LOOMS — A STUDY OF THE JUTE INDUSTRY AND WORKERS IN DUNDEE, TAYPORT AND INDIA

MD1989.13 Jane Manson, SHETLAND KNITTING AND RUG MAKING: ORIGIN OF PATTERNS AND MODERN PLACE IN SOCIETY

MD1989.14 Alison McCowan, BLAIRADAM BRICKWORKS: THE EXPERIENCES OF DAVID PIRIE

1991

MD1991.04 Owen F. Hand, PAISLEY, ITS SHAWLS AND ITS WEAVERS

MD1991.12 Diane L. Oakes, MRS M. H. SWAIN AND SCOTTISH EMBROIDERY

MD1991.13 Craig A. M. Spowart, THE BORDER TEXTILE INDUSTRY: GALASHIELS — COMMUNITY AT THE HUB

1993

MD1993.03 Karen Burton, A HISTORY OF CARPET MANUFACTURE AND DESIGN CONCENTRATING ON THE COMPANY OF JAMES MEIKLE & CO. LTD., DYSART AND KIRKCALDY FROM 1919 TO 1980

MD1993.03 Suzanne Cameron, A STUDY INTO THE CRAFT OF COOPERING — ITS HISTORY AND HOW IT SURVIVES TODAY.

MD1993.15 Judith I. Mann, DRYSTONE WALLING: THE PROCESS, ITS HISTORY AND ITS PLACE IN THE MODERN WORLD

1994

MD1994.13 Scott Russell, COOPERAGE: THE CRAFT THEN AND NOW

1996

MD1996.07 David Harford, SALT-MAKING ON THE FORTH ESTUARY

MD1996.14 Zoe Mitchell, BLAIRGOWRIE (This project covers aspects of agriculture, linen trade/mills, berry picking, tourism, custom and belief in the area of Blairgowrie)

1997

MD1997.05 Michael Church, A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF MY FATHER (Description of his father's occupations, mainly as a bothy man and dry-stone dyker)

HONOURS DISSERTATIONS

1991

MH1991.02 Hugh P. Hagan, BRUTE STRENGTH AND IGNORANCE: A STUDY OF THE RIVETERS OF PORT GLASGOW

MH1991.11 Irene C. M. C. Riggs, THE QUEER-LIKE SMELL (The study of the linoleum industry in Kirkcaldy)

MH1991.15 Janice E. Wason, THE POWER AND THE BEAUTY (An Ayrshire lacemaking factory)

1994

MH1994.04 Lesley-Ann Mather, EVIDENCE OF THE CONTINUITY IN THE MATERIAL CULTURE OF LEWIS IN THE PREHISTORIC AND HISTORIC PERIODS

Postgraduate Work in the School of Scottish Studies, the Department of Scottish History and the Department of Celtic, 1996–97

The following list, giving the name of the postgraduate and an indication of the thesis subject, shows the wide range of work being covered by the School of Scottish Studies, the Department of Scottish History, and the Department of Celtic.

SCHOOL OF SCOTTISH STUDIES

Aileen F. Bruce. The allotment movement in Scotland.

David T. Bunton. The Ozark home.

Katherine M. Campbell. Formal and informal transmission of traditional music.

Frances J. Fischer. Scottish and Faroese ballads.

Rachel F. Freeman. Place identity in Lower Shader, Isle of Lewis: the evidence of mapping, narrative and communal activities.

Jane L. George. Women and golf in Scotland.

Hugh P. Hagan. Community identity in Port Glasgow during the inter-war period.

Meredith T. Harley. Singing style in traditional Scottish song.

Gisela M. Lockenkoetter. Community customs (house visiting and Ball Games) and their graphic representation.

Fiona M. MacDonald. Women and death on Lewis: the cultural management of a life crisis and the maintenance of gendered identity.

Neill C. Martin. Ritual dialogue in marriage customs, with special reference to Scotland.

Frances M. McBrierty. The ethnology of religious expression: saints and saint devotion in a Leith parish.

Howard Y. Mitchell. Community life and lore of Scotland's institutions for the mentally handicapped.

Gillian Munro. Lives of women in a north-east fishing community.

Laurie B. Romanosky. Hallowe'en in Scotland.

Donna J. Shedlarz. Oral traditions of Scotland's canals.

Anke-Beate Stahl. Nomenclature of Barra.

Yusuke Uno. Comparison between Scottish and Japanese lullabies: texts and contexts.

Gary J. West. Perthshire: aspects of social organisation in early twentieth century agricultural communities.

Jeremy Weston. The ethnology of Scotland-Pakistan connections.

DEPARTMENT OF SCOTTISH HISTORY

Sharon Adams. Seventeenth Century south-west Scotland.

Hew Blair-Imrie. Relationship between land ownership and the commercialisation of Agriculture in Angus, 1750–1820.

Caroline Carr-Locke. Women and brewing as a craft and commodity in Edinburgh, 1750–1800.

Winifred Coutts. The Court of Session in 1600.

Barbara Dalglish. Liddesdale and the Scottish border, 1513–1625.

Michael Davidson. Submission and treaty in early medieval Europe.

Robert A. Fenwick. Sources for Scottish social and family history research, 1600–1750.

John Finlay. Men of law in Scotland, 1450–1560.

Janet Foggie. The Dominicans in Scotland, 1450–1560.

Susan Gillanders. The effect of the Cromwellian Union on Scottish Burghs.

Mark Gorzalka. Religious history in Sixteenth Century Scotland.

Ruth Grant. Sixth Earl of Huntly and the politics of the Counter-Reformation, c. 1576–1617.

Karen Hunt. Governorship of the First Duke of Albany.

Dean S. Jacobs. Scottish emigration to America in the Eighteenth Century.

Amy L. Juhala. Royal court of James VI, 1580–1603.

James MacCormack. Small town development in Scotland, c. 1660–1820.

Robin MacPherson. Fifth Earl of Bothwell.

Andrew Newby. Estate management in Scotland and Ireland in the Nineteenth Century.

Alison Nuttall. Nineteenth Century Midwifery and Practice.

Lorraine Peters. Scotland and the American Civil War.

Martin Rorke. Scottish overseas trade, 1275–1597.

Andrea Thomas. Renaissance Culture at the Court of James V, 1528–42.

Jill Turnbull. Glass-making in the Forth basin, 1610–c. 1800.

Kenneth Veitch. The balance of Old and New in Scotland's Twelfth-Century Church.

Douglas Watt. Highland nobility and the lawyers in Seventeenth-Century Scotland.

Raymond Wells. The anti-Covenanting North East.

DEPARTMENT OF CELTIC

Joseph Calise. Medieval Celtic texts relating to the Picts and Scots.

George Cameron. Early Celtic literature.

Ching-Yen Chen. MSc in Celtic Studies (Scottish Gaelic).

Robert Dunbar. Concepts of land ownership and use in Gaelic society.

Davyth Hicks. Language, history and onomastics in early Scotland.

Sheila Kidd. The Gaelic prose writings of Rev. Alexander MacGregor (1808–81).

Tracy Kopecky. Aspects of early Irish literature and culture.

William Lamb. Scottish Gaelic and Linguistics.

Alasdair MacCaluim. The role of the Gaelic learner.

Joan MacDonald. Studies in the decline of the Classical tradition of poetry in Gaelic Scotland.

Wilson McLeod. Development of the Gaelic tradition.

Patricia Menzies. *Oran na Comhachaig*: a textual and thematic study.

Michael Newton. The symbol of the tree in Scottish Gaelic literature.

Eithne Ni Ghallchoir. MSc in Celtic Studies (Scottish Gaelic).

Charles O'Hara. Celts and Teutons: the moving frontier.

Terence Rosecrans. Aspects of romanticisation of the Celt through the ages.

Insa Thierling. The *cailleach* in Gaelic literature and tradition.

David Thornley. Highland family origins: the evidence of Gaelic literature and tradition.

Thomas Torma. Early Irish literature/medieval studies.

Carol Zall. The Gaelic storyteller and Gaelic oral narrative tradition: a case study.

Book Reviews

The Greig-Duncan Folksong Collection. Vol. 5: edited by Patrick-Shuldham Shaw, Emily B. Lyle and Adam McNaughtan. xxii + 656 pp. ISBN 1873 664 418. Vol. 6: Edited by Patrick Shuldham-Shaw, Emily B. Lyle and Elaine Petrie. xxvii + 608 pp. ISBN 1873 664 426. Edinburgh: Mercat Press, 1995. £35.00 each.

1995 has seen the publication of the fifth and sixth volumes of *The Greig-Duncan Folksong Collection*, a welcome event in view of the fact that five years have passed since Vol. 4 saw the light of day in 1990. Reviewing individual volumes of a multi-volume project in isolation is a risky undertaking, especially since the readers of this journal have not so far had an opportunity to become acquainted with the preceding four volumes. The temptation is therefore great to provide a fairly full description of both the manuscript *Collection* itself and of the nature and history of the project which has its publication in eight substantial volumes as its goal, a daunting task indeed which requires patience and courage as much as scholarly and editorial expertise, and institutional co-operation and financial support.

While it would be wrong for an interim review to succumb to such a temptation, it seems to be nevertheless fitting, indeed necessary, to provide at least the basic factual information regarding the publication history of the first four volumes: Vol. 1 was published in 1981, Vol. 2 in 1983, Vol. 3 in 1987, and Vol. 4 in 1990. The corpus of songs has been divided thematically, and each song 'type' has been given an individual number under which all its variants are grouped together. Vol. 1 (songs nos. 1–185) contains 'Nautical, Military and Historical Songs', as well as 'Songs in which Characters adopt the Dress of the Opposite Sex'; Vol. 2 (songs nos. 186–346) is exclusively devoted to 'Narrative Songs'; in Vol. 3 (songs nos. 347–706) we find 'Songs of the Countryside' and 'Songs of Home and Social Life'; to Vol. 4 (songs 707–928) have been assigned 'Songs about Particular People', 'Night Visiting Songs', and 'Songs of Courtship'; and the two volumes under review (vol. 5, songs nos. 929–1078; Vol. 6, songs nos. 1079–1268) are the first two parts of the extensive section of 'Songs of Love and Marriage', Vol. 5 concentrating on happy relationships and the reconciliation of parted lovers, and Vol. 6 focusing on 'Sad Love Songs' or what the original editor had called 'Songs of Unhappy Love'. Looking ahead, Vol. 7 will be the third volume in this trilogy, whereas Vol. 8 will contain songs of parting and children's songs, as well as general indexes and commentaries on the whole Collection. All the songs and other materials published in this enormous undertaking stem, of course, as the title indicates, from the collections of 3,500 texts and 3,300 tunes made from the north-east earlier this century by Gavin Greig (1856–1914), schoolmaster at Whitehill School, New Deer,

and the Rev. James Bruce Duncan (1848–1917), United Free Church minister at Lynturk near Alford. The results of their efforts are housed in Aberdeen University Library.

At present, the songs contained in each volume are only indexed by title and by singer or source, and for anybody unfamiliar with the regional tradition it is therefore difficult to develop a sense of what songs the printed collection actually contains and how they link up with other published song collections and anthologies. Anybody interested in Child Ballads, for example, has to peruse the whole 'Notes' section in order to discover that Vol. 5 contains variants of Child 7, 17, 53, 98, 99, 100, 101, 221, 232, 233, 238, 239, 240, 252, 263 and 293 (although not in that order), and that Vol. 6 has variants of Child 4, 9, 24, 62, 63, 64, 75, 76, 84, 201, 204, 215, 216, 222, 235, 237, 259, 269, 294 and 295 (also not in that order). Similarly references in the 'Notes' show that there are numerous connections with Malcolm Laws' canons of American balladry.

While the corpora of Child and Laws ballads are comparatively easily identified, other songs or song clusters prove to be much more elusive since cross-references in the 'Notes' are not intended to be exhaustive. This is not surprising in view of the fact that, according to Adam McNaughtan, editor of Vol. 5, for instance, the volume entrusted to his editorial care is a bit of a 'mixed bag', containing such thematic song types as 'rhapsodies about love, description of a lover (unnamed), direct addresses to a lover (unnamed), chance encounters leading to marriage, initial difficulties overcome, family opposition resisted (unto marriage or death), disguised sailors' returns, lovers disguised, lovers tested, love and marriage, family love, miscellaneous broadsides and Victorian sentimental songs'. It further complicates matters that some forty of the 150 songs presented in that volume have English origins and that nine are Irish although most of them have developed Scottish characteristics. What Greig and Duncan collected, it seems, genuinely reflected the nature of the songs sung by the north-east 'folk' in their time.

The Greig-Duncan Folksong Collection is obviously one of the greatest publishing events in Scottish folklore research. The practice of assigning individual volumes to individual editors, under the supervision of the general editor, Dr Emily B. Lyle, is a reasonable practical solution to what otherwise might have become an intractable problem. As things stand at present, however, each volume is more or less self-contained, and it will take a series of well-constructed analytical indexes in the last volume to make the materials in this extensive collection truly accessible to the user. To take just a couple of examples: I was surprised to find the title 'Ythan Side' listed as variant C of song no. 1130 'Glasgow Green' (Vol. 6, 129), especially since neither the tune nor the one-stanza text appear to have any connection with the well-known 'Ythanside' the several variants of which are presented as song no. 951 in Vol. 5, 38–47, but which is not mentioned in the 'Notes' under 1130. At present, there is therefore no way of knowing whether there is any link between the two songs or not, or why it is listed under 1130 in the first place. On the other hand, my interest was aroused by song no. 1058 (Vol.

5, 553) 'My ain Countrie' because of the way in which its refrain is echoed in Thomas Hardy's *Mayor of Casterbridge*. In the brief 'Note' (638), Duncan is quoted as saying: 'Words different from Cunningham', but since Cunningham is not included among the abbreviated references, this leaves the interested user stranded, unless he is already thoroughly familiar with the biographical background to Scottish folk-song publications.

The opening up of the whole multi-volume publication will obviously be an arduous, though rewarding enterprise. In view of the fact that it is likely to take some considerable time to accomplish, it might be useful to split the projected volume 8 into two separate parts, the first containing, as planned, the 'Songs of Parting' and 'Children's Songs', and the second the general indexes and commentaries. Such a division would at least ensure that all the primary materials will have been made available to the public, independent of the scholarly apparatus which is to follow.

The completed publication of *The Greig-Duncan Folksong Collection* will be a remarkable achievement, eagerly awaited by a wide range of potential users. All those involved in this demanding enterprise are already to be congratulated on both their vision and their commitment to bringing this completion about.

W. F. H. NICOLAISEN

Scottish Traditional Tales edited by Alan Bruford and Donald A. MacDonald. Polygon: Edinburgh, 1994. ISBN 0 7486 61506. 488 + viii pp.

The Scottish book world is not short of story and legend collections but this anthology is not typical of such publications in that it provides much more than an assemblage of story texts for as wide an audience as possible. Over one hundred texts from the manuscripts and audio recordings of the School of Scottish Studies feature under eleven headings defined by theme or genre such as 'children's tales' or 'legends of witchcraft'. Although there are, of course, overlaps, the second half of the book contains largely legendary material and the first more international popular tales. The Scots transcriptions maintain features of the spoken dialect in which the texts are from Gaelic-using tellers. In contrast to more general publications, the editors provide explanation of how they have brought verbatim transcripts of live recordings to the printed page.

Obviously, some areas of the country have been better covered by the School's fieldworkers: the Northern and Western Isles and Perthshire are particularly well represented here. Certain narrative forms do not feature, such as the modern legend and more specifically local traditions, and longer *Märchen* typical amongst travellers as these have been extensively published in collections by, for example, Duncan Williamson. The enormous variety and the presentation of this collection convey the richness and diversity of the oral narrative tradition that existed well

into this century. As would be expected of a volume edited by two experts in the field of Scottish oral narrative and folklore, the texts are well annotated, their exact sources indicated, with pointers to alternative published versions and to studies of the type, and there are references to the AT and ML indexes where applicable. This allows the interested reader to follow up different versions and treatments of a story elsewhere. There are also brief sketches of some of the storytellers, explanations of possibly obscure vocabulary, and background information to a narrative if such exists, in terms of its place in international tradition or in history.

Besides its variety and the reliability of its texts as genuine examples of oral literature, what makes this anthology particularly valuable is the introductory essay by the late Alan Bruford, who was for years editor of *Tocher*, a magazine that includes narrative transcripts also but without much referencing or comment. The introduction provides an informative and insightful survey of the Scottish situation and sets it in the international contexts of traditional material and of collection and scholarship. It describes some of the typical social settings for the telling of stories, their transmission media other than the oral performance, the role of story in custom cycles, the traditions more associated with particular socio-cultural and linguistic regions, and the identity of the tellers of different genres. There is a clear explanation of the main international classification systems and of how their terminologies relate to generic features and functions. With a review of the important literature, this gives a good background to the account of how international and trans-cultural collection started, before a brief history of such activity in Scotland and a summary of some of the main trends and tendencies in narrative analysis and theoretical and methodological approaches since the nineteenth century. This is enormously valuable and will allow the more general reader, attracted to this book for its story content, to gain an understanding of why academics gather and study oral literature, and to see the Scottish, and often very regional, traditions in wider settings. It is also important that the editors were prolific collectors in the field and, therefore, can impart their insight into the creative process experienced by tellers, the way narratives are transmitted, and why and how we tell, invent and enjoy stories.

FIONA M. MACDONALD

Scottish Ballads edited by Emily Lyle. Canongate Press. Edinburgh: 1994. 288 pp. ISBN 0 86241 477 6, £4.99.

Printed as Canongate Classics 55, *Scottish Ballads* provides a judicious selection of Scottish versions of eighty-three texts of Child ballads, mostly historical and taken from printed books and manuscripts. A very few texts are taken from twentieth century

oral tradition. While the texts themselves are the heart of the matter, the introduction and notes are essential elements in framing and contexting the printed words.

Emily Lyle's introduction reflects her long familiarity with the ballad in Scotland: she touches on the historical background of the study of balladry and the appearance of texts; she points out that any text or tune that we have has survived in many ways by pure chance: 'When we remember that a ballad could be sung by very many singers and could be sung by one singer on many occasions, we realise that what was picked up by collectors was only a small sample' (p. 10); she speaks to the characteristics of the material, especially to the Scottish versions; she underlines the fact that ballads are songs — 'We should never forget that the ballad is a sung genre with a whole musical dimension that is not caught by the printed text' (p. 12); and she offers a useful discussion about the multiple performance contexts where ballads occur. Ballads may be performed for oneself, even silently; they may be performed to an audience belonging to the group to which the singer belongs and may or may not be accompanied by prose expansions and discussion; they may be performed for collectors, often outsiders; and they may be recontextualised for other contexts. In fact one of the primary ways in which ballads have been recontextualised is in printed works such as this one.

The notes appear after the texts and provide a wealth of essential information concerning sources — sometimes printed books, in other instances manuscript collections, or tape recorded versions. Lyle provides the name of the singer if known and indicates whether or not there is a tune recorded for the text cited. In fact, the notes flesh out the introduction in providing additional data about the ballad: note number 10 to 'The Baron of Brackley' is a case in point, giving a thumbnail sketch of the kinds of contemporary transmission a ballad may have. The text was recorded from a Glasgow woman who learned it from a revival singer; Hamish Henderson, she says, 'launched' it 'on the folk scene'.

For my taste, I would have preferred to have the notes as headnotes to the individual ballads, readily accessible before perusing the text; and I would like to have seen the tunes, when available, printed with the text as a visual reminder that the ballad is, as Lyle says, a'a sung genre'. Note 8 to the Introduction says that a cassette was to be issued to go with this volume; while I have not seen/heard it, such a record of the musical nature of the genre will be an extra benefit to this book. Lyle has chosen to continue a scholarly tradition of privileging versions of Child ballads; perhaps it is unfortunate to continue that practice which excludes the bothy ballads and other songs with narrative focus. What we have in *Scottish Ballads* is a potpourri of some of the ballads which have flowered on Scottish soil, perhaps personal favourites printed as poems; yet the collection offers a splendid introduction to one of the fascinating genres of vernacular literature. It is good to have such accessible and sensibly chosen texts available both for reading pleasure and for student use.

MARY ELLEN BROWN

Scottish Customs from the Cradle to the Grave by Margaret Bennett. Polygon. Edinburgh: 1992. ISBN 0 7486 6118 2. xxii + 298 pp.

This work sits between being a valuable resource for the folklore student and an attractive work on domestic and social life with a very broad appeal. It consists of extracts taken from publications, manuscripts and tape-recorded interviews (some of them conducted by the author) that describe and comment on folklore associated with the three most crucial phases of transition in the life-cycle, which also provide the chapter-subjects: 'Childbirth and Infancy', 'Love, Courtship and Marriage' and 'Death and Burial'. After a short introduction by the editor that sets the extracts in the general context of that life-cycle stage, and uses proverbs to illustrate points made, relevant material is arranged thematically, under more specific headings. The quoted passages cover various aspects of the routines, rituals, attitudes and beliefs prevailing for each life-crisis, with examples of practice and comment from the sixteenth century up to the present. Depending on the available resources, most of the country is covered, including urban areas, and a number of photographs is included.

Bennett has plundered many of the 'classic' Scottish folklore publications, such as Gregor and Martin, for their observations; the transcriptions that are used from the holdings of the School of Scottish Studies contain more personal testimony that stimulates the reader's own recollection of comparable experiences. The inclusion of modern evidence reminds us that much of our daily lives and knowledge will not be recorded because it is seen as mundane and is taken for granted, so this book is thought-provoking in itself and is not limited by frequently found popular notions of what is folklore — rural, quaint, and of the past. The selections often contain interesting descriptions of folklife (for example, the practical care of the new-born) and social history, and the 'official' side is sometimes voiced (for example, a non-professional Orkney midwife's account is matched with that of a consultant paediatrician).

Although Bennett indicates her sources precisely and gives the necessary background information about the identity of the informant or the collecting context, in parts the annotation is sparse and seems rather arbitrary. However, this is a valuable work in that it brings together and organises a huge mass of information, illustration and commentary from disparate sources that are readily accessible to neither the general reader nor most students. It shows the wealth of existing material and indicates with the good bibliography where folklore can be further sought. Moreover, its broad outlook may help to dispel some misconceptions about what folklore means and how it is researched, and it shows the multiplicity of perspectives that one needs when looking at such universal events as birth, marriage, sex, pregnancy, death and mourning, as well as demonstrating how revealing, important and informative apparently incidental detail may be. Scotland sorely needs analytical and theoretical studies in the fields of ethnology and folkloristics. This survey of primary resources may spur others on to interpretation, although longer introductions and more

discussion of sources, and how they can be handled, might have encouraged this further, as would have the inclusion in the bibliography of secondary studies of similar material from outside Scotland to exemplify what can be done with a body of evidence like this one. Nevertheless, this is an entertaining, highly readable survey of the descriptive literature and some oral resources for the life-cycle high points, a valuable collection for even those well-acquainted with the topics and material who will no longer need to search library shelves to see what Martin had to say about handfasting or what is in the archives of the School of Scottish Studies on the subject of Skye funerals.

FIONA M. MACDONALD

Speaking in our Tongues. Proceedings of a Colloquium on Medieval Dialectology and Related Disciplines, edited by D. S. Brewer, Margaret Laing and Keith Williamson. Cambridge: 1994. xii + 231 pp.

At the latest since the publication of the four-volume *Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English* (McIntosh *et al.*, 1986) and the follow-up project on early Middle English (see *Catalogue of Sources for a Linguistic Atlas of Early Mediaeval English*, Laing 1993) the University of Edinburgh has established itself together with its strong traditions also in Scots and Gaelic as a very important centre on medieval dialectology. It was only natural therefore that the Colloquium on Medieval Dialectology and Related Disciplines was held there in April 1992, the proceedings of which were published two years later in the book under review.

The organisers 'sought to provide a forum for a liberal exchange of views on two major themes: (1) problems and concerns common to the investigation of different medieval vernaculars; (2) how the study of language variation might be more fully integrated with the divers related disciplines which contribute to define its historical, cultural and social context' (editors' introduction, 1f.). How successful were they in their attempts? By inviting representatives from the fields of philology, textual studies, ethnology, codicology and palaeography, onomastics, word geography, lexicography and history they went a long way to achieving their second goal. The organisers were less successful with the first theme as English clearly dominates the scene, being at the centre of ten papers. There is, unfortunately, only little room for the problems connected with other medieval vernaculars, Dutch and French being the only ones treated, apart from the Celtic languages, which in Edinburgh, of course, comes as no surprise. In Fisiak 1995 the spectrum is broader including, in addition to Old and Middle English, Old French and Middle Dutch, also Middle High German and Slavic languages.

As the adopted title Colloquium reveals, the emphasis was very much on discussing the generally rather brief papers. Many of the remarks in the question – answer periods following the papers delivered in each section are quite illuminating and it is therefore

to be welcomed that the discussions are also published — in edited form, of course; they occupy a little over one third of the book, fifty-one pages as against 141 pages of the thirteen papers themselves, to be precise.

Twelve papers were presented within the framework of four panels which were well balanced with three papers in each panel. In addition there was a keynote address by Anthonij Dees on 'Historical dialectology and literary text traditions' (117–125) dealing with dialectal variation in late thirteenth and early fourteenth century French in a most insightful way. Under the heading of Panel I 'Taxonomy and Typology in Medieval Dialect Studies' the following three papers appear: 'On the origin and spread of initial voiced fricatives and the phonemic split of fricatives in English and Dutch' by Hans F. Nielsen (19–30), 'The study of medieval language in the Low Countries: the good, the bad and the future' by P.Th. van Reenen (31–49) and 'Descriptions of dialect and areal distributions' by Michael Benskin (169–187). Panel II, entitled 'Manuscript Studies and Literary Geography', contains the following papers: Richard Beadle, 'Middle English texts and their transmission, 1350–1500: some geographical criteria' (69–91); A. I. Doyle, 'A palaeographer's view' (93–97) examining the educational background to manuscript production and Jeremy J. Smith, 'A philologist's view' (99–105), where the author considers the relationship between modern linguistic theory and traditional philology. The following three papers form Panel III 'Languages in Contact': Angus McIntosh, 'Codes and cultures' (135–137) arguing that only extralinguistic factors can account for a great deal of linguistic variation also in the Middle Ages, as is the case now; William Gillies, 'The Celtic languages: some current and some neglected questions' (139–147) and Helmut Gneuss, 'Language contact in early medieval England: Latin and Old English' (149–157). The final Panel 'Word Geography' is represented by Terry Hoad on 'Word geography: Previous approaches and achievements' (197–203); Robert E. Lewis on 'Sources and techniques for the study of Middle English word geography' (205–214) and Gillian Fellows-Jensen on 'Place-names and word geography: some words of warning' (215–224) where she draws particular attention to the value of field names as sources of localisable vocabulary.

Only a few additional comments can be made here. As is to be expected, some papers show a greater richness in novel ideas than others. That the results of word-geographical studies in Middle English are disappointing is one of these cyclical repetitions. In view of the suggestions made, may we now hope that the situation in this area will be improved? With regard to Nielsen's paper it should be noted that whatever the origin of initial voiced fricatives, the phenomenon spread beyond English and Dutch, from England to Brittany (cf. Tristram 1995) and from the Netherlands to North Germany. The realisations of the definite article and related words in English (Nielsen, 25f.) can only be tackled satisfactorily when the present-day dialectal situation is also considered (cf. Viereck 1995). Benskin draws attention to methods of numerical taxonomy by which dialectal data can be analysed and dialect areas with their perspective centres established and cites a few uncategorised references. As welcome

as the computer assistance no doubt is, such a procedure is only sensible if there is a sufficient amount of data available on all linguistic levels as these ought to be analysed separately. Moreover, quality should not be buried by quantity. However, there are recent developments, not specifically referenced by Benskin, where the computer generates together with the map lists of features showing precisely what linguistic features contribute to the structure of a particular dialect area.

'The organiser hoped that the Colloquium might be a first step towards the promotion of interdisciplinary studies and collaboration between institutions and individuals across areas of common interest' (editors' introduction, 3). This reviewer hopes it was and that it will have an impact on research and will be followed by further meetings.

WOLFGANG VIERECK

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1995 'Zaoz and Zomerzet: Linguistic contacts across the English Channel', in Wolfgang Viereck, ed., *Proceedings of the International Congress of Dialectologists, Volume 4*. Stuttgart, 276–298.

VIERECK, WOLFGANG
1995 'Realizations of the definite article in dialectal English and how and when they originated', in Fisiak (op. cit.) 1995, 295–307.

Hebridean Island. Memories of Scarp. Angus Duncan; ed. A. Duncan. Tuckwell Press, East Linton (1995). xxii, 218 pp. 70 photographs, 3 maps. £16.99. ISBN 1 898410 02 X.

Hebridean Island largely consists of Angus Duncan's manuscript account of his upbringing on Scarp, which has been edited by his son, Arthur Duncan. Writing in the 1940s and 50s, the son of a former Scarp schoolmaster, Duncan describes life on that small island off the west coast of Harris in the last decade of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth. Reading this lucid, fond, but unsentimental account, one forgets that Scarp has been uninhabited since 1971; younger islanders, like myself, today tend only to associate many such previously occupied isles with seasonal grazing, naturalist visitors and daytrips. Easily readable, the text situates the reader in a vibrant, hard-working community that, with a steady decrease, numbered from two to one hundred people between 1881 and 1931.

The full descriptions of many aspects of Scarp daily life apply to the Hebrides generally in this period, while still maintaining a definite local emphasis. Thirty chapters, some of which were published in *An Gaidheal* in the 1950s, cover a wide

array of subjects: communal labour and social entertainment and relations; oral tradition; agriculture, husbandry and fishing; topography and natural history; household life and material production; the school and mission; island history and connections with mainland Harris; portraits of local figures who made an impression on the writer as he was growing up; and his childhood experiences. This last element is treated in a way that I have not encountered in any other book on the Western Isles and contains much that is new to me and valuable. Duncan's detailed, intimate knowledge of Scarp is apparent, but his writing subtly conveys the freshness and openness of his boyhood worldview when he describes events and places from a childhood perspective. For me, this balance of information and creativity distinguishes *Hebridean Island* from most other works it might be classed along with, but which are often either dryly 'factual', or romanticizing and misrepresentative. I hope that to complement this book there might be somewhere a girl's-eye account awaiting publication to give us entry into female experiences and socialization in such a community.

The chapters avoid reiteration and show that even a relatively isolated community like Scarp was, before the turn of the century, integrated, and increasingly so, into the national market economy and state and into Anglo-Scottish culture, without making overt judgments on the implications of these ineluctable trends. Duncan would have acknowledged that benefits were accrued as well as losses suffered with such changes, although they ultimately led to complete depopulation. Within his narrative itself, which is, after all, to a great extent reminiscence, I sometimes felt there was a 'gap' between the years described and the time of writing that might have been dealt with, although the appendix fills some of this. Duncan also depicts as in the past practices and aspects of island lifestyle that were still very true of Hebridean society in the 1950s. Little is said about language, which is surprising, and the insertion of more Gaelic vocabulary would have enriched the story.

The editor's biographical notes on the author and his family contextualise and add another layer to Angus Duncan's writing. Forty-five pages of appended notes by the editor and experts on specific topics both enlarge upon 'empirical' material (e.g. geology, demography, flora and fauna) and expand the description of cultural life and social organisation (e.g. of shared labour, folktales and their tellers, weddings). The editor also brings the Scarp account up to the present with a useful, brief discussion of ownership and other issues, and the bibliography is a good selection for the islands and their history.

The black and white and recent colour photographs convey information and add to the attractiveness of this appealing book. In conclusion, I would recommend this to both the casual reader and the researcher who is interested in the social and cultural life, and livelihoods pursued, in the islands, in the past. The core chapters alone constitute a work that is engaging, informative and sensitive, and very evidently based on the experiences of an insider.

FIONA M. MACDONALD

Scotland's Place-Names. David Dorward. Mercat Press, Edinburgh, 1995. £9.99 (paperback, 171 pp.).

It is now nearly twenty years since David Dorward's little booklet on Scotland's place-names appeared as a companion volume to *Scotland's Surnames.* Both were light in content, sometimes lighthearted, and written in a style that was very acceptable to the general reader wishing to learn the basics of Scottish names.

The market for such books has developed considerably since the 1970s, and Dorward has responded to what is obviously a more demanding readership by producing a more detailed version (called 'Expanded Edition' on the cover). A short introduction deals with the languages of Scotland, accompanied by a rather misleading map (p. 4) giving rough settlement areas for Picts, Strathclyde Britons and the Kingdom of Northumbria. The paragraph on 'P-Celtic' lumps both Pictish and Cumbric together, while conceding the complexity of the relationship between these two p-Celtic languages.

The four maps on pps. 11–14, 'Ancient District Names', 'The Old Counties and Shires', 'The Former Regional Councils' and 'The New Councils' attempt to clarify the situation regarding regional and district names. However, these maps are crude (*Bute* on the second map is located in what seems to be Cowal), lack boundaries, and will anger the folk of the Northern Isles, since Orkney and Shetland are not marked. It would have been useful to have included the names of the Western Isles, and Muileachs will be distressed that the island of Mull is labelled 'Morvern' on the first map.

The main body of information is contained in an alphabetical listing of the major place-name elements, from *aber-* to *worth* with the occasional inclusion of common 'problem' – names such as 'Gordon', 'Grampians' and 'Rest and be Thankful'. Here the treatment is readable, occasionally witty, and often quite scholarly. Most of the names discussed are dealt with in a sensible manner, although a number of errors are evident. *Auchenshuggle* (p. 16) is probably from *seigeal* 'rye' rather than from *sabhal* 'barn'; the Gaelic form of *Ardgour* (p. 19) is *aird ghobhair* 'height of the goats' instead of 'ard ghober', and *letter* (p. 88) is Gaelic *leth-tir*, literally 'half-land'. *Craiglockhart* (p. 37) was recorded in 1278 as being the property of Sir Stephen Loccard, so can scarcely be from *luchard* 'encampment'.

There are some surprising omissions. It would have been useful to have discussed the name *Hebrides* which most readers regard as an ancient name, and there is no mention of *Iona.*

In total, this book deals with about 2,200 Scottish place-names and place-name generics, giving a pretty comprehensive coverage. Some obscure generics are effectively dealt with, such as *threap* 'dispute', in names like *Threepland* (p. 45); *lann* 'enclosure' in such as Lanbryde and Lynchat; *rath* in Rathillet, Radernie and Rattray, and *tairbeart* in the various Tarberts, Tarbets and Tarbat.

Most general readers with little or no background in Scottish history or language will find this a useful book. It makes no pretentions at scholarship, yet contains scholarly material. The index is accurate, and should give most readers basic derivations for the most common Scottish names, without breaking new ground. If it stimulates further investigation of the subject, it will have served its purpose very well.

IAN A. FRASER

Books Noticed

Books included here may also be reviewed separately. In addition to books sent for review, notice is also made of books otherwise drawn to the Editors' attention.

The groupings are as far as possible according to the subject categories of the International Ethnological Bibliography (ed. Dr Rainer Alsheimer, University of Bremen, FB10 (Kulturwissenschaft), Postfach 330 440, D — 2800 Bremen 33, Germany).

01 *Ethnology as a Science*

Sources

Margaret Fay Shaw, *From the Alleghenies to the Hebrides. An Autobiography*, Canongate Press, Edinburgh 1993. 150 pp. £12.99. [The life's journey from Philadelphia to Canna of a renowned folklorist, talented writer and photographer, who has gained mastery of the language and song of Gaeldom. The details given of traditional ways and tasks, especially in South Uist, and of wartime conditions in Canna, have much value.]

Cecil Sinclair, *Tracing Scottish Local History. A Guide to Local History Research in the Scottish Record Office*, Scottish Record Office, HMSO Edinburgh, 1994, viii + 167 pp. £7.95. [An essential guide to historical and ethnological research, arranged according to themes; houses and streets, estates and farms, parishes, burghs, ports, franchise jurisdictions, districts, sheriffdoms and counties, roads, rails and canals, schools, businesses, recreation.]

History of Ethnology

Bjarne Rogan, ed. *Det nære og det fremmede. Vindu mot fransk etnologi*, Novus Forlag, Oslo 1993, 248 pp. [This 'window on French ethnology' assembles a selection of articles by well-known French ethnologists, mainly from the 1980s. They give a good overview of three of the main themes in French ethnology: the study of symbolism, of regional and cultural identity, and the question of the researcher's relationship to the object of study. Aspects of food play a prominent role. The special character of French ethnology is well demonstrated.]

Methods, Techniques, aids

Jan M. Fladmark, ed., *Heritage, Conservation, Interpretation, Enterprise*, Donhead Publishing Ltd., 28 Southdean Gardens, Wimbledon, London SW19 6NU, 1993. 355

pp. £35.00. [These papers, presented at The Robert Gordon University Heritage Convention 1993, reflect state-of-the-art thinking about cultural landscapes, planning for interpretation, interpretation and presentation, the arts and crafts. They are concerned with stewardship of the land and of cultural assets, in a wide-ranging series of approaches.]

02 *Regional Ethnology*

Celtic Language Area

Clodah Brennan Harvey, *Contemporary Irish Traditional Narrative. The English Language Tradition*, University of California Publications, Folklore and Mythology Studies Vol. 35, University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford 1992. vii + 130 pp. [A contemporary study covering the background, social change, folklore collectors and the status of the two language traditions in Ireland, all as they affect the storytelling tradition.]

03 *Ethnicity, Identity, Living Styles*

General.

Christy Bing, *The Lairds of Arbuthnott*, Capability Publishing, Edzell 1993. 128 pp. £6.99. [Written by one of the family, this is the first proper history of the senior branch of the Arbuthnotts since the late 17th century.]

Carol Edington, *Court and Culture in Renaissance Scotland. Sir David Lindsay of the Mount*, Tuckwell Press, East Linton 1995. x + 276 pp. £30.00. [Sir David Lindsay, an important figure in fifteenth to sixteenth century literature, is examined within the historical, political and religious context of his period. The book traces Lindsay's career at the courts of James IV and James V and his involvement in current religious controversies; it looks at him as a political thinker and especially at his concepts of kingship and commonweal; and it examines his poetry in the light of the religious climate on the eve of the Reformation.]

Helen and Keith Kelsall, *Scottish Lifestyle 300 Years Ago. New Light on Edinburgh and Border Families with a New Chapter on Music Making*, Scottish Cultural Press, Aberdeen 1993. vii + 262 pp. £9.95. [Paperback reprint, with revisions and additions, of the hardback 1986 volume. It deals with a related group of Merse lairds (the Hume family and its social network), using contemporary household account books, diaries, etc. to

illuminate the details of their domestic and public lives. Much light is thrown on the background to the period.]

Helen and Keith Kelsall, *An Album of Scottish Families 1694–96. Being the first instalment of George Home's Diary supplemented by much further research into the Edinburgh and Border families forming his extensive social network*, Aberdeen University Press, 1990. 73 + 158 pp. £14.95. [A presentation of a remarkable late 17th century diary, full of details of botany, agriculture and medicine, and of industrial, social, legal and political history.]

John Kerr, *Life in the Atholl Glens*, Perth and Kinross District Libraries, Perth 1993. 128 pp. £9.95. Well illustrated. [The author, who has been researching Atholl for over 25 years, has packed a great deal of interesting detail into his chapters on the eight glens — Garry, Girnaig, Tilt, Tarf, Loch, Fender, Bruar and Errichty.]

Colin MacDonald, *Life in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland: Echoes of the Glen & Highland Journey*, the Mercat Press, Edinburgh 1993. xiii + 157 + 159. £10.95. [A re-issue of two of Colin MacDonald's books (*Echoes*, 1936; *H.J.*, 1943). Very readable, and full of information about ways of life in a Cromartie glen and the West of Scotland. The writer, born on a croft in 1882, became a Land Officer with the Department of Agriculture for Scotland, and later, Gaelic-speaking member of the Land Court.]

Bjarne Rogan, *Dagligliv i Ny-Hellesund. Om mennesker, familier og hendelser i et øysamfunn på sørlandskysten på første del av 1900-tallet*, (daily life in Ny-Hellesund. On people, families and events in an island community on the south coast in the early 1900s), Novus Forlag, Oslo 1992. 187 pp. [A novel approach to oral history. The editor has worked with three informants and presents their stories not in thematic sequences, but allowing each to speak independently about his/her home, each one deepening the story. The material, once edited, was then seen and agreed with the informants. This use of oral history has produced a remarkable story of an island community.]

Anna Ritchie, *Viking Scotland*, B. T. Batsford Ltd. / Historic Scotland, London 1993. 143 pp. [A well-illustrated survey of the remains and evidence of the Vikings, including language, landscape and the physical remains of houses, graves, weapons and other items.]

Dorothy Slee, *Two Generations of Edinburgh Folk* (Flashbacks 1), Canongate Academic in association with The European Ethnological Research Centre and National Museums of Scotland, Edinburgh 1993. xi + 64 pp. £7.99. [The first in an oral history series designed to throw light on the lives and working contexts of individuals. This volume deals with tenement life as experienced by one family from the Victorian period to the post-Second World War era].

Roderick Wilkinson, *Memories of Maryhill*, Canongate Academic, 1993. 168 pp. £9.99. [The story of a twentieth century boyhood in a poor but respectable part of Glasgow.]

Lachlan B. Young, *Mull of Kintyre to Moosburg. Memories of Peace and War; 1914–1945.* Perth & Kinross District Libraries, Perth 1994. 206 pp. [A volume of memories about the early life of the author on a small farm in the days of horse power, with an outline of the activities of the farming year. It next deals with his education (the author went on to become a Director of Education) and teaching experience, and finally with his experiences as a soldier in Britain and North Africa, and as a Prisoner of War in Italy and Germany. Factually, realistically and readably written.]

04 *Age, Family, Group*

Women.

Ian MacDougall, ed., *'Hard work, ye ken'*. Midlothian Women Farmworkers (Flashbacks 2), Canongate Academic in association with the European Ethnological Research Centre and National Museums of Scotland, Edinburgh 1993. xiii + 97 pp. £7.99. [The working lives of four Midlothian women, as tape-recorded by the editor, using their own dialect expressions and phrases to convey details of work done, home life, families, dress, food and entertainment.]

Children, Adolescence

Iona MacGregor, *Bairns, Scottish Children in Photographs*, National Museums of Scotland, Edinburgh 1994. 152 pp. £14.99. [A selection of photographs from the National Museum of Scotland's Scottish Life Archive, which fully demonstrates the wealth of the Archive's holdings. The sections include home and family, education and religion, sickness and health, institutions, work and play, at various social levels. The period covered is one of unprecedented social change.]

05 *Economy, World of Work, Occupations*

General.

Hugh Cheape, Ed., *Tools & Traditions. Studies in European Ethnology Presented to Alexander Fenton*, National Museums of Scotland, Edinburgh 1933. xv + 272 pp. £35.00. [Contributions by thirty-seven international scholars on subjects ranging through ethnological surveys and museums, farming, ploughs and spades, harvesting, hay

wagons, cattle and shielings, food and drink, buildings, furniture, crafts and dress, and aspects of language and personal and place-names.]

John Love and Brenda McMullen, eds., *A Salmon for the Schoolhouse. A Nairnshire parish in the Nineteenth Century* (Sources in Local History 3), Canongate Academic in association with The European Ethnological Research Centre and the National Museums of Scotland, Edinburgh 1994. xi + 160 pp. £8.99. [The record of Robert Thomson, born 1838, school teacher at Cawdor, then Ardclach, and a gifted botanist and entomologist. He also had a strong interest in folklore, place-names and antiquities.]

Mowbray Pearson, ed., *More Frost and Snow. The Diary of Janet Burnet 1758–1795* (Sources in Local History 2), Canongate Academic in association with The European Ethnological Research Centre and the National Museums of Scotland, Edinburgh 1994. viii + 127 pp. £14.94. [A diary from the 18th century, early in itself and exceptional in having been written by the wife of an Aberdeenshire landowner. The weather has a strong role to play.]

Gathering, Hunting, Fishing

Angus Martin, *Fishing and Whaling*, National Museums of Scotland, Edinburgh 1995. 84 pp. £4.99. [A wide ranging survey of fishing, starting from the shore and moving to the deep sea. Weather lore, wrecks, and the lives and customs of fisher folk are also taken into account. Well illustrated.]

Ørnulv Vorren, *Reindrift og nomadisme i Helgeland. I Beskrivelse; II Kartmessig fremstilling* (Reindeer herding and nomadism in Helgeland, I description, II maps) (Tromsø Museums skrifter xxi, 1–2), Novus Forlag, Oslo 1986. 186 pp. + maps volume. [The study, by the head of the Sami-Ethnographic Dept. of Tromsø Museum, deals with the subject from the turn of the century till the Occupation of 1940, when nomadism still maintained its traditional patterns.]

Agriculture and Animal Husbandry, Forestry

Alexander Fenton, Ed., *At Brechin with Stirks. A Farm Cash Book From Buskhead, Glenesk, Angus, 1885–1898.* (Sources in Local History 1), Canongate Academic in association with The European Ethnological Research Centre and the National Museums of Scotland, Edinburgh 1994. viii + 95 pp. £14.99. [The full text of a farmer's cash book with a detailed analysis showing the financial returns, and aspects of the everyday life of a farmer in an Angus glen in the later 19th century.]

Inja Smerdel, *Ovčiarstvo na Pivki*, Lipa 1989. 123 pp. [A study of transhumance in sheep-farming in Pivka, a region of western Slovenia, as the practice is remembered amongst the last of the transhumant sheep-breeders. Summary in English.]

Inja Smerdel, *Oselniki*, Slovene Ethnographic Museum, Ljubljana 1994. 318 pp. [No. 4 in the publications of the Museum. A meticulously documented historical study and catalogue of scythe whetstone holders, their manufacture and use, with an extensive English text. An important contribution to the history of hay-harvesting techniques and to 'folk art', in the decoration of these wooden holders.]

Other branches of the Economy

Tom Donnelly, *The Aberdeen Granite Industry*, Centre for Scottish Studies, University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen 1994. vii + 186 pp. £9.50. [A historical study of a subject important not only for the buildings of Aberdeen and the Northeast, but also for other parts of Scotland. It divides the granite industry into three periods; growth before 1830, consolidation 1830–80, and its structure, 1880–1939. The granite masters and the labour force are also discussed.]

Handicrafts

Enid Gauldie, *Spinning and Weaving*, National Museums of Scotland, Edinburgh 1995. 80 pp. £4.99. [A useful introduction to and survey of spinning and weaving equipment and techniques from prehistory to recent times. Well illustrated.]

Foreign Travel

Andrew Wawn, ed., *The Icelandic Journal of Henry Holland 1810*, The Hakluyt Society, London 1987. xviii + 342 pp. £16.00. [The story of the first visit to Iceland of the physician, Sir Henry Holland. It contains much detailed observation, including a drawing of the old style of Orkney plough (observed en route), and information on Icelandic buildings.]

09 *Food*

General.

Elisabeth L. Fürst, Ritva Prättälä, Marianne Ekström, Lotte Holm, Unni Kjærnes, eds., *Palatable Worlds. Sociocultural Food Studies*, Solum Forlag, Oslo 1991. 206 pp. [This is a

collection of papers from a symposium on Symbols and Everyday Life. It combines sociological, anthropological, psychological, ethnological and historical perspectives on food, and makes an important addition to the range of Nordic literature on food research.]

Olive M. Geddes, *The Laird's Kitchen. Three Hundred Years of Food in Scotland*, HMSO and The National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh, 1994. x + 110 pp. £18.95. [Very well illustrated, and based on diet books, household accounts, inventories and recipe books in the National Library of Scotland.]

Noëlle Vialles, *Animal to Edible*, Cambridge University Press, 1994. xvi + 141 pp. £30 (hardback), £13.95 (p.b.). (First published in French as *Le Sang et la chair: les abattoirs des pays de l'Adour*, 1987). [A fascinating study, based on field research into the workings of modern abattoirs, of the role and symbolic significance of meat in the human diet, and of the attitudes of those who do the slaughtering.]

C. Anne Wilson, ed., *'Banquetting Stuffe'. The fare and social background of the Tudor and Stuart banquet* (Food and Society 1) Edinburgh University Press 1986. £17.50. viii + 159 pp. [Contains five chapters on the development of sweetmeats into a separate final course at meals in the course of the 16th century as a highly status related food.]

C. Anne Wilson, ed., *The Appetite and the Eye. Visual aspects of food and its presentation within their historic context.* (Food and Society 2), Edinburgh University Press 1991. ix + 162 pp. £17.50. [Six chapters on ritual, form and colour in the medieval food tradition, changing forms of dining rooms, decoration of the Tudor and Stuart Table, ideal meals and their menus, and middle-class Victorian dining.]

C. Anne Wilson, ed., *Food for the Community. Special Diets for Special Groups* (Food and Society 6), Edinburgh University Press, 1993. ix + 185 pp. £30.00. [Seven chapters on monastic diet, hospitality, board wages and servants' feeding arrangements, the diet of sailors, élite school dinners in France, workhouse food and soldiers' food.]

10 *Settlement, Cultural Landscape*

General.

Ian Armit, ed., *Beyond the Brochs. Changing Perspectives on the Atlantic Scottish Iron Age*, Edinburgh University Press, 1990. 228 pp. [Contributions by eight authors on different aspects of the Atlantic Iron Age, including the brochs, fortifications, Hebridean pottery, pins and combs, and a case study of Pool, Sanday, Orkney.]

Keith Cavers, *A Vision of Scotland. The Nation Observed by John Slezer 1671 to 1717.* HMSO and National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh 1993. viii + 109 pp. £14.95. [A study of the life and work of John Slezer, the military Chief Engineer of German origin whose draughtsmanship gives a visual image of Scotland's major buildings and towns and their immediate environs at the end of the seventeenth century. It reproduces Slezer's drawings, and provides fascinating information on the state of contemporary copper plate engraving and etching, and book production.]

H. L. Cox, ed., *Kulturgrenzen and Nationale Identität* (Cultural Boundaries and National Identity) International European Ethnocartographic Working Group, Bonn 1993. 240 pp. (vol. 30 of the *Rheinisches Jahrbuch für Volkskunde*). [Nineteen chapters from different countries on geographical, historical, religious, linguistic, cultural and other aspects of the subject, including the Highland Line in Scotland, and on cultural and conflicting National Identities in Ireland.]

Drew Easton, ed. *By the Three Great Roads. A History of Tollcross, Fountainbridge and the West Port.* Aberdeen University Press, 1988. x + 177 pp. [A study by six writers of aspects of the Tollcross in Edinburgh, covering history, the working population, transport, leisure, schooling, churchgoing, and the environs.]

Alexander Fenton and Desmond A. Gillmor, eds., *Rural Land Use on the Atlantic Periphery of Europe: Scotland & Ireland*, Royal Irish Academy, Dublin 1994. 219 pp. [Seven pairs of contributors examine land use, agriculture, forestry, recreation, conservation, and land-use planning and management in the two countries respectively, within a wider European overview.]

Sally Foster and T. Christopher Smout, eds., *The History of Soils and Field Systems*, Scottish Cultural Press, Aberdeen 1994. 165 pp. £9.95. [Twelve contributions on various aspects of man's impact on the environment, including soil erosion, ridge and furrow, cultivating implements, manuring, and the interpretation of the remains of field systems.]

Angus Graham, *Skipness, Memories of a Highland Estate*, Canongate Academic, 1993. xvii + 141 pp. £12.50. [An account of the estate of Skipness in Argyll, acquired by the Grahams (who had made their money in the grocery and wine trade in Glasgow) in 1866. It is based on personal experience and family anecdote, told with the author's typical dry humour, and presents much history and archaeology and information on the lifestyle of a leisured class, with a light touch.]

Lars Ivor Hansen, *Samisk fangstsamfunn og norsk hovdingeøknomi* (Lappish hunting community and Norwegian elite economy), Novus Forlag, Oslo 1990. 275 pp. (English summary). [The second book to appear as a result of a research survey of the life of

the coastal Sami in South Troms, Norway, from the Middle Ages till c. 1700, by the Sami-Ethnographic Department of the Tromsø Museum. It looks at Sami history and cultural adaptation as affected by reciprocal relations with the Norwegian élite (e.g. through fur trading). Forms of land holding, cultural memorials, place-names and the landscape are examined in detail as a means to this end.]

T. Christopher Smout, ed., *Scotland Since Prehistory. Natural Change & Human Impact*, Scottish Cultural Press, Aberdeen 1993. xx + 140 pp. £14.95. [Eleven contributors discuss climatic change, human impact on the prehistoric environment, pollen analysis, woodland history, marginal agriculture, sheep farming, deer, salmon, and midges.]

11 *Architecture, Building, Dwelling*

General.

Lydia Skinner, *A Family Unbroken 1694–1994. The Mary Erskine Tercentenary History*, The Mary Erskine School, Edinburgh, 1994. 207 pp. £12.50 pb., £20 hc. [An attractively illustrated history of the Merchant Maidens school, with particular emphasis on the period from 1870 to the present day. This is also part of the history of Edinburgh and of Scottish education.]

Rural Architecture

Tim Buxbawm, *Scottish Doocots*, Shire Album 1901, Shire Publications Ltd. 1987. 32 pp. [A useful, well-illustrated outline of the history, distribution, and types of doocots in Scotland.]

Public Buildings

Iain MacIvor, *Edinburgh Castle*, B.T. Batsford Ltd. / Historic Scotland, London 1993. 143 pp. £25.00 hb., £14.99 pb. [A well-illustrated study of the development of Edinburgh Castle and of the elements of the past that can be traced in the present structure. The author was formerly Chief Inspector of Monuments for Historic Scotland.]

13 *Custom, Festival, Game, Spare Time.*

Death.

Anne O'Connor, *Child Murderess and Dead Child Traditions, A Comparative Study.* Academia Scientiarum Fennica, FF Communications No. 249, Helsinki 1991. 246 pp.

[Deals with unbaptised infants, abortion, infanticide and abandonment, dead child traditions, child murderess traditions, dead child revenant legends and ballads, in Irish and in European folk tradition.]

Sport, Games

John Burnett, *Sporting Scotland*, National Museums of Scotland, Edinburgh 1995. 80 pp. £4.99. [A survey of sporting activities from the Middle Ages to the present day, demonstrating the change from local to world perspectives. Well-illustrated.]

Sándor Petényi, *Games and Toys in Medieval and Early Modern Hungary* (Medium Aevum Quotidiandum), Krems 1994, 128 pp. [This study flows from a project on 'The Material Culture of Medieval Hungary'. It surveys the written and artefactual evidence for games, including chess, backgammon, gaming discs, dice, tokens, nine-men's morris, knucklebones, eggs, noise-makers, dolls, toy horses and riders, clay vessels, spinning tops, marbles, skates and sleds.]

14 *Religion, Piety*

General.

Dorothy Ann Bray, *A List of Motifs in the Lives of the Early Irish Saints*, Academia Scientarium Fennica, FF Communications No. 252, Helsinki 1992. [Contains an introduction outlining the nature and content of the source material, and a detailed list of motifs arranged by theme and class.]

Nigel M. de S. Cameron, David F. Wright, David C. Lachman, Donald E. Meek, eds., *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology*, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh 1993. xx + 906 pp. £33.95. [The first one-volume, balanced account of Christianity in Scotland, with over 3500 entries by 350 experts. It covers Roman Catholicism, Baptist theology and Episcopal traditions, as well as the Reformed faith. An essential work of reference.]

Rev. Dr William D. McNaughton, *The Scottish Congregational Ministry 1794–1993*, The Congregational Union of Scotland, Glasgow 1993. xxxiv + 487 pp. £35.00. [An exhaustive listing of individuals who ministered to Congregational churches in Scotland or trained in the Theological Halls of the denomination. In two parts, 1794–1900, and 1900–1993. Each entry outlines an individual's career chronologically.]

16 *Health, Illness, the Body*

General.

David Buchan, ed., *Folk Tradition and Folk Medicine in Scotland. The writings of David Rorie*, Canongate Academic, Edinburgh, 1994. x + 317 pp. £20. [David Rorie (1867–1946) was a country doctor whose recordings of folklore and folk medicine from the people amongst whom he worked made him a pioneer in these fields. This volume, with a succinct introduction by the late Professor David Buchan, presents much of his collection for the first time, and will be of immense use in the growing subject of Scottish ethnology.]

19 *Song*

Ballads and Epics.

Emily Lyle, ed., *Scottish Ballads*, Canongate Classics 55, Edinburgh 1944. 288 pp. £4.99. [A selection of over eighty of Scotland's finest ballads, involving versions that cover the last three centuries.]

20 *Music, Dance*

General.

D. James Ross, *Musick Fyne. Robert Carver and the Art of Music in Sixteenth Century Scotland*, The Mercat Press, Edinburgh, 1993. xxx + 185 pp. £15.95. [A major study of the period and its music, showing the solid achievements of Robert Carver and his Scottish contemporaries.]

21 *Popular Prose and Reading Materials, Märchen, International (Popular) Tales, Fairy Tales, Folktales, Magic Tales.*

Alan J. Bruford and Donald A. Macdonald, eds., *Scottish Traditional Tales*, Polygon, Edinburgh 1994. 488 pp. £12.95. [An authoritative and original collection of tales divided by theme — tall tales, hero tales, legends, tales of fate and religion, fairies and sea-folk, children's tales, trickster tales and tales of clan feuds and robbers. It covers the Gaelic and Lowland Scottish Tradition, and reflects the collecting work of the School of Scottish Studies over half a century. Some of the material has not been published before. There is a scholarly introduction by the late Dr Alan Bruford.]